

FROM “A SEPARATE TRANSMISSION” TO “AN ALL-EMBRACING TEACHING”

A STUDY ON THE “YINGHUA SHENGXIAN” SECTIONS  
IN SONG CHAN HISTORIOGRAPHIES

by

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*To my grandpa, Shuwen Jia (1927-2007),  
a lifelong learner and a guiding light in my childhood.*

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates the sections entitled “Yinghua shengxian” 應化聖賢 (Sages and Worthies as Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities) within the Chan historiographies of Song China. Traditionally, Chan historiographies were perceived as exclusively dedicated to the Chan school, chronicling the development of Chan lineages and preserving the essential teachings of Chan masters. However, the “Yinghua shengxian” sections introduced a novel dimension by incorporating non-Chan figures from diverse religious backgrounds and identifying them as Chan ideals. The “Yinghua shengxian” sections became a recurring component in the Song Chan historiographies since their predecessor section was first included in the compilation during the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. By the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, their evolution manifested in increased prominence within Chan historiographies, as they were strategically repositioned to the forefront and expanded to include more figures.

The chapters of this dissertation follow a chronological arrangement based on the four Song Chan historiographies containing the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. Each chapter starts with an exploration of the distinctive features of the Chan historiographies and the impact on the compilations and styles of their “Yinghua shengxian” sections. These are followed by one or two case studies on specific figures selected from the “Yinghua shengxian” section, displaying how Chan compilers broadened their scope by incorporating iconic figures beyond Chan lineages and even outside Buddhism. Through hagiographical writing, the Chan compilers infused Chan values into the portrayals of these religious paradigms, transforming them into spokesmen for the Chan school. Meanwhile, their accounts in Chan historiographies shed light on historical facts such as the Chan-Tiantai controversy, the Buddho-Daoist dispute, interactions between local cults and established religions, and the involvement of Chan literature in folk culture.

This examination of non-Chan ideals within the framework of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections posits that these sections constitute a crucial yet undervalued source providing significant insights into the development of the Chan school during the Song dynasty. By delving into both historical and fictional dimensions of Chan historiographies, this study contends that the Chan school actively engaged in the Song religious discourse and adopted different strategies to assert its superiority. The evolution of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, from emphasizing its uniqueness to incorporating diverse non-Chan traditions, attests to the increased confidence and openness of the Chan school in the Song dynasty.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Bodhisattvas can transform into buddhas, stay in a buddha-like state, manifest the dharma wheel, establish responsive manifestations, universally manifest the radiant of the Thus-come, and deliver those with great aspirations onto the path of the Great Vehicle; descending and transforming for their benefit.

菩薩能化為佛，能住如佛，能化法輪，建立應化，普現如來之光明，度志大乘，於彼而降化。

—— *Dengmu pusa suowen sanmei jing* 等目菩薩所問三昧經<sup>1</sup>

### An Overview of the “Yinghua shengxian” Sections in Song Chan Historiographies

In the 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Shimen Zhengtong* 釋門正統, a historiography centered on the Tiantai school, compiler Zongjian 宗鑑 criticized that the compilers of a Chan historiography, the *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄, categorized the Tiantai founding patriarch Zhiyi 智顛 as a “*chan* master,” stating, “How could one acknowledge that the Great Master (Zhiyi) is limited solely to being a distinguished master in the *chan* practice?”<sup>2</sup> Since the *Jingde chuan denglu* was

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<sup>1</sup> *Dengmu pusa suowen sanmei jing* 等目菩薩所問三昧經. T. no.288, 10: 584c22-585a2.

<sup>2</sup> *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. X. no.1513, 75: 267c9-10. The designation of Huisi and Zhiyi as *chan* masters reflects people’s understanding of Chan Buddhism in the early Song. In the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, Zanning 讚寧 presents both Tiantai and Chan as meditation traditions, emphasizing contemplation as a form of *chan* practice to reconcile these two traditions. In essence, Tiantai was also perceived as a tradition that upheld the *chan* practice. In his commentary on the division of “Chan Practitioners,” Zanning further attributes the advancement of meditation techniques to Huisi and Zhiyi. Zanning’s notion of *chan* incorporates the *chan* lineages into the broader Buddhist traditions, thus recognizing Huisi and Zhiyi as *chan* masters within the *dhyāna* tradition. Zanning’s distinction between the *chan* tradition and the institutionalized Chan school becomes apparent in the *Dasong sengshi lue* 大宋僧史略, where he demarcates the *dhyāna* (*chan*) tradition from the formalized Chan school. He observes that the Indian *dhyāna* tradition was introduced into China during the former Qin dynasty, wherein these meditation techniques were originally employed for medicinal purposes. However, commentators of these *dhyāna* texts redirected focus towards the rhetoric embedded within the practices, thereby eclipsing the fundamental essence of the meditative methodology. This prompted Bodhidharma to uphold the principle of “not establishment of words and letters,” as he intended to guide individuals toward liberation from the constraints of language. Nonetheless, the nascent Chan school appropriated this principle as its slogan and endeavored to transgress the monastic norms. Zanning contends that the Indian meditative tradition accorded with Buddhist teachings, yet the established Chan school diverged from this trajectory and sought independence from Buddhist conventions, which should be

completed in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, Zongjian’s critique reflected accumulated discontent among Tiantai followers towards the Chan school. As modern scholar Chen Yuan points out, the disparagement of Zhiyi in the *Jingde chuan denglu* triggered the long-term opposition between the Chan and the Tiantai schools.<sup>3</sup> In the *Jingde chuan denglu* Fascicle 27, Zhiyi, along with nine other figures not associated with any Chan lineages, was labeled “distinguished *chan* masters” and venerated as Chan ideals in the section entitled “Chanmen dazhe bu chushi er youming yushi zhe 禪門達者不出世而有名於時者” (Distinguished Masters in the Chan Gate outside the Lineage but Renowned in Their Times, abbr: “Chanmen dazhe” section).<sup>4</sup> These figures, with diverse backgrounds, such as Tiantai patriarchs, semi-legendary poet monks, and those famous for thaumaturgical deeds, were grouped together in the *Jingde chuan denglu*. The compilers confirmed their spiritual achievements while collectively identifying them as Buddhist ideals for

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considered a “demonic heterodoxy.” See Albert Welter, “Zanning and Chan: The Changing Nature of Buddhism in Early Song China.” *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 23:1, (1995): 112-117. *The Administration of Buddhism in China: A Study and Translation of Zanning and the Topical Compendium of the Buddhist Clergy (Da Song Seng Shi Lüe)* (New York: Cambria Press, 2018), 247-251. That is to say, “*chan* master” does not necessarily indicate masters in Chan lineages or being affiliated with the institutionalized Chan school, but they could be meditation practitioners associated with the broader tradition. Zongjian’s critique is rooted in the fact that the *Jingde lu* only regards Zhiyi as a practitioner of meditation, without emphasizing his influential role as the founding patriarch of the Tiantai school. However, the *Jingde lu* identifies Zhiyi as a meditation practitioner in order to serve its specific purpose.

<sup>3</sup> Chen Yuan 陳垣, *Zhongguo fojiao shiji gailun* 中國佛教史籍概論 (Shanghai: Shanghai Century Publishing Group, 2005), 97.

<sup>4</sup> The description “*bu chushi*” is worthy of attention. Literarily, it signifies “not come into the world.” However, these figures attained considerable renown and prominently engaged with the society during their times. Their status as “*bu chushi*,” actually, pertains specifically to the institutionalized Chan school, as they did not affiliate with any established Chan lineages. These figures, including Tiantai patriarchs—Huisi and Zhiyi, semi-legendary poet monks—“Three Sages of Tiantai,” and thaumaturgical monks—Baozhi, Shanhui, Sengqie, Wanhui, and Budai, are classified into different categories based on the divisions in the Eminent Monks series. Huisi and Zhiyi are “Meditation Practitioners,” while Baozhi is “Divine Marvels” in Huijiao’s *Gaoseng zhuan*. The remaining figures are categorized as “Wonder Workers” in Daoxuan’s *Xu gaoseng zhuan*. Despite the Daoxuan’s substitution of Huijiao’s “Divine Marvels” with “Wonder Workers,” both divisions generally acknowledge these monks as possessing thaumaturgical abilities, capable of performing wonders through magical power. See *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 429c15-19. For the difference between the “Divine Marvels” and the “Wonder Workers,” John Kieschnick points out that the former emphasizes monks’ proficiency in eliciting miraculous response from Nature, whereas the latter underscores monks endowed with spiritual powers capable of invoking the resonance of Buddhist deities. See Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 99.

the Chan school in particular. This prompts the question: What was the rationale behind this inclusion?

The publication of the *Jingde chuan denglu* marked the initiation of a new era in Chan literature. It not only established a precedent but also delineated the structure and purpose of subsequent “*denglu*” works. The *denglu* works, characterized by their lineal genealogical style, served as hagiographies detailing the lives of Chan masters and as historiographies for the Chan school. Since then, the term *denglu* became synonymous with Chan historiography, emerging as a prominent genre within Chan literature. Only three decades later, the *Tiansheng guang denglu* 天聖廣燈錄, the second *denglu* work following the format of the *Jingde chuan denglu*, was completed. Subsequent to this, various other *denglu* works, including the *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* 建中靖國續燈錄, the *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要, the *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, and the *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元, were compiled throughout the Song dynasty. Collectively, these *denglu* works constituted the *Five Lamps* series, serving as a benchmark for the periodization of *denglu* works.<sup>5</sup>

The *Jingde lu* played a critical role in shaping the identity of the Chan school as a form of state Buddhism in the early Song period.<sup>6</sup> As the foremost “official history” of the

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<sup>5</sup> The development of *denglu* can be divided into three periods, which are Pre-*Five Lamps* period, *Five Lamps* period, and Post-*Five Lamps* period. The emergence of the *Five Lamps* served as a benchmark for this periodization. See Shi Ciyi 釋慈怡, *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大詞典 (Taipei: Foguang Publisher, 1988), 6261.

<sup>6</sup> T. Griffith Foulk notes that Chan as a distinct school did not emerge until the Song dynasty. During the tenth century, Chan historical accounts were more concerned with legitimizing the school within the context of the new dynasty than providing an accurate historical narrative. See Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism” in *Religion and Society in T’ang and Sung China*, edited by Patricia Ebrey and Peter Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993), 149. Albert Welter shares a similar viewpoint and suggests that pre-Song Chan historiographies reflected the local Chan communities’ intent to establish their lineage and authenticate their tradition. However, during the Song dynasty, the Chan school attained the status of a state religion, enjoying imperial patronage. In this era, the *Jingde chuan denglu*, as the first historical record of Chan, undertook a rewriting of Chan history, by which to portray the Chan school as an independent institution distinct from the longstanding

institutionalized Chan school, the compilation of the “Chanmen dazhe” section and the inclusion of the ten individuals had to be the result of careful considerations by Chan compilers. Despite the *Jingde lu* serving as a model for subsequent *denglu* works, the “Chanmen dazhe” section was omitted from the next two *denglu* works, the *Tiansheng lu* and the *Jianzhong lu*. The rationale behind this exclusion will be elaborated later. Interestingly, the “Chanmen dazhe” section found its way back into *denglu* works by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, specifically in the *Zongmen tongyao ji* 宗門統要集, an understated Chan historiography by the Yunmen 雲門 monk Zongyong 宗永.<sup>7</sup> In this work, Zongyong introduced a section entitled “Yinghua xiansheng” 應化賢聖 (Worthies and Sages as Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities, abbr: “Yinghua shengxian” section), incorporating twenty figures as Chan ideals, nine of whom were originally part of the “Chanmen dazhe” section. The “Yinghua xiansheng/shengxian” sections subsequently became a recurrent feature in three Southern Song *denglu* works—the *Liandeng huiyao*, the *Jitai pu denglu*, and the *Wudeng huiyuan*. While the specific figures in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections varied, the nine figures from the *Jingde lu* almost consistently made appearances. In this sense, the “Chanmen dazhe” section served as a prototype for these subsequent “Yinghua shengxian” sections.

The two tables below illustrate the incorporation of the “Chanmen dazhe” section and the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in the *Five Lamps* series, along with the comprehensive list of figures featured in these sections.

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Tiantai school and Vinaya school within the Buddhist convention. See Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 125-126.

<sup>7</sup> Zongyong was a dharma brother of Weibai 惟白, the compiler of the *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu*. Both of them were dharma heirs of Fayun (Yuantong) Faxiu 法雲(圓通)法秀. The hagiography of Zongyong can be found in the *Bu xu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳. X. no.1524, 77: 510c04-511a14. Zongyong and Weibai’s lineage information can also be seen in the *Xu chuan denglu* 續傳燈錄. T. no.2077, 51: 536b06-b21, 539b29-c04.

Time Period	Denglu work	Fascicle	Title	Number of Figures
Northern Song	<i>Jingde chuan denglu</i>	27	Distinguished Masters in the Chan Gate outside the Lineage but Renowned in Their Times	10
	<i>Tiansheng guang denglu</i>	N/A		
	<i>Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu</i>	N/A		
	* <i>Zongmen tongyao ji</i>	2	Worthies and Sages as Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities	15
Southern Song	<i>Liandeng huiyao</i>	29	Worthies and Sages as Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities	20
	<i>Jitai pu denglu</i>	24	Sages and Worthies as Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities	10
	<i>Wudeng huiyuan</i>	2	Sages and Worthies as Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities	23

**Table 1.** The “Yinghua shengxian” sections in the *Five Lamps* series.

<i>Jingde chuan denglu</i>	<i>Liandeng huiyao</i>	<i>Jitai pu denglu</i>	<i>Wudeng huiyuan</i>
Chan Master Jinling Baozhi 金陵寶誌禪師	Elder Buddhapāla 佛陀波利尊者	Monk Qiansui Baozhang 千歲寶掌和尚	Mañjuśrī 文殊菩薩
Mahasattva Wuzhou Shanhui 婺州善慧大士	Elder Buddhayaśas 耶捨尊者	Ancient Buddha Koubing Zaoxian 扣冰藻先古佛	Vasubandhu 天親菩薩
Chan Master Nanyue Huisi 南嶽慧思禪師	Elder Boluoti 波羅提尊者	Monk Jiuxian Yuxian 酒仙遇賢和尚	Sudhana 善財
Chan Master Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛禪師	Chan Master Buddhadrā 秦跋陀禪師	Elder Nan’anyan Ziyan 南安岩自嚴尊者	The Respected Subhūti 須菩提尊者
Monk Sizhou Sengqie 泗州僧伽和尚	Chan Master Nanyue Huisi 南嶽慧思禪師	Mahasattva Fahua Zhiyan 法華志言大士	The Respected Śāriputra 舍利弗尊者
The Respected Wanhui Fayun 萬廻法雲公	Chan Master Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛禪師	Monk Zhizu Zhihua 知足知華道者	The Respected Aṅgulimāla 鵞掘摩羅尊者
Chan Master Tiantai Fenggan 天台豐干禪師	Chan Master Tiantai Fenggan 天台豐干禪師	Feng Fahua 風法華	The Respected Pindola 賓頭盧尊者
Tiantai Hanshanzi 天台寒山子	Chan Master Weishan Lingyou 大瀉祐禪師	Elder Li Xuanton 李玄通長者	Demon King Zhangbi 障蔽魔王
Tiantai Shide 天台拾得	Chan Master Fengxian Jingzhao 先淨照禪師	True Man Lü Yan 呂岩真人	Prince Nezha 那吒太子

Monk Mingzhou Budai 明州布袋和尚	Monk Jinling Baozhi 金陵誌公和尚	True Man Zhang Yongcheng 張用成真人	Chan Master Buddhadra 秦跋陀禪師
	Monk Mingzhou Budai 明州布袋和尚		Chan Master Baozhi 寶誌禪師
	Mahasattva Wuzhou Shanhui 婺州善慧大士		Mahasattva Shanhui 善慧大士
	Great Sage Sizhou 泗州大聖		Chan Master Nanyue Huisi 南嶽慧思禪師
	Monk Wuzhu 無著和尚		Chan Master Zhizhe of Xiuchan Monastery on Mt. Tiantai 天台山修禪寺智者禪師
	Monk Gongqi 公期和尚		Great Sage Sizhou Sengqie 泗州僧伽大聖
	Monk Zhiyi 紙衣道者		Chan Master Tiantai Fenggan 天台山豐干禪師
	Hanshan 寒山		Tiantai Hanshanzi 天台山寒山子
	Shide 捨得		Tiantai Shidezi 天台山捨得子
	General of Qiantang 錢 塘將使		Monk Budai of Mingzhou Fenghua 明州奉化县布袋和尚
	Hongzhou Official Xu Shi 洪州許式郎中		Mahasattva Fahua Yanzhi 法華志言大士
	Emperor Taizong of the Great Song 大宋太宗皇帝		Ancient Buddha Koubing Zaoxian 扣冰藻先古佛
			Monk Qiansui Baozhang 千歲寶掌和尚

**Table 2.** The full list of figures in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in the *Five Lamps* series.

While acknowledging the evident distinctions in meaning and religious contexts between the “Chanmen dazhe” and the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, for the convenience of narrative coherence in this dissertation, I will, unless specifically addressing it, treat the “Chanmen dazhe” section as a form of the “Yinghua shengxian” section. I will use the term “Yinghua shengxian”

section” as a collective designation when discussing the role and function of these sections in the broader context of Chan historiography.

A preliminary examination of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections reveals noteworthy variations. First, as previously mentioned, the section underwent a change in title from “Chanmen dazhe,” which emphasizes their achievements attained through *chan* practice, to “Yinghua shengxian,” which highlights their essence as Buddhist deities. Second, there was a significant repositioning of the section, moving it from the latter part of the *denglu* works to the forefront, implying an increased emphasis on its importance. Third, the group underwent a substantial expansion in terms of the number of included figures, and the selective criteria became more diverse, including figures not only outside the Chan school, such as Tiantai masters and Indian translators, but also extended beyond the Buddhist tradition to encompass figures like the emperor, government officials, Daoist True Men, and even a folk deity.

Considering the conventional use of *denglu* works in Chan Buddhism for preserving genealogical information of the Chan school and the essential teachings of Chan masters, the incorporation of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections marked a significant departure in this era. My research questions thus include: Why did the Chan compilers include these specific sections in Chan historiographies? As “outsiders” to Chan lineages, how were these individuals portrayed in Chan texts? Furthermore, in a broader context, what was the significance of compiling these sections and promoting the non-Chan figures as Chan ideals in the *denglu* works to the Chan school?

Motivated by these research questions, this project operates on two fronts. Within the text, I analyze the adaptations made by Chan compilers to the hagiographies and the *gong'an* 公案 (public case) stories created for the featured figures. These adaptations and creations serve as

gateways to comprehend Chan values and ideologies. Beyond textual analysis, I explore the reasons why these figures captured the attention of the Chan compilers by investigating the relationships between the Chan school and the traditions represented by these figures. From a broader perspective, venerating these non-Chan figures as models and reshaping their images to align with the Chan context reflect the Chan compilers' imaginative conceptualization of Chan ideals and considerations regarding the identity of the Chan school in dynamic interactions with Buddhist conventions.

With these primary focuses in mind, my intention is not to analyze the hagiographies merely as Chan literature for discussing Chan teachings. Instead, I aim to delve into the contexts and explore the dynamic interactions of the Chan school with the Buddhist conventions in the Song religious landscape. Recognizing that the modified accounts of these figures may not accurately reflect their actual portrayals, I seek to understand the Chan school's intention in altering the images of these figures. The inquiry revolves around why Chan compilers devoted attention to individuals outside any Chan lineages and even established a separate section to promote these outsiders as their ideals. Through this research, I aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the Chan school and the unique features of the socio-religious climate during the Song dynasty.

### **Methodological Approach**

While the project's approach involves sorting out historical facts through literature reading, it is crucial to acknowledge that *denglu*, despite being considered historiography, has faced persistent questions regarding the value in terms of its historicity. Previous scholarship has astutely highlighted the unreliability of accepting the "history" presented in *denglu* works at face

value as these records are intertwined with myths, exaggerations, and imaginations.<sup>8</sup> In essence, what these *denglu* works offer is a “beautified self-portrait” of the Chan school. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the fabricated history is not devoid of value. The historicity, as Yanagida Seizen points out, can be sorted out from fictional claims and records as they reflect the historical and societal contexts of the authors and compilers.<sup>9</sup> In addressing this, I adopt John Kieschnick and Gong Jun’s relevant works as methodological models for conducting this research. Kieschnick’s approach involves accepting the accounts in the *Eminent Monks* series, despite historical inaccuracies, as representations of the monk’s image and their idealized roles. These hagiographies, according to Kieschnick, provide insight into the imagination of ideal monks in medieval China.<sup>10</sup>

While acknowledging the critical role of compilers in shaping the presentations of these Buddhist ideals, Kieschnick does not emphasize the impact of the compilers’ Vinaya school backgrounds on their compilations. This aspect is highlighted in Gong Jun’s comparative study, which delves into the hagiographies of Chan masters in the *Eminent Monks* series and *denglu*

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<sup>8</sup> Extensive research has been conducted on this subject. Representative works include Foulk, “The Ch’an Tsung in Medieval China: School, Lineage or What?” *Pacific World Journal*, New Series Number 8, (1992): 18-31. “Myth, Ritual and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism.” In *Religion and Society in T’ang and Sung China*, edited by Patricia B. Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993), 147-208. “Sung Controversies Concerning the ‘Separate Transmission’ of Ch’an.” In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), 220-294. “*Chanyuan qinggui* and Other ‘Rules of Purity’ in Chinese Buddhism.” In *The Zen Canon*, edited by Steven Heine and Dales Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 275-312. John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch’an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987). *Seeing through Zen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禪宗史書の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan 法藏館, 1967), 17-18.

<sup>10</sup> John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk : Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 1.

works.<sup>11</sup> Showing the distinctive imaginations of the ideal Chan masters by Vinaya and Chan compilers respectively, Gong suggests that hagiographies cannot be treated as historical narratives but rather as a blend of the protagonist's portrayal and the imagination of religious ideals. The writing of hagiographies, Gong posits, resides in the realm between fact and fiction.<sup>12</sup>

When considering historical facts and fictional narratives interwoven in Chan historiographies, it becomes evident that fictional narratives are, if not more, equally important as uncovering historical facts. The scrutiny of fictional claims not only brings us closer to historical truth but also recognizes the intrinsic importance of the fictional claims themselves in reconstructing the intellectual history of the Chan school. These fictional claims used in crafting hagiographies of these Chan ideals should be regarded as expressions of the ideal values that the Chan compilers intended to convey, which are responses to the religious environment that the Chan school was navigating. Failing to examine these fictional claims would leave us in the dark about why specific figures, embodying the ideal values of the Chan school, were elevated within this tradition.

In this regard, the “Yinghua shengxian” sections serve as a source encompassing both historical and fictional dimensions. These two dimensions manifest through the selection of individuals as potential Chan ideals and the transformation of these individuals into Chan ideals. The selection of these individuals reflects the compilers' observations and evaluations of prevalent ideological trends in religiosity, whereas the recreation and adaptation of these individuals' accounts imbue them with the kernel values and ideal teachings of the Chan school.

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<sup>11</sup> Gong Jun 龔雋, “Tangsong fojiao shizhuan zhongde chanshi xiangxiang: bijiao sengzhuan yu denglu youguan chanshi zhuan de shuxie 唐宋佛教史傳中的禪師想像—比較僧傳與燈錄有關禪師傳的書寫.” *Journal of the Center for Buddhist Studies*, issue 10, (2005): 151-184.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 155-159.

Through these dual dimensions, we are able to discern the evolution of the Chan school—it gained more confidence as it established its identity and clarified its position within the broader Buddhist landscape.

### **Structure of the Research**

The analysis of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in this dissertation adheres to a chronological order of the four *denglu* works within my research scope. It encompasses three primary dimensions: the nature of the *denglu* works, the characteristics distinctive to each “Yinghua shengxian” section, and the representation of figures as Chan ideals in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections.

The examination of the nature of *denglu* works is through scrutinizing their compilations and circulations. This approach reveals the influence of various compilation and dissemination methods on the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. To explore the emergence and variations of these sections, the research delves into the distinctive features of each *denglu* work and their correlations with the respective “Yinghua shengxian” sections. For instance, the “Chanmen dazhe” section within the *Jingde chuan denglu*, aligning with the *Jingde lu*’s stance in presenting the institutionalized Chan school born from the *dhyāna* tradition, displays the hybrid nature of the Chan school as part of the broader *dhyāna* tradition and as an independent Buddhist school. The “Yinghua shengxian” section within the *Jiatai pu denglu*, adhering to the *Jiatai lu*’s inclusive feature, encompasses individuals venerated within folk Buddhist cults and Internal Alchemical Daoism.

Figures with similar religious backgrounds are grouped together for the analysis of the relationships between the traditions they embodied and the Chan school, revealing distinct

features of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections across different time periods. For example, the “Chanmen dazhe” section captures sensitive issues in the Chan-Tiantai controversy in the early Song dynasty, while the “Yinghua shengxian” section in the *Jiatai pu denglu* presents the image-war over Daoist patriarchs in the Buddho-Daoist conflict during the mid-Southern Song dynasty.

By tracing adaptations in the figures’ hagiographies and elucidating rhetorical shifts in their portrayals, this study unveils how the Chan school strategically altered the portrayals of these figures to advance its own agendas. It also underscores the significance of promoting these figures as Chan ideals within the Chan school. This dissertation contends that tracing the evolution of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in the *Five Lamps* series provides an alternative perspective for reviewing intriguing facets of Chan Buddhism during the Song dynasty.

First, the six *denglu* works within the *Five Lamps* series manifest distinct natures due to different compilation processes. The compilation, publication, and circulation of these *denglu* works can be categorized into two modes: 1) imperial patronaged and acknowledged *denglu* works, which were directly connected with the upper classes including aristocrats, imperial court, and high-rank literati; and 2) laity initiated and sponsored *denglu* works, which were closely associated with local groups such as local bureaucrats, gentries, and Buddhist communities.

Within the scope of my research, the compilations of the three Northern Song *denglu*, the *Jingde chuan denglu*, *Tiansheng guang denglu*, and *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu*, and the Southern Song *denglu*, the *Jiatai pu denglu* received official sanction from the imperial court. These *denglu* works were titled with era names, and some even bestowed prefaces by the emperors. Conversely, the remaining two Southern Song *denglu* works, the *Liandeng huiyao* and the *Wudeng huiyuan*, were compiled with the support of local lay communities without receiving

any imperial recognition. This suggests that local lay communities played an substantial role in religious activities, which echoed with the social changes in the 12<sup>th</sup> century after the Song regime’s relocation to southern China.<sup>13</sup> As the local gentry ascended to prominence as a more powerful social class, they acquired greater autonomy and wielded increased influence in shaping local culture and education. Simultaneously, Buddhist establishments, being the most resource-rich institutions in the local area, maintained intricate yet close relationships with local elites. These establishments frequently opted to collaborate with local elites, who served as their most significant patrons.<sup>14</sup> In the ensuing discussion on the compilation of the *Liandeng huiyao* and the *Wudeng huiyuan*, I will expound on the pivotal role played by local elites in driving the compilation of these two *denglu* works.

The distinct natures of the *denglu* works directly impact the writing style of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, which can be summarized as follows:

	Hagiographical Style	<i>Gong’an</i> story Style
Imperial-sanctioned <i>denglu</i>	<i>Jingde chuan denglu</i> <i>Jiatai pu denglu</i>	
Laity-patronaged <i>denglu</i>		<i>Liandeng huiyao</i> <i>Wudeng huiyuan</i>

**Table 3.** The correlation between the nature of the *denglu* works and the writing style of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections.

<sup>13</sup> The significant social change in the 12<sup>th</sup> century manifested as the rise of the local gentry class. Several scholars have contributed to this topic. Robert Hartwell posits that Northern Song’s professional bureaucratic elite gave way to local elite families in the Southern Song. See Hartwell, “Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 42, No.2, (1982): 425-26. His student Robert Hymes further elaborates on this topic by presenting the Southern Song Fuzhou as a case study. He suggests that Northern Song literati pursued high state offices, accumulating wealth and building connections, while Southern Song elites prioritized their role as local culture builders and local welfare promoter in their hometown, implying a separation of the elite from the state. See Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 7, 119-20. Their viewpoint is further expanded by Peter Bol, who conducts a case study on Wuzhou, see Bol, “The Rise of Local History: History, Geography, and Culture in Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 61.11 (2001): 37-76.

<sup>14</sup> For example, the revival of the Caodong tradition in Southern Song largely relied on the support from local elites. See Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2010), 78-103.

In general, the *Jingde chuan denglu* and the *Jiatai pu denglu* followed the writing style of the *Eminent Monks* series, employing a hagiographical style in presenting the accounts within the “Yinghua shengxian” sections.<sup>15</sup> The *Liandeng huiyao* and the *Wudeng huiyuan* portrayed figures in the *gong’an* story style, which was more likely to fulfill the pedagogical purpose of Chan masters.

Second, the veneration of specific figures as Chan ideals underscores the convergence of elites’ and commoners’ Buddhism. As highlighted by Huang Chi-chiang in his examination of the divine monk Sengqie, it would be problematic to classify the cults of divine monks like Baozhi and Wanhui within the dichotomy of elite cult and commoner cult. When applied to the description of folk Buddhist beliefs, the binary framework of elites and commoners falls short of capturing the comprehensive and complex panorama. Instead, we must consider the role of elites in fostering folk Buddhist cults, with their dedicated records playing a pivotal role in disseminating these beliefs.<sup>16</sup>

The figures featured in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections encompass not only the divine monks traditionally worshipped in the *Eminent Monks* series but also relatively contemporary monks who developed their own cults in local areas, such as Qiansui Baozhang and Koubing Zaoxian and Nan’an Yan in the *Jiatai pu denglu*. This trend implies that despite the distinct roles

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<sup>15</sup> Kischnick notes that the status of the *Eminent Monks* series was replaced by the Chan *denglu* works in the Song dynasty. In this shift, compilers of the *denglu* works relied more on utilizing recorded sayings than hagiographies preserved in the *Eminent Monks* series. However, when examining the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, we can find that the imperial sanctioned *denglu* works adopted the hagiographical style for selected figures, suggesting a connection with the hagiographical writing tradition represented by the *Eminent Monks* series. If we consider that the imperial sanctioned *denglu* works introduced the Chan ideals in a formal manner, local *denglu* works, which portray the “Yinghua shengxian” figures in *gong’an* stories, were featured more with typical Chan characteristics. For more information, see Kischnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 135-137.

<sup>16</sup> Huang Chi-chiang 黃啟江, *Sizhou dasheng yu songxue daoren* 泗州大聖與松雪道人 (Taipei: Student Book Company, 2009), 14-15.

and responsibilities that elites and commoners assumed in religious activities due to their disparate social and educational backgrounds, there existed a shared space where they held common beliefs. On such occasions, literati assumed dual identities as both observers and participants. For example, in the case study on monk Qiansui Baozhang, his cult spread from local regions Pujiang 浦江, Zhuji 諸暨, and Kuaiji 會稽, to the capital city Hangzhou 杭州 through the literary works and local gazetteers crafted by literati. As he was revered as the founding patriarch of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery 中天竺寺, literati's participation in the monastic ceremony and record writing facilitated his recognition by the Chan compiler. With the dissemination of the *Jitai pu denglu*, Baozhang's cult reached a nationwide audience, prompting numerous monasteries to position him as a legendary founding patriarch to attract more visitors. In this context, although commoners may not be discernable, they had to be the primary force in promoting Baozhang's cult locally. However, with the involvement of elites, the cult achieved even broader dissemination.

Third, the incorporation of figures from other Buddhist traditions, such as the Tiantai and Daoist patriarchs, provides insights into their significant developments and interactions with the Chan school. Diverging from other sections in the *denglu* works, which primarily aim to preserve genealogical information of the Chan school and essential teachings of Chan masters, the “Yinghua shengxian” sections uniquely feature figures from diverse ideological trends and traditions, serving as a window into the Chan school's responses to the evolving religious landscape and popular currents within the religious environment.

During conflicts with the Tiantai school and controversies with Internal Alchemical Daoism, Chan compilers sought to maintain a steadfast stance by portraying target figures with a strong sense of the ideal Chan value, such as “not establishing words” and “probing the nature of

original enlightenment.” An intriguing phenomenon in Chinese religion is that target figures in the image war,<sup>17</sup> whether affiliating clearly or not, attracted compilers from various Buddhist schools or even different ideological traditions due to their high value as religious ideals. By depicting these figures as upholding the Chan teachings, Chan compilers leveraged their value to promote the Chan school in return. This elucidates why the inclusion of the two Tiantai patriarchs, Huisi and Zhiyi, in the *Jingde lu* sparked long-term discontent among Tiantai adherents. Similarly, the accounts of Lü Dongbin and Zhang Boduan, the two patriarchs of Internal Alchemical Daoism in the *Jiatai pu denglu*, intensified the Buddho-Daoist controversy.

In the subsequent section, I will delve into the characteristics of Chinese religious domain. It was in this field that the image war, centering around a single figure with different affiliations, became possible as various groups rewrote or adapted hagiographies to align with their own agendas.

Last, Chan Buddhism adopted a novel strategy to assert its superiority by comprehensively incorporating all ideologies in the Chan historiographies. In early *denglu* works, the Chan school emphasized its uniqueness by stressing the slogan “a special transmission outside teachings.” In the Southern Song *denglu* works, however, Chan Buddhism asserted its dominance by encompassing not only Buddhist traditions like Tiantai and Pure Land but also ideologies beyond Buddhism, including Daoism, Confucianism, and folk religions. Chronologically examining the “Yinghua shengxian” sections reveals the “Chanmen dazhe” section’s need to connect with the *dhyāna* tradition to legitimize the Chan school’s status as a

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<sup>17</sup> According to Kieschnick, the term “image-war” indicates the contests over the varied depictions of eminent monks proposed by different biographers, which should be seen as “responses to very real threats to the monastic community.” See Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 143.

newly institutionalized establishment. The figures included in this section mirror the Chan school's self-claims as an independent religious entity in opposition to the established Buddhist schools in Buddhist conventions like Tiantai. Consequently, the accounts of Huisi and Zhiyi contain implicit references to heated issues in the Chan-Tiantai conflict, and the accounts of the "Three Sages of Tiantai" promote mad monks as embodiments of the Chan school's spirit—a superior, extraordinary, yet aloof and rebellious tradition in the Buddhist convention. As Chan Buddhism grew stronger and became the state Buddhism, it adopted a more inclusive approach, selecting figures from a broader spectrum as its ideals. For instance, the *Liandeng huiyao* depicted even the emperor as a typical Chan master, while the *Wudeng huiyuan* portrayed the popular deity Nezha as a Chan ideal. The Chan compiler, in re-titling the section, no longer needed to rely on the *dhyāna* tradition to display its orthodox status in religiosity. Instead, it actively engaged in the popular religious discourse of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries by using "Yinghua shengxian" as the title, a theme that will be elaborated in the next section. Simultaneously, with the introduction of the "Yinghua shengxian" sections, the Chan school embraced veneration without being confined by sectarian boundaries. This inclusiveness signifies that the Chan school evolved into a robust and confident establishment that embraces all traditions. This observation leads to my main argument for this dissertation: the "Yinghua shengxian" sections, often neglected but crucial, serve as a compelling indicator of the development of religiosity in 11<sup>th</sup>-to-13<sup>th</sup>-century China. These sections provide persuasive evidence supporting the notion that Buddhism during this period greatly prospered through a variety of active and dynamic self-reinventions, among which, the Chan school emerges as remarkably open and inclusive than our expectations.

## The Social Context

To contextualize the “Yinghua shengxian” sections within the Song religious-cultural milieu, it is necessary to examine the broader cultural environment and pivotal changes during the Song dynasty. These factors wielded a substantial influence in shaping the Chan school’s self-identification and self-awareness, manifesting explicitly in the writings and compilations of Chan ideals by the Chan compilers within the “Yinghua shengxian” sections.

The integration of the Three Teachings served as a prominent background in the intellectual circle during the Song dynasty. This amalgamation did not form in the Song dynasty but evolved over time through dynamic interactions among Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. In history, the Sui Confucian scholar Wang Tong 王通 for the first time proposed the idea of “*sanjiao keyi*” 三教可一 (Three Teachings can be unified), suggesting the possibility of synthesizing the Three Teachings for state governance, with Confucianism as priority and Buddhism and Daoism as complementary.<sup>18</sup> During the Tang dynasty, Confucianism permeated political institutions and held sway among literati but lacked in the theory of mind-nature, a gap then filled by Buddhism. After the Huichang persecution, Chan Buddhism, known for its exploration of mind and nature, survived and gained prominence. Inspired by Chan teachings, Daoism also exhibited a tendency to focus on essence and spirit, giving rise to Internal Alchemical Daoism. This inward-turning trend became more evident in the Song dynasty, eventually leading to the full growth of Neo-Confucianism.

The Song dynasty witnessed the great synthesis of the Three Teachings, a phenomenon influenced by the rulers’ attitudes and policies in the early Song period. Emperors such as

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<sup>18</sup> Dong Hongling 董虹凌, “Wang Tong Sixiang Tuozhan Yanjiu” 王通思想拓展研究, Ph.D. diss. (Sun Yat-Sen University, 2004), 117.

Taizong and Zhenzong promoted the unity of the Three Teachings for governance, confirming their complementary roles in educating and cultivating the populace. For example, Emperor Taizong highlights, “Buddhism upholds compassion, Laozi emphasizes tranquility, and Confucius expounds on the Five Constant Virtues in order. All of them are essential paths to cultivating the people.”<sup>19</sup> Emperor Zhenzong has, “Daoism and Buddhism, both teachings contribute to benefiting the world.”<sup>20</sup> The relatively lenient religious policies of the Song rulers created an accommodating environment for Buddhism to be acknowledged as a crucial force in shaping Song culture. An illustrative example is Buddhism's response during the early Song *wen* 文 (culture) revival. Zanning 讚寧, the head of the Buddhist clergy, was recognized by high literati as a *wen* master for his extensive knowledge of Confucianism and his ability to exhibit *wen*.<sup>21</sup> Zanning proposed the inclusion of Buddhism as a component of indigenous *wen*, challenging the perspective that only upheld Confucian values from antiquity. This unique opinion reflects Buddhists' willingness to view Buddhism as a domesticated teaching subordinate to political power. Zanning's proposal emphasized the emperor's role as the legitimate supervisor of the Buddhism, indicating a shift away from the unrealistic autonomy sought by figures like Huiyuan 慧遠, who authored the famous “*Shamen bujing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論” (Treatise on Why Monastics Should Not Pay Homage to Kings).<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Zanning

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<sup>19</sup> 釋氏以慈悲，老子以清淨，宣尼序五常，俱化民之要道。 *Jingwo guanjian* 經幄管見, fasc. 4. In *Wenyuange Siku quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書, (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 18a.

<sup>20</sup> 道釋二門，有助世教。 *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編, fascicle 63, In *Wenyuange Siku quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書, (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 28a.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Welter, *Monks, Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 163-171.

<sup>22</sup> It is said that Zanning advised Emperor Taizong not to pay homage to the Buddha when the emperor visited a monastery with this inquiry. He claimed that the Song ruler as a present Buddha needed not to pay homage to the previous Buddha. According to Huang Chi-Chiang, this account is sourced from Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 *Guitian lu* 歸

highlighted the utility of Buddhism for the emperor in governing the state, revealing Buddhists' aspirations to be integrated into the official system and seek protection and patronage.<sup>23</sup>

The altered stance of Buddhism towards rulers can also be seen in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. In the *Liandeng huiyao*, Emperor Taizong is venerated as a Chan ideal.

Emperor Taizong of the Great Song dynasty asked a monk, “Which sūtra are you reading?” The monk replied, “The Sūtra of Benevolent Kings.” The emperor said, “Since it is ‘my’ sūtra (note: the emperor identified himself as a benevolent king), why is it in your hands?” The monk had no response.

Master Xue comments, “The Royal Heaven has no preference but only assists [those] virtuous.”

The emperor paid visit to the Precious Pagoda and opened it, asking a monk, “Who are you?” The monk replied, “I am the caretaker of the pagoda.” The emperor questioned, “Since this pagoda belongs to me (note: the emperor identified himself as “precious”), why are you the owner?” The monk had no response.

Master Xuedou comments, “This is known by the whole state.”

The emperor asked a monk who presented at court, “Where are you from?” The monk replied, “I reside at the Cloud-Resting Hermitage on Mount Lu.” The emperor remarked, “The depths of the resting clouds do not face the sky (note: hermits were not supposed to present at court). Why have you come here?” The monk had no response.

Master Xuedou comments, “It is difficult to escape from the ultimate guidance.”

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田錄. Ouyang mistakenly documented the emperor as Taizu instead of Taizong, which made Zhipan deemed the all account as fabrication. Huang contends that it is more likely an inadvertent error in Ouyang's record because Ouyang notes that it became a custom for the rulers not prostrating before the Buddha thereafter. For more information, see Huang, “*Song taizong yu fojiao*” 宋太宗與佛教. *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 故宮學術季刊, v.12 n.2, (1994): 127.

<sup>23</sup> Zanning proposed an ideal model for the integration of Buddhist clergy into the bureaucratic structure. He recommended the implementation of a five-tier clergy system, wherein members of the clergy could serve as civil servants for the ruler. The Buddhist clergy, under this model, assumed the duty of protecting the state and the people through their spiritual practices and the alignment of official monasteries with imperial directives. See Albert Welter, *The Administration of Buddhism in China: A Study and Translation of Zanning and the Topical Compendium of the Buddhist Clergy (Da Song Seng Shi Lüe)* (New York: Cambria Press, 2018), 89-90.

The emperor dreamt, and a divine being informed, “Please, Your Majesty, arouse the mind of *bodhicitta*.” In the morning court, the emperor inquired among his attendants, “How does one arouse the mind of *bodhicitta*?” No one had responses.

Master Xuedou comments, “This (note: to ask a living Buddha arose the mind of *bodhicitta*) indeed is seldom heard of either in the past or present.”

A monk presented at court and said, “Your Majesty, do you remember me, this humble monk?” The emperor asked, “Where did we meet?” The monk replied, “After the meeting on Mount Ling, we parted and have not seen each other ever since.” The emperor asked, “How can you prove it?” The monk had no response.

Master Xuedou comments, “This humble monk has come for a special purpose.”

The emperor asked a monk who begged for rewards as he burned the Buddhist canon, “In the past, Mātanga did not burn the scriptures [into ashes]. Why did you burn it now?” The monk had no response.

Master Xuedou comments, “Your Majesty did not forget his instructions.”

大宋太宗皇帝，問僧：“看甚麼經？”云：“仁王經。”帝云：“既是寡人經，因甚麼，在卿手裏？”僧無對。

雪竇代云：“皇天無親，惟德是輔。”

帝幸開寶塔，問僧：“卿是何人？”云：“塔主。”帝云：“寡人塔，為甚麼，卿作主？”僧無對。

雪竇代云：“盍國咸知。”

帝因僧朝見，乃問：“卿是甚處僧？”僧云：“廬山臥雲庵。”帝云：“臥雲深處不朝天，為甚到此？”僧無對。

雪竇代云：“難逃至化。”

帝夢，神人報云：“請陛下，發菩提心。”帝早朝，宣問左右街云：“菩提心，作麼生發？”俱無對。

雪竇代云：“實謂今古罕聞？”

有僧朝見云：“陛下，還記得臣僧麼？”帝云：“甚處相見來。”云：“靈山一別，直至于今。”帝云：“卿以何為驗？”僧無對。

雪竇代云：“貧道得得而來。”

帝因僧奏，燒却藏經，欲乞宣賜。帝問：“昔日摩騰不燒，如今為甚麼却燒？”僧無對。

雪竇代云：“陛下不忘付囑。”<sup>24</sup>

In this *gong'an* story, Emperor Taizong is portrayed as an enlightened Chan master, skillfully engaging the monk in conversations with sharp rhetorical questions. The Chan compiler adeptly extols Emperor Taizong as a benevolent king and a treasure. Xuedou's commentary injects a touch of humor, serving as a foil to the emperor's image as an awakened Chan ideal capable of penetrating the surface meaning of language and delving into the deeper nuances of the conversation. Through the *gong'an* story and Xuedou's remarks, it becomes apparent that the emperor not only wielded political authority but also possessed wisdom, thereby legitimizing the rulers' status as supervisors to the Buddhist community.

In contrast, the “Yinghua shengxian” section in the *Liandeng huiyao* also incorporates *gong'an* stories featuring two government officials, the provincial magistrate of Qiantang and Xu Shi. Both officials are portrayed as holding inferior authority compared to the Chan masters in their conversations. This deliberate contrast suggests that Chan compilers sought to elevate the status of rulers. However, when depicting interactions with literati, the compilers tended to present these relationships as equal, not hesitating to challenge their Confucian counterparts. This introduces the second aspect of the Song social and intellectual milieu: the active participation of literati in Buddhist activities.

The relatively lenient religious policies and the imperial promotion of the harmonious coexistence of the Three Teachings fostered a close connection between literati and Buddhists. During the Northern Song period, the elite class frequently engaged in a symbiotic relationship with the clergy, serving as both bureaucrats and private individuals who patronized Buddhism.

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<sup>24</sup> *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 258a17-b10.

Regardless of their personal opinions, their official duties compelled them to adopt a pragmatic and open-minded approach when addressing religious matters.<sup>25</sup>

This environment also afforded literati greater freedom and space to pursue the cultivation of mind-nature in Buddhism and Daoism. For literati, their identity as Confucians at the court did not hinder their participation in Buddhist affairs or the forging of friendships with Buddhists.<sup>26</sup> Even those publicly critical of Buddhism could privately develop close relationships with Buddhist individuals.<sup>27</sup> For literati sympathetic to Buddhism, their engagement went beyond doctrinal fascination, providing a means to alleviate depression during times of demotion.<sup>28</sup> Poetry exchanges with Buddhist friends were common, contributing to the flourishing of Chan poetic culture in the Song dynasty.<sup>29</sup> Some high-ranking literati at the

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<sup>25</sup> To examine the intricate Buddhism-Confucianism relationship, Huang Chi-chiang undertakes a case study on Hangzhou and investigates the dynamics of the relationship between the elite class and the clergy. See Huang, “Elite and Clergy in Northern Sung Hang-chou: A Convergence of Interest.” In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), 295-339.

<sup>26</sup> Mark Halperin coined the term “worldly devotion” to feature this attitude. In the context of Song society, Buddhist institutions were not perceived solely as otherworldly religious entities; instead, they constituted a significant component of the daily lives of elites, seamlessly integrated into their daily life. See Halperin, *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960-1279* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 4, 26.

<sup>27</sup> For example, Ouyang Xiu as a prominent figure in the early Song anti-Buddhism movement still befriended Chan master Fushan Fayuan 浮山法遠. Sima Guang 司馬光, who also renowned for his anti-Buddhism position, only objected to excessive land use of monastery construction and opposed superstitious elements in Buddhism. It is noteworthy that he possessed a profound understanding of Buddhist doctrines. In a disciplinary decision involving an unruly nephew, he chose to send him to a monastery to study. See Zhang Yu 張煜, “Songdai shidafu yu fojiao.” 宋代士大夫與佛教, *Pumen xuebao* 普門學報, Issue. 30, (2005), 341-343.

<sup>28</sup> A compelling example of the intimate relationship between literati and Chan masters is evident in the case of Su Shi 蘇軾, who befriended many Chan masters in his life. Especially during his tenure as a magistrate in Hangzhou, Su forged friendships with Huailian 懷璉, Shanben 善本, Kejiu 可久, Daoqian 道潛, etc. Notably, Su Shi shared a particularly close bond with Daoqian, developing a life-long friendship. Their association even came under scrutiny during the *Wutai shian* 烏台詩案 (Crow Terrace Poetry Trial), resulting in Daoqian facing punitive measures due to his proximity to Su Shi. Daoqian’s experience was not unique, as other Chan monks during the Song dynasty also faced punishment or were compelled to leave the monastic order due to their connections with literati who involved in political conflicts at the court.

<sup>29</sup> For more information, see Jason Protass, *The Poetry Demon: Song-Dynasty Monks on Verse and the Way* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2021).

imperial court even became part of Chan lineages as dharma heir, exemplified by figures such as Yang Yi 楊億 and Li Zunxu 李遵勗, who played a critical role at the imperial court in promoting the Linji school.<sup>30</sup> This aspect will be further elaborated in the section discussing the omission of the “Yinghua shengxian” section in the *Tiantsheng guang denglu*.

One crucial religious activity in which literati actively engaged was the composition of commemorations for monasteries, with a substantial collection of these writings preserved in local gazetteers.<sup>31</sup> In the Song dynasty, as Buddhism, underwent significant secularization, literati supplanted monks as the principled chroniclers, participating in Buddhist affairs as part of the state’s oversight of Buddhism. Notably, during the Southern Song dynasty in Lin’an, many literati recorders held high positions in the imperial office, particularly contributing to renowned monasteries. While it may seem that literati exceeded their role by intervening in monks’ responsibilities, the reality was often the monks actively soliciting requests from literati to write commemorations for the monasteries. The collaborative effort aimed to establish networks between monks and scholar-officials.<sup>32</sup>

In summary, various factors prompted literati to actively engage in Buddhist activities, including the religious policies during the Song, the appeal of Buddhist doctrines, the friendship with fellow Buddhists, and requests from monastic communities. These literati, serving as keen

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<sup>30</sup> Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 172-174.

<sup>31</sup> For information specifically on the topic of literati writing commemorations for monasteries, see Mark Halperin. *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960-1279* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Wang Feifei 王菲菲, “Nansong lin’an ducheng zhengquan xiade senglü yu shiren guanxi tanxi” 南宋臨安都城政權下的僧侶與世人關係探析. *Journal of Sun Yat-Sen University*, No.5, Vol.59, (2019): 121-127.

observers, also functioned as recorders of these events. Through their writings, the names and ideas of certain Buddhists were disseminated across both space and time.

Within this dissertation, I will present the *Jitai pu denglu* as an imperial-sanctioned *denglu* work that incorporated lay patrons in its compilation, thereby acknowledging the pivotal role of the lay community in supporting Buddhism. Regarding the figures presented in its “Yinghua shengxian” section, two compelling examples stand out. The first is Li Gonglin’s 李公麟 iconography, which depicts the Lotus Society and substantiates the crucial roles played by three Indian translators in Pure Land literature. Another noteworthy instance is found in the case study of Qiansui Baozhang. Not only can his cult’s influence in the local area be affirmed through numerous literary works by literati, but his renown was also enhanced through a commemorative record detailing the restoration of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery by a scholar-official.

### **Participating in the “Religious Market”**

The religious market model, as a component of the religious economy theory, was introduced by Rodney Stark and Roger Finke in their monograph *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. According to their definition, a religious economy is “a ‘market’ of current and potential adherents, a set of one or more organizations seeking to attract or maintain adherents, and the religious culture offered by the organization(s).”<sup>33</sup> This model comprises religious adherents as consumers, religious organizations as suppliers, and religious cultures as goods in circulation. However, it was primarily developed based on mechanisms in Western

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<sup>33</sup> Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 193.

religiosity, where competition typically occurs between different religious institutions. Since adherents usually have exclusively committed affiliations to particular religious institutions, the focus of the competition is the full conversion of adherents.

The applicability of this model to China has been questioned by various scholars. In contrast to the dominance of Christianity in Western religious environments, the Chinese religious market is more open, and religious institutions do not necessarily require exclusive committed membership. Adam Yuet Chau highlights the distinct competing modes in Western and Chinese religious markets. While the former involves competitions between religious institutions for exclusive conversions, the latter entails competitions “between different modalities of doing religion as well as within each modality.”<sup>34</sup> The typical modalities, such as sūtra chanting, ritual practicing, and pilgrimage making, are shared across all conceptualized religions like “Buddhism” and “Daoism.” However, the distinctions between these conceptualized religions become blurred in the realm of “doing religion.” Ng Ka Shing proposes a redefined religious market model as “analogous to a market in which a certain degree of exchange activities exists and people choose (not) to engage in these activities based on various factors.”<sup>35</sup> These factors, including political transition, economic development, social changes, and cultural dynamics, have varying impacts on different levels of the religious market.

Although Chau and Ng present different perspectives, both point out the pivotal role of

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<sup>34</sup> Adam Yuet Chau, “Modalities of Doing Religion and Ritual Polytypy: Evaluating the Religious Market Model from the Perspective of Chinese Religious History.” *Religion (London. 1971)*, 41.4 (2011): 548.

<sup>35</sup> Ng Ka Shing, “Religious Economy Theory Revisited: Towards a New Perspective of Religious Dynamics in East Asian Settings.” *Research Journal of Graduate Students of Letters, Hokkaido University Collection of Scholarly and Academic Papers* 北海道大學大學院文學研究科研究論集, Vol. 13, (2013): 518.

“religious efficacy” in guiding individuals’ choices regarding modalities and affiliations with deities and institutions.

“Religious efficacy,” in fact, served as a fundamental rationale for orienting the religious market in the Song dynasty. On this topic, Robert Hymes and Valerie Hansen provide insightful perspectives. Hymes, when evaluating the bureaucratic model in the Daoist pantheon, underscores the growth of a national market for religious services due to economic and social changes during the Song dynasty. In this relatively open market, religions and religious services were circulated as commercial goods, and practitioners competed to offer more efficacious services.<sup>36</sup> Hansen adds to this understanding by noting that in this religious market, not only did religious practitioners compete as mediators connecting the realm of gods and deities to human beings, but gods and deities were also positioned to compete for their efficacious divine power. People, as religious clients and consumers, were free to select services from practitioners or gods who could efficaciously respond to their demands. The prevailing theme shaping the Chinese religious market was “efficacy,” as only the most efficacious gods and deities could receive official titles or be enlisted in the official pantheon.<sup>37</sup>

From Hymes to Chau, each scholar focuses on the pragmatic dimensions of religious activities and adopts the conceptual framework of the “religious market.” Within this framework, competition revolves around the efficacy of religious services and the providers thereof. In this dissertation, rather than emphasizing the market competition, I propose employing the term “religious market” as a metaphor for the Song religious sphere, where various ideological

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<sup>36</sup> Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 172, 197.

<sup>37</sup> Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 26, 165.

traditions actively exchanged ideas and practices. In this communal arena, “efficacy” also extends to religious ideals, which refers to the value, charisma, and influence that those religious ideals possess. In the Buddhist context, these ideals include eminent monks in the *Eminent Monks* series and Chan masters in Chan lineages. Their “efficacy” is demonstrated through practical approaches to attaining enlightenment in teachings and inspirational pedagogical methods. Positioned in the Song “religious market,” these ideals captured the attention of biographers from different traditions. Similar to brand ambassadors in the commercial market, the celebrity effect and value of these ideals could be used for promoting certain traditions and thus extending their influence. In the context of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, Chan compilers appropriated these valuable figures such as the Tiantai founding fathers and even Daoist patriarchs, turning them into spokesmen for the Chan school. Meanwhile, the “Yinghua shengxian” sections also include the efficacious religious figures worshipped as deities in local areas, such as Qiansui Baozhang and Nezha. Due to the open and inclusive nature of the Chinese religious domain, appropriating religious ideals as one’s own became a common practice shared by many ideological traditions.

### **The *Tiansheng guang denglu* & the *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* and the Absence of the “Yinghua shengxian” Section**

Two decades after the completion of the *Jingde lu*, the compilation of the second work, the *Tiansheng guangdeng lu*, was scheduled on the agenda. The editor, Li Zunxu, was a lay Buddhist, a son-in-law of Emperor Taizong, and a colleague and a friend of Yang Yi, the editor of the *Jingde lu*. As for the *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu*, it was compiled by the Yunmen monk Weibai 惟白 and presented to the court in the first year of *Jianzhong jingguo* 建中靖國 (1101).

Emperor Huizong bestowed an imperial preface at the request of his son-in-law, Zhang Dunli 張敦禮. These two *denglu* works exhibited a close connection with the Song imperial court, notably lacking the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. While the compilers did not provide explicit explanations, inferences can be drawn from the prefaces.

The *Jingde chuan denglu* not only marked the inception of a new genre in Chan literature but also served as a platform for the Chan school to articulate its identity. However, as Welter points out, the *Jingde lu* did not represent the final statement of the Chan school. The self-identification of the Chan school underwent constant shaping during dynamic interactions with other religious traditions, with its representation influenced by the dominant faction within the Chan school.<sup>38</sup> In other words, the identity of the Chan school was molded and altered by both internal and external forces. Although the *Jingde lu* presented the five houses with a fairly equal tone, the progress of these houses was uneven. By the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, Weiyang 濤仰 had faded away, Fayuan 法眼 had declined with the downfall of the Wuyue kingdom, and only Yunmen, Linji 臨濟, and Caodong 曹洞 remained active. Caodong, however, stayed stagnant until Touzi Yiqing 投子義青 and Furong Daokai 芙蓉道楷 rejuvenated the Caodong teaching. Therefore, in the early Northern Song, Yunmen and Linji were the only two robust lineages in competition. While schools and lineages ostensibly competed under the name of “orthodoxy,” the essence of the competition, as Foulk poignantly notes, revolved around benefits such as

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<sup>38</sup> Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 160.

prestige, patronage, and privilege.<sup>39</sup> Internal competition during the Song dynasty would only intensify as the Chan school received unprecedented honor and patronage from the imperial court.

Diverging from the comprehensive presentation of the Chan school in the *Jingde lu*, both the *Tiansheng lu* and the *Jianzhong lu* focus more on the distinctions within the Chan school.

While the *Tiansheng lu* serves as a platform primarily promoting the Linji school,<sup>40</sup> the *Jianzhong lu* exclusively showcases Linji and Yunmen, the two flourishing houses of the time.<sup>41</sup> One might speculate that the exclusion of the “Yinghua shengxian” section is due to its lack of qualification for inclusion in the compilation agendas, as it pertains to figures unrelated to any lineages.

This tendency is more pronounced in the *Tiansheng lu*. It not only reaffirms the authentic mind transmission from the sixth patriarch Huineng 慧能 to Shenxiu 神秀 but also establishes the orthodox position of the Linji school among the five Chan houses. A notable claim in the preface states, “After the sixth patriarch attaining sudden enlightenment, the Niutou branched out different houses. Thousands of lamps carrying on [the light], the meritorious torches are burning even more fiercely.”<sup>42</sup> Apart from highlighting the crucial role of the sixth patriarch in featuring the Chan teachings, Li Zunxu places emphasis on the Niutou house and asserts that it was the

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<sup>39</sup> Griffith Foulk, “Sung Controversies Concerning the ‘Separate Transmission’ of Ch’an.” In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), 221.

<sup>40</sup> See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 161-207. The *Tiansheng guang denglu* was also the first Chan historiography to preserve the full version of Linji’s recorded sayings. See Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy: The Development of Chan’s Records of Sayings Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140.

<sup>41</sup> 而雲門臨濟二宗，遂獨盛於天下。 *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* 建中靖國續燈錄. X. no.1556, 78: 640c17-c18.

<sup>42</sup> 逮六祖而頓悟，牛頭析派。續千燈而罔窮，繇茲惠炬益繁。 *Tiansheng guang denglu* 天聖廣燈錄, X. no.1553, 78: 425c20-c22.

source from which Chan lineages branched out. The question arises: why did the editor give special attention to the Niutou school, a side branch that roughly existed in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century?

The Niutou branch derived its name from the putative founder, Niutou Farong 牛頭法融. According to various accounts, Niutou was said to have received dharma transmission from the 4<sup>th</sup> patriarch Daoxin 道信.<sup>43</sup> Due to the shared teachings with the Shitou branch 石頭宗, which developed from Huineng's lineage, the Niutou school was eventually merged with the thriving Shitou lineage.<sup>44</sup> Despite being an independent regional Chan community, the Niutou branch did not endure for an extended period in history, nor did it give rise to any Chan houses. Conversely, the Shitou lineage served as the true origin for the Yunmen, Fayan, and Caodong schools. Therefore, Li replaced the Shitou branch with the Niutou school, transforming the three schools into side branches emerging from the 4<sup>th</sup> patriarch Daoxin rather than the 6<sup>th</sup> patriarch Huineng, who represented the most “orthodox” Southern school. By doing so, Li elevated the Linji school while diminishing the status of Yunmen and Caodong. This replacement was later rectified in the *Jianzhong lu*, where it declares that the five houses originated from Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 and Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思, the “orthodox” dharma heirs within the lineage of the sixth patriarch.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The account about Daoxin's dharma transmission to Niutou can be found in the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 and the *Jingde chuan denglu*. Master Yinshun 印順 demonstrated that Niutou Farong was more likely a self-awakened Chan practitioner, and the continuous lineage of the Niutou school was likely a product of later generations' romantic imagination. The historical authenticity of the encounter and interactions between Daoxin and Farong is cast into doubt by the evident inconsistencies in their respective active periods. See Yinshun 印順, *Zhongguo chanzong shi* 中國禪宗史 (Taipei: Zhengwen Publishing House, 1990), 95-98.

<sup>44</sup> Zongmi 宗密 categorizes Niutou Farong and Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 into the same classification known as “the school of extinction without reliance 泯絕無寄宗.” See *Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu* 禪源諸詮集都序. T. no.2015, 48: 402c03-c10.

<sup>45</sup> 自達磨西來，寔為初祖。其傳二、三、四、五，而至於曹溪。於是双林之道逾光，一滴之流浸廣。自南嶽、清原而下，分為五宗。 *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* 建中靖國續燈錄. X. no.1556, 78: 640c13-15.

Regarding Li Zunxu's motivation to promote the Linji school, aside from his personal preference and identity as a dharma heir of Linji master Shimen Yuncong 石門蘊聰, a more important factor likely stemmed from the alignment of Linji style Chan with the goals of the Song culture revival movement. This style offered an appealing model of literary uniqueness, distinguishing Song culture from its more traditional predecessors.<sup>46</sup> As a more radical model within the Chan school, Linji style Chan embodied the Song court's ambition to rejuvenate the old culture. Linji literature not only enriched Buddhist literature but also quickly received appreciation from the literati circle. In turn, the literati circle contributed numerous influential patrons and dharma protectors, playing a pivotal role in connecting the Buddhist community and the imperial court.<sup>47</sup> In this sense, promoting the Linji school proved advantageous to multiple parties.

## Literature Review

While there exists scattered research on individuals listed in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, a comprehensive study remains lacking in current scholarship. This research addresses this gap by drawing upon existing scholarship from three main perspectives: 1) Chan Buddhism

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<sup>46</sup> Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 179.

<sup>47</sup> Lay Buddhism significantly flourished during the Song dynasty. Despite an anti-Buddhism movement in the early Northern Song, the opposition from Confucian literati was mitigated due to the sustained efforts of Buddhist scholars like Qisong 契嵩, Huailian 懷璉, Yuanwu 圓悟, and Dahui 大慧, who actively cultivated friendships and connections with literati. Consequently, many literati displayed great interests in Buddhism and became dharma protectors, among whom the most renowned one was Zhang Shangying 張商英. Many literati, who had previously criticized Buddhism, also transformed into Buddhist patrons, including Fu Bi 富弼, Wenyan Bo 文彥博, and Han Qi 韓琦. In addition, a great number of high-rank literati developed close friendships with Chan masters, exemplified by individuals such as Yang Yi, Li Zunxu, Su Shi, Zhang Fangping 張方平, and Chao Jiong 晁迥. For more information, see Pan Guiming 潘桂明, *Zhongguo jushi fojiao shi* 中國居士佛教史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 2000), 475-657.

and *denglu* works in the Song dynasty, 2) historical fact and Chan fiction in Chan history, 3) the religious and cultural environment of the Song dynasty, and 4) Buddhist hagiographies and studies on specific figures. The following chapters will discuss related scholarship in more detail.

Noteworthy studies on Chan Buddhism and *denglu* works in the Song dynasty contribute to understanding the socio-cultural context for producing the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. Morten Schlutter’s *How Zen Became Zen* highlights the significant roles of Song literati in promoting specific Chan lineages, such as abbotship appointment in public monasteries, which affected disputes within Chan lineages in public rather than monastic settings.<sup>48</sup> Similar to this focus, Albert Welter’s *Monks, Rulers and Literati: the Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* explores the rise of Chan Buddhism in the Song imperial court, revealing political motivations behind its promotion as a state religion and the influential role of literati in compiling Chan historiographies.<sup>49</sup> *Buddhism in the Sung* edited by Daniel Getz and Peter Gregory, challenges the notion of Song Buddhism’s decline, collecting essays on the three major Buddhist traditions in the Song dynasty, Chan Buddhism, Tiantai school, and Pure Land movement.<sup>50</sup> It offers insights into the dynamic interrelations among these traditions in Song religiosity, which serves as an important reference for the case studies in the following two chapters.

In terms of *denglu* works, Feng Guodong comprehensively explores the *Jingde chuan denglu*’s compilation, edition, circulation, annotations, literariness, and impact, which expands my thinking in discussing the significance of the “Chanmen dazhe” section in the *Jingde chuan*

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<sup>48</sup> Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: the Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>50</sup> Peter N. Gregory and Daniel Aaron. Getz edit., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999).

*denglu*.<sup>51</sup> Ishii Shudo's series of essays focus on the *Zongmen tongyao ji* and its connection with the *Liandeng huiyao* serve as crucial references for understanding the emergence of the "Yinghua shengxian" sections by the end of the Northern Song dynasty.<sup>52</sup> Huang Chun-chuan's monograph on the *Wudeng huiyuan* conducts textual comparison with previous *denglu* works, revealing its distinct features and highlighting the compilers' views on the position of the Chan school in Song religiosity.<sup>53</sup>

The examination of the "Yinghua shengxian" sections through textual and contextual analysis reveals distinctions between facts and fiction that have shaped Chan history. A number of pertinent studies exist, with notable contributions such as Yanagida Seizan's insightful perspective on the research methodology employed to explore historicity by considering fictional claims in Chan historiographies as historical products of specific eras.<sup>54</sup> John McRae's *Seeing through Zen* traces the formation of mature Chan lineages in romanticized Chan narratives and periodizes the development of Chan history.<sup>55</sup> T. Griffith Foulk's works, including "The Chan School and Its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition," "The Chan Tsung in Medieval China:

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<sup>51</sup> Feng Guodong 馮國棟, *Jingde chuan denglu yanjiu* 景德傳燈錄研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014).

<sup>52</sup> Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, "Shumon tōyō syū ni tsuite I 『宗門統要集』について (上)," *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gaku bu ronsyū* 駒澤大學佛教學部論集, 4. (1973): 43-58. "Shumon tōyō syū ni tsuite II—touyou to kaiyou no jyakugo no hikaku to syutten" 『宗門統要集』について (下)—統要と會要の著語の比較と出典. *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gaku bu ronsyū* 駒澤大學佛教學部論集 5. (1974): 37-63. "The *Zongmen Tongyao Ji* and the Distinctive Character of Song Chan Buddhism," translated by Albert Welter. *Annual Report of the Zen Institute* 駒沢大学禅研究所年報 7 (1996): 236-226.

<sup>53</sup> Huang Chun-chuan 黃俊佺, *Chan-zong dianji wudeng huiyuan yanjiu* 禪宗典籍《五燈會元》研究 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publications, 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禪宗史書の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan 法藏館, 1967).

<sup>55</sup> John McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

School, Lineage or What?” and “*Chanyuan qinggui* and Other ‘Rules of Purity’ in Chinese Buddhism,” demystifies Chan history constructed in Chan historiographies from multiple angles such as the formation of the Chan school’s entity and the precepts utilized in Chan monasteries.<sup>56</sup> Bernard Faure, in *The Will to Orthodoxy*, positions Chan historiography compilations within the social context, revealing competition among Chan lineages.<sup>57</sup> These works shed light on the agenda of Chan compilers in promoting certain figures or lineages when I examine the Chan-edited hagiographies and historiographies.

While this dissertation primarily addresses Chan historiographies and the Chan school in the Song dynasty, the figures in the case studies are also associated with other intellectual traditions, Buddhist cults, and even folk culture. Consequently, studies on general religious culture also serve as critical references. On this topic, Robert Hymes’s *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*, though mainly focuses on interactions between Taoism and folk religions in ritual practices, offers a portrayal of the religious culture where Song people upheld practicality.<sup>58</sup> This viewpoint is further highlighted in Valerie Hansen’s *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*, where she vividly delineates

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<sup>56</sup> Griffith Foulk, “The ‘Ch’an School’ and Its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition,” Ph.D. diss., (University of Michigan, 1987). “The Ch’an Tsung in Medieval China: School, Lineage or What?” *Pacific World Journal*, New Series Number 8, (1992): 18-31. “Myth, Ritual and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism.” In *Religion and Society in T’ang and Sung China*, edited by Patricia B. Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993), 147-208. “Sung Controversies Concerning the ‘Separate Transmission’ of Ch’an.” In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), 220-294. “*Chanyuan qinggui* and Other ‘Rules of Purity’ in Chinese Buddhism,” in *The Zen Canon*, edited by Steven Heine, Dales Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 275-312.

<sup>57</sup> Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997.)

<sup>58</sup> Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.)

how the “efficacy” of gods and deities shaped the Song religious environment.<sup>59</sup> This cross-sectarian boundary perspective and methodology can also be found in Edward L. Davis’s *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*. He argues that the changing social conditions created a “syncretic field,” where multiple religious traditions collaborated to fulfill Song people’s religious needs in daily life.<sup>60</sup> James T.C. Liu’s *China Turning Inward* focuses on intellectual history and political factors behind the formation of Neo-Confucianism, providing insights into the role of literati in directing the development trend of the Three Teachings during the Southern Song dynasty.<sup>61</sup> These works collectively present a comprehensive view of the interdisciplinary Song religious culture, offering background information for Chan compilers attentive to and influenced by other intellectual traditions.

While the current scholarship lacks a comprehensive study on the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, ample research exists on Buddhist hagiographies and specific figures. Noteworthy among these are John Kieschnick’s *The Eminent Monk* and Gong Jun’s “Tangsong fojiao shizhuan zhongde chanshi xiangxiang: bijiao sengzhuan yu denglu youguan chanshi zhuan de shuxie” 唐宋佛教史傳中的禪師想像—比較僧傳與燈錄有關禪師傳的書寫, both of which provide methodological guidance for this dissertation. Kieschnick, in his introduction, clarifies that his work does not aim to reconstruct the historical images of eminent monks but rather to explore the standards people used to define Buddhist ideals in their imagination.<sup>62</sup> Gong Jun, on

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<sup>59</sup> Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>60</sup> Edward Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001).

<sup>61</sup> James T. C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

<sup>62</sup> John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997).

the other hand, conducts a textual comparison of hagiographies in the *Eminent Monks* series and *denglu* works, revealing divergent preferences among compilers and the infusion of their upheld values in the hagiographical writings.<sup>63</sup> This dissertation also draw on other pertinent works concerning specific figures in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, including Yü Chun-fang’s *Kuan-yin*, Huang Chi-chiang’s *Sizhou dasheng yu songxue daoren* 泗州大聖與雪鬆道人 and Huang Jing-jia’s series of essays on mad monks.<sup>64</sup> These contributions either discuss particular figures in the trajectory of Buddhist domestication, examine the rise of cults around certain figures in a social context, or explore the cultural significance of promoting certain figures within Chan Buddhism. From these works, I derive substantial inspiration to conduct my research.

Accordingly, the research on the “Yinghua shengxian” sections contributes to the existing scholarship on Song Buddhism by thoroughly exploring this often overlooked primary source. The “Yinghua shengxian” sections, within the context of Song Buddhism, emerged as vital yet undervalued components that shed light on the development of the Chan school during the Song

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<sup>63</sup> Gong Jun 龔雋, “Tangsong fojiao shizhuan zhongde chanshi xiangxiang: bijiao sengzhuan yu denglu youguan chanshi zhuan de shuxie” 唐宋佛教史傳中的禪師想像—比較僧傳與燈錄有關禪師傳的書寫. *Journal of the Center for Buddhist Studies*, issue 10, (2005): 151-184.

<sup>64</sup> Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-Yin: the Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). Huang Chi-Chiang 黃啟江, *Sizhou dasheng yu songxue daoren: songyuan shehui jingying de fojiao xinyang yu fojiao wenhua* 泗州大聖與松雪道人：宋元社會菁英的佛教信仰與佛教文化 (Taipei: Student Book Company, 2009). Huang Jing-jia 黃敬家, “Yangkuang, youxi yu shentong—tangdai kuangseng chuiji de xingwei moshi—yi song gaoseng zhuan weili” 佯狂, 遊戲與神通—唐代狂僧垂跡的行為模式—以宋高僧傳為例. *Fojiao sixiang yu wenxue guoji xueshu yantaohui huiyi lunwen* “佛教思想與文學”國際學術研討會會議論文, edited by Department of Chinese Literature and Center for Buddhist Studies at National Taiwan University 台大文學院暨佛學研究中心, (2008): 360-377. “Chanmen sansheng yu wenshu huashen: Hanshan xingxiang zai songdai chanlin zhongde zhuanhua jiqi yihan” 禪門散聖與文殊化身：寒山形象在宋代禪林中的轉化及其意涵, *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, v.44 n.3 (2014): 385-418. “Huanhua zhi ying: Tangdai kuangseng chuiji de xingxiang jiqi yihan” 幻化之影：唐代狂僧垂跡的形象及其意涵. *Taitai foxue yanjiu* 臺大佛學研究. 20 (2010): 59-98. “Songdai chanmen wenxian zhongde sansheng jiqi youxi xingxiang de jingshen yuanyuan” 宋代禪門文獻中的散聖及其遊戲形象的精神淵源. *Donghua hanxue* 東華漢學. 23 (2016): 101-134.

dynasty. The selections and portrayals of figures in these sections reveal the compilers' considerations and imaginations regarding Chan Buddhist ideals, for the criteria for selecting figures into the "Yinghua shengxian" sections was grounded in certain socio-religious contexts. This research presents that the Chan school, beyond constructing consistent lineages and upholding mind transmissions, also claimed its superiority through actively participating in the religious domain. It sought to appropriate influential religious individuals from other traditions and converted them into supporters of the Chan school, demonstrating an active involvement with diverse religious traditions. Consequently, Chan historiographies not only preserve lineages and teachings but also exhibit a keen awareness of the religious environment, engaging in dynamic interactions with other traditions within the realm of religiosity.

Adopting a novel perspective on these underappreciated primary sources, I view the "Yinghua shengxian" sections as a microcosm reflecting various facets of Buddhism in 11<sup>th</sup>-to-13<sup>th</sup>-century China. Through this lens, Chan Buddhism is portrayed as inclusively incorporating all traditions and positioning itself as the most comprehensive ideology. The research aims to contribute to the academic discourse by addressing the question of "what Song Chan really was" rather than discussing "what Song Chan should be like."

## **Chapter Outlines**

This dissertation is structured with four chapters in addition to this introduction and a conclusion. Each chapter is dedicated to a specific *denglu* work that compiled the "Yinghua shengxian" section, presented in chronological order. The chapters encompass a three-part framework, addressing the nature of the *denglu* work, the features of its "Yinghua shengxian" section, and case studies on specific figures. The case studies involve a comparative analysis of

various accounts of the figures, revealing intentional adaptations made by Chan compilers to shape the images of these figures into Chan ideals.

Chapter 2, titled “The *Jingde chuan denglu* and the ‘Chanmen dazhe’ section,” examines the *Jingde chuan denglu* as the first imperial-sanctioned *denglu* work and the significance of compiling the “Chanmen dazhe” section to the newly established Chan school. Beyond presenting consistent lineages directly traced back to the Buddha, the *Jingde lu* intentionally compiled the “Chanmen dazhe” section, featuring ten prominent Buddhist figures with no direct connection to Chan lineages. The Chan compilers adapted the hagiographies of these figures to align them with Chan values, portraying them as not just Buddhist ideals but Chan ideals in particular. I argue that during its initial stage, the Chan school sought to showcase its superiority yet also to align itself with the long-established *dhyāna* tradition to legitimize its orthodoxy in religiosity. To elucidate the Chan school’s agency, I conducted two case studies. The first case study focuses on two Tiantai patriarchs, Huisi and Zhiyi, who are depicted by the Chan compilers as renowned *chan* practitioners. Despite acknowledging the existence of the Tiantai school, the Chan compiler demotes it to a side branch of the Chan school, by which to elevate the Chan school as a superior Buddhist sect. This case study captures several heated issues in the Chan-Tiantai controversy in the early Song dynasty, revealing the Chan school’s ambition to be independent from existing Buddhist conventions and its strategies to claim superiority. The second case study examines how the mad monks, represented by the “Three Sages of Tiantai,” symbolize the core values upheld by the Chan school. I argue that their iconoclasm and aloofness align with the Chan school’s self-identification as “a separate transmission beyond teachings,” implying its superiority.

Chapter 3 delves into the *Liandeng huiyao* and its “Yinghua xiansheng” section. Despite being the first *denglu* within the *Five Lamps* series to incorporate this section, the *Liandeng huiyao* was not the inaugural Chan historiography to introduce it. My investigation traces the section back to the *Zongmen tongyao ji*, a lesser known Chan historiography compiled by the end of the Northern Song. It becomes evident that the “Yinghua shengxian” section in the *Liandeng huiyao* is a replication of the one in the *Zongmen tongyao ji*. The chapter then delves into the origins of the concept of “yinghua shengxian,” delineating the development of the *yinghua* theory in practical use when correlating Buddhist deities with specific individuals. My research uncovers that this correlation evolves from bestowing “bodhisattva” as honorable titles to specific earthly beings for their virtues or specialties to anthropomorphizing Buddhist deities into specific Buddhists, casting them as earthly manifestations of these deities. This progression not only reflects the domestication of Buddhism but also resonates with Song religious culture, where the pantheon was expanded through creating, acknowledging, and promoting new deities.

The discussion on the nature of the *Liandeng huiyao* reveals that despite its inclusion in the *Five Lamps* series, it differs from the preceding three *denglu* works in the Northern Song. While the earlier *denglu* works were compiled under the patronage of the imperial court, the *Liandeng huiyao* likely originated from the support of the local lay community and circulated within a confined local area. This compilation process dictated a distinct role for the *Liandeng huiyao*—unlike imperial-sanctioned *denglu* works primarily aimed at standardizing Chan history, locally compiled *denglu* works like the *Liandeng huiyao* were utilized for pedagogical purposes by Chan masters. A case study associated with the discussion on the *Liandeng huiyao* centers on three Indian Elders identified as sūtra translators in the *Eminent Monks* series. In order to explore the reason behind their inclusion in the Chan historiography, I examine their presence in the

Song Buddhist contexts, revealing that their prominence as key figures in Pure Land literature and their associations with the Lotus Society were the primary reasons that captured the attention of Chan compilers. This case study underscores that, to establish authority in religiosity, the Chan compiler not only emphasized constructing of Chan lineages but also actively sought iconic figures in the religious milieu, making them the spokesmen for the Chan teachings and values.

Chapter 4 investigates the *Jiatai pu denglu* and its “Yinghua shengxian” section. The *Jiatai pu denglu*, as the only imperial-sanctioned *denglu* work in the Southern Song dynasty, received widespread acceptance and exerted significant influence in the religious culture. The analysis commences with an exploration of its compilation and a discussion of its nature. As Buddhism experienced increasing secularization in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the *Jiatai lu* marked a pivotal shift by extending its inclusion to dharma protectors, transmitters, and advocates beyond the monastic community. This inclusiveness, evident in the “Yinghua shengxian” section, manifests as embracing figures from more diverse traditions such as local Buddhist cults and Internal Alchemical Daoism.

This chapter features two case studies: Qiansui Baozhang and Zhang Boduan. The former explores the evolution of a legendary Indian monk from a local cult figure to the revered founding patriarch of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery in Hangzhou, and eventually to a nationally perceived Buddhist ideal. The involvement of the literati played a crucial role in promoting his cult, leading to acknowledgment by the compiler of the *Jiatai pu denglu*. Due to the *Jiatai lu*'s wide acceptance, many monasteries claimed him as their founding patriarch. The case study on Zhang Boduan shed light on the Buddho-Daoist conflict in the religious discourse of the Southern Song dynasty. Renowned for his integration of Chan doctrines with Daoist practice,

Zhang Boduan was recognized as a founding patriarch of Internal Alchemical Daoism. As a valuable religious paradigm in the religious domain, he drew the attention of Chan compilers, who praised him as an accomplished Daoist attaining enlightenment through Buddhist teachings. The *Jiatai lu*'s aggressive adaptations triggered an outrage from Daoist followers, leading to a conflict manifested through commentary writings. In response, Buddhist scholars adhered to the *Jiatai lu*'s account, positioning Zhang as a model for Daoist practitioners who had “converted” to Buddhism. This case exemplifies how the Chan compilers of the *denglu* work intensified the image war, strategically asserting superiority not only at the doctrinal level but also among the adherents.

Chapter 5 centers on the *Wudeng huiyuan*, the anthology in the *Five Lamps* series, and its “Yinghua shengxian” section. The compilation of the *Wudeng huiyuan* was led by the abbot of the Lingyin monastery, and the process was similar to the *Liandeng huiyao*'s, which was sponsored by the local lay community. As an anthology, the *Wudeng huiyuan* selectively compiled content from previous *denglu* works into a portable form. Consequently, its “Yinghua shengxian” section was also an anthology of previous “Yinghua shengxian” sections, with the addition of a single new figure, Prince Nezha, who serves as the focal point for the case study in this chapter.

The investigation into Nezha begins with a fundamental question: why did Nezha capture the attention of the compilers of the *Wudeng huiyuan*, becoming the only new figure in its “Yinghua shengxian” section? The discussion starts with his Indian origin and then shifts to his introduction to China intricately tied to the rise of the Vaiśravaṇa cult. As a fascinating child god, Nezha's storyline eventually gained independence from the Vaiśravaṇa cult. My research reveals two developmental lines in Nezha's image—one as the assistant *yaksa* of Vaiśravaṇa and

handsome heavenly deity in the Sanskrit sūtras, and the other as the domesticated Nezha in Chinese culture. I argue that the Chan literature, including *gong'an* and Chan poems, played a crucial role in enriching Nezha's image as a tranquil awakener and a wrathful deity. This, in turn, contributed to Nezha's popularization in the folk culture of the Song dynasty. Nezha's emergence as a valuable iconic figure of the era provides a compelling reason for Chan compilers to include him in the "Yinghua shengxian" section.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion, where I revisit the research questions and discuss the significance of hagiographical writing within the Chinese "religious market." I argue that whether in the "Chanmen dazhe" section or the "Yinghua shengxian" sections, Chan compilers employed a consistent strategy to convert non-Chan Buddhists into Chan ideals. As a strategy to assert the superiority of the Chan school, Chan compilers capitalized on the fame and influence of non-Chan figures as a supplement to the stance of orthodoxy adopted through constructing the genealogical system of Chan masters. During this process, the "conversion" typically occurred through hagiographical writing, enriching their stories with the episodes aligned with the Chan compilers' agenda. Given the crucial role of hagiographies in shaping followers' identity and enhancing community cohesion, frequent image wars ensued between traditions competing for the same ideals.

The "Yinghua shengxian" sections, as a valuable source for learning Chan history, provide a fresh perspective on the development of the Chan school in the Song dynasty. Chan *denglu* works not only focused on lineages' growth and Chan masters' teachings but also actively engaged in contemporary religious discourse to establish itself as a leading force in religiosity. The research conducted in this dissertation reveals that Song Chan was more open

and inclusive than previously believed, with the Chan school shifting its strategy from emphasizing its uniqueness to positioning itself on top of all traditions.

## Chapter 2

### The *Jingde Chuan Denglu* and the “Chanmen Dazhe” Section

#### The Nature of the *Jingde chuan denglu* and the “Chanmen dazhe” Section

The *Jingde chuan denglu* was edited and published in the early Northern Song period, during the reign of Emperor Zhenzong. In contrast to his father, Taizong, who endeavored to emulate the Tang culture, Emperor Zhenzong aimed to establish a distinctive pattern to differentiate the Song culture from its predecessors. This cultural milieu gave rise to the Song *guwen* 古文 (classical prose) movement, which unprecedentedly admitted Buddhist literature as a part of *wen*.<sup>65</sup> The Chan school became the major beneficiary during this process, receiving imperial patronage for the first time and transitioning from regional significance to national prominence.<sup>66</sup> Aiming to highlight the Chan school as an entirety which was opposed to other Buddhist schools such as the Tiantai and Vinaya, the *Jingde lu* adopted a relatively neutral stance and an impartial tone when addressing the five houses instead of emphasizing certain lineages.<sup>67</sup> Since then, the Chan school became a new representation of the Song culture, presenting as a systematic institution with the five houses branching out into various lineages.

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<sup>65</sup> See Albert Welter, *The Administration of Buddhism in China: A Study and Translation of Zanning and the Topical Compendium of the Buddhist Clergy (Da Song Seng Shi Lüe)* (New York: Cambria Press, 2018), 81-82.

<sup>66</sup> See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 177-179.

<sup>67</sup> By the completion of the *Jingde chuan denglu*, Weiyang had already faded into obscurity, Fayan was in decline, and Yunmen exhibited a weakened influence. At this point, only Linji and Caodong maintained active. Nevertheless, the *Jingde chuan denglu* adopted a notably impartial tone in depicting the five houses, which aimed to delineate the historical evolution of these houses from their foundational source, the Buddha. Subsequent *denglu* works tended to highlight specific houses or concentrate on the extant lineages at their times.

The compilation of the *Jingde chuan denglu* not only served as a defining feature of the new culture, but also played a critical role in shaping the new identity of the Chan school in this new era. According to Welter, the transitioning of Chan school's identity from regional lineages to a national institution was evident in the two titles and the two prefaces of the *Jingde lu*. The original text referenced by the *Jingde lu* was the *Fozu tongcan ji* 佛祖同參集 by Fayuan 法眼 monk Daoyuan 道原. As a representative of the Wuyue 吳越 Chan, Daoyuan perceived the Chan teaching as complementary to other Buddhist teachings, hence titling his work with “*tongcan*” 同參 (common practices).<sup>68</sup> When the *Fozu tongcan ji* was presented to the Song court, literatus Yang Yi was appointed as the editor. Playing a crucial role in both the *guwen* movement and the establishment of the new culture, Yang Yi recognized that his task was more than literary revision but a critical project contributing to the Song cultural revival. This compilation aimed to showcase the independence and uniqueness of Song culture. Bearing this in mind, he emphasized Chan Buddhism as a “separate transmission outside the teaching,” intending to distinguish the Chan school from other Buddhist conventions.<sup>69</sup> In essence, the Wuyue Chan, as represented by Daoyuan and his *Fozu tongcan ji*, embraced a more syncretic and inclusive perspective, whereas Yang Yi and his edited work implied a more radical and ambitious approach to demonstrate the superiority of the Chan school.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 174-175.

<sup>69</sup> 蓋大雄付囑之旨，正眼流通之道，教外別行不可思議者也。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 0196b22-23.

<sup>70</sup> Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 120-121, 174-179.

Ultimately, the *Jingde lu* remains a revised work based on the *Tongcan ji*, carrying distinct imprints of Wuyue Chan. Welter identifies a compromise by the compiler in characterizing Chan as both independent, subitist, and antinomian, yet harmonious with the rituals and traditions of conventional Buddhism. He points out that the “Chanmen dazhe” section was a prime example of this hybrid nature. Notably, the ten figures in this section exhibit close geographical connection with the Wuyue region. More importantly, the inclusion of the individuals practicing meditation through scriptural learning yet outside of any specific Chan lineages suggests a residual understanding of the Chan school within the broader Buddhist *dhyāna* tradition, which, according to Welter, was not uncommon.<sup>71</sup>

While Welter provides a plausible explanation for the compilation of this section, a closer examination of the hagiographies reveals a deliberate revision by the compilers to align the portrayals of the figures with the agenda of the newly established Chan school. An illustrative case is found in the accounts of Tiantai masters Huisi and Zhiyi, which present the Chan school as a distinctive religious entity by tailoring their portrayals to convey typical Chan values. This will be explored further as a case study in the next section. Here, in addition to endorsing Welter’s perspective, I propose a complementary explanation: despite their recognition as meditation practitioners, sūtra learners, and wandering thaumaturgists in the *Eminent Monks* series, these Buddhists were not originally intended to be included in the *Jingde lu*, a work representing the new established Chan school. However, by utilizing the term “*chanmen*” (*chan* gate) to connect with the *dhyāna* tradition, this section implies the compiler’s ambition to leverage the status of these “celebrities”—they were enlightened beings in the religious sense

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<sup>71</sup> Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 158-160.

and influential individuals in the sociocultural context. By doing so, they enhanced the status of the Chan school beyond its immediate supporters. Moreover, apart from the recognized Chan masters in the lineages, who represent the mode of attaining enlightenment through mind transmission, this section accommodates self-enlightened beings such as divine monks Baozhi and Sengqie, as well as unconventional figures like mad monks Fenggan, Hanshan, and Shide. The compiler seemingly intended to assert that enlightenment attainment could manifest in various forms under the umbrella of the institutional Chan school.

The “Chanmen dazhe” section within the *Jingde chuan denglu*, a *denglu* work sanctioned by the imperial court, employs a hagiographical writing style to depict these non-Chan figures. This section meticulously presents ten figures in a structured pattern, providing details such as their names, hometowns, and notable accomplishments in a relatively chronological manner. Given that the hagiographies of these figures are also preserved in the *Eminent Monks* series, a comparative analysis between the accounts in the *Eminent Monks* series and those in the “Chanmen dazhe” section can reveal deliberate adaptations made by the Chan compilers in portraying these individuals.

The intentional modifications, including additions and omissions, within the narratives of the “Chanmen dazhe” section reflect the thoughtful considerations of the Chan compilers regarding the contextual integration of these figures into the newly established Chan school. Through this purposeful shaping, the figures, with fame and recognition for their achievements as meditation practitioners within the broader *dhyāna* tradition, eventually ascended to become “spokesmen” for the Chan school.

## Case Study I

### Bridging the Chan Tradition and the Chan School

#### Tiantai Patriarchs in the Chan Historiography

The two Tiantai masters included in the *Jingde chuan denglu* are the founding patriarchs of the Tiantai school, Huisi and Zhiyi. Huisi, with the secular surname Li 李, attained the Lotus Samādhi while studying under Huiwen 慧聞. His teaching comprised a combination of meditative practice and doctrinal learning. After delivering public sermons for years, he passed down the *dharma* to Zhiyi, who is widely considered the actual founder of the Tiantai school. Zhiyi, with the secular surname Chen 陳, attained enlightenment through the recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. As he grew in prominence, Zhiyi attracted significant attention from both imperial courts and devoted followers. In the seventh year of Taijian 天監 (575), Zhiyi relocated to Mt. Tiantai and established the Tiantai school. Later, in the eleventh year of Kaihuang 開皇 (591), Zhiyi received the title of “Wise One 智者.” According to the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, Huisi and Zhiyi are listed as the third and the fourth patriarchs, respectively, in the Tiantai lineage.<sup>72</sup>

However, the two Tiantai patriarchs were only identified as “*chan* practitioners” and were compiled into the “Chanmen dazhe” section in the *Jingde chuan denglu*. This “derogatory” action by the Chan compilers provoked criticism from Tiantai devotees, as mentioned in the introduction. A thorough examination of their hagiographies in the *Jingde lu*, along with a textual comparison of their accounts in both Chan and Tiantai sources, reveals that the Chan compiler went beyond merely diminishing their status to “*chan* practitioners.” To highlight the deliberate adaptations made by the Chan compilers to their hagiographies, I have also referenced

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<sup>72</sup> *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 177c10-11.

their accounts in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. Therefore, my textual comparison draws from four primary sources: the Vinaya perspective of the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, the Chan perspective of the *Jingde chuan denglu*, and the Tiantai perspectives of the *Shimen zhengtong* and the *Fozu tongji*. By analyzing the differing rhetoric employed in making their portrayals, I aim to present the core values the Chan school upheld and several essential issues underlying the Chan-Tiantai controversies.

### Issue 1. Genealogical Status and the Order of Doctrinal Precedence

The genealogical problem examines whether the dharma was ever successively passed down through a “separate transmission” and if the claimed orthodox lineage of the Chan school could be substantiated. The order of doctrinal precedence, on the other hand, is essentially questioning if the Buddha ever imparted a “separate teaching” that surpassed the teachings preserved in the scriptures.

*Xu gaoseng zhuan*-Huisi: [Huisi] initiated the twofold practices of meditation and wisdom. Throughout the day, he engaged in discussions on principles and their practical applications, while devoting his nights to meticulous and critical analysis. Consequently, his spoken words were not extended far to verify that wisdom could be generated from meditation. The meaning [of his teaching] was not false. The Southern and the Northern Chan schools rarely dissented from [his teaching].

慧思：定慧雙開，晝談理義夜便思擇。故所發言無非致遠，便驗因定發慧，此旨不虛。南北禪宗罕不承緒。<sup>73</sup>

*Jingde chuan denglu*-Huisi: During that period, Chan master Huiwen had several hundreds of followers. (Chan Master Wen, having dedicated himself to the recitation and exploration of the canon, acquired a deep understanding of the *Treatise on Contemplating the Middle View* and gained profound insights into the principles of meditation. Notably, this treatise was authored by the 14<sup>th</sup> Indian

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<sup>73</sup> *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 564a03-04.

patriarch, Mahāsattva Nāgārjuna. Consequently, [Huiwen] received [the dharma] remotely transmitted by Nāgārjuna.)

慧思：時慧聞禪師有徒數百。(聞禪師始因背手探藏，得中觀論發明禪理。此論即西天第十四祖龍樹大士所造，遂遙稟龍樹。) <sup>74</sup>

*Jingde chuan denglu*-Zhiyi: Consequently, the 14<sup>th</sup> patriarch Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna composed a verse.... The Great Master Bodhidharma transmitted the Dharma based on the mind, without being constrained by designations. [His teachings] were direct and intended solely for those with exceptional wisdom, causing them to disregard conceptual frameworks and meanings. For this reason, [the teachings of Bodhidharma] and this teaching (note: Tiantai) share similarities, yet also possess differences. Chan master Zhiyi thoroughly investigated the principle and exhaustively explored its nature, providing a comprehensive teaching. For this reason, [the teachings of Zhiyi] and the teachings of Chan show differences, but also share similarities.

智顛：故第十四祖龍樹菩薩偈……達磨大師以心傳心不滯名數，直為上上根智俾忘筌忘意，故與此教同而不同；智者禪師窮理盡性備足之門，故與禪宗異而非異也。 <sup>75</sup>

*Fozu tongji*-Zhiyi: For those who seek to comprehend the meaning of Buddhist Dharma, is the Tiantai teaching the only option [available to them]?

然則欲識佛法意者，其唯天台之學乎？ <sup>76</sup>

In the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, Daoxuan 道宣 considered Huisi's teaching the foundation of the Chan teaching. This statement, however, was omitted in the *Jingde lu*. Instead, the *Jingde lu* highlighted Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on Contemplating the Middle View* as the source of Huiwen's teachings. Additionally, it emphasized Nāgārjuna's position in the Chan lineage as the 14<sup>th</sup> patriarch. As a result, Huiwen became a remote dharma heir of Nāgārjuna, and his lineage became a subsidiary branch within the Chan school.

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<sup>74</sup> *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 431a18-19.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 432b07-10.

<sup>76</sup> *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 186b19-20.

This implication is further highlighted in Zhiyi's account. According to an added note by the Chan compiler, Chan and Tiantai are not conflicting teachings but rather different approaches to the same end. Instead of relying on scriptures, Bodhidharma transmitted the dharma through direct mind-to-mind transmission, which was intended for those of exceptional intelligence. Zhiyi, on the other hand, meticulously explained the dharma, making the Tiantai teaching suitable for those with average capabilities.<sup>77</sup> The rhetoric employed in the *Jingde lu* to describe Zhiyi's teaching carries multiple meanings. Alongside emphasizing Huisi's lineage as a side branch of the Chan tradition, the phrase "different paths to the same end" reflects the Chan school's self-portrayal as "a separate transmission outside the teaching," which suggests that the Chan school displayed its superiority by highlighting its special means of transmitting the dharma.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, by asserting that mind transmission is meant for the most intelligent individuals, the *Jingde lu* establishes a classification between the teachings of Chan and Tiantai, attributing a sense of supremacy to mind transmission over scriptural teachings for general populace. In this manner, the Chan school relegates the Tiantai teachings to a provisional teaching within Buddhism.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> 達磨大師以心傳心不滯名數，直為上上根智俾忘筌忘意故，與此教同而不同。智者禪師窮理盡性備足之門故，與禪宗異而非異也。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 432b08-10.

<sup>78</sup> Griffith Foulk, "Sung Controversies Concerning the 'Separate Transmission' of Ch'an." In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 260.

<sup>79</sup> Shortly after the compilation of the *Jingde lu*, a discord emerged within the Tiantai school involving two factions, namely, *Shanjia* 山家 and *Shanwai* 山外, centering around the issue of mind observance. Although the dispute originated within the Tiantai school, its ramifications extended to the Chan school as well. Siming zhili 四明知禮 played a pivotal role in this controversy by launching an attack on the Chan school. His critique centered on the assertion that the 2<sup>nd</sup> patriarch of the Chan school, Huike 慧可, had not fully obtained the profound teachings of Bodhidharma. In addition, Tiantai monks, in the midst of this dispute, either disavowed the concept of "separate transmission" from Śākyamuni to Mahākāśyapa or contended that the Chan teachings were inferior to the "perfect teaching" preserved in the *Lotus Sūtra*. Therefore, within the *Jingde lu*, as the inaugural officially sanctioned *denglu* work, the rhetoric employed in the hagiographies of the two Tiantai patriarchs effectively captures the most fundamental concerns at the heart of the Chan-Tiantai controversy. For more information, see Chi-wah Chan, "Chih-

When depicting the two Tiantai patriarchs, the *denglu* works demonstrate a tendency to align their portrayals with the values of the Chan tradition. For instance, Zhiyi's sermon is described as "not establishing words and letters,"<sup>80</sup> which serves as a symbolic slogan of the Chan school. Meanwhile, the Chan texts do not avoid acknowledging Huisi and Zhiyi's attainments through the typical Tiantai approach, which involves meditative practices centered on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the perfect teaching according to Tiantai's classification. For example, the *Jingde lu* specifically highlights that the state of Huisi's enlightenment was the Lotus Samadhi 法華三昧 in particular.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, when Zhiyi questioned the concept of "One mind contains all practices," Huisi explicitly pointed out that it represented the "perfect and sudden meaning" of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which led to Zhiyi's subsequent enlightenment.<sup>82</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that the *Jingde lu* recognizes and promotes the critical role of the *Lotus Sūtra* in the practice and teachings of Huisi and Zhiyi. However, upon closer examination of the account of Huisi in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, it became evident that the Chan school's acceptance of Tiantai's teaching is conditional. The *Jingde lu* not only removes the section that expounds Huisi's integration of meditation and wisdom, which serves as the theoretical foundation for Tiantai's

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li (960-1028) and the Crisis of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism in the Early Sung." In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 409-441.

<sup>80</sup> 凡說法不立文字。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 0431c09.

<sup>81</sup> 背未至間，豁爾開悟，法華三昧，最上乘門，一念明達，研練逾久，前觀轉增。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄, T. no.2076, 51: 0431a25-26. The Lotus Samadhi represents the state of samadhi achieved through the dedicated practice on the *Lotus Sūtra*. This particular form of practice, emphasizing perfect and sudden enlightenment, was formulated by Huisi and Zhiyi and is integral to the teachings upheld in the Tiantai school. For more information, see Lin Chih-chin 林志欽, "Fahua Jing Xiuxing Famen yu Huisi Fahua Sanmei zhi Xiuzheng yu Chuangli" 法華經修行法門與慧思法華三昧之修證與創立. *Yuan Kuang Journal of Buddhist Studies*, n.20, (2012): 55-134.

<sup>82</sup> 復命門人智顛代講，至一心具萬行有疑請決。師曰，所疑乃大品次第意耳，未是法華圓頓旨也。吾昔於夏中一念頓發諸法見前。吾既身證不勞致疑。顛即諮受法華行，三七日得悟。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 4331b15-19.

meditative teaching of “*zhiguan* 止觀” (cessation and observation), but it also omits a critical statement by Daoxuan that Huisi’s meditative teaching is “rarely dissented by the Southern and the Northern Chan schools,”<sup>83</sup> a statement implying the priority of Tiantai’s teaching over Chan’s. Considering that Daoxuan’s record asserts that Huisi’s teaching was actually the source from which the two main lineages of Chan school inherited, it is not surprising that this statement was deliberately erased from the Chan texts.

In the case of Zhiyi, the compilers of the *Jingde lu* not only commend the remarkable efficacy of the *Lotus Sūtra* as “the marvelous canon of the one vehicle, which swept away the existing teachings in the conjured city,”<sup>84</sup> but they also provide a detailed introduction to Tiantai’s fundamental doctrines such as the “Five Periods and Eight Teachings” 五時八教 and the “Three Insights in One Thought” 一心三觀.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, they even acknowledge that Zhiyi initiated an independent Buddhist school called Tiantai.<sup>86</sup> All of these acknowledgments, nevertheless, are made under the premise that Zhiyi’s scriptural-based teaching was merely an expedient teaching 權教 for average practitioners, which was inferior to Bodhidharma’s revelation of the true dharma through mind transmission. Understandably, the intentional degradation of Zhiyi was unacceptable to Tiantai’s disciples. The *Shimen zhengtong* directly criticizes the *Jingde lu*, and Zongjian draws a parallel between Zhiyi and Confucius, claiming that Zhiyi was the one who illuminated the true dharma of the Buddha to the world. He states,

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<sup>83</sup> 南北禪宗罕不承緒。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0562c06.

<sup>84</sup> 法華為一乘妙典，蕩化城之執教。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 0432a07.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 432a20-27, 432a29-b10.

<sup>86</sup> 總目為天台教。 *Ibid.* 432c09.

“For the management of the state administration, if it were not Confucius, the regulations made by the three kings and four dynasties would not be revealed. Similarly, for the Way of renouncement, if it were not the Great Master [Zhiyi], the essence of the three vehicles and four teachings would remain obscure.”<sup>87</sup>

The position of the Chan school is now evident. It indeed recognizes the significant contributions of Huisi and Zhiyi, the great efficacy of the Lotus teaching, and even the independent existence of the Tiantai school. However, by portraying Huisi and Zhiyi as remote heirs of Nāgārjuna and demonstrating the superiority of mind transmission, the Chan school effectively incorporates the entirety of Tiantai while simultaneously relegating it to the status of an expedient teaching of the Buddha.

The two significant issues that the accounts of Huisi and Zhiyi touch upon, genealogical status and the order of doctrinal precedence, later became contentious topics in the Tiantai-Chan opposition. Initially, Siming Zhili 四明知禮, the representative of the Home-Mountain faction within the Tiantai school, wrote the *Shi buermen zhiyao chao* 十不二門指要鈔 to criticize the Off-Mountain faction during an internal crisis in the Tiantai school. But in his attempt to elevate the Home-Mountain faction, Zhili made comments regarding the story of Huike obtaining the “marrow” of Bodhidharma’s teaching, arguing that despite being assigned as the dharma heir of Bodhidharma, Huike’s insights were still inferior to Tiantai’s “inherent evilness” theory.

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<sup>87</sup> 夫治世之經，非仲尼則三王四代之制寢而不彰；出世之道，非大師則三乘四教之旨晦而不明。 *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. X. no.1513, 75: 266a11.

Unsurprisingly, his statement sparked a response from the Chan school, initiating a debate between Tiantai and Chan regarding the doctrinal precedence.<sup>88</sup>

Aside from this, the divergence in claims about genealogical transmission had long been a focal point of controversy between Tiantai and Chan schools. While the Chan school believed in the successive dharma transmission within the 28 Indian patriarchs, Tiantai insisted that the lineage ended at the 24<sup>th</sup> patriarch, Simhabhiku 師子比丘, as stated in the *Fu fazang yinyuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳.<sup>89</sup> The debate over genealogical succession, intertwined with the competition for orthodoxy within the Chan school, was too complex to be fully discussed here.

Although the topics reflected in the Tiantai-Chan debate in the early Song period were not new, the opposition became more evident and intense around the turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when Siming Zhili and Ciyun Zunshi 慈雲遵式 sought official recognition and the inclusion of Tiantai texts in the Buddhist canon.<sup>90</sup> Given that the *Tiansheng guang denglu* was presented to the imperial court in 1029, Zhili and Zunshi's activities could be interpreted as a resistance to the new order established by the Chan school, as the Chan school's rapid growth broke the delicate balance within the Buddhist landscape.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> For more information, see Song Daofa 宋道發, "Songdai Taichan Erzong Fatong Shuo zhi Zheng" 宋代台禪二宗法統說之爭. In *Minnan Foxue* 閩南佛學 edited by Minnan foxue yuan 閩南佛學院 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe 岳麓書社, 2002), 353-374.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Griffith Foulk, "Sung Controversies Concerning the 'Separate Transmission' of Ch'an." In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 284.

<sup>91</sup> The *Jingde chuan denglu* and the *Tiansheng guang denglu* symbolized the recognition and official support bestowed upon the Chan school by the Song court. The *Jingde chuan denglu* attested to the Song imperial court's endorsement of the Chan school, whereas the *Tiansheng guang denglu* indicated the ascendancy of the Linji-style Chan within the Chan school as it claimed that the true dharma eye presented in the Linji-style Chan. Both works were incorporated into the Buddhist canon after their compilations, implying their importance in early Song dynasty. See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 186-206.

Ultimately, the two issues discussed in the debate—the genealogical status and the order of doctrinal precedence—are concerned with the orthodoxy, authenticity, and superiority of the Chan school. During the debate, opponents from the Tiantai school either denied the succession of a “separate transmission” or asserted that it was inferior to the “perfect teaching” conveyed in the *Lotus Sūtra*. As the first imperial-sanctioned Chan *denglu* work, the *Jingde lu* in a sense released the contentious topics that fueled the Tiantai-Chan opposition when composing the hagiographies of the two Tiantai patriarchs.

## Issue 2. The Divergence on Vinaya Precepts

*Xu gaoseng zhuan*-Huisi: [Huisi] once dreamt that an Indian monk persuasively urged him to relinquish his secular life. Astonished [by this encounter], he realized that this was an auspicious sign and bid farewell to his parents, becoming a Buddhist. [Because] the monastery that he resided at was not an *aranya*, he frequently sensed the presence of divine monks who admonished him to uphold purity. Guided by this profound awareness, he dedicated himself to a life of simplicity and practiced with meticulous caution. . . . .Furthermore, he dreamt of several hundreds of Indian monks in elegant and distinguished appearance and attire. The chief monk commanded him, stating: “Your previous ordination rite was not effective. [With that,] how are you able to reveal the correct path to others? Now that you have met the pure assembly, you had better prepare the platform and invite thirty-two esteemed monks. After the *karman* ritual placed upon [you], [you will] fully obtain [the ordination].” Waking up with a start, he realized that he indeed received the ordination in the dream.

[慧思]嘗夢梵僧勸令出俗，駭悟斯瑞辭親入道。所投之寺非是練若，數感神僧訓令齋戒，奉持守素，梵行清慎。又夢梵僧數百形服瓌異，上坐命曰：“汝先受戒律儀非勝，安能開發於正道也？既遇清眾，宜更翻壇祈請師僧三十二人，加羯磨法具足成就。”後忽驚寤方知夢受。<sup>92</sup>

*Fozu tongji*-Huisi: The “forty-two monks” symbolically refers to the forty-two stages [of Bodhisattva Practice], representing the transformative progress from the initial stage to the ultimate enlightenment. This [number] indicates that Nanyue

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<sup>92</sup> *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T no.2060, 50: 562c07-08; 562c15-16.

had already attained purity of the six senses and entered the ten stages of faith within the perfect teaching. For this reason, the inclusion of forty-two Mahāsattvas, along with monks who had directly achieved marvelous enlightenment, performed the ordination ritual to validate [Huisi’s achievement.] 四十二僧，即四十二位，自初住訖妙覺也。此表南岳當獲六根清淨，入圓十信。以故四十二位大士及妙覺直僧，為其加法以證之也。<sup>93</sup>

Except for the *Jingde lu*, all accounts maintained the episode of Huisi’s formal ordination within a dream. The *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* extensively documents Huisi’s acceptance and dedicated observance of precepts at multiple places. Shortly after his ordination, Huisi experienced recurring dreams where divine monks were repeatedly present. He was reminded to wholeheartedly embrace the Vinaya precepts due to the absence of an “*araṇya* 練若” temple at his residence.<sup>94</sup>

Originally denoting tranquil locations in the wilderness for Buddhists to live and practice, *araṇya* later became a general designation for monasteries situated remotely from urban centers. In addition, residing in an *araṇya* is considered an ascetic practice, as it was the first among the twelve *dhuta* practices of *bhikṣu*.<sup>95</sup> Thus, this episode highlights the utmost importance of the strict observance of the Vinaya precepts.

As Huisi’s divine dreams continued once he found himself surrounded by hundreds of Indian monks. The head monk conveyed to him that his previous ordination was not superb enough, urging him to seize the opportunity for a formal ordination through a *karman* ritual performed by these enlightened monks. The recurrence of this episode in the Tiantai accounts

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<sup>93</sup> *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 179a20-21.

<sup>94</sup> *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 562c06.

<sup>95</sup> See Shi Ciyi 釋慈怡, *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典 (Taipei: Foguang Publisher, 1988), 3697.

further underscores its importance in portraying Huisi's image. The only discrepancy lies in the number of Indian masters conducting the *karman* ritual, which is thirty-two in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* but forty-two in the Tiantai accounts. Zhipan 志磐, in his analysis, provides a concise explanation regarding the meaning of the number. The number forty-two symbolizes the forty-two stages of Bodhisattva practice, signifying Huisi's attainment of purity in the six senses and his progress through the ten stages of faith.<sup>96</sup>

Now, two questions have surfaced: what is the *karman* ritual? And why this episode received such heavy emphasis in all sources except the Chan *denglu*?

The term “*karman*” holds two general meanings in the Buddhist dictionary. First, it refers to *karma*, encompassing physical, oral, and mindful actions that result in either meritorious or demeritorious consequences. Second, it denotes the occasions where precepts-related events take place, such as ordination, repentance ritual, and the demarcation of restricted zones.<sup>97</sup> With regard to ordination in particular, during the bestowment of precepts, the precept taker acquires the *jiyeti* 戒體 (essence of precept) from the *karman* ritual. Although *karman* has these two layers of meanings, relevant research reveals that in the actual usage of “*karman*” in the Buddhist canon and Dunhuang manuscripts, its original sense as “*karma*” gradually gave way to the meaning of “Buddhist ritual” with a connotation of “absolute abidance of Buddhist precepts.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> 四十二僧，即四十二位，自初住訖妙覺也。此表南岳當獲六根清淨入圓十信。以故四十二位大士及妙覺直僧，為其加法以證之也。Fozu tongji 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 179a20-179a21. The forty-two stages include *shizhu* 十住 (ten abodes), *shixing* 十行 (ten practices), *shihuixiang* 十迴向 (ten dedications of merit), *shidi* 十地 (ten stages), and the states of *dengjue* 等覺 (perfect enlightenment), and *miaojue* 妙覺 (marvelous enlightenment).

<sup>97</sup> Shi Ciyi 釋慈怡. *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典 (Taipei: Foguang Publisher, 1988), 6137.

<sup>98</sup> Zhang Ying 張穎, “Folü jiemo yici de fanyi jiqi xiangguan wenti” 佛律“羯磨”一詞的翻譯及其相關問題. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊, 2 (2012): 113.

Aligning with this, the Law of Karman 羯磨法 stands for a special council held in the sangha, where the proposal or request could be passed only if the entire council members gave approvals.<sup>99</sup> The council members typically consist of four monks, who were considered “pure” due to their commitment to upholding precepts without any violations.<sup>100</sup> In this sense, performing the ordination ritual by the Law of Karman was the highest formal form of conducting ordination, through which ordained Buddhists gained the essence of the precepts, meaning they had made a wholehearted commitment to upholding Buddhist precepts.<sup>101</sup>

In examining Huisi’s divine dream and its significance, it is noteworthy that all three compilers—Daoxuan, Zongjian, and Zhipan—insisted on including this episode, which implies that Buddhist precept held considerable weight in shaping Huisi’s image in the non-Chan context. The emphasis on precept is also evident in the hagiography of Zhiyi. The *Gaoseng zhuan*’s account depicts Zhiyi being guided by the restraining precepts after receiving the ten precepts from Faxu 法緒.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the *Shimen zhengtong* mentions Zhiyi’s profound understanding of the Vinaya Pitaka.<sup>103</sup> Aside from these, the *Fozu tongji* records many requests from aristocrats and government officials who sought bodhisattva ordination from Zhiyi. For instance, “...the crown prince requested [Zhiyi] to offer the bodhisattva precept,”<sup>104</sup> “[Zhiyi]

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<sup>99</sup> Shi Sheng-yen 釋聖嚴. *Jielüxue gangyao* 戒律學綱要 (Taipei: Heavenly Lotus Publishing Company, 1978), 225-238.

<sup>100</sup> Zhang Ying 張穎, “Folü jiemo yici de fanyi jiqi xiangguan wenti” 佛律“羯磨”一詞的翻譯及其相關問題. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊, 2 (2012): 114-115.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

<sup>102</sup> 投湘州果願寺沙門法緒而出家焉，緒授以十戒導以律儀。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0564a18.

<sup>103</sup> 尋詣慧曠律師，精通律藏。 *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. X. no.1513, 75: 266a11.

<sup>104</sup> 皇太子請授菩薩戒。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 182c21.

conducted the Bodhisattva ordination for thousand monks in the grand administer hall,”<sup>105</sup> and “provincial governor Wang Xuanwu requested for bodhisattva precept.”<sup>106</sup>

However, all these descriptions were omitted by the *Jingde lu*, as well as the later *denglu* works. This divergence reveals not only the Chan and Tiantai’s different attitudes towards precept issues but also a crucial distinction between the Chan school and the Buddhist conventions. It implies the Chan school’s attempt to claim its autonomy over the existing order defined by traditional Buddhist conventions.

Among the numerous myths surrounding the Chan community, one involves their observance of “unique precepts.” It is said that early Chan monks in China initially adhered to the *dhuta* precepts 頭陀戒 practiced in Indian Buddhist tradition. However, these precepts posed challenges within the Chinese cultural and religious contexts due to the different political and religious environments. Seeking to address these issues, Daoxin, the putative fourth patriarch, implemented significant reforms to adapt the precepts to the pragmatic needs of the Chinese Chan community. These reforms led to the establishment of the farming Chan mode, which integrated daily labor with meditative practice, rendering the Chan community self-sufficient and independent from the constraints of Buddhist monastic discipline in India.<sup>107</sup> Along with this reform, the “bodhisattva precepts” were introduced to justify the activities of the community.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> 於總管大聽事設千僧齋授菩薩戒法。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 183a21-22.

<sup>106</sup> 刺史王宣武請授大乘戒法。 *Ibid.* 183c21-22.

<sup>107</sup> See Song Lidao 宋立道, “The Fourth Patriarch Daoxin’s Chan Thought.” In *Buddhism*, edited by Lou Yulie (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 49-50. Xu Wenming 徐文明, “Chanzong jielü geming zai renjian fojiao zhong de yiyi” 禪宗戒律革命在人間佛教中的意義. *Pumen xuebao* 普門學報, n. 16, (2003): 2, 7.

<sup>108</sup> Ibuki highlights that the term “bodhisattva precepts” lacked a concrete set of regulations, and early Chan adherents perceived it in an abstract sense. Following Daoxin, various Chan lineages offered diverse interpretations of this concept, resulting in the attribution of different names to the specific “bodhisattva precepts” they adhered to. For more information, see Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, “Vinaya and the Chan School: Hinayana precepts and bodhisattva

Fundamentally, the Chan precepts were rooted in the theoretical basis of universal original pure nature, asserting that one could detach from defilements and violations as long as their mind remained pure. Similar to this myth, it is believed that Huineng created the notion of the “*wuxiang jie*” 無相戒 (formless precepts) in the *Platform Sūtra*, making the form and essence of the precepts identical.<sup>109</sup> In essence, the reformed Chan precepts linked purity of mind with adherence to precepts, replacing the traditional Vinaya, which relied on external discipline and restrictions, with a system of self-discipline and internal precepts. By introducing these two precept reforms, the Chan community was supposed to attain unprecedented autonomy, both collectively and individually. Nevertheless, these changes also gave rise to several contentious issues and conflicts between the Chan and the Vinaya schools.

First, in tradition, only Vinaya masters held the authority to resolve precepts-related matters, thereby rendering Chan masters ineligible to make any alterations to the precepts. Consequently, the Chan school’s precept reforms were considered “illegal” from the traditional perspective on the division of responsibilities within Buddhist conventions. Second, the ordination conducted in the Chan school typically adhered to the mind-to-mind transmission tradition, where one’s own master directed the process. This practice did not align with the Vinaya’s requirement for the number of the attending sangha during the ordination. It is not an exaggeration to state that with the reformed precepts, the Chan school would surpass the control

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precepts, Buddhism in the city and Buddhism in the mountains, religion and the state,” *Studies in Chinese religions*, 2015, Vol. 1 (2): 111-116.

<sup>109</sup> For more information about the “formless precepts,” see Morten Schlütter, “The Transformation of the Formless Precepts in the *Platform Sūtra* (*Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經),” in *Rules and Engagement: Medieval Traditions of Buddhist Monastic Regulation*, edited by Susan Andrews, Jinhua Chen, and Cuilan Liu (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2017), 417-446.

of the Vinaya school which served as the supreme authority in Buddhism. If doing so, the Chan school would actively challenge the established order upheld by traditional Buddhist institutions.

As expected, Daoxuan, the founder of the Nanshan 南山 Vinaya school, displayed little tolerance for the Chan school's approach to precepts. He expressed his disdain in his remarks in the division of "Xichan" 習禪 (Chan Practitioners): "There is a learning called meditation in this world, which fraudulently spread its fashion and teachings. [It is] mixed with vulgarness, and distains ritual observances."<sup>110</sup> On the contrary, Daoxuan praised the Chan masters who adhered to the *dhuta* precepts, as they "did not transgress the [restrictions of the] Vinaya school."<sup>111</sup>

During the early Song dynasty, as the Chan school gained considerable attention and imperial patronage, the conflict between the Chan and the Vinaya schools escalated. However, it was not only the Vinaya school that harshly criticized the Chan precepts but also traditional schools like Tiantai. In both the *Gaoseng zhuan* and Tiantai accounts, Huisi was portrayed as a Chan master who upheld traditional monastic values and respected the Vinaya. In these accounts, Huisi has to receive ordination by the law of *karman*, even though the ritual occurred in his dream. Only by this process, was he eligible to transmit the authentic dharma. This episode, nevertheless, was removed by Chan *denglu* works. Whether intentional or not, this exclusion at least implies that the compilers of the *denglu* works did not prioritize the traditional precepts. Consequently, Huisi and Zhiyi are portrayed more as Chan masters initiated by the formless Chan precepts.

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<sup>110</sup> 世有定學妄傳風教，同纏俗染混輕儀迹。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 596b22.

<sup>111</sup> 又如慧瓚禪主，嘉尚頭陀行化晉趙，門庭擁盛，威儀所擬無越律宗。 *Ibid.* 597a13-14.

Scholars such as Griffith Foulk and Yifa have already provided evidence that the precept reforms, along with many other myths surrounding the Chan school, were idealized images constructed by later generations to emphasize its distinctiveness within Buddhist conventions.<sup>112</sup> In reality, the precepts observed in Chan monasteries were no different from those in other Buddhist sectarians. But apart from the historical facts, the Chan school's self-proclamation indicated its ambition and intention to challenge the established Buddhist order, and this aspect is significant in understanding the writings that center around the Chan school.

### **Issue 3. The Issue of Dharma Degeneration**

Although the idea of dharma degeneration appears in various sūtras, it remained underexplored in the Indian Buddhist context. In the context of Chinese Buddhism, it is widely accepted that Huisi was the first Chinese Buddhist to extensively develop the concept of dharma degeneration.<sup>113</sup> Huisi's preoccupation with the dharma eschatology became the impetus for his adoption of ascetic practices and the emphasis on the significance of repentance. For example, he stated in his vow text, "Now that I have entered the mountain for ascetic practice. I repent for

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<sup>112</sup> See Griffith Foulk, "Chanyuan qinggui and Other 'Rules of Purity' in Chinese Buddhism," in *The Zen Canon*, edited by Steven Heine, Dales Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 275-312. Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

<sup>113</sup> See Shi Xingxuan 釋性玄, "Fo jiao mo fa sixiang zai zhongguo zhi shourong yu kaizhan—yi Nanyue Huisi zhi mo fa sixiang wei zhongxin" 佛教末法思想在中國之受容與開展—以南岳慧思之末法思想為中心, MA. Thesis, (Yuan Kuang Buddhist Institute, 2009). Takao Giken 高雄義堅, "Mappō shisō to shoka no taido (jō)" 末法思想と諸家の態度(上), *Journal of History of Chinese Buddhism*. v.1 n.1, (1973): 1-20. Song Daofa 宋道發, "Huisi mo fa sixiang zhi yanjiu" 慧思末法思想之研究, *Journal of Minnan Buddhist College*, n. 2, (1999): 35-42.

any precept violations, delusions, and other grave transgressions. I repent for these karmic crimes committed during my current and previous life.”<sup>114</sup>

During the early Northern Qi dynasty, Huisi astutely recognized the social instability and hidden crisis within the sangha community. In response, he wrote the famous “Nanyue si da chanshi lishi yuanwen”南嶽思大禪師立誓願文 (The Verse of Vows of Great Chan Master Nanyue Si), making a commitment to save sentient beings before the advent of Maitreya. Huisi’s sensitivity towards dharma degeneration stemmed from two primary causes. First, the sangha of his time lacked stringent regulations, resulting in disorder within the community. Many Buddhists neglected meditative practice and ingratiated themselves with political authorities.<sup>115</sup> Second, according to his own account, Huisi survived multiple assassination attempts by “evil bhiksu’s.”<sup>116</sup> The primary reason for these attempts was that the Mahāyāna doctrines propagated by Huisi were not accepted by the majority of Buddhists who remained devoted to the Theravada meditative practice.<sup>117</sup> In light of these circumstances, Huisi asserted that the age of dharma degeneration had already commenced.

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<sup>114</sup> 我今入山修習苦行，懺悔破戒障道重罪，今身及先身是罪悉懺悔。Nanyue si da chanshi lishi yuanwen 南嶽思大禪師立誓願文. T. no.1933, 46: 791c11.

<sup>115</sup> See Song Daofa 宋道發, “Huisi mofa sixiang zhi yanjiu” 慧思末法思想之研究, *Journal of Minnan Buddhist College*, n. 2, (1999): 37-38.

<sup>116</sup> 是末法一百二十年，淮南郢州刺史劉懷寶共遊郢州山中，喚出講摩訶衍義。是時為義相答，故有諸法師起大瞋怒。有五人惡論師以生金藥置飲食中令慧思食，所有餘殘三人噉之一日即死。慧思于時身懷極困，得停七日氣命垂盡。……又講摩訶衍義一遍，是時多有眾惡論師，競來惱亂生嫉妬心。咸欲殺害毀壞般若波羅蜜義。……年三十四時在河南兗州界論義，故遭值諸惡比丘以惡毒藥令慧思食，舉身爛壞五臟亦爛。Nanyue si da chanshi lishi yuanwen 南嶽思大禪師立誓願文. T. no.1933, 46: 787b06-11, b20-24, 791c11.

<sup>117</sup> According to Song Daofa, numerous monks in the Northern Dynasties only focused on reciting scriptures, without engaging in meditation contemplation or delving into the profound meaning of the scriptures. The practice of Theravada meditation was widespread, and monks received patronage from the imperial courts of Northern Wei and Northern Qi. Song Daofa 宋道發, “Huisi mofa sixiang zhi yanjiu” 慧思末法思想之研究, *Journal of Minnan Buddhist College*, n. 2, (1999): 38.

In active response to the era of dharma degeneration, Huisi, as he repeated in the “Lishi yuanwen”, transcribed the *Paramita Sūtra* and *Lotus Sūtra* in golden characters.<sup>118</sup> While the *Jingde lu*’s account mentions the production of these scriptures, it does not directly associate it with either Huisi’s vows or the prevailing dharma degeneration. Instead, the *Jingde lu* introduces the background of the scripture-making process as follows: “[Huisi] responded to the requests from his followers and, supported by both Buddhists and laities, [he] created the golden characters’ *Paramita Sūtra* and *Lotus Sūtra*.”<sup>119</sup> The rhetoric seems more inclined to highlight the popularity of Huisi’s sermons, by which he gained patronage from his followers.

In contrast, both the *Gaoseng zhuan* and Tiantai texts underscore the significance of dharma degeneration as a crucial background motivating Huisi’s decisions and actions. For instance, Huisi declared, “I upheld the *Lotus Sūtra* during the age of dharma degeneration,”<sup>120</sup> “The Qi regime is about to collapse, and Buddhism is supposed to die.”<sup>121</sup> Huisi even cautioned Zhiyi against being the one responsible for ending the lineage during the age of dharma degeneration.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> 在南定州，刺史請講摩訶衍義一遍。是時多有眾惡論師，競起惡心作大惱亂，復作種種諸惡方便，斷諸檀越不令送食。經五十日唯遣弟子化得以濟身命，于時發願，我為是等及一切眾生，誓造金字摩訶衍般若波羅蜜一部。……發此願已即便教化作如是言，我造金字摩訶般若波羅蜜經。 *Nanyue si da chanshi lishi yuanwen* 南嶽思大禪師立誓願文. T. no.1933, 46: 787b27-c03, c10-11.

<sup>119</sup> 其他隨叩而應，以道俗所施造金字般若法華經。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 0431b14-15.

<sup>120</sup> 我於釋迦末法受持法華。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0562c06.

<sup>121</sup> 然齊祚將傾，佛法應滅。 *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. X. no.1513, 75: 0263b20.

<sup>122</sup> 南岳手持如意，臨席讚之曰，可謂法付法臣法王無事。復謂師曰，吾久羨南岳，恨法無所委。汝粗得其門，當傳燈化物。莫作最後斷種人也。最後謂，末法也，師既奉訓，不獲從往南岳。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 0181c11-15.

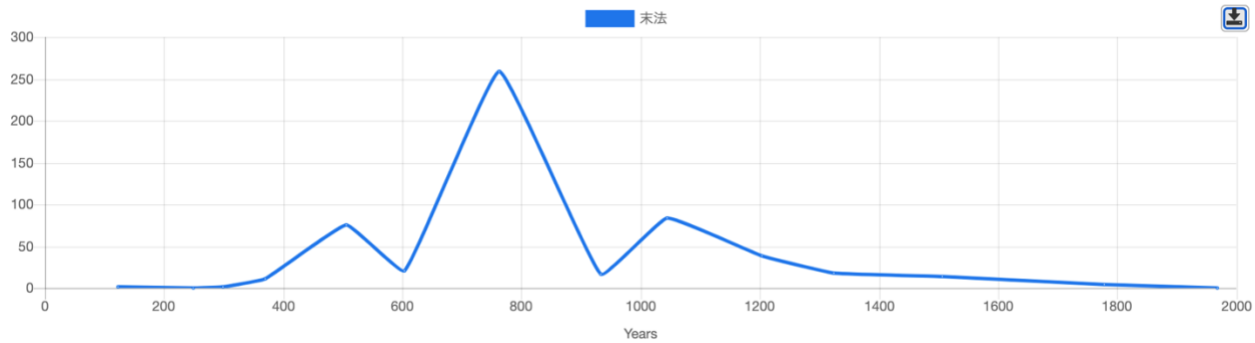
The various interpretations regarding the background of the production of the golden-character scriptures and the different attitudes towards dharma degeneration raise the following questions: Why did Chan texts intentionally avoid including references to dharma degeneration and what was the general opinion about the dharma degeneration within the Chan context?

Scholars have noted that the idea of dharma degeneration was a contentious topic of discussion in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century China, during which it greatly fueled the growth of the Pure Land movement and the prosperity of the Sanjie jiao 三階教.<sup>123</sup> A lexical statistical survey on the concept “*mofa*” 末法 (dharma degeneration) in the CBETA database reveals some interesting patterns.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> For more information on this topic, see Liu Yi 劉屹, “Fomie zhihou: zhongguo fojiao mofa sixiang de xingqi” 佛滅之後: 中國佛教末法思想的興起. *Tang Yanjiu* 唐研究, v.23 S1, (2017): 493-515.-Nishimoto Teruma 西本照真, “chūgoku jōdo kyō to san kai kyō niokeru mappō shisō no ichi” 中国浄土教と三階教における末法思想の位置, *Journal of religious studies*, 65 (3), (1991), 379-397. Takao Giken 高雄義堅, “Mappō shisō to shoka no taido I, II” 末法思想と諸家の態度(上)(下), *Journal of History of Chinese Buddhism*. v.1 n.1, (1973): 1-20, v.1 n. 3, (1973): 47-70.

<sup>124</sup> Liu Yi points out that both Sanskrit terms, *saddharmavipralopa* and *Pascimakāla*, are translated as “*mofa*” in Chinese. However, it is essential to distinguish between them; the former signifies the general period following the Buddha’s demise, while the latter refers to the era of dharma degeneration, contrasting with the periods of true dharma and semblance dharma. Technically, the concept of “dharma degeneration” does not exist in Indian Buddhism; rather, it was constructed by Chinese Buddhism. Therefore, it is inaccurate to presume that “*mofa*” necessarily implies dharma degeneration. The association between “*mofa*” and dharma degeneration only emerges within the context of the three periods teachings. Here, to provide a preliminary overview of the discussions about “*mofa*” across different time periods, I conducted a cursory search in CBETA without further delving into the nuanced meanings of “*mofa*” in distinct contexts. See Liu Yi 劉屹, “Hewei mofa” 何謂“末法”, *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies*, v.4 n.1, (2021): 70.



**Figure 1.** The statistics of the term “*mofa*” in the documents across various dynasties in the CBETA database.

The appearance of the term “*mofa*” exhibited a notable increase from 600 to 750, approximately echoing the period from the Sui-Tang transition to the end of the An Lushan Rebellion.

Subsequently, there was a discernible decline, reaching its nadir during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms era. Following this, there was a period of relatively stagnant growth during the Northern Song dynasty, but it could not match the zenith observed during the Tang dynasty.

Thereafter, the rate gradually diminished, with no subsequent resurgence. As the graph demonstrates, the frequency of “*mofa*” does not always correlate positively with the level of social stability. Despite a decrease following the An Lushan Rebellion, there was no significant rise during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, the transitional period of multiple regimes’ fragmentation, nor during the subsequent dynastic transitions after the Song dynasty. Why was that?

*Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄, a prominent Buddhist anthology by Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, serves as a valuable source for this investigation. Although Yanshou advocated the integration of scriptural teachings and upheld the Pure Land belief, his

fundamental standpoint remained rooted in Chan Buddhism.<sup>125</sup> Throughout his discourse, Yanshou repeatedly discussed the topic of dharma degeneration. On one hand, he acknowledged the arrival of dharma degeneration and the apathy of sentient beings. On the other hand, however, he expressed a positive affirmation regarding the possibility of attaining enlightenment.

The prescription that Yanshou offers is the Chan teaching, as he states, “I heard that in the ten directions of the Buddha land, there is only the one vehicle dharma that reveals the truth through expedient teachings, directly pointing at one’s true mind.”<sup>126</sup> The rhetoric emphasized focusing on one’s internal mind rather than the external world. He further elaborated, “If [the mind] used to be defiled but now it is pure, [it means that] the purity has a beginning. Once there is a beginning there is an end, and thus it is not the permanent purity. [But if one] believes that affliction is exactly the wisdom, [he will gain] permanent purity. That is because it raises faith by extolling the original nature. [One] is inherently a Buddha, and thus there is no progress to make.”<sup>127</sup> Later, this emphasis on the internal mind and self-realization was further developed in the Song dynasty, during which the idea of dharma degeneration evolved into an entirely subjective state of mind.

The “Zhengdao ge” 證道歌 (Song of the Right Way) by Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄覺 reflects a typical Chan master’s perspective on attaining enlightenment during the age of dharma

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<sup>125</sup> Different from Song Chan masters who asserted the superiority of Chan as an independent tradition over other Buddhist teachings within the scriptural tradition, Yongming Yanshou embraced an inclusive perspective on Chan. As Albert Welter observes, Yanshou conceptualized Chan and the broader Buddhist tradition as two interconnected facets of a unified whole. According to Yanshou, the principal practice of Pure Land faith, namely, the Bodhisattva practice, is inherently intertwined with his overarching, universal understanding of the Chan concept. For more information, see Albert Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu: A Special Transmission Within the Scriptures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 11-43.

<sup>126</sup> 聞說十方佛土中，唯有一乘法。開權顯實，直指自心。 *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄. T. no.2016, 48: 0561a14.

<sup>127</sup> 若昔染今淨，淨則有始，始即必終，非常淨也。信煩惱即菩提，方為常淨。由稱本性而發心故，本來是佛，更無所進。 *Ibid.* 0561a27-b01.

degeneration. Its inclusion in the *Zongjing lu* implies Yanshou's agreement with Xuanjue's viewpoint.

Lament the dharma degeneration! Truly, it is a challenging era. Sentient beings find themselves with limited fortune, and the prospects for improvement seem scarce. [We are] distanced from the time of sages, which has led to deep-seated erroneous views. While the evil forces are strong, the dharma is waning, which have given rise to bitterness and disasters. Upon encountering the Buddha's teaching on sudden enlightenment, [one] fervently wishes to eliminate [all sufferings], breaking through obstacles like shattering a tile. While the mind may strive for enlightenment, it is the body that experiences the suffering. Instead of complaining or blaming others, one must introspect. To put an end to the unceasing karma, one must refrain from disparaging the Buddha's authentic teachings.

嗟末法，惡時代，眾生薄福難調制。去聖遠兮邪見深，魔強法弱多冤害。聞說如來頓教門，恨不滅除令瓦碎。作在心，殃在身，不須怨訴更尤人。欲得不招無間業，莫謗如來正法輪。<sup>128</sup>

Indeed, it is unfortunate for sentient beings living in the age of dharma degeneration. However, the degraded environment does not entirely extinguish the possibility of attaining Buddhahood due to the Buddha's new approach of the "teaching of sudden enlightenment." As emphasized in the song, one should place their faith in this authentic Buddha dharma. Nevertheless, the teaching of sudden enlightenment is not an elixir because the salvation requires individual effort. As both Xuanjue and Yanshou confirm people's potential to attain enlightenment, they shifted the rhetoric of the original description of dharma degeneration by highlighting the power of one's agency in the pursuit of enlightenment. Later, this song became a

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<sup>128</sup> *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄. T. no.2016, 48: 0652b20-b23.

recurring verse in Recorded Sayings and Chan historiographies, implying the wide acceptance of this idea.<sup>129</sup>

Another perspective on dharma degeneration involves the complete internalization of the external environment into one's mind state. The Northern Song Chan master Longmen Foyan 龍門佛眼, a dharma heir of Wuzu Fayuan 五祖法演, expounded this viewpoint in his recorded sayings. Here is an excerpt:

It is a well-known belief that there exists the age of right dharma, the age of semblance dharma, and the age of dharma degeneration. [However, I,] the mountain monk, said that the dharma itself does not have right, resemblance, or degeneration. The Buddha's dharma remains perpetually upheld in the world. When one obtains it, he will find himself in the age of right dharma; when one loses it, he will find himself in the age of dharma resemblance or degeneration. 尋常說正法，像法，末法。山僧道法無正像末，佛法常在世間。得時便是正法，失時便是像末法。<sup>130</sup>

The concept of dharma degeneration, accordingly, underwent a transformation, shifting from a notion of an objective time period to a metaphor for a deluded state of mind. This reinterpretation eventually redirected the anxiety about the era towards the concern about the spiritual practice of individuals. Notably, this evolution found resonance with the emergence of a popular *gong'an* titled “Wuzhu visiting Mt. Wutai”:

In the past, the monk Wuzhu made a pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai to pay homage to Mañjuśrī. Upon arriving at the base of the mountain, he lodged at a monastery, where he encountered an elder monk. A while later, the monk asked Wuzhu, “Where did you come from?” Wuzhu replied, “I came from the South.” The monk asked, “How is Buddhism faring there lately?” Wuzhu responded, “[Unfortunately,] the *bikshus* in the age of dharma degeneration do not earnestly

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<sup>129</sup> For example, it presents in the *Jingde chuan denglu* and the *Liangeng huiyao*. Song monk Yanqi 彦琪 and Zhine 知訥 had a commentary work to Yongjia's “Zhengdao ge,” which was compiled in the *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong* 禪門諸祖師偈頌.

<sup>130</sup> *Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄. X. no.1315, 68: 0219a22-24.

observe precepts.” The monk asked, “How many [of them]?” Wuzhu estimated, “Perhaps around three hundred, or maybe five hundred.” Wuzhu [, in turn,] asked, “How do you maintain Buddhism here?” The monk replied, “Commoners and sages coexist, just like the mingling of dragons and snakes.” Wuzhu continued to ask, “How many Buddhists are there?” The monk said, “Front three three, back three three.”

昔無著和尚游五臺，禮拜文殊。到山下投一寺宿，遇一老僧。祇待次，問無著曰：“上人自何而來？”無著曰：“南方來。”老僧曰：“南方佛法近日如何？”無著曰：“末法比丘少奉戒律。”僧曰：“多少眾？”著曰：“或三百，或五百。”著問：“和尚此間佛法如何住持？”僧曰：“凡聖同居，龍蛇混雜。”著曰：“多少眾？”僧曰：“前三三，後三三。”<sup>131</sup>

While Wuzhu yearned to meet Mañjuśrī on his fervent pilgrimage, he failed to recognize the Bodhisattva disguised as an elder monk because he had not yet attained the “dharma eye.” During the conversation, Wuzhu expressed his concern and discontent about the decline of dharma and inquired about the condition of Buddhism in this sacred realm. To his surprise, he was informed that the situation here was nearly identical. This exchange, in fact, serves as a reflection of Wuzhu’s own delusion, as he tirelessly sought a “Buddha” or a “Buddha Land” external to his own mind. The underlying teaching conveyed by this case is that with the dharma eye, a place of dharma degeneration could be transformed into an equivalent of the Buddha land. Conversely, remaining in delusion renders even a Buddha land no different from a place of dharma degeneration.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> *Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄. X. no.1315, 68: 179a11-a16. This *gongan* is documented in various sources, such as *Fenyang wude chanshi yulu* 汾陽無德禪師語錄 by Shishuang Chuyuan 石霜楚圓, *Dahui pujue chanshi yulu* 大慧普覺禪師語錄 by Xuefeng Yunwen 雪峰蘊聞, *Biyang lu* 碧岩錄 by Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤, and etc. Its extensive incorporation into Chan texts, particularly those from the Song and Ming dynasties, suggests that the case enjoyed significant prevalence during that era.

<sup>132</sup> Steven Heine examines the rhetoric, metaphor, and context of this *gong’an* story in detail. See Heine, “Visions, Divisions, Revisions: The Encounter between Iconoclasm and Supernaturalism in Kōan Cases about Mount Wu-t’ai.” In *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, edited by Steven Heine, Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 137-167.

It is intriguing to observe that the Chinese Chan masters' perspectives on dharma degeneration also had an impact on Japanese Zen masters. Although the Zen school emerged from the prevailing notion of Mappō, certain prominent Zen scholars contested the eschatological implications of this concept and substituted with their own interpretations. A compelling example of this stance can be seen in Dōgen, the founder of the Sōtō Zen, who ardently maintained that the genuine Mahāyāna doctrine as a universal teaching transcended the limitations of time and space.<sup>133</sup>

Given this analysis, it is reasonable to assert that the Chan compilers of the *denglu* series intentionally mitigated the influence of dharma degeneration in Huisi's hagiography, an episode that plays a critical role in shaping the portrayals of Huisi in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* and Tiantai accounts.<sup>134</sup>

#### **Issue 4. The Competition for Imperial Recognition**

In addition to examining Huisi and Zhiyi's practices and teachings, it is essential to explore their interactions with political authorities, as these are recounted differently in Chan and Tiantai texts. When considering the importance of imperial recognition in establishing orthodoxy within Buddhist factions, the revival of the Tiantai school during the 10<sup>th</sup> century was an excellent example because this revival was largely attributed to the considerable patronage of the

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<sup>133</sup> Kikufuji Myōdō 菊藤明道, "Zensha no mappō shisō" 禪者の末法思想. *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*. v. 21, Issue 1, (1972): 259.

<sup>134</sup> Chiang I-Pin notes that while Chan masters like Fayān Wenyi expressed a profound sense of urgency, *chan* Buddhism itself did not manifest intense anxiety towards dharma degeneration. This could be attributed to the resilience of *chan* Buddhism following the Huichang persecution. This historical adversity compelled *chan* scholars to shift their attention from the external environment to the internal discipline of the Buddhist community and the self-cultivation of Buddhist followers. See Chiang I-Pin 蔣義斌, "Fayan Wenyi de chanjiao sixiang" 法眼文益的禪教思想. *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, no. 13 (2000): 447.

Wuyue King.<sup>135</sup> Subsequently, during the early Song dynasty, the Tiantai school had to witness the rapid growth of the Chan school and its establishment of orthodox teaching within the Buddhist conventions. All these developments were primarily owing to the acknowledgment and support from the imperial court and high-ranking officials. As Foulk astutely observes, the fight for orthodoxy is essentially about seeking prestige, patronage, and privileges.<sup>136</sup> The close association between Buddhist factions and the imperial court thus became a robust indicator in justifying the orthodoxy amidst factional contention. In this context, the backing of the ruling authorities played a pivotal role in shaping the prominence and legitimacy of a particular Buddhist school. The patronage and support from the imperial court not only ensured the survival of certain Buddhist traditions but also solidified their standing within the broader religious landscape.

In comparison to the *Jingde lu*'s brief and simplistic account of Huisi's connection with the upper class, which states, "The ruler of Chen repeatedly conveyed greetings to him, and worshiped him as the great *chan* master,"<sup>137</sup> Daoxuan's narrative offers more insights into Huisi's journey to prominence. Despite being categorized into the division of "Chan Practitioner," Huisi was renowned for his remarkable predicative abilities: "Thus his predictions

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<sup>135</sup> Under the patronage of Wuyue King Qian Hongchu 錢弘俶, Tiantai monks retrieved their scriptures from Japan and Goryeo, which built the foundation for the revival of the Tiantai school in the Song dynasty. For more information, see Song Daofa 宋道發, "Wuyue wang Qian Hongchu yu Songdai Tiantai zong de fuxing" 吳越王錢弘俶與宋代天台宗的復興. In *Wuyue fojiao xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 吳越佛教學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe 宗教文化出版社, 2004). Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, "Tiantai zong zhi shuaiwei yu zhongxing" 天台宗之衰微與中興, *Fokuang Buddhist Journal*, 1, (1976): 28-56. Lai Jian-cheng 賴建成, "Wantang songchu Tiantai zong zai wuyue diqu de fazhan" 晚唐宋初天台宗在吳越地區的發展, *Yuan Kuang Journal of Buddhist Studies*, n.9, (2004): 299-324.

<sup>136</sup> Griffith Foulk, "Sung Controversies Concerning the 'Separate Transmission' of Ch'an." In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 221.

<sup>137</sup> 陳主屢致慰勞供養目為大禪師。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 0431a14.

were often proved to be true.”<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, his sermons were described as “miraculous and unpredictable,”<sup>139</sup> which added mystique and wisdom to his reputation. These exceptional qualities likely helped Huisi to be recognized by Huihao 慧高, the director of the monastic administration. Huihao, impressed by Huisi’s extraordinary nature, referred to him as “a miraculous person.”<sup>140</sup> With Huihao’s recommendation, Huisi’s connection with the emperor became pronounced. The emperor of Chen would pay formal visits to Huisi annually, showing deep respect and bowing before him.<sup>141</sup>

The *Shimen zhengtong* uses a similar strategy on this topic in portraying Huisi, but Zhipan shifts in rhetoric regarding Huisi’s rise to fame among bureaucrats. In Zhipan’s narrative, Huisi’s reputation is attributed to his exceptional preaching skills. It is said that Huisi was invited to different regions to give sermons on Mahāyāna doctrines to a number of government officials. For instance, “[Huisi] moved to Yingzhou and gave sermons on Mahāyāna doctrines to the governor Liu Huaibao;”<sup>142</sup> “[Huisi] arrived at the Kaiyue Monastery in Guangzhou, and was invited by local governors to lecture the *Paramita Sūtra*,”<sup>143</sup> “[Huisi] went to southern Dingzhou and gave sermons on Mahāyāna doctrines to local governors.”<sup>144</sup> According to Zhipan’s record, all these events occurred chronologically before Huisi’s encounter with Huihao and his

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<sup>138</sup> 故其往往傳事驗如合契。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0562c06.

<sup>139</sup> 說法倍常神異難測。 *Ibid.* 0563c15.

<sup>140</sup> 僧正慧高與諸學徒，相逢於路。曰，此神異人，如何至此。 *Ibid.* 0563c05-06.

<sup>141</sup> 每年陳主三信參勞。 *Ibid.* 0563c14.

<sup>142</sup> 四年至郢州，為刺史劉懷寶講摩訶衍義。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 0179a05.

<sup>143</sup> 五年至光州開岳寺，巴子立五百家，共刺史請講摩訶衍般若經。 *Ibid.* 0179b15-16.

<sup>144</sup> 八年至南定州，為刺史講摩訶衍。 *Ibid.* 0179b23-24.

acquisition of the imperial veneration. The change in rhetoric not only enriches Huisi's hagiography with more details but also highlights his identity as a successful preacher and an influential advocate of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Considering the historical fact that when Huisi was active, Mahāyāna doctrines were still relatively new in China and not widely accepted among Buddhists, it is not difficult to discern that Zhipan's account underscores Huisi's role as a pioneer who passionately propagated these innovative teachings in that prevailing chaotic social environment labeled as dharma degeneration. Moreover, as Zhipan mentions that Huisi faced opposition and assaults from "evil *bhikṣu*" multiple times due to his reformatory sermons, Huisi was thus more likely to be depicted as a religious hero and dharma protector in the *Shimen zhengtong*.

The rhetoric to stress imperial and bureaucratic patronage is also notable in Zhiyi's hagiography. In his account in the *Shimen zhengtong*, Zhiyi was not only treated as the preceptor to the emperor of Chen—" [Zhiyi] gave sermons on the *Human King Paramita Sūtra* to the emperor of Chen, who showed the highest respect by three prostrations,"<sup>145</sup> but also venerated by Emperor Yang of Sui, as "the emperor sent attendants to welcome [Zhiyi's arrival],"<sup>146</sup> and was even bestowed posthumous title "Venerable Fakong Baojue" by King Zhongyi of Wuyue Kingdom.<sup>147</sup> By extensively detailing Zhiyi's high regard in the imperial court, the *Shimen zhengtong*'s account implicitly promotes and solidifies the authority of the Tiantai school within Buddhism. It highlights Tiantai's significance and legitimacy as a prominent Buddhist tradition, acknowledged and revered by rulers and the imperial courts, which in turn enhances its status

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<sup>145</sup> 講仁王般若於陳帝，帝伸三拜之禮。 *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, X. no.1513, 75: 266b14-15.

<sup>146</sup> 煬帝遣使奉迎。 *Ibid.* 266c03.

<sup>147</sup> 吳越錢忠懿王追諡法空寶覺尊者。 *Ibid.* 266c23-24.

and influence among the broader Buddhist community. The association with the imperial court served to strengthen Tiantai's position and establish its orthodoxy, adding to the school's reputation and credibility.

In summary, compared to the oversimplified description regarding the Tiantai patriarchs' connections with the imperial court in the Chan texts, the Tiantai accounts offer more details to enrich the episodes of their interactions. By emphasizing Tiantai's strong ties with the political power and portraying Huisi and Zhiyi as prominent guests in the court and even preceptors of the rulers, the Tiantai compilers intended to display the orthodox status of the Tiantai school in the Buddhist conventions. The Chan compilers of the *denglu* series, on the contrary, attempted to weaken the influence of the Tiantai tradition, for the Chan school became the new "honored guest" of the Song imperial court.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this section, I conducted a close reading of the hagiographies of Huisi and Zhiyi preserved in four sources compiled from three perspectives, including the *Eminent Monk* series, Chan, and Tiantai traditions. Through textual comparison and analysis, I discussed the different perspectives and rhetoric adopted by the compilers in portraying these two figures and examined several essential issues implied in their writings. By using the primary sources as social indicators which, to some degree, reflect historical facts, I argue that the *denglu* series' intentional inclusion of Huisi and Zhiyi as eminent Chan masters was part of the Chan compilers' agenda to claim superiority of the Chan school over the Tiantai school. This implication can be seen from *Jingde lu*'s classification of the Tiantai scriptural teachings as inferior to Bodhidharma's teachings in mind transmission, from the inclusion of the entire

Tiantai school as a side branch in the Chan genealogical system, from the portrayals of Huisi and Zhiyi to accord with the unique Chan values on the Vinaya issue and dharma degeneration, and from the Chan compilers' intentional downplaying the Tiantai school's connections with political authorities.

Overall, these observations highlight the dynamic interactions, rivalries, and strategies employed by different Buddhist schools. The historiographical and hagiographical writing became a battlefield for different Buddhist schools to vie for influence, autonomy, and patronage, as shown how the writing shaped identities and narratives of the Chan and Tiantai traditions in this section. Only through careful textual comparisons, is it possible to gain insight into the complex interplay of religious, social, and political factors in creating the multi-faceted images of prominent historical figures.

In this case study, the Chan school exhibited a dual approach in shaping its own identity. On one hand, the Chan school broke free from the constraints of traditional Buddhist orders, challenging the established norms and practices, which infused the Chan school with a rebellious and iconoclastic spirit. On the other hand, the Chan school actively constructed its own new order and intended to position itself as a benchmark to evaluate other Buddhist institutions. Although the Chan school's alleged autonomy and independence had never been achieved in history, this ambition as a crucial aspect of Chan's narrative was critical to comprehend Chan's literature. The *Jingde chuan denglu*, as the first imperial-sanctioned Chan historiography, exemplifies the ambition of the Chan school in many ways, one of which, is reflected in its rewriting of hagiographies. In the next section, the Chan compilers capitalized on the "Three Sages of Tiantai" and portrayed them as the spokesmen for the unique Chan values.

## Case Study II

### Between Order and Disorder

#### The “Three Sages of Tiantai” in the Song Chan Historiographies

The historical connections between the Chan and Tiantai schools have been elaborated in the case study of Huisi and Zhiyi. However, apart from these two eminent patriarchs, three additional figures also maintain significant affiliations with the Tiantai school. The Tang dynasty monks, Fenggan, Hanshan, and Shide, were collectively venerated as the “Three Sages of Tiantai” 天台三聖 due to their residency at the Guoqing monastery 國清寺, the headquarter of the Tiantai school.<sup>148</sup> Unlike Huisi and Zhiyi, acknowledged as founding fathers and doctrinal philosophers, the origins of the “Three Sages” remain in mystery. They had earned renown as monk poets, eccentric hermits, and embodiments of both Buddhist deities and folk gods within cultural and religious contexts.<sup>149</sup> The clear distinctions between the Tiantai patriarchs and the

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<sup>148</sup> The “Three Sages of Tiantai” were semi-legendary figures, as their records exhibit conspicuous inconsistencies. Zanning astutely observed and commented on these irregularities within the hagiographies of the “Three Sages.” He points out that if Fenggan had indeed journeyed to Chang’an in the year of Xiantian 先天, their activities should have coincided with the reign of Emperor Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 684-690). However, Weishan Lingyou’s 為山靈佑 encounter with Hanshan during the reign of Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 805-820) implies their continued existence in the later years of the Tang dynasty. Zanning could not provide a satisfactory explanation for this discrepancy. 按封干先天中遊遨京室，知閻丘、寒山、拾得俱睿宗朝人也，奈何宣師《高僧傳》中……閻丘，武臣也，是唐初人。閻丘序記三人，不言年代，使人悶焉。復賜緋，乃文資也。夫如是，乃有二同姓名閻丘也。又大瀉祐公於憲宗朝遇寒山子，指其泐潭，仍逢拾得於國清，知三人是唐季葉時猶存。夫封干也，天台沒而京兆出；寒、拾也，先天在而元和逢。為年壽彌長耶？為隱顯不恒耶？《易》象有之，“小狐汔濟”，其此之謂乎！*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 832a29-b09.

<sup>149</sup> Hanshan as a recluse was said to have resided in seclusion on Mount Tiantai, where he engaged in *dhūta* practice. By the late Tang dynasty, the poems attributed to Hanshan, Fenggan, and Shide already appeared, while folk narratives surrounding the “Three Sages of Tiantai” likely began to coalesce. The earliest documented reference to the “Three Sages of Tiantai” appears in the recorded sayings of Northern Song Chan master Fenyang Shanzhao 汾陽善昭. During the early Song dynasty, the Guoqing monastery established the Sanxian tang 三賢堂 (Three Sages Hall) to honor Fenggan, Hanshan, and Shide. Depictions of Hanshan and Shide in artwork became prevalent from the Song dynasty onwards. They came to be revered as the *Hehe erxian* 和合二仙 (Two Immortals of Harmony), a designation first recorded during the Jiajing 嘉靖 and Wanli 萬曆 eras in the Ming dynasty. See Zhou Qi 周琦, “‘Tiantai sansheng’ yu ‘hehe erxian’ kao” 天台三聖與和合二仙考. In *Hanshanzi ji hehe wenhua guoji yantaohui lunwen ji* 寒山子暨和合文化國際研討會論文集 (Zhejiang: Zhejiang University Press, 2009), 262.

Three Sages have resulted in their separate treatment in scholarly discussions—while Huisi and Zhiyi are predominantly examined for their philosophical thoughts, Fenggan, Hanshan, and Shide undergo scrutiny for their literary works.<sup>150</sup>

Nevertheless, the collective analysis of the two Tiantai patriarchs and the Three Sages in the same section is justified by their recurrent appearances spanning from Fascicle 27 of the *Jingde lu* to Fascicle 2 of the *Wudeng huiyuan*, where they are identified from the “Chanmen dazhe” to the “Yinghua shengxian.” Such groupings within the *denglu* literature reflect the intricate criteria for admitting figures into these specialized sections in the Chan historiographies.

According to Bernard Faure’s categorization, the “Three Sages”, as *devata* who transgress the social norms, play a pivotal role in forming and promoting religious and political legitimacy.<sup>151</sup> If that is the scenario, they were expected to receive significant emphasis within the Tiantai tradition, as the Tiantai school could leverage their cultural value to broaden its influence. However, an examination of their hagiographies as collected in the Chan and Tiantai texts elucidates their different significances to the two traditions. In contrast to Huisi and Zhiyi, the “Three Sages” receive comparatively little emphasis in the Tiantai texts.

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<sup>150</sup> Among the extant works, several poems are attributed to Fenggan, alongside one fascicle of poems co-authored by Fenggan and Shide, included in the *Poetry Collection of Hanshanzi* 寒山子詩集. Hanshan was admired as a spiritual idol in 1950’-60’s by the Beat Generation of America, who discovered an accordance with Hanshan’s independent and rebellious spirit. Hanshan’s poems received wide acceptance in the West. There are several editions of English translations of Hanshan’s poems. Here are some examples: Robert Henricks, *The Poetry of Han-shan: A Complete, Annotated Translation of Cold Mountain* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990). Paul Rouzer, *A Buddhist Reading of the Hanshan Poems* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015). Christopher Nugent and Paul Rouzer, *The Poetry of Hanshan (Cold Mountain), Shide, and Fenggan* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016). For Huisi and Zhiyi, scholarship focuses on their thoughts and theories. Here are some examples. Zhang Fengleiz 張風雷, “A Preliminary Study on the Buddhist Thought of Huisi, the Tiantai School Peoneer: Questions regarding Early Tiantai Thought.” In *Buddhism: Religious Studies in Contemporary China Collection*, vol. 5 (2015): 106-121. Ji Wenjie, “Tiantai Zhiyi’s Idea of Tathāgatagarbha: The Relationship between the Fourfold Doctrine of Conversion and tathāgatagarbha.” *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Indogaku Bukkyogaku Kenkyu)* 71.2 (2023): 487–490.

<sup>151</sup> Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 96-97, 145.

*Fonzu tongji*: [During the reign of] Emperor Yang of Sui. Fenggan, the earthly manifestation of Maitriya; Hanshan, the earthly manifestation of Mañjuśrī; Shide, the earthly manifestation of Samantabhadra.

佛祖統紀：隋煬帝，豐干彌陀化現，寒山文殊化現，拾得普賢化現。<sup>152</sup>

*Shimen zhengtong*: In the seventeenth year [of Wude of Emperor Gaozong of Tang], chief of the prefecture Tiantai, Lüqiu Yin, met sage Fenggan, as well as Hanshan and Shide in the Guoqing Monastery.

釋門正統：[唐高宗武德]十七年，天台太守閻丘胤遇散聖豐干，及遇寒山拾得於國清寺。<sup>153</sup>

While the *Fozu tongji* presents a rather succinct depiction of the “Three Sages”, the *Shimen zhengtong* introduces them with merely a single sentence within a brief chronicle record. This disparity becomes evident when the “Three Sages” received pronounced reverence in the Chan tradition, where they were portrayed in a special section. It can be said that their roles in the Tiantai tradition have been comparatively downplayed. This distinction brings forth intriguing questions that propel the direction of this study. Despite their limited involvement in the establishment of the Tiantai tradition, the “Three Sages” hold enduring value as semi-legendary figures who are capable of enhancing Tiantai historiographies and extending the influence of the Tiantai school. But why were they understated in the Tiantai tradition while being given special attention in the Chan tradition? How were they portrayed in the Chan historiographies? And what is the significance of upholding the “Three Sages” to the Chan school? In this section, I will address these questions by delving into the unique qualities of the “Three Sages” and their congeniality with the newly institutionalized Chan school.

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<sup>152</sup> *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 0462b02-03.

<sup>153</sup> *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. X. no.1513, 75: 0311a17-18.

## “Madness” as the Essential Quality

The earliest hagiographies of the Three Sages can be found in Zanning’s *Song gaoseng zhuan*, which was completed in 988. As this compilation predates the *Jingde chuan denglu*, the portrayal of the Three Sages largely reflects their representation within the broader context of Song Buddhism. In this work, Fenggan, Hanshan, and Shide are grouped under the division of “*gantong*” 感通 (Wonder Workers). The hagiographies of Hanshan and Shide are affiliated with Fenggan’s account. A noteworthy common feature that resonates throughout the portrayals of these three figures is the descriptions of their apparent madness and eccentric behavior.

To facilitate a textual comparison between the narratives preserved in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and the *Jingde chuan denglu*, I will initially provide an overview of Zanning’s rendition of the Three Sages’ hagiographies and generally outline their portrayals by highlighting significant episodes within their respective accounts.

Among the three, Fenggan, as the eldest one, occupied the most prominent position. He was depicted as having eyebrow-length short hair, suggesting that he might not have been an ordained monk. This supposition is attested by subsequent descriptions of his work in the Guoqing monastery. Working as a hard laborer, Fenggan’s daily responsibilities included grinding grains and overseeing the provision of meals for the resident monks. Zanning categorized Fenggan within the same classification as Wanhui, a thaumaturgical monk renowned for his prophecies about Tang politics. Several miraculous occurrences are detailed in Fenggan’s hagiographies. One such account highlights his ability to tame wild animals—one of the essential traits of the eminent monks whose compassion and spiritual attainment could influence even beasts.<sup>154</sup> There was an incident where resident monks were astonished to witness Fenggan

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<sup>154</sup> In medieval Chinese Buddhist narratives, many eminent monks and nuns are said to have the experience of converting beasts, like tigers, to Buddhism, and this was considered an achievement of their extraordinary spiritual

entering the monastery astride a tiger, all the while reciting verses extolling Buddhist principles. This event solidified the reverence and respect accorded to Fenggan. The most important episode in Fenggan's account revolves around his encounter with Lüqiu Yin 閩丘胤, the provincial governor of Taizhou 台州. Suffering from a debilitating headache, Lüqiu sought treatment but failed. Fenggan presented himself before Lüqiu and, spraying water from a sacred vessel, successfully cured his headache. Realizing Fenggan's extraordinary nature, Lüqiu solicited prophetic insights from him, which led to the revelation of the divine identities of Hanshan and Shide. While Fenggan is the focal figure, Hanshan and Shide assume supporting roles, serving as a foil to Fenggan's personality. It is said that Fenggan and Shide, working together as laborers in the kitchen, often engaged in enigmatic dialogues. Despite their eccentricity and estrangement from the rest of the monastic community, they shared a close relationship with Fenggan, implying an ineffable connection among the three. During the encounter with Lüqiu, Fenggan directed him to pay homage to Mañjuśrī at the Guoqing monastery. Furthermore, he disclosed that the bodhisattva had assumed the guise of a laborer toiling in the kitchen yet without explicitly indicating this embodiment was Hanshan or Shide. Later, when Lüqiu visited the Guoqing monastery, he discovered that Fenggan's former room had long been vacant but bore traces of wild creatures like tigers and leopards. Lüqiu then found Hanshan and Shide, paying

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state. See Huaiyu Chen, *In the Land of Tigers and Snakes: Living with Animals in Medieval Chinese Religions*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023), 63-99. Huang Jing-jia examines the painting of the Four Sleepers prevalent during the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties. The composition of the Four Sleepers includes the "Three Sages" and the tiger that Fenggan rode. Remarkably, the tiger underwent a transformation from a wild beast to a companion of eminent monks, symbolizing their ability to tame and harmonize even the most untamed forces. Later, many Chan masters wrote eulogies for this painting, which exemplifies the popular concept of "Playing in Samadhi" in the Song and Yuan dynasties. See Huang, "Songyuan chanlin zhong Hanshan deng sishui yixiang de xingcheng jiqi zansong de youxi chanji" 宋元禪林中寒山「四睡」意象的形成及其讚頌的遊戲禪機, *Tamkang Journal of Chinese Literature*, Issue 33, (2015): 1-39.

respects to them. The two, in contrast, blamed Fenggan for spreading rumors and left the monastery without returning.<sup>155</sup>

Towards the end of Fenggan's account, there is an episode depicting his pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai, where he encountered an elder and asked him if he was Mañjuśrī. Rather than offering a direct response, the elder told him that it was impossible for two Mañjuśrīs to coexist in the world. This response implies that either Hanshan or Shide was the genuine embodiment of Mañjuśrī, yet Fenggan remains oblivious to their identities. Curiously, this arrangement appears to be logically inconsistent, given that Fenggan had already revealed to Lüqiu the presence and location of Mañjuśrī in the previous episode. The *Jingde lu*'s compilers probably recognized this incongruity and thus rearranged this episode, inserting it to the place before Fenggan's encounter with Lüqiu.

Following Fenggan's hagiography are Hanshan and Shide's accounts. In the opening of Hanshan's hagiography, Zanning particularly highlights that Hanshan's madness was widely recognized by his contemporaries. Characterized as a destitute and haggard man clad in ragged clothes, Hanshan wore a hat fashioned from tree bark and shoes made of wooden clogs. He did not have an official name but was named after the Cold Cliff he dwelled around. Periodically, he would visit Shide in the Guoqing monastery to procure leftover meals from resident monks. Portrayed as a figure featuring in madness, Hanshan's peculiarity manifested across numerous occasions. His actions defied conventional logic, and his speech baffled ordinary people. When he went to the Guoqing monastery, he "either leisurely strolled along the corridors, or vehemently yelled to humiliate people, or even expletively hurled toward the heavens."<sup>156</sup> His

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<sup>155</sup> *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0831b02-c04.

<sup>156</sup> 或廊下徐行，或時叫噪凌人，或望空曼罵。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0831c14-15.

behavior was intolerable to the resident monks, and thus he was expelled from the monastery. In response, Hanshan simply turned away, departing with a laugh. During Lüqiu's visit to Hanshan, monk Daoqiao described him as afflicted with a form of "madness," and no one understood the rationale behind Lüqiu, a dignitary official, paying homage to this "madman." In contrast to his eccentric demeanor, Hanshan demonstrated a talent for conveying Buddhist teachings through verse. After Hanshan and Shide left the monastery and eventually disappeared into the Cold Cliffs, monk Daoqiao 道翹 gathered over two hundred verses of Hanshan and compiled them into a collection. Later, Chan master Caoshan Benji 曹山本寂 annotated and commented on these works.<sup>157</sup>

In conjunction with the ambiguous backgrounds of Fenggan and Hanshan, Shide was described as an abandoned child and was brought back to the Guoqing monastery by Fenggan. Shide's portrayal contains elements of both madness and miraculous traces. Initially assigned with work within the dining hall, he was entrusted to oversee incense and lighting. However, one day, Shide was found sitting on the chief seat and eating in front of the Buddhist statues. Moreover, he even referred to Kaundinya, the chief arhat among the first five disciples of the Buddha, as a "lesser fruit *śrāvaka*" 聲聞乘 (voice-hearer), and laughed heartily as if no one was there. Prompted by other monks, he was subsequently demoted to dishwashing duties in the kitchen. After that, he was described as conducting a series of miraculous traces, which ultimately won him the title of "a recluse worthy who was the response body of bodhisattva" by the local government.<sup>158</sup> In one such occurrence, the food prepared by monastery cooks was always messed up by birds. Shide thus resorted to striking the statues of the protective deity

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<sup>157</sup> *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0831c09-0832a04.

<sup>158</sup> 時牒申州縣，郡符下云：“賢士隱遁，菩薩應身，宜用旌之。”號拾得為賢士。 *Ibid.* 0832a19-20.

outside the Sangharama hall. To everyone's surprise, the deity appeared in the dreams of all resident monks, complaining about Shide's fierce actions. Remarkably, the unanimous reporting of the same dream the following morning prompted the recognition of Shide's divine nature and extraordinary qualities. In another occurrence, Shide guided a herd of cows to the sangha hall while the monks were engaged in a repentance ritual. In response to the reprimands from the chief seat, Shide proved that those cows were actually the deceased monks of the monastery. This revelation left the monks astonished and propelled them to realize that Shide, as a manifestation of a bodhisattva, was imparting a profound lesson.<sup>159</sup>

Compared to Fenggan and Shide, whose hagiographies recount various miraculous occurrences, Hanshan's portrayal leans more towards a wild man transgressing social norms. In other words, while all three are classified as "Wonder Workers," their depictions emphasize different aspects. Zanning aligns Fenggan with Wanhui due to their shared attributes such as unpredictable conduct, incomprehensible speeches, and divine traces.<sup>160</sup> However, beyond these features, it is the characteristics of madness and eccentricity that are prominently underscored in

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<sup>159</sup> *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0832a05-28.

<sup>160</sup> Indeed, mad monks hold a significant role in Chinese Buddhism, particularly in the context of Chan Buddhism. It is crucial to discern a distinction, however, between mad monks such as the Three Sages of Tiantai and thaumaturgical monks exemplified by figures like Wanhui. Despite both groups being characterized as eccentrics, their hagiographies reveal nuanced differences. Thaumaturgical monks tend to be depicted with episodes emphasizing their supernatural abilities, while mad monks often display exaggerated behaviors in deliberate defiance of conventional norms. Notably, both groups are upheld within the Chan school. Thaumaturgical deeds are prominently praised in early Chan texts, portraying supernatural abilities acquired through Chan practice. However, as the Chan school became institutionalized, Chan texts ceased to actively promote such extraordinary feature, although the theme of supernatural power remained prevalent. On the other hand, mad monks, with their eccentricity and iconoclastic tendencies, align closely with the rise of the Chan school as a distinct transmission challenging traditional Buddhist conventions. It is essential to recognize that thaumaturgical monks and mad monks, in fact, represent distinct traditions—the former originating from Indian Buddhism, while the latter finds inspiration in Chinese culture, specifically the spirit of madness promoted in Confucian and Daoist texts. In this sense, the feature of madness in these monks reflects the domestication of Buddhism, which blends with Chinese cultural elements. The demarcation between the two groups is not always clear-cut in Chinese Buddhist hagiographies, as thaumaturgical monks might also exhibit madness and iconoclastic behavior. Both sets of values are strategically utilized by the institutionalized Chan school to underscore its unique identity within the broader Buddhist convention.

the hagiographies of the “Three Sages” in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. Their cryptic manners of expression often left people confused. For instance, when someone sought guidance from Fenggan, his response would always simply be, “Complying with the time,” without any further explanation.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, the conversations between Hanshan and Shide in the kitchen were so enigmatic that those who overheard them could not comprehend the meaning.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, their madness and iconoclastic behaviors often distanced them from the social norms and monastic regulations upheld by the regular monks in the Guoqing monastery. Fenggan was frequently depicted as being in a “state of madness,”<sup>163</sup> particularly when expounding Buddhist doctrines around the capital region during the era of Xiantian 先天. Hanshan, labeled as “a man of madness,”<sup>164</sup> exhibited numerous behaviors that defied conventional comprehension, as detailed earlier. When Shide received reprimands from the chief seat, he was addressed as a “madman.”<sup>165</sup> This quality of “madness,” rooted in their unpredicted and unconventional actions, actually derives from the long history of appreciating madness as an extraordinary personality in Chinese tradition rather than Indian Buddhism.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> 人或借問，止對曰隨時二字而已更無他語。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0831b04-05.

<sup>162</sup> 爨訖二人晤語，潛聽者多不體解。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0831b11-13.

<sup>163</sup> 風狂之相過之。 *Ibid.* 0831b10.

<sup>164</sup> 風狂之士弗可恒度推之。 *Ibid.* 0831c09-10.

<sup>165</sup> 風人何以喧礙說戒。 *Ibid.* 0832a23.

<sup>166</sup> Huang Jing-jia highlights that this unique category of monks is rarely found in Indian Buddhism. Unlike the ascetic practitioners lauded in the Indian Buddhist milieu, these mad monks demonstrated profound insight and exceptional spiritual attainment through the deliberate enactment of madness. Their cryptic speech and iconoclastic behavior can be construed as deliberate performances, embodying the essence of “*youxi sanmei*” 遊戲三昧 (Playing in Samādhi). The concept of *youxi sanmei* refers to the Chan practitioner utilizing Samadhi as a foundation, engaging freely in various forms of teaching, guiding, and transforming within the world. It involves skillfully adapting to different situations and sentient beings, employing appropriate expedient means to help them attain the

In the *Analects*, madness was for the first time endowed with positive meanings such as “passionate” and “enthusiastic.” Confucius once expressed his preference for befriending individuals who were both ardent and prudent, as he believed that the ardent would drive progress and the prudent would prevent wrongdoing.<sup>167</sup> Mencius, too, acknowledged and lauded madness as a decisive and progressive demeanor.<sup>168</sup> In early Confucian classics, madness did not signify a state of mental illness or an appearance of a detestable look. Rather, it contains a sense of surpassing conventional societal limitations and projecting an air of dignified aloofness. The cultural meanings of madness did not solely reside within the Confucian tradition but also found resonance within Daoism. One of the most renowned madmen in history can be found in *Zhuangzi* 莊子, where Jian Wu 肩吾 and Lian Shu 連叔 engage in a dialogue about a reclusive madman named Jie Yu 接輿. While Jian Wu, representing regular people with conventional thinking, dismissed Jie Yu’s speech as incomprehensible and erratic, Lian Shu’s response—likely reflects Zhuangzi’s perspective, criticized Jian Wu’s conventional thought. Lian Shu contends that Jian Wu’s failure to comprehend Jie Yu’s speech, ultimately, stems from his inferior spiritual state.<sup>169</sup> This transformation of madness, from an admired personality to an

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benefits of enlightenment. See Huang Jing-jia 黃敬家, “Huanhua zhiying: Tangdai kuangseng chuiji de xingxiang jiqi yihan” 幻化之影：唐代狂僧垂跡的形象及其意涵, *Taiwan Journal of Buddhist Studies*, (2010): 59-98.

<sup>167</sup> 不得中行而與之，必也狂狷乎！狂者進取，狷者有所不為也。Yang Bojun 杨伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1982), 141.

<sup>168</sup> 狂者又不可得，欲得不屑不潔之士而與之，是獯也，是又其次也。Yang Bojun 杨伯峻, *Mengzi yizhu* 論語譯註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1988), 341.

<sup>169</sup> 肩吾問於連叔曰：“吾聞言於接輿，大而無當，往而不返。吾驚怖其言，猶河漢而無極也；大有逕庭，不近人情焉。”連叔曰：“其言謂何哉？”曰：“藐姑射之山，有神人居焉，肌膚若冰雪，淖約若處子，不食五穀，吸風飲露。乘雲氣，御飛龍，而遊乎四海之外。其神凝，使物不疵癘而年穀熟。吾以是狂而不信也。”連叔曰：“然，瞽者無以與乎文章之觀，聾者無以與乎鍾鼓之聲。豈唯形骸有聾盲哉？夫知亦有之。是其言也，猶時女也。之人也，之德也，將旁礴萬物，以為一世蕲乎亂，孰弊弊焉以天下為事！之人也，物莫之傷，大浸稽天而不溺，大旱、金石流、土山焦而不熱。是其塵垢粃糠，將猶陶鑄堯、舜者也，孰肯以物為事！宋人資章甫而適諸越，越人斷髮文身，無所用之。堯治天下之民，平海內之政，往見四子藐姑射之

esteemed spiritual state, thus permeated from the Confucian tradition into Daoist literature. Over successive dynasties, madmen were gradually perceived as outliers by formal political establishments; nonetheless, they continued to be celebrated and upheld within literary and cultural contexts. This phenomenon reached a zenith during the Wei and Jin periods, epitomized by literati such as Ruan Ji 阮籍 and Ji Kang 嵇康, who harnessed madness as a weapon to challenge the hypocritical codes of ethics. Their madness was embodied in their iconoclastic personalities, characterized by their readiness to break societal confines in pursuit of freedom.<sup>170</sup> During the Tang dynasty, a large number of poets displayed their affinity for “madness.” Among these, Li Bai stood out as the most notable one. He likened himself to Jie Yu, who unabashedly ridiculed Confucius.<sup>171</sup> The madness expressed in these poems symbolized the poets’ inherent innocence, sincerity in their literary pursuits, and unwavering confidence in their talents.

In essence, the portrayals of the “Three Sages” encompass the multifaceted dimensions of “madness” in a positive light. Their enthusiasm and resilience maintained their independence, preventing them from blindly following the conventions; their superior spiritual state distanced them from regular individuals, which automatically “encoded” their speeches; their iconoclastic behaviors were used for confronting and distaining customary regulations; their willingness to conduct miraculous power was aimed at offering salvation with their talents and compassion. The mad monks present a non-dual perspective, transcending the binary distinctions between

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山，汾水之陽，窅然喪其天下焉。” See Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Zhuangzi jinzhu jinyi* 莊子今註今譯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009), 25-26.

<sup>170</sup> Liu Mengxi 劉夢溪, *Zhongguo wenhua de kuangzhe jingshen* 中國文化的狂者精神 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店, 2012), 33-39.

<sup>171</sup> 我本楚狂人，鳳歌笑孔丘。“Lushan yaoji lushiyu xuzhou” 廬山謠寄盧侍御虛舟. In *Li Bai ji jiaozhu* 李白集校註 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1980), 863.

sacred and secular, normal and abnormal, and regular and irregular. In these Chinese mad monks, their madness, while defying rationality, represents a spiritual existence that transcends conventional worldly values such as ethics, morality, and normality. This contrasts with Foucault's notion of madness, which is often viewed as a rejection of humanity and an affliction deemed unacceptable to reason.<sup>172</sup> The Three Sages exemplify how “madness” can serve as a powerful force for asserting individuality, attaining enlightenment, and effecting positive change in the mundane world.

### **The “Three Sages” as Chan ideals**

In the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, the Three Sages are identified as “Chanmen dazhe”. The character “*da* 達” carries multiple meanings in classical Chinese, encompassing both “distinguished or eminent” and “thoroughly insightful or penetrating.” The former likely denotes the high status achievable within a hierarchical framework, while the latter refers to one's supreme spiritual state. Both interpretations are justifiable in understanding this title. Notably, although the majority of enlightened Chan masters find their place within the well-defined genealogical system in the main body of the *Jingde lu*, these exceptional *chan* practitioners, who are equally enlightened yet exist outside the established order, are brought together within this distinct section. It can be asserted that the incorporation of this group into Chan historiography serves two purposes. On one hand, it indicates the acknowledgment and embrace of enlightened individuals beyond the traditional “master-disciple” transmission relationship. On the other hand,

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<sup>172</sup> See Liu Wan-li 劉婉俐, “Shensheng yu fengkuang: Zangchuan fojiao de fengxingzhe chuantong vs. fuke fengkuang bingshi de quanli lunshu” 神聖與瘋狂：藏傳佛教的「瘋行者」傳統 vs. 傅柯瘋狂病史的權利論述. *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly*, v.32 n.10 (2004): 156-159.

it validates the existence of varied approaches to enlightenment yet with an emphasis on the *chan* practice and tradition.

If we consider the criteria employed by the *Eminent Monks* series to justify Buddhist ideals as “conventional,” it follows that the *Jingde lu* assumed a pivotal role in adapting this criterion to an innovative value system redefined by the Chan contexts. The section of “Chanmen dazhe” in the *Jingde lu* serves as a bridge, effectively connecting the two categories of Buddhist ideals—the conventional eminent monks and the earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities. Subsequently, the portrayals of these individuals assembled within the “Yinghua shengxian” sections essentially amalgamate two dimensions—1) the semblance to typical Chan masters, characterized by notable similarities to those within the genealogical lineages, which can be viewed as a method of “accommodating” the traditional Buddhist ideals within the context of Chan; 2) the broader classification of being “earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities,” which can be interpreted as a “conservation” mechanism aimed at safeguarding the distinctive attributes of these enlightened beings situated beyond the Chan lineages.

Let us now shift the focus to the depictions of the “Three Sages” in the *Jingde lu*. In contrast to their hagiographies in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, it is evident that the Chan compilers introduced two additional episodes to enrich their accounts. These additions subsequently evolved into recurring *gong’an* cases in later *denglu* works. In these episodes, the three figures are tailored to be typical Chan masters expounding the kernel teachings of Chan Buddhism.

The first episode features Fenggan as a Chan master employing poetry as a conduit to convey his teachings.

One day, Hanshan asked [Fenggan], “[If] the old mirror was not polished, how is it able to reflect the candle?” Master [Fenggan] said, “The ice jug does not have a reflection, while the monkey reached for the water moon.” [Hanshan] said, “This is [the state of] not reflecting the candle. Please provide further elucidation,

master.” In reply, Master [Fenggan] said, “[You,] the myriad virtue, did not bring [the mirror]. What would you have me explain?” Both Hanshan and Shide then paid respect [to Fenggan].

一日寒山問：“古鏡不磨如何照燭？”師曰：“冰壺無影像，猿猴探水月。”  
曰：“此是不照燭也。更請師道。”師曰：“萬德不將來教我道什麼？”寒拾  
俱禮拜。<sup>173</sup>

The dialogue between Hanshan and Fenggan revolves around a classical theme within Chan discourse—the Buddha nature, which is symbolized by the old mirror in Hanshan’s question. The candle refers to the transient, external phenomena. The connection between the Buddha nature and phenomena is initiated by the action of “reflecting.” Consequently, Hanshan’s question thus can be rephrased as, “If the Buddha nature remains hidden by delusion, how can it interact with external circumstances?” Fenggan’s response, expressed through allusions as well, expounds that the authentic Buddha nature will not be agitated by external fluctuations. Hanshan’s request for further elucidation receives Fenggan’s implicit reply. Beyond pointing out Hanshan’s unrevealing Buddha nature, Fenggan’s response also serves as a performative instruction. In the state of awakening, the mind remains steadfast even when confronted with fluctuating phenomena. However, this state is achieved through mindful cultivation rather than verbose instruction. This case is intricately nuanced, as it does not only delve into the core issue of the Chan discourse but also reflects the essence of the slogan of Chan Buddhism—“not establishing words and letters.”

A notable observation is that the *Song gaoseng zhuan* does not have any reference to Fenggan’s teachings. Moreover, despite Fenggan’s seniority in relation to Hanshan and Shide, their relationship appears more akin to close friends than a master-disciple dynamic. In this

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<sup>173</sup> *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 0433b16-19.

episode, all the “Three Sages” deviate from their established images as mad monks or free-spirited monk poets.

The second episode depicts a scene in which Hanshan and Shide deride the monastic abbot.

One day, [when Shide] was sweeping the floor, the abbot asked, “Your name is Shide [because] Fenggan took you in. Ultimately, what is your surname and where do you hail from?” Shide set the broom aside and stood with hands clasped. The abbot was confused. Hanshan thumped his chest and exclaimed, “Heaven! Heaven!” Shide turned [to him] and asked, “What are you doing?” [Hanshan] said, “Haven’t [you ever] seen that while a family in the East experiences a death, a family in the West assists in mourning?” The two danced and left with a blend of laughter and tears.

一日掃地，寺主問：“汝名拾得，豐干拾得汝歸。汝畢竟姓箇什麼在何處住？”拾得放下掃帚叉手而立。寺主罔測。寒山搥胸云：“蒼天蒼天。”拾得却問：“汝作什麼？”曰：“豈不見道，東家人死西家助哀。”二人作舞哭笑而出。<sup>174</sup>

While the Buddhist monks in the monastery had embraced the monastic life, their ties to their families persisted due to the ethical influence of the filial piety tradition. The question from the abbot was akin to casual conversation, a means to display his concern for Shide. As Shide’s silent response was not perceived by the abbot, Hanshan offered an analogy to elucidate the situation—what troubled the abbot so much was meaningless to Shide himself. The interaction between the abbot and Hanshan/Shide underscores the clash between enlightened mind and conventional thought. The iconoclastic reactions of Hanshan and Shide to the situation not only express their condemnation of the deluded mind, which is still confined by designations but also cast harsh critiques towards institutional Buddhism, which is symbolized by the abbot. As the

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<sup>174</sup> *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 0434a07-11.

leader of a prominent monastery, the abbot was expected to possess superior insight. However, despite his institutional authority, he was challenged and even defeated by two hard laborers in the monastery. This satirical effect is achieved through the stark juxtaposition of the obvious social status and the opposite spiritual attainments between the abbot and Hanshan/Shide.

As previously discussed, iconoclasm stands out as a notable trait of mad monks. It is noteworthy that although the “Chanmen dazhe” section was missing in the *Tiansheng guang denglu*, the compiler Li Zunxu identified these marvelous figures such as Hanshan and Shide as “*sansheng*” 散聖 (scattered sages). Huang Jing-Jia argues that because these “scattered sages” lack clear affiliations with any particular sects, their power to deconstruct the conventional norms carries an undercurrent rebellion against institutionalized Buddhism.<sup>175</sup> Notably, as Chan Buddhism gained prominence in the Song dynasty, at least as it allegedly claimed, iconoclasm emerged as a revered quality, finding favor both within the Chan and literati circles. This trend, prominently exemplified by the ascent of the Linji school and its teaching style, suggests that the norm challenged by the mad monks was likely the non-Chan Buddhist establishments. As evident in the second *gong’an* case, Hanshan and Shide direct their mockery at the abbot of a formal monastery. Whether the monastery is the headquarters of Tiantai does not matter. Instead, both the monastery and the abbot serve as symbols of conventional religious authorities. The underlying message conveyed is that the seemingly “orthodox” Buddhist institution was inadequate in imparting the highest teachings and guiding followers toward enlightenment. If the

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<sup>175</sup> Huang’s exploration of mad monks traces the evolution of their portrayals in the Chan texts, professing from being labeled as “*chanmen dazhe*” 禪門達者 to adopting the designation of “*sansheng*” 散聖, and eventually evolving into “*yinghua shengxian*” 應化聖賢. This linear progression demonstrates how Chan texts embraced, redefined, and repositioned this certain group of figures over time. See Jing-jia Huang 黃敬家, “Songdai chanmen wenxian zhongde sansheng jiqi youxi xingxiang de jingshen yuanyuan” 宋代禪門文獻中的散聖及其遊戲形象的精神淵源. *Dong Hwa Journal of Chinese Studies*, Jun. (2016): 125-126.

abbot himself is delusive as such, then the common monks under his lead are probably even worse.

Chan Buddhism stands in stark contrast to these institutions. Despite the formation of a hierarchical structure, the genealogical lineage does not necessarily define one's level of spiritual attainment. As observed by Buckelew, the daily "*shangtang*" 上堂 (ascending the hall) ceremony held in Chan monasteries provided a platform where disciples were legitimized to challenge the authority of their masters. Even in the routine interactions between masters and disciples, it was not a given that the master could always successfully maintain their authority.<sup>176</sup> This phenomenon partially stems from Chan Buddhism's emphasis on "directly accomplishing the Buddhahood by perceiving one's own nature 見性成佛." With the foundational belief that every individual possesses the potential to achieve Buddhahood, both masters and disciples theoretically share an equal likelihood of attaining enlightenment. Furthermore, Chan Buddhism's distinctive methods of verifying enlightenment through the "mind seal" and preserving the dharma through mind transmission created an environment that allowed enlightened figures the latitude for their iconoclastic expressions. Whether exhibited through eccentric behaviors or enigmatic speeches, such actions should be interpreted as tacit assertions of their supreme spiritual realization. Consequently, this episode was likely crafted to elevate the prestige of the Chan school. Simultaneously, it also can be interpreted as a cautionary message

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<sup>176</sup> See Kevin Buckelew, "Signs of Authority and the 'Marks of the Great Man'." In "Inventing Chinese Buddhas: Identity, Authority, and Liberation in Song-Dynasty Chan Buddhism." Ph.D diss. (Columbia University, 2018), 105-106. Foulk highlights that the practice of commenting on old *gong'an* stories during the *shangtang* ceremony was an opportunity not only for disciples and audiences to attain enlightenment, but also for the master to demonstrate his spiritual authority. See Griffith Foulk, "The Form and Function of Koan Literature: A Historical Overview." In *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, edited by Steven Heine, Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17.

aimed at the gradually institutionalizing Chan school itself, reminding it to avoid becoming rigid in its establishment and thereby losing its inherent vitality.<sup>177</sup>

Huang Jing-jia's extensive research delves into the portrayal of "mad monks" in Tang and Song Buddhist hagiographies and historiographies. According to her insights, these mad monks blur the boundary between the sacred and the secular. Instead of actively engaging in worldly matters, these figures present themselves as though existing within a sacred realm.<sup>178</sup> In other words, their approach to merging the sacred and the secular is not a process of secularizing the sacred, but rather sanctifying the secular. This can be illuminated by considering a pair of Buddhist terms: *yindi* 因地 (causal stage) and *guodi* 果地 (resulting stage). The causal stage pertains to those who have yet to attain enlightenment, while the resulting stage refers to the realm of enlightened beings. Within this framework, all of the "*chanmen dazhe*" are individuals who have already reached the resulting stage, each manifesting distinct personality. The mad monks, for instance, are characterized by their unpredictable conduct and cryptic utterances, which may appear illogical and incomprehensible to those who remain at the casual stage because the actions of the mad monks defying conventional reasoning. However, these seemingly irrational behaviors are grounded in their advanced spiritual attainment. Thus, their actions should be conceived as direct reflections of their elevated spiritual state at the resulting stage. Curiously, this immediate reflection of enlightenment diverges from the approach of Chan

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<sup>177</sup> In her investigation of Hanshan, Huang specifically highlights the resistance exhibited by Hanshan towards institutionalized Buddhism, encompassing the newly established Chan school as well. See Huang Jing-jia 黃敬家, "Chanmen sansheng yu wenshu huashen: Hanshan xingxiang zai songdai chanlin zhong de zhuanhua jiqi yihan" 禪門散聖與文殊化身：寒山形象在宋代禪林中的轉化及其意涵. *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, (2014): 398.

<sup>178</sup> Huang Jing-jia 黃敬家, "Huanhua zhi ying: Tangdai kuangseng chuiji de xingxiang jiqi yihan" 幻化之影：唐代狂僧垂跡的形象及其意涵. *Taiwan Journal of Buddhist Studies*, (2010): 86.

masters within the genealogical system. Those Chan masters, in contrast, primarily meld the sacred and the secular by dissolving the sacred rather than sanctifying the secular. This approach can be exemplified by the Farming Chan and the teaching of “ordinary mind as the Way” 平常心是道.<sup>179</sup> The “Chanmen dazhe” section within the Chan historiography thus functions as a supplement to the genealogical lineages in the Chan school, exemplifying an alternative mode of attaining awakening.

### **Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities Upheld beyond Sectarian Boundaries**

In the subsequent *denglu* works following the *Jingde chuan denglu*, namely, the *Liandeng huiyao* and the *Wudeng huiyuan*, the “Three Sages” were compiled in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. As the title shows, the individuals featured within these sections are recognized as earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities. The alteration in categorization from the “Chanmen dazhe” to the “Yinghua shengxian” indicates that the Chan *denglu* works participated in a broader religious discourse during the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century, a topic I will elaborate on in the forthcoming chapters. The “Three Sages” actually began to be associated with specific Buddhist deities in their hagiographies since the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. Eventually, Fenggan as the manifestation of Amitābha, Hanshan as Mañjuśrī, and Shide as Samantabhadra became a widely accepted belief in the Buddhist context. However, this assigning of deities was not accomplished all at once; rather, it was a gradual process reflected in the sources which will be discussed in this section.

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<sup>179</sup> Both the Farming Chan and the “ordinary mind as the Way” seek for the sense of sacredness in ordinary life instead of creating a sacred scene through rituals to attain the sacredness. Mazu’s “ordinary mind,” as Poceski points out, was a state transcending the dualistic thinking, which could be achieved through the engagement of daily work within the context of everyday life. See Mario Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 195-199.

In the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Hanshan and Shide appear in the account of Fenggan as two hard laborers working in the monastic kitchen.<sup>180</sup> When the provincial governor Lüqiu Yin encountered Fenggan and sought guidance on worship, he was directed to pay homage to Mañjuśrī during his visit to the Guoqing monastery. Lüqiu was told that the bodhisattva was disguised as “the person working in the kitchen,”<sup>181</sup> but no specific names were mentioned. Subsequently, when Lüqiu met Hanshan and Shide, he paid respects to both without attempting to ascertain which one was the earthly manifestation of Mañjuśrī. As Hanshan and Shide retreated into seclusion in the forest, they criticized Fenggan’s talkativeness but did not explicitly identify him as the manifestation of Amitābha, a piece of information that was later articulated in the Tiantai historiographies. Another episode in the account describes Fenggan’s pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai to worship Mañjuśrī, where he was subtly hinted by an elder that there is no second Mañjuśrī in the world. The theme of the story suggests that Fenggan failed to recognize that Mañjuśrī was actually around him. Yet, similar to the earlier text, this account does not provide definitive information about whether Hanshan or Shide was the earthly manifestation of Mañjuśrī.

Shide’s association with Bodhisattva Samantabhadra was rather vague in his account of the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. He is mentioned to have been granted the title of “secluded worthy as a manifestation of bodhisattva” by the local government due to his divine deeds, as previously mentioned.<sup>182</sup> The two cases—Shide beating the statues of protective deities and herding cows to

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<sup>180</sup> 先是國清寺僧厨中有二苦行，曰寒山子，曰拾得。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0831b11-12.

<sup>181</sup> 國清寺厨執爨洗器者。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0831b19-20.

<sup>182</sup> 時牒申州縣郡符下云，賢士隱遁菩薩應身，宜用旌之，號拾得為賢士。 *Ibid.* 0832a18-20.

interrupt the repentance ceremony—demonstrate his capacity for conducting sympathetic resonance, which is one of the criteria used to justify his worthiness as a manifestation of bodhisattva.

In the *Jingde lu*'s version, the associations of Hanshan with Mañjuśrī and Shide with Samantabhadra were firmly established during a conversation between Fenggan and Lüqiu. In this exchange, Fenggan instructed Lüqiu to worship the two bodhisattvas manifested by Hanshan and Shide. Hanshan as a manifestation of Mañjuśrī was further elaborated in an episode in his account. When Fenggan asked Hanshan to accompany him to visit Mt. Wutai for the worship of Mañjuśrī, Hanshan declined, refusing to be a “fellow” of him. Like the episode in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, where an elder informed Fenggan that there was no second Mañjuśrī, Hanshan declined to go with Fenggan because Fenggan failed to recognize him as the intended bodhisattva. However, up until this point in the *Jingde lu*'s account, there is no indication or revelation of Fenggan's divine identity, and he actually behaves like a deluded individual.

Although all “Three Sages” are categorized into the “Yinghua shengxian” section in the Southern Song *denglu* works, none of the accounts mentioned their divine connections with Buddhist deities. On the other hand, the finalized correspondences are provided in the Tiantai historiography, *Fozu tongji*. The historical chronicle creates a list of individuals who are believed to be earthly counterparts of specific Buddhist deities, noting the emergence of Fenggan as a manifestation of Amitābha, Hanshan as Mañjuśrī, and Shide as Samantabhadra during the reign of Emperor Yang of Sui.<sup>183</sup> These associations are reiterated in the concise collective account of the “Three Sages.” The recounted episode revolves around Lüqiu's visit to the Guoqing

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<sup>183</sup> 隋煬帝，豐幹彌陀化現，寒山文殊化現，拾得普賢化現。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 0462b02-03.

monastery. Informed beforehand by Fenggan, it was conveyed that “Hanshan was a manifestation of Mañjuśrī, who concealed himself at Guoqing, while Shide was a manifestation of Samantabhadra, who appeared in a humble form.”<sup>184</sup> Lüqiu thus encountered Hanshan and Shide in the kitchen and paid his profound respect through a bow. However, Lüqiu’s behavior only met with an exclamation from Hanshan and Shide, who stated, “Fenggan is gossipy. [He is the manifestation of] Amitābha, [but you] failed to recognize this.”<sup>185</sup>

The progression of the deification of the “Three Sages,” therefore, can be summarized as follows: during the early Song dynasty, by the finalization of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* in 988, Hanshan was the foremost among the three to be designated as the earthly manifestation of Mañjuśrī. Fenggan and Shide, although grouped with Hanshan, were not yet associated with specific Buddhist deities. However, a significant development occurred shortly thereafter when Shide was established as the manifestation of Samantabhadra in the completion of the *Jingde lu* in 1004. This correlation was likely influenced by the customary pairing of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra as attendant figures frequently depicted together in monastic settings. Given Hanshan’s prior deification as Mañjuśrī, it became plausible to identify Shide as the manifestation of Samantabhadra. In regard to Fenggan, pinpointing the precise timing of his linkage with Amitābha in the Song Chan historiographies proves challenging. Nevertheless, based on the travel log of Japanese monk Jōjin 成尋 (1011-1081), the *San Tendai Godai san ki* 參天台五台山記, a record from the fourth year of Enkyū (1072), specifically the fourteenth day of the fifth month, clearly presents the comprehensive deification information about the triad. It

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<sup>184</sup> 寒山文殊遁迹國清，拾得普賢狀如貧子。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 0364b11-12.

<sup>185</sup> 豐干饒舌彌陀不識，禮我何為。 *Ibid.* 0364b16-17.

states, “The Three Sages are composed of Chan master Fenggan, Bodhisattva Shide, and Bodhisattva Hanshan, embodying the earthly manifestations of Amitābha, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī.”<sup>186</sup> This notation implies that the identification of Fenggan as Amitābha was resolved approximately fifty years after Shide’s deification.

While the Tiantai texts did not accord identical significance to the “Three Sages”, they nonetheless engaged with the topic of the deification of historical figures within their discussions. In the *Shimen zhengtong*, Zongjian establishes a connection between the emergence of divine monks in history and the era of dharma degeneration. He contends that these monks were celestial saviors descending to Earth, serving as vessels of the Buddha’s compassion:

Following the Buddha’s attainment of nirvana, Baozhi appeared during the Liang dynasty; Sengqie descended in the Tang dynasty; Budai manifested in Yinshui; Zhutou emerged at Shuangxi; Xiangyang partook in clams; Gusu engaged in shrimp fishing; Kumārajīva ingested needles; Tongjin consumed poisoned wine; Yinfeng assumed an inverted posture; Guanxi retraced the path [to nirvana]. Some [of them] vociferously exclaimed to halt, while others overturned boats to proceed. All these individuals were earthly manifestations of bodhisattvas and arhats, who arose during the era of dharma degeneration. [They] adopted diverse forms [in order to] deliver those who were entrapped within the cyclical realm [of samsara].

如來滅後，寶誌現於梁朝，僧伽來於唐代，布袋化於鄞水，豬頭顯於雙溪。襄陽啖蛤，姑蘇餌蝦，羅什吞針，童進飲鳩，隱峰倒卓，灌谿步歸。或大吼而休，或翻舡而往。此皆菩薩羅漢應身生彼末法之中，作種種形，度諸輪轉者也。<sup>187</sup>

Various interpretations regarding the origins of earthly manifestations may diverge, and the motivations behind the promotion of these legendary figures might be different as well.

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<sup>186</sup> 三賢者豐干禪師，拾得菩薩，寒山菩薩。彌陀，普賢，文殊化現。 *San tendai godai san ki* 參天台五台山記. B. no.174, 32: 0346a26-b01.

<sup>187</sup> *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. X. no.1513, 75: 0288c20-24.

However, what becomes evident from these Buddhist sources is the widespread embrace of earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities, fostering a trend that transcended sectarian distinctions during the Song dynasty.

### **Concluding Remarks: The Significance of the Mad Monks to Chan Buddhism**

In the preceding sections, I analyzed the portrayals of the “Three Sages” of Tiantai in both the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and the *Jingde chuan denglu*. This examination demonstrated how the Chan historiography transformed these figures from “Wonder Workers” in the *Eminent Monks* series to Chan ideals within the Chan context. The Chan compilers strategically harnessed their existing value as mad monks and poet monks and then adapted their depictions to align with and uphold Chan teachings. In the *Jingde lu*, Fenggan, Hanshan, and Shide occupied three out of ten positions in a distinct section of Chan ideals. The significance of their roles was further underscored by their recurring presence as earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities in later *denglu* works. A noteworthy fact is that Hanshan had been portrayed primarily as a destitute monk with elusive words, akin to a Daoist hermit secluded in Mt. Tiantai. It was not until the Song dynasty that Hanshan’s portrayal as a “mad monk” had been solidified and gained prominence in the *denglu* works.<sup>188</sup> This transformation of Hanshan’s portrayal and the shifted focus of Chan compilers suggest that the concept of “mad monks” held a special significance to the Chan school. Contrasting with the relatively understated rhetoric that Tiantai texts applied to their hagiographies, the “Three Sages” are given considerable attention and held in high esteem within the Chan context. Even though they did not belong to the Tiantai genealogy, they were

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<sup>188</sup> Huang Jing-jia 黃敬家, “Chanmen sansheng yu wenshu huashen: Hanshan xingxiang zai songdai chanlin zhongde zhuanhua jiqi yihan” 禪門散聖與文殊化身：寒山形象在宋代禪林中的轉化及其意涵. *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, Sep. (2014): 391-401.

renowned legendary figures who had once resided at the headquarter of the Tiantai monastery. The questions that arise are why these figures were subject to such divergent treatments in the two traditions and what factors led to their favor and recognition within the Chan school.

Huang Jing-jia believes that it was the congruence between the feature of self-awakening in these mad monks and the emphasis on the intrinsic nature of enlightenment in the Southern Chan school during the Tang dynasty that led these figures to be elevated in Chan Buddhism.<sup>189</sup> Additionally, I contend that a pivotal factor for their popularity in Chan Buddhism likely lies in the inherent spirit embodied by the “Three Sages”, which bore a distinct sense of rebellion and aloofness. Their mockery and resistance against prevailing norms resonated with Chan’s defiance of conventional orders established by traditional Buddhist institutions. An examination of the development of the Chan school reveals a consistent tendency to deviate from the well-established structure. Whether on practical or doctrinal grounds, the Chan School asserted its supremacy by positioning itself as a reformer, consistently accentuating its uniqueness, such as the most renowned slogan “separate transmission outside the teaching.” The precept issue discussed in the previous section is another illustrative instance, where the Chan school sought to supplant the role of the Vinaya school through its self-proclaimed ordination. Even within the Chan school, the most energetic faction, the Linji school, was also the seemingly most “deconstructive” one, which stood out for its adoption of radical teaching methodologies. This reformative impetus propelled the Chan school to effectively accommodate itself to the evolving circumstances. However, rebellion and deconstruction do not encapsulate the entire picture. The

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<sup>189</sup> See Huang Jing-jia 黃敬家, “Yangkuang, youxi yu shentong: Tangdai kuangseng chuiji de xingwei moshi—yi song gaoseng zhuan weili” 佯狂、遊戲與神通：唐代狂僧垂跡的行為模式—以《宋高僧傳》為例. *Fojiao sixiang yu wenxue guoji xueshu yantaohui huiyi lunwen* 佛教思想與文學 國際學術研討會會議論文, (2008): 362.

Chan school also dedicated itself to the establishment of new norms and orders, utilizing them as benchmarks to justify and evaluate other institutions within its discourse.

The mad monks also epitomized another facet of Chan's character: its disposition towards aloofness and transcendence. As expounded in the preceding section, the credibility and leadership of Huisi and Zhiyi found validation through the extensive support and patronage from disciples and followers. Their prestige was, in part, a product of their eloquence and adept communication skills. In stark contrast, the mad monks gained their charisma through their incommunicable attributes. Embodying a direct manifestation of the enlightened mind, these mad monks always appeared detached from ordinary individuals and conventional thought, thereby imbuing their personas with a sense of isolation and independence. While Chan's teachings encompass an aspect closely intertwined with daily life, its essence, as elucidated through a comparison with Zhiyi's teachings, represented the supreme teachings, reserved solely for the most intelligent. These ineffable and inexpressible qualities perpetuated the remoteness and dissociation inherent within the Chan school.

In Bernard Faure's study on thaumaturgical monks and their roles in the development of the Chan school, he draws upon Levi-Strauss's reflection on the individuals who seek social power.<sup>190</sup> Faure asserts that the thaumaturgical monks, occupying marginalized positions within the societal framework, possess the capability to incite latent power from the bottom of human society due to their willingness to undertake the risk to sacrifice themselves. This power holds the potential to undermine the established social order, and yet, when it is harnessed to legitimize a new order, it can yield a remarkably potent transformative in reverse. Faure employs this

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<sup>190</sup> See Claude Levi-Strauss. Trans. by John Russell. *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Criterion Books, 1961), 41.

paradigm to explain the distinct significance of thaumaturgical monks in advancing the orthodox status of the Chan school in Buddhist conventions.<sup>191</sup>

However, one may not have to venture that far to find compelling explanations for the empowerment of these unconventional figures within the socioreligious milieu in China. Beyond the parallels between the mad monks and the spiritual ethos of Chan Buddhism, the acceptance and recognition of “madness” within the sociocultural environment is another crucial factor. This embracing of “madness” carries deep roots in the indigenous Chinese culture and can be traced back to the pre-Qin classics such as the *Analects* and *Zhuangzi*. The ideal personalities symbolize a source of supreme wisdom that transcends conventional perspectives shaped by social norms. Consequently, a hierarchical relationship is formed between the exalted—those who stand outside social norms, and the ordinary—those who conform to social norms. When this tradition was passed down to the Wei-Jin dynasties, “madness” evolved into an essential quality within the lives of literati, it concurrently became a mechanism for opposing the corrupt political authority and a form of satirical expression in response to the chaotic social environment. The interplay between these ideal exemplars and regular individuals suggests that those extraordinary figures possess an inherent resistance capable of subverting prevailing norms. In this manner, the essence of “madness” persisted within Chinese culture, imbued with positive connotations of independence, intelligence, and transcendence.

At last, in a broader context, the evolution from the “Chanmen dazhe” section to the “Yinghua shengxian” section encapsulates the shifting perspective of the Chan school toward the

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<sup>191</sup> Faure does not differentiate between thaumaturgical monks such as Baozhi and mad monks like Hanshan or Shide. He employs the general term “thaumaturgical monks” in his analysis without making a specific distinction between the two. Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 96.

acceptance of awakening beyond the Chan lineages. Initially, the emphasis remained on the Chan school itself, highlighting the figures' connections with the *chan* tradition. Over time, this shifted to an acknowledgment of the diverse approaches to enlightenment beyond the Chan school. Concurrently, this transformation also reveals the Chan school's initial efforts to establish ties with the broader *dhyāna* tradition, aiming to validate its position in Buddhist conventions. Subsequently, during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, as the religious milieu trended towards secularism and the recognition of divine entities became a fashion, the Chan school actively participated in this evolving discourse, promoting these Chan ideals to be earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities who could be worshipped beyond sectarian boundaries. This transition thus illustrates different strategies employed by the Chan school to assert its superiority in religiosity: from stressing its uniqueness to embracing a multitude of ideologies. Within this trajectory, it becomes evident that the Chan school grew to be more confident in detaching from the *dhyāna* tradition and more inclusive in encompassing various traditions.

## Chapter 3

### The *Liandeng Huiyao* and Its “Yinghua Xiansheng” Section

#### The Nature of the *Liandeng huiyao* and Its “Yinghua xiansheng” Section

When the Song imperial family relocated to South China in 1127, the Southern Song dynasty was inaugurated. Several decades later, in 1183, Huiweng Wuming completed the fourth work in the *Five Lamps* series—the *Liandeng huiyao*. Within this work, the “Chanmen dazhe” section was, in a sense, reintroduced in a nuanced manner, as nine out of the ten figures from the “Chanmen dazhe” section reappeared in a section entitled “Yinghua xiansheng”. If we consider the “Chanmen dazhe” section as upholding a tradition that promotes figures beyond the Chan lineages as Chan ideals, it is fair to assert that this tradition persisted in the “Yinghua xiansheng” section, as the latter appropriated individuals from more diverse backgrounds and the number of the figures was largely extended.

The *Liandeng huiyao*, however, was not the inaugural *denglu* work that compiled the “Yinghua xiansheng” section. Instead, it was a lesser-known Buddhist historiography named the *Zongmen tongyao ji* that initiated this distinctive section. Despite not being part of the *Five Lamps* series, the *Zongmen tongyao* served as one of the main sources to which a number of Southern Song recorded sayings and *denglu* works referenced.<sup>192</sup> Compiled around 1093, the *Tongyao ji* should be regarded as a contemporary work with Weibai’s *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* completed in 1101, and it was approximately ninety years earlier than the compilation of

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<sup>192</sup> For more information, see Ishii Shūdō 石井修道. “Shumon tōyō syū ni tsuite I” 『宗門統要集』について(上), *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gaku bu ronsyū* 駒澤大學佛教學部論集. 4. (1973): 43-58. “Shumon tōyō syū ni tsuite II—tōyō to kaiyō no jyakugo no hikaku to syūten” 『宗門統要集』について(下)—統要と會要の著語の比較と出典. *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gaku bu ronsyū* 駒澤大學佛教學部論集. 5. (1974): 37-63.

the *Liandeng huiyao*.<sup>193</sup> A preliminary comparison of the “Yinghua xiansheng” sections in the *Tongyao ji* and the *Liandeng huiyao* reveals striking similarities in the figures selection, the *gong’an* stories, and even the commentary remarks by the end of the stories.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, differences are reflected in their structural composition. In the *Zongmen tongyao ji*, the “Yinghua xiansheng” section is located in Fascicle 2, immediately following the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of dharma heirs of Huineng. This section is accompanied by two additional parts, namely, “Weixiang sifa” 未詳嗣法 (Unclear Dharma Inheritors) and “Wuming guxiu” 無名古宿 (Nameless Masters in the Past). When Wuming compiled the *Liandeng huiyao*, he referenced all three sections, primarily amalgamating the first two into his “Yinghua xiansheng” section. More specifically, Wuming selected eleven out of the fourteen figures from the *Tongyao ji*’s “Yinghua xiansheng” section. Given that the remaining three figures were only have their names recorded,<sup>195</sup> it can be said that Wuming replicated the entire “Yinghua xiansheng” section from the *Tongyao ji*. The section “Weixiang sifa” includes eight figures, of which Wuming incorporated six into his “Yinghua xiansheng” section. The two figures he intentionally omitted are Chief Seat Chan 首座

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<sup>193</sup> The *Zongmen tongyao ji*’s compiler, Zongyong, and the *Jianzhong lu*’s compiler, Weibai, were dharma brothers in Fayun Faxiu’s lineage and completed their works during the same period. While potential links between these two compilations remain undisclosed, this topic is worth further exploring. Ishii’s study mainly focuses on Chan masters within the lineages, with less emphasis on the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. See Ishii, “The *Zongmen Tongyao Ji* and the Distinctive Character of Song Chan Buddhism,” translated by Albert Welter. *Annual Report of the Zen Institute*. 7 (1996): 233.

<sup>194</sup> The motivation behind Wuming’s “copying” of the “Yinghua xiansheng” section from the *Zongmen tongyao ji* remains unclear. However, considering that the full title of the *Liandeng huiyao* was the *Zongmen liandeng huiyao*, there seems to be a potential connection between these two *denglu* works. This could be a direction for further investigation in the future research.

<sup>195</sup> The three figures are Monk Dushun 杜順和尚, Monk Nanyue Laizan 南嶽賴瓚和尚, and Great Master Nan’an Yanzhu Dingying 南安岩主定應大師.

蟾 and Monk Gaocheng 高城和尚.<sup>196</sup> Meanwhile, he introduced three figures to the section: Chan Master Da Weiyong (Weishan Lingyou 滄山靈佑), Great Sage Sizhou, and Practitioner Zhiyi. These modifications suggest that Wuming had distinct intentions and considerations in compiling this section.

According to the author's note, Wuming's motivation to compile the *Liandeng huiyao* stemmed from his growing concern about the Buddha's teaching being drowned by flowery and meaningless words.<sup>197</sup> Presumably, because the primary purpose of this work was pedagogical, and the *gong'an* stories were deemed more effective in conveying Chan teachings than hagiographies, Wuming opted for the direct reproduction of the "Yinghua xiansheng" section from the *Zongmen tongyao ji* for the sake of convenience.

The preface, written by a Yuan monk Sizhong 思忠, provides additional insights into the circulation of the *Liandeng huiyao*. It reveals that the compilation and publication of the work were collective efforts initiated and patronaged by local Buddhists and laity. Sizhong notes that after the compilation, Wuming delivered lectures on the work at his residing monastery, the Chongfu monastery 崇福寺 in Quanzhou 泉州. Wuming's lectures gained popularity, prompting him to publish the book upon the request of disciples and followers.<sup>198</sup> Unlike the three preceding *denglu* works, the *Liandeng huiyao* did not attain imperial recognition from the emperor. Sizhong mentions that shortly after he read the book, the printing tablets were

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<sup>196</sup> Monk Gaocheng has his hagiography preserved in the division of "Wonder Workers" in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. He was a dharma heir of Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一, the patriarch of the Hongzhou lineage. The identity of Chief Seat Chan cannot be determined.

<sup>197</sup> 近年已來，據師位者，不本宗由，枝詞蔓說，對句押韻，簇錦攢花。謾人自謾，不知其幾。學者不辨邪正，遞相沿襲，與之俱化。 *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 11c09-12.

<sup>198</sup> 始唱道于泉之崇福，耆衲檀信力請刊行。 *Ibid.* 11b13-14.

destroyed by fire. In order to republish the book, he spent nearly two decades searching for the tablets in the Minyue 閩越 region, which further suggests that the circulation of the book might not have been extended beyond the local area. The new edition was eventually printed at the Baoguo monastery 報國寺, incurring a cost exceeding 2,000 *min*. Once again, the patrons involved in this endeavor were local literati and Buddhists.<sup>199</sup>

In the following sections, I first explore the emergence of the *yinghua* phenomenon within the framework of Chinese Buddhism. To investigate the reason why Zongyong adopted the term “*yinghua*,” I scrutinize the development of the connection between Buddhist individuals and Buddhist deities within the context of Chinese Buddhism. This section is followed by a case study delving into three Indian translators celebrated as Chan ideals in the “*Yinghua xiansheng*” section. In this case study, I elucidate the Chan compiler’s concern with Pure Land literature, the prevalent ideological current, at the time.

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<sup>199</sup> 未幾，板為灰燼，深為嘆惜。僕僕旋閩越二十年，復來湖上搜尋故本。就大報國鋟梓，工費二千餘緡，實文雅藏主，相其成也。 *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 11b16-18.

## From Deification to Personalization

### Telling the Pre-story of the “Yinghua shengxian” Section in the Song *Denglu* Works

The “Yinghua shengxian” section was reintroduced into the *Five Lamps* series through the *Liandeng huiyao*. Subsequently, it was retained as a recurring section in the *Jiatai pu denglu* and the *Wudeng huiyuan*, the next two Southern Song *denglu* works. Given its prevalence in the Chan historiographies, it is necessary to examine the origin of the concept “yinghua xiansheng/shengxian,” elucidate its implied significance, and discern the social context contributing to its popularity towards the end of the Northern Song dynasty.

As previously suggested, the “Yinghua shengxian” section followed the tradition initiated by the “Chanmen dazhe” section, which advocates for promoting non-Chan figures as Chan ideals in the *denglu* works. As this special section lacked the presence in both the *Tiansheng guang denglu* and the *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu*, when Zongyong compiled the *Zongmen tongyao ji*, he could follow the *Jingde chuan denglu*, naming it the “Chanmen dazhe” section. However, Zongyong chose a brand-new title, naming it the “Yinghua xiansheng” section. A comparative analysis of the two titles reveals a variance in the focus of these *denglu* works. First, the figures are identified differently. The *Jingde chuan denglu* still highlighted the figures as *chan*/meditation practitioners, whereas the *Liandeng huiyao* upheld them as earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities. Second, while the “Chanmen dazhe” bridges the newly established Chan school with the *dhyāna* tradition, the “Yinghua shengxian” seeks to guide the Chan school beyond an exclusive Chan context toward a broader religious discourse. Third, in both sections, figures are portrayed as enlightened Chan ideals, akin to the enlightened Chan masters within the lineages. However, whereas the “Chanmen dazhe” acknowledges the potential for awakening through meditation practice transcending the genealogical Chan teachings, the

“Yinghua shengxian” underscores one’s inherent enlightenment, embodied by Buddhist deities in various manifestations.

My examination of the “Yinghua shengxian” section commences with an analysis of the inferred implications embedded within the title. It will be followed by a discussion on the emergence and utilization of the concept “*yinghua*” in Buddhist texts leading up to the Northern Song dynasty, through which I aim to delineate a preliminary trajectory of the evolution of this term in practical applications within the given historical context.

### **The Interpretation of “*Yinghua Shengxian*”**

The term “*yinghua shengxian*” comprises two elements, “*yinghua*” and “*shengxian*.” When “*yinghua*” is interpreted as a compound, it denotes the expedient manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas who deliver appropriate teachings to sentient beings based on their varying capabilities and intelligence. It is one of the supernatural powers of Buddhist deities. A reference can be found in the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 Fascicle 94:

This Bodhisattva, in the midst of sentient beings, may manifest as a father, as a son, as a teacher, as a disciple, as a master, as a servant, as an elephant or a horse, as a rider on the elephant or horse, as someone wealthy, powerful, and influential, or as someone poor and lower. In all these situations, they remain untainted; it is like the Buddha transforming sentient beings and engaging in all activities without being affected by pleasure or pain. . . . . The Bodhisattva should skillfully play supernatural power like this to benefit sentient beings and purify the Buddha’s Land.

是菩薩於眾生中，或為父、或為子，或為師、或為弟子，或為主、或為奴，或為象馬、或為乘象馬者，或時富貴力勢、或時貧賤——於此諸事，亦不為染污；譬如佛所化人，作一切事，不染苦樂。……菩薩應如是遊戲神通，成就眾生、淨佛國土。<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論. T. no.1509, 25: 717b29-c08.

While *yinghua* encompasses the supranormal abilities wielded by Buddhist deities, it is also a power exercised out of their compassion to rescue sentient beings and establish a Buddha land. *Yinghua* thus is considered an important component of bodhisattva practice. In the *Buddhāvataṃsaka Mahāvaiṣṭya Sūtra*, Sudhana inquires Gopikā about whether the cultivation of bodhisattva practice involves “responding to the world and being reborn in the world, and universally manifesting various expedient bodies.”<sup>201</sup> Gopikā, in response, expresses her approval.

In a broader sense, *yinghua* indicates the only perceivable form of the Buddha accessible to sentient beings, contrasting with the formless dharma body and the imperceivable reward body. While the *yinghua* form may not be the essential body of Buddhist deities, it embodies the foundational principles of Buddhist doctrine and serves as a conduit for imparting authentic Buddhist teachings.

In a narrow sense, however, the distinction between “*ying*” and “*hua*” emerges concerning the manifestations of Buddhist deities. The *Hebu jingguangming jing* 合部金光明經 provides clarification:

The first is the incarnated body (*huashen*), the second is the responsive body (*yingshen*), and the third is the dharma body (*fashen*). ... Due to its the unimpeded power, [the Buddha is able to] align with the minds and actions of sentient beings. ... The diverse bodies [manifested by the Buddha] are called the incarnated body. ... The body capable of displaying the inherent thirty-two forms and eighty minor marks with the halo on the back is called the responsive body. 一者化身，二者應身，三者法身，（中略）自在力故。隨眾生心，隨眾生成行，（中略）現種種身，是名化身。（中略）是身得現具足三十二相、八種種好、頂背圓光，是名應身。<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> 善財問，修菩薩行不離佛地，超出世間，法身圓滿，應世受生，普現種種諸方便身？*Dafang huangfo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經. T. no.0278, 09: 0755c05-07.

<sup>202</sup> *Hebu jingguangming jing* 合部金光明經. T. no.0664, 16: 0362c20, c24-25, c27, 0363a02-03.

The *Dacheng yizhang* 大乘義章 also articulates the difference between the two bodies:

[The body] for cultivating sentient beings and manifested in the form of the Buddha is called the responsive body. [The body] presenting in various forms in the six realms is called the incarnated body.

為化眾生，示現佛形，名為應身。示現種種六道之形，說為化身。<sup>203</sup>

In summary, *yingshen* or the responsive body denotes the buddha form or bodhisattva form transformed from the dharma body in particular, whereas *huashen* or the incarnated body refers to various forms of earthly manifestations. Accordingly, bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Sudhana are the manifestations of *yingshen*; historical figures who are venerated as buddhas or bodhisattvas demonstrate *huashen* of Buddhist deities.

The first half of the title refers to the two conventional forms of Buddhist deities, while the second half, *shengxian/xiansheng* or sages and worthies, alludes to individuals distinguished within a hierarchical framework. Despite the compound term *shengxian/xiansheng* being prevalent in various ideological contexts, within the Buddhist discourse, *sheng* (sages) indicates those who have attained enlightenment or achieved an advanced spiritual stage, and *xian* (worthies) refers to those who, though not yet enlightened, have already distanced themselves from malevolence.<sup>204</sup> In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the term “sages and worthies” or *shengxian/xiansheng* are very often employed interchangeably without further differentiation.

Now, let us revisit the significance of “*yinghua shengxian*” as a section title. If we regard *shengxian* as an honorable title conferred upon the selected figures who are identified as Buddhist ideals or models, *yinghua*, representing supernatural power and profound compassion,

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<sup>203</sup> *Dacheng yizhang* 大乘義章. T. no.1851, 44: 0820c07-09.

<sup>204</sup> Shi Ciyi 釋慈怡, *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典 (Taipei: Foguang Publisher, 1988), 5588.

elucidates the rationale behind promoting those “outsiders” to Chan lineages within the Chan school. It was their exceptional spiritual achievements that transcended the hierarchical structure defined by the Chan genealogical system. Through creating a new order beyond the confines of the existing structure upheld by lineal and exclusive Chan lineages, the “Yinghua shengxian” section acknowledged these “marginalized” figures to the Chan lineages, allowing them to be venerated as Buddhist ideals within the Chan context. Consequently, the pivotal inquiry into the religious background for the prevalence of the “Yinghua shengxian” section revolves around the utilization and interpretations of the term *yinghua*. Understanding the origin and evolution of this term in association with certain historical figures in Buddhist sources becomes crucial.

### **“Yinghua” in Buddhist Texts: from Theory to Practice**

While tracing the phenomenon of *yinghua* in vernacular transmission proves challenging, an examination of its utilization in Buddhist hagiographies and historiographies allows for the delineation of its evolution within written sources. A preliminary survey shows that preceding the *Zongmen tongyao ji*, instances of the *yinghua* phenomena associated with specific figures were not uncommon. However, in its initial stage, *yinghua* did not imply a direct correspondence relationship between earthly beings and Buddhist deities. In early Buddhist sources, discussions on *yinghua* as a supernatural power of buddhas and bodhisattvas primarily existed at a theoretical level.

The earliest instances of *yinghua* can be traced back to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-to 5<sup>th</sup>-century. In the *Dengmu pusa suowen sanmei jing* 等目菩薩所問三昧經 by Zhu fahu 竺法護, it states, “Bodhisattvas are able to transform into buddhas, to maintain a buddha-like state, to turn the dharma wheel, and to establish *yinghua*, universally manifesting the radiance of the thus-

come.”<sup>205</sup> Similarly, the *Pusa yingluo jing* 菩薩瓔珞經 by Zhu fonian 竺佛念 asserts, “Bodhisattvas have super intelligence and unexpected transformations. [They] have various *yinghua* in response to sentient beings and deliver them according to their conditions. [Their] practices are akin to the Buddha’s, and there is no distinction between them.”<sup>206</sup> In his commentary to the *Vimalakirti Sūtra* 注維摩詰經, Sengzhao 僧肇 quotes Daosheng 道生, stating, “*Yinghua* without directions is the Way of the Buddha.”<sup>207</sup>

In these cases, *yinghua* was not confined to specific settings nor explained within a private relationship between an individual and a deity. Instead, it was introduced as a supernatural power exclusively possessed by Buddhist deities. Even though “sentient beings” are mentioned, they appear as beneficiaries of the *yinghua* power, with Buddhist deities occupying a dominant role in the relationship. In addition, *yinghua* in these early cases did not exhibit a sense of leisure associated with “playing in Samadhi 遊戲三昧” but was more likely described as a skillful mean stemming from the compassion of bodhisattvas.

In searching for the instances where specific Buddhists are designated as earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities, I have examined major collections of Buddhist hagiographies predating the compilation of the *Zongmen tongyao ji*. These collections include the section of “Shulie zhuan” 述列傳 in the *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 by Sengyou 僧祐, the *Mingseng zhuan* 名僧傳 by Baochang 寶唱, and the *Eminent Monks* series by Huijiao, Daoxua, and

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<sup>205</sup> 菩薩能化為佛，能住如佛，能化法輪，建立應化，普現如來之光明。 *Dengmu pusa suowen sanmei jing* 等目菩薩所問三昧經. T. no.0288, 10: 0584c22-23.

<sup>206</sup> 菩薩神智變化無方，應化眾生隨緣往度，如佛所行而無有異。 *Pusa yingluo jing* 菩薩瓔珞經. T. no.0656, 16: 0113b04-05.

<sup>207</sup> 應化無方為佛之道。 *Zhu weimojie jing* 注維摩詰經. T. no.1775, 38: 0390b25.

Zanning. In the “Shulie zhuan,” a loose connection between Buddhist deities and earthly beings is discernible in several biographies, where Buddhist translators are accorded the title of “bodhisattva,” either by their hometowns or places of residence. Consequently, multiple Buddhists may share the same title, possibly due to originating from the same places or residing in the same region. For example, Zhu Shufo 竺朔佛 is revered as the “Indian bodhisattva 天竺菩薩,”<sup>208</sup> and Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 as the “Yuezhi bodhisattva 月支菩薩.”<sup>209</sup> Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 is titled as Yuezhi bodhisattva and Dunhuang bodhisattva.<sup>210</sup> The only exception is Daoan, designated as Marked-Hand Bodhisattva due to his distinctive physical feature.<sup>211</sup> The commonality shared by these Buddhists is their outstanding achievements in sūtra translation, which, in a sense, has profoundly influenced the landscape of Chinese Buddhism.

Historically, Baochang’s *Mingseng zhuan* served as a bridge connecting the *Chu sanzang jiji* and the *Gaoseng zhuan*. Although the original edition of Baochang’s work is lost, the Japanese monk Sōshō 宗性 preserved an excerpt called *Meisō denshō* 名僧傳抄 when the *Mingseng zhuan* circulated in Japan. A comparison between the “Shulie zhuan” and the extant *Meisō denshō* reveals that Baochang expanded the scope of inclusion for figures and their biographies.<sup>212</sup> More importantly, Baochang incorporated additional episodes that underscored

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<sup>208</sup> 般舟三昧經，光和二年十月八日，天竺菩薩竺朔佛，於洛陽出。 *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集. T. no.2145, 55: 0048c10-11.

<sup>209</sup> 般舟三昧經……月支菩薩支讖授與。 *Ibid.* 0048c11-12.

<sup>210</sup> 賢劫經，永康元年七月二十一日，月支菩薩竺法護，從罽賓沙門得是賢劫三昧。……元康元年四月九日，燉煌菩薩支法護，手執胡經口出首楞嚴三昧。 *Ibid.* 0048c03-04. 0049b15-16.

<sup>211</sup> 初安生，便左臂上有一皮，廣寸許，著臂如釧，將可得上下，唯不得出手而已。時人謂之印手菩薩。 *Ibid.* 0109a22-24.

<sup>212</sup> Compared to “Shulie zhuan,” *Mingseng zhuan* largely broadened its scope by incorporating a greater number of individuals and detailing their biographies. Notably, it also introduced clear and well-defined categorizations. See

the belief in Amitābha and Pure Land in particular. For example, the narrative of Daoan pledging to be reborn in Tushita is presented twice in Baochang’s narrative,<sup>213</sup> a detail not found in the “Shulie zhuan.” Along with this, this account also highlights a visit from a divine monk who revealed Tushita to Daoan.<sup>214</sup> While Sōshō acknowledged Daoan’s honorable title, the Marked Hand bodhisattva, he did not associate this title with Daoan’s miraculous encounter with the divine monk or his adherence to Pure Land beliefs. In fact, Sōshō provides no explanation regarding the origin of Daoan’s bodhisattva title, which suggests that Daoan earned this title through his dedication to sūtra translation instead of any divine traces. This stands as the only instance in the *Meisō denshō* associating a figure with a bodhisattva title.

In Huijiao’s 慧皎 *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, the concept of *yinghua* is still sparingly mentioned. The only example appears in the account of monk Baoliang 寶亮, where *yinghua* also conveys the Buddha’s superpower.<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, bodhisattva as an honorable title is bestowed upon specific Buddhists in recognition of their virtues and expertise. In addition to Daoan, who was known as Marked-Hand bodhisattva,<sup>216</sup> the Indian monk Vighna 維祇難 was honored with the title Dunhuang Bodhisattva for his devoted efforts in preaching Buddhist

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Hsieh Hsien-Yi 謝獻誼, “Zaitan mingseng zhuanchao de bianxuan tedian jiqi chaoji yiyi” 再探名僧傳抄的編選特點及其抄記意義. *Hanxue yanjiu jikan* 漢學研究集刊. n. 29, (2019): 121-160.

<sup>213</sup> 時年五十二矣，嘗與弟子法遇等以人，於彌勒像前立誓願，同生兜率。……□□安嘗與嘉及弟子法遇等，於彌勒佛前，共立誓願，願生兜率。 *Mingseng zhuanchao* 名僧傳抄, X. no.1523: 77: 0352a18-20, b14-15.

<sup>214</sup> 偽建元二十一年正月二十七日，忽有異僧來求寄憩。 *Ibid.* 77: 0352a20-21.

<sup>215</sup> 所以如來乘本願以託生，現慈力以應化，離文字以設教，忘心相以通道。 *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, T. no.2059, 50: 0381c24-26.

<sup>216</sup> 初安生而便左臂有一皮廣寸許，著臂掣可得上下之，唯不得出手。又肘外有方肉，上有通文。時人謂之為印手菩薩。 *Ibid.* 0354a03-06.

teachings.<sup>217</sup> In these cases, “bodhisattva” does not refer to any specific celestial deity or relate to any supernatural power but serves as an honorable title given by followers who admired these individuals for their bodhisattva-like virtues.

The only example alluding to the *yinghua* connection in the *Gaoseng zhuan* was Baozhi, a thaumaturge renowned for his eccentric behaviors and divine traces. Two episodes in his account suggest his mysterious link with the bodhisattva. On one occasion, Baozhi manifested his “real form 真形” to a Chen family who served him with firm belief, and his appearance closely resembled that of a bodhisattva. On another occasion, like many divine monks, Baozhi foretold his death by informing followers that “the bodhisattva is leaving.”<sup>218</sup> Baozhi’s essence as a bodhisattva elucidates his unconventional behaviors, but this bodhisattva title likely referred to a general category of Buddhist deities rather than a specific one. According to Chün-fang Yü’s research, it was not until the 8<sup>th</sup> century that Baozhi was celebrated as the manifestation of the Eleven-headed Avalokitesvara.<sup>219</sup> It is thus fair to say that in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, Baozhi represents an early example of the practical application of the *yinghua* theory. In contrast to more prevalent cases where the title of bodhisattva was an honor bestowed upon earthly beings who emulated bodhisattva virtues, the *yinghua* type of connection was exceedingly rare, especially when considering Huijiao’s emphasis on divine traces and the dedication of two out of the ten

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<sup>217</sup> 維祇難……護世居燉煌，而化道周給。時人咸謂燉煌菩薩也。 *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, T. no.2059, 50: 0327a11-12.

<sup>218</sup> “The bodhisattva is leaving” was from his tomb inscription by Lu Chui 陸倕 in 515, implying that the episode of Baozhi manifested a bodhisattva appearance to Chen family might be added by Huijiao. See Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-Yin: the Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 199.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.* 195.

divisions of the work to divine monks. This suggests that in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, the one-on-one correspondence of *yinghua* had not been widely applied to specific figures.

When Daoxuan compiled the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* about a century later, the connection between virtues and the *yinghua* phenomenon began to merge. The hagiography of Xuanzang 玄奘 includes the “Shu sheng ji” 述聖記 by the crown prince Li Zhi 李治, which aims to praise Xuanzang’s extraordinary achievements. In the opening, Li Zhi extolled individuals who dedicated themselves to disseminating the Buddha’s supreme teachings. Since the opening paragraph functions as an evocation, Xuanzang’s name is not explicitly mentioned, yet he is evidently the most distinguished one in this category. The phrase “Going into the *yingshen* (responsive bodies) and being immortal after eons of suffering” alludes that Xuanzang, in essence a Buddhist deity, descended to the *samsara* world for the sake of sentient beings.<sup>220</sup> While this example does not constitute a complete *yinghua* connection as it does not link Xuanzang with a specific Buddhist deity, it signifies the onset of the *yinghua* phenomenon involving earthly beings.

In another example, *yinghua* appears in the discussion on transformation. As elucidated by a treatise master named Lingrun 靈潤, Buddhist scriptures encapsulate two layers of meanings—the absolute and conventional truths. Upon attaining enlightenment, one acquires the dharma body through an understanding of the absolute truth and the *yinghua* body by mastering the conventional truth.<sup>221</sup> Notably, in this context, the discussion of *yinghua* remains theoretical and does not imply a supernatural ability exclusive to Buddhist deities. Instead, it transforms into

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<sup>220</sup> 道名流慶，歷遂古而鎮常。赴感應身，經塵劫而不朽。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0457a07-08.

<sup>221</sup> 轉依已後真諦義邊即成法身，俗諦義邊成應化體。 *Ibid.* 0546c22-23.

a capability accessible to qualified individuals. Lingrun's discussion primarily focuses on common practitioners rather than deities. This evolution underscores a shift in the emphasis of the *yinghua* theory from celestial deities downwardly to earthly beings.

Monk Sengya's 僧崖 case stands as an early example of the one-on-one *yinghua* correspondence. Modeling upon the Medicine Buddha, Sengya gained renown for his endeavors in self-immolation.<sup>222</sup> This altruist pursuit categorizes him within the division of "Body Abandoner" in the *Tang gaoseng zhuan*. When *yinghua* was first mentioned in his hagiography, Sengya drew a parallel between patients and sentient beings, urging his disciples to recognize that those whose essence was difficult to discern were most likely expedient manifestations of buddhas or sages.<sup>223</sup>

After Sengya died, a sick monk named Huisheng 慧勝 once had a dream where Sengya encircled himself with burning incense. Worried if Sengya intended to burn his body, Huisheng said he was only a common Buddhist and was unable to endure the pain of cremation. Sengya clarified that the incense burning was a cure and confessed his true identity as the Bodhisattva of Radiance over Treasure 光明遍照寶藏菩薩. In the account of Sengya, self-immolation serves as a central theme, shedding light on his early aversion to his body, compassion for sentient beings,

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<sup>222</sup> James Benn discusses medieval Chinese auto-cremation practitioners drew inspiration from the *Lotus Sūtra* and Jataka tales to legitimize their acts of self-immolation, believing that self-immolation provided a shortcut path to attaining Buddhahood. Benn suggests that the widespread adoption of self-immolation was a crucial element in the process of "creating Chinese bodhisattva." This phenomenon coincided with the flourishing of Chan Buddhism, contributing to the emergence of Chinese buddhas. In this context, the inclusion of the "Yinghua shengxian" sections in Chan historiographies takes on significance. This special section resonated with the concept of living buddhas within Chan lineages, serving to identify a specific group of individuals as Chinese version of bodhisattvas. This practice can be seen as an integral episode in the domestication of Buddhism in China. See *Benn, Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 62, 199.

<sup>223</sup> 乃謂侍者智炎曰，我滅度後，好供養病人。並難可測其本，多是諸佛聖人乘權應化。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0679c29-680a02.

and the “appearance of no-pain 無痛相” resulting from his spiritual attainment.<sup>224</sup> The three factors—asceticism, compassion, and the supernatural bestowed upon him the title of bodhisattva during his lifetime. It is notable that Sengya’s designation as a bodhisattva is not a mere honorific but a specific one.

Along with this particular designation, Sengya’s story accentuates divine traces, including various auspicious signs during his immolation. This implies that *yinghua* as a connection between earthly beings and Buddhist deities tends to be associated with mysterious phenomena or divine traces, which distinguishes it from connections established through honorable titles that place greater emphasis on Buddhists’ morality or accomplishments.

Sengya’s contemporary, Shanhui, known as Fu Hong 傅弘 or Mahasattva Fu 傅大士, was venerated as Bodhisattva Maitreya according to his earliest extant account—*Dongyang shuanglin si fudashi bei* 東陽雙林寺傅大士碑 by Xu Ling 徐陵. The available inscriptions have two versions, with the concise rendition in the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 differing from the more detailed *Louzhao kanben shanhui dashi lu* 樓炤刊本善慧大士錄. Zhang Yong confirms the authenticity of both texts and posits that the *Louzhao kanben* version should be the original comprehensive account.<sup>225</sup> In the opening, Xu extols Vimalakirti and Mañjuśrī, emphasizing that perfect men and saints can manifest themselves as elders or Confucian scholar because they are not attached to a fixed “self” and can deploy expedient means to disseminate their teachings.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> 時人同號以為僧崖菩薩。……何故菩薩受燒都無痛相。崖曰，眾生有相故痛耳。Xu *gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0679c12-13.

<sup>225</sup> Zhang Yong 張勇, *Fu dashi yanjiu* 傅大士研究 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 2000), 3-10.

<sup>226</sup> 夫至人無己，屈體申教，聖人無名，顯用藏迹。故維摩詰降，同長者之儀。文殊師利，現儒生之像。Xu *xiaomu ji jianzhu* 徐孝穆集箋註, fasc. 5. In *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 1a.

Alluding that Shanhui was a divine earthly manifestation, this opening expresses a very clear *yinghua* mode of thinking. Shanhui self-claimed that he was a succeeding bodhisattva of the Buddha, specifically titled Maitreya. Xu further elucidates that Shanhui could be one of the five hundred manifestations of Maitreya, drawing parallels with Avalokitesvara, who was said to have five hundred manifestations.<sup>227</sup> Upon Shanhui's passing, he directed disciples to craft two Maitreya statues to place in pagodas, along with a Maitreya portrait to be laid on his bed.<sup>228</sup> In addition to Shanhui's firm belief in Maitreya, the inscription details various auspicious marks on his physical body, miraculous traces, counsel provided to Emperor Wu of Liang, and his advocacy for self-immolation.<sup>229</sup> Notably, Daoxuan appears to intentionally diminish Shanhui's influence, deleting references to his divine traces, his *yinghua* connection with Maitreya, and his endorsement of auto-cremation. James Benn explores Daoxuan's intention through a comparative analysis of the impact on auto-cremations between Shanhui and Sengya. Despite both being influential self-immolators during the final days of Emperor Wu's reign, Shanhui and his disciples' auto-cremation are depicted as an expression of despair, whereas Sengya's auto-cremation carries a sense of a renewal of the dharma. For Daoxuan, a prudent advocate for auto-cremation seeking to balance religious authority and the political power, Shanhui's comparatively rebellious image may not align with the ideal example he aims to present.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> 示同凡品，教化衆生。彌勒菩薩亦有五百身在閻浮提，種種示現，利益衆生。Xu *xiaomu ji jianzhu* 徐孝穆集箋註, fasc. 5. In *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 2b.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid*, 17b.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid*, 1a-22a.

<sup>230</sup> James Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 92, 99-101.

In other cases, monks are commonly extolled and recognized as bodhisattvas for their extraordinary achievements and expertise. Monk Huijing 慧淨 earned widespread respect as an “Eastern Bodhisattva” due to his profound insight into sūtra interpretation.<sup>231</sup> Tanyan 曇延 was venerated as a bodhisattva for his dedication to disseminating Buddhist teachings.<sup>232</sup> Lingyu 靈裕 was bestowed the title of “Bodhisattva Yu” for his integrity.<sup>233</sup> Tanwuzui 曇無最 obtained the title of “Bodhisattva of Eastern Land” for his observance of Vinaya.<sup>234</sup> In these examples, the title of bodhisattva remains a prestigious appellation given by their followers. On one hand, these hagiographies indeed feature earthly beings and references to Buddhist deities. On the other hand, however, no specific celestial deity was projected into this relationship, and the term “bodhisattva” in such discourses generally signifies the extraordinary accomplishments of these eminent monks.

While the one-on-one correspondence of *yinghua* relationship remains rarely documented in written records, compared to earlier periods, there is a notable increase of specific figures being identified as bodhisattvas in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*. With the *yinghua* theory increasingly applied to historical figures, instances are more likely to appear within human-centered contexts. This development can be characterized by the perceived reduction of the distance between the human world and the divine realm, which is achieved by bringing deities down to the earthly plane. This process involves imbuing plain titles with various human features and bestowing

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<sup>231</sup> 三藏法師對僕射房玄齡鴻臚唐儉庶子杜正倫于志寧，撫淨背而歎曰，此乃東方菩薩也。 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳. T. no.2060, 50: 0442c29-0443a02.

<sup>232</sup> 每夕北禮以為曇延菩薩焉。 *Ibid.* 0488c11-12.

<sup>233</sup> 鄴京創講名節既著，言令若新，預聽歸依遂號為裕菩薩也。 *Ibid.* 0495c21-22.

<sup>234</sup> 天竺沙門菩提留支見而禮之，號為東土菩薩。 *Ibid.* 0624c12-13.

abstract forms of deities with diverse personalities. This transformation not only paved the way for the proliferation of *yinghua* phenomena, but it also marked a progression toward a more human-oriented Buddhism. The anthropomorphization of Buddhist deities thus marks a new stage in the domestication of Buddhism in China.

In subsequent centuries, numerous Buddhists came to be regarded as earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities, either through self-declaration or confirmation by others. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Zanning's *Song gaoseng zhuan* featured more *yinghua* cases than before. The one-on-one correspondence, namely, Buddhist figures are celebrated as responsive bodies of specific Buddhist deities, is clearly documented in several hagiographies. For example, monk Daojian 道鑿 was said to share a resemblance with Bodhisattva Prajñā-kuta, leading to widespread rumors about Daojian as the responsive body of the bodhisattva.<sup>235</sup> Sengqie was confirmed by the divine monk Wanhui as the manifestation of Eleven-headed Avalokitesvara.<sup>236</sup> Mad monks Hanshan and Shide, as discussed in the preceding chapter, were venerated as Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, respectively.<sup>237</sup> Monk Mingzan 明瓚 was believed to embody Maitreya, and Haiyun 海雲 was considered the manifestation of Samantabhadra.<sup>238</sup>

Discussing the diversity observed in various *yinghua* cases, Zanning explicates that the responsive bodies of Buddhist deities could manifest in the South or North, as Chinese or

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<sup>235</sup> 曾有梵僧來禮畫像云，智積菩薩何緣在此，歎嗟彌久。而自此號智積應身也。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0825b23-25.

<sup>236</sup> 因問萬迴師曰，彼僧伽者何人也。對曰，觀音菩薩化身也。經可不云乎，應以比丘身得度者，故現之沙門相也。 *Ibid.* 0822a28-b01.

<sup>237</sup> 時牒申州縣郡符下云，賢士隱遁菩薩應身，宜用旌之，號拾得為賢士。 *Ibid.* 0832a18-20.

<sup>238</sup> 一說伊僧差越等夷。或隨眾齋食，或以瓦釜煮土而食，云是彌陀佛應身。未知何證驗之。……昔傳雲是普賢菩薩應身也。 *Ibid.* 0834a12-14, 0882c07-08.

foreigners, and exhibit ordinary appearances or uncommon features.<sup>239</sup> Zanning's focus in commentary shifts from the divine essence of Buddhist deities to their earthly manifestations. In other words, he underscores the diverse human presence rather than the supernatural abilities of deities when discussing the *yinghua* phenomena. Within this trend, Buddhist deities became concretized and characterized by specific historical figures—acquiring personalities, being identified by their speeches and behaviors, and gaining reputation through their social networks.

When reflecting on the escalating number of *yinghua* cases during the Wei to Sui dynasties in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Zanning attributes the *yinghua* phenomena to bodhisattvas “playing with supernatural abilities 以神通為遊戲.”<sup>240</sup> By defining the *yinghua* phenomenon as a form of “playing,” Zanning's interpretation highlights magical power and efficacious traces over moral and professional performances. This tendency aligns with the fact that most *yinghua* monks belong to the division of “Wonder Workers.” More significantly, it elevates thaumaturgical deeds to a critical factor in evaluating one's divine connection with Buddhist deities. Regarding why *yinghua* monks from previous dynasties were not compiled in the *Tang gaoseng zhuan*, Zanning attributes it to the difficulty of the compiler to collect and verify information of *yinghua* cases across a vast territory.<sup>241</sup>

Apparently, Zanning realized a discernible surge in the occurrence of *yinghua* phenomena within the religious context during the early Song dynasty. However, it does not

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<sup>239</sup> 原夫聖人之應身也，或南或北，或漢或胡，或平常之形，或怪差之質。故令聞見必也有殊。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0825b29-c02.

<sup>240</sup> 系曰，魏隋之僧且多應現者何。通曰，菩薩作用隨類化身。以神通為遊戲耳，於遊戲而利益世主焉。 *Ibid.* 0821c23-25.

<sup>241</sup> 亦猶大宋文軌既同，土疆斯廣，日有奇異，良難遍知。縱有某僧也，其奈史氏未編，傳家無據，故亦闕如，弗及錄者，留俟後賢者也。 *Ibid.* 0821c27-0822a01.

necessarily imply that these figures were initially considered earthly manifestations during their lifetimes. As the process of hagiography writing involves a continuous enrichment of the protagonist's biography with new episodes, the versions passed down to the Song dynasty may have been layered with ideologies and imaginations accrued over previous periods. Regarding the boom of *yinghua* cases, it is plausible that more vivid *yinghua* episodes were added as supplementary content to the stories at a much later stage than the original hagiography compilations. A compelling example is the case of divine monk Baozhi, who was described as having a "bodhisattva-like" appearance in his 6<sup>th</sup> century hagiography but was later venerated as Eleven-headed Avalokitesvara in particular by the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly, instead of asserting that Zanning uncovered more *yinghua* cases from previous records, it is more accurate to interpret the prosperity of the *yinghua* phenomena as a reflection of people's desire to bring spiritual beings into present reality and create domestic Buddhist deities in medieval China.

With the emphasis on thaumaturgical power and divine traces, more eccentricities and unreasoning elements were employed in the accounts of those celebrated as earthly manifestations of Buddhist deities, and episodes related to the verification of these figures were depicted as more mysterious. For instance, Chengguan 澄觀 was verified to be a bodhisattva based on the words of a wild monk who prophesied, "bodhisattva is coming."<sup>242</sup> Zongmi 宗密 was regarded as "the person of bodhisattva" in a meeting with the Chan master Zhao.<sup>243</sup> Zhenbiao 真表 was disclosed as a bodhisattva through a voice from the sky, informing villagers

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<sup>242</sup> 寺有禪客拳眉翦髮，字曰癡人。披短褐操長策狂歌雜語，凡所指斥皆多應驗。觀未至之前狂僧驅眾僧，洒掃曰，不久菩薩來此。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0737b18-21.

<sup>243</sup> 復見洛陽照禪師。照曰，菩薩人也，誰能識之。 *Ibid.* 0741c28-29.

to prepare for the arrival of the deity.<sup>244</sup> Hengzheng 恒政 was confirmed to be a bodhisattva through manifesting the divine form in front of the emperor.<sup>245</sup> In these cases, the true essence of these figures as bodhisattvas was barely perceived by common people; only those in the same spiritual state could see through their guises. Although these hagiographies did not explicitly employ “responsive body” or “*yinghua*” in their narratives, the cases already conveyed a sense of resemblance to full-fledged *yinghua* stories.

Simultaneously, the usage of “bodhisattva” as an honorable title persisted but occurred in significantly fewer instances than before. In the two examples provided, the title of bodhisattva was either officially granted by the emperor or bestowed as a praise from followers.<sup>246</sup>

The above analysis delves into the evolution of “*yinghua*” as discussed in Buddhist texts prior to the compilation of the *Zongmen tongyao ji*, delineating the characteristics associated with the utilization of “*yinghua*” across different phases. Initially, *yinghua* manifested as a supernatural power attributed to compassionate Buddhist deities, often appearing in the context of conveying Buddhist doctrines. Before “*yinghua*” was applied to earthly beings, the connection between certain Buddhist deities and historical figures was expressed through the veneration of individuals as “bodhisattvas.” The designation of “bodhisattva” served as an esteemed title symbolizing the high moral standing or certain accomplishments of the earthly being.

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<sup>244</sup> 又聞空中唱告村落聚邑言菩薩出山來何不迎接。 *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 0794b17-18.

<sup>245</sup> 一日御饌中盈擘而進，有擘不張呀者。帝觀其異即焚香祝之，俄為菩薩形，梵相克全儀容可愛。 *Ibid.* 0777a14-17.

<sup>246</sup> 後時詔行人內宮寢於御殿，勅賜號常精進菩薩，受開國公。 *Ibid.* 0865b03-04. 時丞相杜公元穎作鎮西蜀，聞玄名命升堂講談于大慈寺普賢閣下。黑白眾日計萬許人，注聽傾心駭歎無已。自此蜀人弗斥其名，號陳菩薩耳。 *Ibid.* 0743b21-24.

Consequently, these individuals were revered as being on par with bodhisattvas. The *Eminent Monks* series records an increasing number of cases involving the *yinghua* phenomena, illustrating a divine and mystical connection between the deities and Buddhists. Compared to the previous connection which elevated earthly beings to the status of deities, this *yinghua* connection anthropomorphized the deities by identifying them with various earthly beings. Because the *yinghua* connection is featured as inexplicable and personal, Buddhist figures in such cases were usually described as having anomalous and enigmatic speech and behavior. Given that they became “proxies” of Buddhist deities in the secular world, their portrayal as eccentric and distant from common people seems reasonable. By the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, while the surge in *yinghua* cases reflects a desire to make Buddhist deities more relatable and accessible, it also indicates the progression of the domestication of Buddhism in China. This shift in religious discourse signifies a transition from a deity-centered to a more human-centered perspective.

### **The Attitude of Chan Buddhism toward the Responsive Body**

The significant increase of *yinghua* cases documented in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* not only reflects the personal proclivity of Zanning, but also indicates the widespread acceptance of the *yinghua* idea among commoners and literati. While the notion of *yinghua* allowed for the creation of more accessible Buddhist deities, it is important to recognize that the responsive body merely represents a manifestation of the deity rather than the essential embodiment of the dharma body. From a doctrinal perspective, this distinction was emphasized in classical Buddhist scriptures and referenced in early Chinese Buddhist texts to highlight the differences in the teachings given by these two bodies. However, this dichotomy was eventually dissolved through the interpretation of Chan Buddhism, which considers both the dharma body and the responsive

body as capable of imparting authentic teachings. This interpretation served as a critical backdrop for Chan compilers to promote the *yinghua* figures in historiographies.

In early Buddhist texts, readers are often reminded the distinction between the ineffable truth and the numerous “Buddha’s words” in the texts.<sup>247</sup> The teachings preserved in the scriptures are skillful means rather than the Buddha’s authentic teachings, and the ultimate truth can only be apprehended through the profound insight into the “marks 相.” The vigilance exhibited by Buddhists regarding the differentiation between the ultimate truth and conventional speeches suggests that they place significant emphasis on discerning the boundary. A compelling example can be found in Vasubandhu’s *Jingang bore boluomi jinglun* 金剛般若波羅蜜經論, translated by Bodhiruci in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. In this treatise, Vasubandhu employs a Buddhist verse to elucidate why Śākyamuni Buddha himself was not the true Buddha and his teaching was not the ultimate truth. The verse read as follows:

The earthly manifestation is neither the authentic Buddha, nor is he the Dharma preacher. [Audiences should] neither accept nor reject the Dharma expounded by Śākyamuni, for no preaching can be delivered without the use of words.

應化非真佛，亦非說法者。說法不二取，無說離言相。<sup>248</sup>

The verse serves to underscore the notion that Śākyamuni Buddha, despite being revered as a Buddha, should not be equated with the authority of the ultimate reality. Likewise, his

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<sup>247</sup> For instance, in the philosophy of Madhyamaka by Nagarjuna, an essential concept is the Two Truths, namely, the Ultimate Truth and the Conventional Truth. The Ultimate Truth represents the emptiness of inherent nature, while the conventional truth pertains to the skillful means employed by the Buddha in teaching sentient beings. Distinguishing between these Two Truths is crucial, as one can comprehend the Ultimate Truth only through penetrating the Conventional Truth. Nagarjuna contends that all concepts are empty designations, signifying that the words of Buddhist scriptures are all manifestations of emptiness. For more information about Nagarjuna’s Two Truths, see Ye Shaoyong 葉少勇, “Longshu zhongguan zhexue zhongde jige guanjian gainian” 龍樹中觀哲學中的幾個關鍵概念. *World Philosophy*, 02 (2017): 155-158.

<sup>248</sup> *Jingang bore boluomi jinglun* 金剛般若波羅蜜經論. T. no.1511, 25: 0784b19-20.

teachings are provisional, which only aim to guide practitioners towards the ultimate truth, but it never conveys the ultimate truth. Vasubandhu further articulates that the Śākyamuni Buddha is no more than an incarnation, who has neither attained enlightenment, nor preached the teaching.<sup>249</sup>

However, this tone underwent a shift with the rise of Chan Buddhism. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Chan master Yunmen Wenyan 雲門文偃 offered a well-known interpretation of the aforementioned verse, equating the ultimate truth attained by the Buddha with the teachings emerging from the response bodies of Buddhist deities. Furthermore, he asserted that whatever is directly perceived by one's eyes is in fact real in terms of the ultimate truth.

[Students] raised, “The manifestation is neither the authentic Buddha, nor the dharma preacher.” Master said, “The preaching that arises from the manifestation is the preaching of the dharma body. [This] is also referred to as the glimpsed substances are completely real. Eating the dharma body with the dharma body.” [He] added, “The meal is not the dharma body. The staff itself is not the dharma body.”

舉。應化非真佛，亦非說法者。師曰：“應化之身說即是法身說。亦喚作觀體全真，以法身喫法身。”又云：“飯不是法身，拄杖不是法身。”<sup>250</sup>

Yunmen's interpretation suggests a departure from the previous understanding of the verse. By equating the preaching from the response body with that from the dharma body, he blurs the distinction between the conventional and the ultimate truths. This perspective implies that the provisional manifestations, which can be directly perceived, hold a genuine expression of the authentic teaching.

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<sup>249</sup> 論曰：以是義故，釋迦牟尼佛非佛，亦非說法。此義云何？偈言：此義云何？佛有三種：一者法身佛；二者報佛；三者化佛。又釋迦牟尼名為佛者，此是化佛，此佛不證阿耨多羅三藐三菩提，亦不說法。  
*Tianqin pusa zao jingang bore boluomi jinglun* 天親菩薩造金剛般若波羅蜜經論. T. no.1511, 25: 0784b17-23.

<sup>250</sup> *Yunmen kuangzhen chanshi guanglu* 雲門匡真禪師廣錄. T. no.1988, 47: 0558c26-28.

It is noteworthy that Yunmen focused on drawing a resemblance between the teachings but not the two bodies. This implies that the response body, even though it is not the embodiment of the ultimate truth, is able to guide devotees towards the ultimate truth. Unlike earlier Buddhist philosophers who regarded the preaching from the response body only as an expedient means, Yunmen emphasizes its tremendous efficacy and even elevates it to the level of the ultimate teaching. In doing so, Yunmen also stresses the significance of conventional Buddhist teaching as the most accessible approach for ordinary devotees.

Yunmen's words carry further implications as they affirm the potential for practitioners to attain enlightenment by following the guidance of awakened Chan masters, who are considered the earthly manifestations of the Buddha in this world. In this sense, a parallel can be drawn between the Chan masters within the lineages and the *yinghua* figures featured in the "Yinghua shengxian" section. Together, they essentially tell the same story: despite the Buddha's distant historical period, both the Chan masters and the *yinghua* figures, taking the role of the proxies of the Buddha and bodhisattvas, continued to provide authentic teachings to assist sentient beings in attaining their Buddhahood.

## **Conclusion and Reflection**

The application of the *yinghua* theory in Buddhist scriptures and hagiographies can be categorized into three stages of development. Initially, *yinghua* was portrayed as a supernatural power attributed to Buddhist deities and discussed primarily in theoretical contexts. Subsequently, *yinghua* became associated with indigenous Buddhists but without specific indications. Finally, the one-on-one correspondence of the *yinghua* connection was established between certain earthly beings and Buddhist deities.

Indeed, this brief summary provides a condensed overview of the development of the *yinghua* theory, but it is important to acknowledge that the emergence of full-fledged *yinghua* cases during the third stage does not necessarily imply the complete cessation of the cases without specific indications or the absence of the one-on-one correspondence during the second stage. The reality is more nuanced.

By the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when the *Zongmen tongyao ji* was compiled, *yinghua* had evolved from being merely a theoretical concept discussed in doctrinal contexts to being actively applied in practical use by indigenous Buddhists. This application led to the creation of a large number of local deities. Such developments provided a noticeable background for Zongyong and subsequent Chan compilers to incorporate the “Yinghua shengxian” section in their *denglu* works, which, in turn, highlights the continued significance and influence of the *yinghua* concept in Buddhist discourse and practice.

As previously analyzed, during the early Northern Song dynasty when the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and the *Jingde chuan denglu* were compiled, two distinct modes of connections between earthly beings and Buddhist deities can be observed. In the first mode, Buddhist deities are typically represented by the designation “bodhisattva.” Individuals were designated as bodhisattvas based on their notable virtues, such as compassion, erudition, altruism, and integrity—qualities that bodhisattvas were originally associated with. In this context, “bodhisattva” often functioned metaphorically to symbolize these virtues. The second mode is manifested in the *yinghua* theory, which places greater emphasis on the supernatural power of the bodhisattva. In accordance, figures within this mode are more inclined to have thaumaturgical deeds and miraculous traces. A notable distinction between these two modes also lies in the categorization of individuals in the *Eminent Monks* series. Many figures in the first

mode are grouped in “Sūtra Translators” and “Sūtra Commentators,” whereas figures in the second mode are commonly referred to as “Divine Eccentrics” and “Wonder Workers.” This distinction illustrates that the development of the *yinghua* theory was rooted in the recognition of the supernatural nature of deities and the belief in the monks’ ability to manifest miracles.

An intriguing perspective for understanding these two modes is to examine the orientations of their manifestations. In the first mode, the title of bodhisattva represents an honorable designation that embodies spiritual accomplishments and the cardinal virtues associated with bodhisattva as a deity. When individuals attain the title of a bodhisattva, it signifies that either their morality or intelligence is on par with that of a bodhisattva. This mode, therefore, implies an upward transformation—promoting individuals to be equivalent to deities by bestowing upon them the same title as the deities. Conversely, the second mode represents a downward transformation. According to the *yinghua* theory, the abstract dharma body of Buddhist deities is personalized through the inclusion of various attributes of earthly beings. Consequently, a single Buddhist deity may display multiple earthly manifestations. For instance, both Baozhi and Sengqie are manifestations of Avalokitesvara, and both Shanhui and Fenggan are revered as Maitreya. Although the *yinghua* cases emphasize miraculous performances, the protagonists of these stories are diverse human beings who possess different agencies and behaviors. The shift from the first mode, “deification,” to the second mode, “personalization,” indicates that in terms of the relationship between Buddhist deities and earthly beings, the focus of the discourse gradually transitioned from a deity-centered perspective to a human-oriented one.

The climate of religiosity in the Song dynasty also played a critical role as an important cultural backdrop. The 11<sup>th</sup>-to-13<sup>th</sup>-century witnessed a flourishing of supernatural beliefs and an

expansion of the pantheon, which redefined the relationship between humans and gods. People sought to harness the power of the divine realm by recruiting gods with extraordinary abilities into the pantheon which imitated the social hierarchical system. Consequently, it is unsurprising to observe that the value circulating in the religious market was the efficacy of the gods—a deity lacking potency was easily to be replaced by a more effective one. The discovery, acknowledgment, and bestowal of titles upon new gods thus became a fashion.<sup>251</sup>

Simultaneously, as new gods emerged, many existing gods were anthropomorphized. Alongside the veneration of ancient aristocrats or generals, people projected various personalities onto a wide range of spirits, including mountain and river gods, city wall gods, and earth gods. These gods were portrayed as having desires and emotions similar to those of humans, and they were believed to operate within the same logic as human society. Gods were not anymore abstract embodiments of divine power but instead, became personalized entities assimilated into the human world. As astutely observed by Hansen, the very humanlike nature of the gods, combined with their ability to assume human form, blurred the distinction between gods and people.<sup>252</sup> The gap between the two realms thus was reduced through bringing down the divine realm and imbuing it with human characteristics.

As the climate of religiosity became more tolerant towards syncretic religious practices among commoners and literati, it inevitably had an influence on the *Zongmen tongyao ji* and its subsequent *denglu* works. In this environment, the “Yinghua shengxian” section was produced and gained popularity within the Chan *denglu* works. For Zongyong and later *denglu* compilers,

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<sup>251</sup> Valerie Hansen. *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 29-47.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.* 57.

an alternative option was to follow the model set by the *Jingde chuan denglu* and title the section “Chanmen dazhe” instead. Nevertheless, while they retained almost all the figures listed in the “Chanmen dazhe” section, they chose to rename the section as “Yinghua shengxian.” By grouping these figures into a category detached from the Chan genealogies, it seems that the Chan compilers deliberately engaged in a religious discourse that extended beyond Chan Buddhism. A further investigation suggests that the selection of the figures reflects the Chan compilers’ considerations on, reactions to, and interactions with the popular ideological trends of the time, which indicates that the Chan history preserved in the *denglu* works goes beyond mere records of Chan lineages and teachings of Chan masters.

## Case Study

### A Recall from Centuries Later

#### Three Indian Translators in the Chan Historiography

The three Indian translators featured in the “Yinghua xiansheng” sections in the *Zongmen tongyao ji* and the *Liandeng huiyao* are Buddhapāla, Buddhayaśas, and Buddhabhadra. In both works, these figures held prominent positions at the beginning of the list, indicating their significance to the compilers. The commonalities among these three figures are easily discernible: they were the only foreign monks engaged in sūtra translation in the “Yinghua shengxian” section. However, there is a difference in their respective periods: Buddhapāla arrived in Tang China during the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century, while Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra were contemporaries active during the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century. Renowned for their remarkable translation accomplishments throughout history, these three masters were categorized under the division of “Yijing” 譯經 (Sūtra Translators) in the *Eminent Monks* series. For this reason, it can be speculated that their inclusion in the *denglu* works was related to the sūtra translation project during the early Song dynasty.<sup>253</sup> An examination of their mentions in the Song Buddhist context, however, reveals that their crucial role in the Pure Land literature and iconography was the real reason for them to be promoted as Chan ideals. Considering the complexity surrounding Buddhapāla compared to the cases of Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra, this case study will primarily focus on examining Buddhapāla.

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<sup>253</sup> For more information, see Tansen Sen, “The Revival and Failure of Buddhist Translations during the Song Dynasty,” *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 88, no.1 (2002): 27-80. Feng Guodong 馮國棟. “Songdai yijing zhidu xinkao—yi songdai sanbu jinglu wei zhongxin” 宋代譯經制度新考—以宋代三部經錄為中心. *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica*. 90.1 (2019): 77-123. Huang Chi-chiang 黃啟江. “Songdai de yijing runwenguan yu fojiao” 宋代的譯經潤文官與佛教. *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly*. 7:4 (1990): 13-31.

As previously mentioned, the “Yinghua shengxian” section in both the *Zongmen tongyao ji* and the *Liandeng huiyao* adopts the *gong’an* style. Within the three *gong’an* stories featuring the Indian translators, each of them engages in a dialogue with a specific interlocutor, where Buddhapāla converses with Mañjuśrī, Buddhayaśas with Huiyuan, and Buddhabhadra with Daosheng. Typically, the conversation in *gong’an* stories is characterized by a sharp exchange of minds or a competition of wisdom, with one figure depicted as holding authority.<sup>254</sup> In the cases of the three masters, Buddhapāla is defeated by Mañjuśrī, while Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra respectively win the victories in their conversations with Huiyuan and Daosheng.

Before delving into the analysis of the three *gong’an* stories, it is important to establish the research questions. First and foremost, how were the three Indian translators portrayed as Chan ideals in the Chan historiography? Specifically, what made Buddhapāla to be a Chan ideal when he did not display profound wisdom? In terms of the socio-historical context, the Song dynasty was no longer their heyday, but why the three masters were recalled by Chan compilers? By addressing these research questions, I aim to explore not only the special images of the three masters in the Chan historiography but also their continued significance within the Chan tradition.

### **Analysis of Buddhapāla’s *Gong’an* Story**

Buddhapāla, also known as Juehu 覺護, was born in Kopen in northern India. He embarked on a journey to China during the early Tang dynasty, and his hagiography was

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<sup>254</sup> In analyzing the pattern of the *gong’an* stories in the *Biyān lu* and the *Zongjing lu*, Foulk suggests that the Chan master in the exchanges always maintains the voice of authority, and the interlocutor, often symbolizing delusion, is described as occupying an inferior position, subject to evaluation by the awakened master. See Griffith Foulk, “The Form and Function of Koan Literature: A Historical Overview.” In *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, edited by Steven Heine, Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 33.

compiled in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. According to this account, Buddhapāla’s unwavering faith in Mañjuśrī drove him to undertake a pilgrimage trip to Mt. Wutai 五台山 in the first year of Fengyi 鳳儀 (676). During his pilgrimage, Buddhapāla encountered an elder who asked him if he brought the *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經. The sūtra, famous for its powerful mantras, was believed to bring immense benefits to sentient beings in China. The elder informed Buddhapāla that without the sūtra, he would be unable to recognize Mañjuśrī, even if the deity were standing in front of him. To reassure Buddhapāla, the elder promised to reveal the residence of Mañjuśrī once he brought the sūtra. The elder vanished right away, which solidified Buddhapāla’s faith in Mañjuśrī. Upon returning to China, Buddhapāla presented the Sanskrit version of the sūtra to Emperor Gaozong. Unexpectedly, the emperor prohibited the circulation of the sūtra after it was translated into Chinese. On Buddhapāla’s repeated requests, the emperor eventually returned the original Sanskrit text. With the assistance of monk Shunzhen 順貞, Buddhapāla produced a new translation, which was widely disseminated and became the most popular rendition of the *Foding zunsheng jing* in China. After fulfilling his mission, Buddhapāla went to Mt. Wutai, and all traces of him were lost thereafter. The compiler, Zanning, also included another popular ending to Buddhapāla’s story—he secluded in the Vajra Cave on Mt. Wutai and never came out. This ending was confirmed by the account of Fazhao 法照, a later monk who encountered Buddhapāla on his pilgrimage to worship Mañjuśrī. The episode of their encounter can be found in the hagiographies of both Buddhapāla and Fazhao, where Buddhapāla, as one of Mañjuśrī’s attendants, guides Fazhao, an “outsider,” on a tour of the sacred realm.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> For Buddhapāla’s account, see *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 718a14-29. For Fazhao’s account, see *ibid.* 844c16-26.

The *gong'an* story of Buddhapāla was derived from his account in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. However, there are notable differences between the two versions. First, Buddhapāla's initial pilgrimage trip was divided into two parts, during which he encountered two elders. Second, at the end of each scene in the *gong'an* story, there are commentary remarks from Fenyang Shanzhao 汾陽善昭 and Dayang Jingxuan 大陽警玄 (Ming'an 明安). Below is the translation of the *gong'an* story.

The venerable Buddhapāla made a pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai. As he arrived in Qizhou, he encountered an elder. [The elder] inquired: “Where [are you] going?” The master replied: “[I am going to] Mt. Wutai to worship Mañjuśrī. The elder further asked, “If the Great Virtue [you] were to meet Mañjuśrī, would [you still] recognize him?” The Venerable remained unable to reply.

Fenyang remarks: “[He was] lucky today.”

The Venerable reached the base of Mt. Wutai, where he encountered another elder. [The elder] asked, “Where have you come from?” [Buddhapāla] replied, “[I] have come from the Western Heaven (India).” The elder then inquired, “Did you bring the *Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sūtra*?” The Venerable responded, “I did not bring it.” The old man said, “If you come here without bring anything, what good is there?” The Venerable thus turned back.

Ming'an remarks, “What determination [did Buddhapāla] make to be able to meet Mañjuśrī? If he had not returned to the Western Heaven, [I believe he could have] simply presented his two hands, as the elder did.”

佛陀波利尊者游五臺，到忻州。見一老人，問師：“甚麼處去？”師云：“臺山禮文殊去。”老人云：“大德見文殊，還識麼？”尊者無對。

汾陽云：“今日慶幸。”

尊者到山下，又見一老人，問尊者：“何來？”云：“西天來。”老人云：“還將得佛頂尊勝經來麼？”者云：“不將得來。”老人云：“空來何益？”尊者遂回。

明安云：“當初下得甚麼語，得見文殊？不回西天，乃云，但展兩手似伊。”<sup>256</sup>

In both the hagiography and the *gong'an* story, the narrative of Buddhapāla's revolves around two central themes: the *Foding zunsheng jing* and the cult of Mañjuśrī. As a Sanskrit translator, Buddhapāla was renowned for introducing and translating the *Foding zunsheng jing*, and his name became closely associated with this sūtra ever since.<sup>257</sup> The *Foding zunsheng jing* held significant importance within the Tang imperial court and among the upper class for two main reasons. In addition to the Tang court's strong devotion to the Tantric Buddhism, the sūtra's remarkable function of removing karmic hindrances and alleviating sufferings contributed to its popularity. Emperor Daizong 代宗 even issued an edict mandating daily recitation of its mantra twenty-one times by Buddhists in the nationwide.<sup>258</sup> The widespread reverence of the sūtra led to the creation of *jingchuang* 經幢 (Buddhist stone pillars), with the *Foding zunsheng jing* being the most common inscription.<sup>259</sup> These facts suggest that the cult dedicated to this sūtra enjoyed great prosperity during the Tang dynasty.

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<sup>256</sup> *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 255c11-19.

<sup>257</sup> Scholars have noted the evident controversy surrounding the legend and corresponding historical records, indicating that the first translation of the *Foding zunsheng jing* in China was not based on the Sanskrit sūtra brought by Buddhapāla. However, it was only after Buddhapāla presented his translation that the sūtra gained widespread dissemination in China. See Lin Yun-jo 林韻柔. “Tangdai foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing de yichuan yu xinyang” 唐代佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經的譯傳與信仰. *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies*. 3 (2008): 145-193.

<sup>258</sup> 天下僧尼令誦佛頂尊勝陀羅尼，限一月日誦令精熟。仍仰每日誦二十一遍。每年至正月一日，遣賀正使，具所誦遍數進來。 *Daizong chao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biao zhi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集, T. no.2120, 52: 852c09-13.

<sup>259</sup> For more information, see Liu Shu-fen 劉淑芬. “Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing yu tangdai zunsheng jingchuang de jianli—jingchuang yanjiu zhiyi” 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經與唐代尊勝經幢的建立—經幢研究之一. *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica*. 67.1 (1996): 145-193. Zhou Zhuying 周祝英. “Wutaishan foding zunsheng tuoluoni jingchuang chutan” 五台山佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經幢初探. *Wutaishan yanjiu* 五台山研究. 3 (2019): 47-53.

Simultaneously, the cult of Mañjuśrī experienced unprecedented development and reached its full flourish during the Tang dynasty. Numerous Mañjuśrī cloisters were constructed under imperial orders, and several Tang emperors undertook pilgrimages to Mt. Wutai, the sacred residence of Mañjuśrī.<sup>260</sup> This historical context served as the background for the emergence of the legend of “Buddhapāla encountering Mañjuśrī in Mt. Wutai.” To the Song dynasty, despite the decline of the cult dedicated to *Foding zunsheng jing*, the cult of Mañjuśrī continued to thrive.<sup>261</sup>

Due to the emphasis placed on Buddhapāla’s miraculous encounter with the bodhisattva in all existing accounts, Buddhapāla’s story gradually became an integral part of the cult of Mañjuśrī. Moreover, revered as a divine monk, Buddhapāla also developed out his own local cult. I will address these topics in the later discussion.

In examining the accounts of Buddhapāla, it becomes evident that his unawareness of Mañjuśrī’s disguise is present in both his hagiography and the *gong’an* story, but the emphasis differs between the two texts. In the hagiography, Buddhapāla’s lack of awareness is attributed to his failure to fetch the sūtra, highlighting the significance of the *Foding zunsheng jing*. However,

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<sup>260</sup> See Lin Yun-jo 林韻柔. “Tangdai de wutaishan xunli huodong—jianlun tangdai ruyue wutaishan de yuwai sengren” 唐代的五台山巡禮活動—兼論唐代入謁五台山的域外僧人. In *Zhongguo zhonggushi yanjiu: Zhongguo zhonggushi qingnian xuezhe lianyihui huikan* 中國中古史研究: 中國中古史青年學者聯誼會會刊, edited by Beijing daxue zhongguo gudaishi yanjiu zhongxin 北京大學中國古代史研究中心 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2011), 313-343. Li Haibo 李海波. “Tangdai wenshu xinyang xingsheng de zhengzhi Beijing” 唐代文殊信仰興盛的政治背景. *Journal of Northwest University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*. 1 (2004): 92-95. “Tangdai wenshu xinyang yanjiu” 唐代文殊信仰研究. Master Thesis, (Northwest University, 2002). Haibo 海波, Zhao Wanfeng 趙萬峰. “Tangdai zhengquan yu wenshu pusa xinyang de hudong” 唐代政權與文殊菩薩信仰的互動. *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 宗教學研究. 4 (2011): 85-92.

<sup>261</sup> Chai Huifang created a graph illustrating the quantities of Buddhist stone pillars during the Tang and Song dynasties. The data reveals a notable decline, with 376 pillars recorded in the Tang dynasty, decreasing significantly to 69 in the Song dynasty. See Chai Huifang 柴慧芳. “Tangsong shiqi zunsheng tuoluoni jing xinyang yanjiu—yi jingchuang jiqi quyu fenbu wei zhongxin” 唐宋時期尊勝陀羅尼經信仰研究—以經幢及其區域分佈為中心. *Wenjiao ziliao* 文教資料. 27 (2016): 83-85.

in the *gong'an* story, his unawareness is portrayed as a result of his delusion concerning the self-endowed Buddha nature. Here, the role of the sūtra is downplayed, and the focus shifts to Buddhapāla's "unrecognition."

In the *gong'an*'s two exchanges, Mañjuśrī assumes the role of guiding the narrative, while Buddhapāla obediently and passively follows the deity's instructions, as indicated by phrases such as "without any reply" and "thus returned." This portrayal of Buddhapāla presents him more as an unenlightened being rather than a faithful devotee or an altruist translator. The elder, Mañjuśrī, is also depicted differently in the two texts. In the hagiography, the deity appeared as a patient sage, while in the *gong'an* story, his speech is sharper and more poignant, casting him as a radical Chan master.

Although in the *gong'an* story, Buddhapāla is portrayed clumsy and deluded, his image is understandable and forgivable due to the presence of Mañjuśrī. As the embodiment of great wisdom, Mañjuśrī often imparts teachings while disguised as ordinary beings, and the theme of "Encountering Mañjuśrī in Mt. Wutai" was a popular topic in Chan literature.<sup>262</sup> Towards the end of the first section, Fenyang Shanzhao reveals the true identity of the elder by playfully commenting on Buddhapāla's extraordinary good fortune. While this *gong'an* story concludes with Buddhapāla's return, Dayang Jingxuan's commentary remark introduces an alternative

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<sup>262</sup> The episode "Encountering Mañjuśrī in Mt. Wutai" holds significant importance in stimulus-response stories within Buddhist literature. Numerous *gong'an* stories feature Mañjuśrī appearing in various incarnated forms, such as elders and beggars. Among these tales, one of the most renowned *gong'an* story depicting an encounter between Mañjuśrī and a Chan master is "Wuzhu Visiting Mt. Wutai." Similar to Buddhapāla, Wuzhu made a pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai to worship Mañjuśrī. While lodging at a monastery at the mountain's base, he encountered an elder monk. During their exchange, Wuzhu expressed his lament for the corruption of Buddhism in his world and expected for a more virtuous situation in this sacred realm. To his surprise, however, the elder monk said the Buddhism in both realms is the same, implying that Wuzhu's lack of the "Buddha-eye" was the true underlying issue. In Wuzhu's case, Mañjuśrī, guised as the elder monk, showed his "blade of wit" by dis mantling the division between the conditioned world and the sacred realm. See *Guang qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳. T. no.2099, 51: 1111b24-c21.

ending that alters the direction of the narrative.<sup>263</sup> In a new scene designed by Jingxuan, Buddhapāla rejected Mañjuśrī but demonstrates his emptiness by presenting his empty hands to the elder.

The comment from Jingxuan deserves careful consideration as it adds depth and resonance to the story within the context of Chan literature. Jingxuan ingeniously crafted a witty response for Buddhapāla in replying to the elder's request: Buddhapāla's turned Mañjuśrī down by a silent gesture—unfolding his empty palms, which exemplifies the notion of emptiness and the destruction of conceptualizations. Buddhapāla's smart response can be seen as a profound expression that aligns with the Chan school's alleged attitude towards scriptures and sūtras, as well as its stance on “not establishing words and letters.”

In the *gong'an* story, *The Foding zunsheng jing* loses its exclusive significance and is no longer given special prominence. This reflects the Chan school's broader attitude, where sūtras are viewed with disdain as mere symbols of the “teaching” 教. In this sense, Buddhapāla's gesture should be interpreted as a manifestation of attaining complete enlightenment by rejecting the conditioned value of sūtras and embracing the ultimate emptiness. With the superior insight into non-duality, Buddhapāla would effectively turn the table, seizing the authority of the conversation from the elder.

Beyond the textual analysis, two questions are waiting to be answered. The first one is what made Buddhapāla to be included in the list of Chan ideals when he did not display

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<sup>263</sup> When examining Chan masters' remarks to the *gong'an* stories, Foulk points out that it creates a hierarchy of authoritative voices, which also put the commentator in a position to demonstrate his equal or even superior insights as a Chan master. His remarks as the last words represent the ultimate judgement. See Griffith Foulk, “The Form and Function of Koan Literature: A Historical Overview.” In *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, edited by Steven Heine, Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 33-34.

profound wisdom? The second one is the Song dynasty was no longer the heyday for the three Indian translators, but why were they recalled by Chan compilers?

For the first question, Buddhapāla to be venerated as a Chan ideal should be attributed to his association with the cult of Mañjuśrī, by which he was also considered an awakener in the early Song Buddhist context.<sup>264</sup> Associated with the cult of Mañjuśrī, Buddhapāla evolved into a divine monk with effective power and eventually he developed out his own cult. In the Northern Song period, there were records claiming Buddhapāla died Baima village 白馬村 in Yingzhou 穎州. When Su Shi 蘇軾 served as the magistrate there, he requested a plaque from the imperial court for a monastic compound that housed Buddhapāla's pagoda. Although Su did not mention the time period of building the pagoda, he describes the scale of the compound as “about forty to fifty rooms,” which suggests that the cult of Buddhapāla might have been established for a considerable period. Upon the time when Su wrote the petition, the cult was still enjoying continued prosperity, for local people testified the efficacious power of the relics of Buddhapāla.<sup>265</sup> Su himself also experienced the miracles of the cult and praised it “inconceivable 不可思議.”<sup>266</sup> A later magistrate Chen Shidao 陳師道, who held the office between 1093 and

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<sup>264</sup> Wei Guohui highlights that the introduction of the sūtra to the imperial court coincided with the period when the Tang rulers were actively promoting the cult of Mt. Wutai. This alignment likely drew the attention of the emperor to the sūtra. Notably, Buddhapāla's association with the cult of Mañjuśrī and Mt. Wutai was established from the very beginning. See Wei Guohui 魏郭輝. “Fotuoboli yi foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing xianguan wenti kaolue” 佛陀波利譯佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經相關問題考略. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊. 4 (2007): 222-229.

<sup>265</sup> “Qici guangfansi ezhuang” 乞賜光梵寺額狀 in *Sushi wenji* 蘇軾文集, collated and annotated by Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2008), 955.

<sup>266</sup> In the second month of the seventh year of Yuanyou 元祐 (1092), Su Shi presented this memorial to the court to report a snow disaster affecting the local populace. Serving as the magistrate of the state, Su, was convinced by local elders to pray to Buddhapāla for a fair weather. Following the ceremonial ritual, there was a swift and remarkable change to the weather, as the clouds dispersed, and the sky became clear. See “Ji fotuoboli zhuwen” 祭佛陀波利祝文. In *Sushi wenji* 蘇軾文集, collated and annotated by Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2008), 1932.

1094, also wrote eulogies and hosted rituals to worship Buddhapāla.<sup>267</sup> Around the time when the *Zongmen tongyao ji* was compiled (1093), the popularity of the cult should have reached the imperial court through the writings of these high-ranked literati. The court's knowledge of this local cult and Buddhapāla's miraculous reputation could have prompted Chan compilers to include him as a revered figure in the Chan literature.

To answer the second question on why Buddhapāla was recalled by the Song Chan compilers, it is necessary to investigate the mentioning and discussion of him in Song Buddhist sources before the compilation of the *Zongmen tongyao ji*. Arranged chronologically, these sources include *Song gaoseng zhuan* in 988, *Guang qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 in 1000, *Jingde chuan denglu* in 1004, *Sanbao ganying yaolue lu* 三寶感應要略錄 in 1056, *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳 in 1068-1077, and *Xinxiu jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 新修淨土往生傳 in 1084.

Among these sources, the *Song gaoseng zhuan* compiled the hagiography of Buddhapāla; the *Guang qingliang zhuan* and the *Sanbao ganying yaolue lu* recorded miracle tales related to the cult of Mañjuśrī and the *Foding zunsheng jing* respectively; the *Jingde chuan denglu* featured master-disciple exchanges over the topic of “Buddhapāla encountering Mañjuśrī,” the title of the *gong'an* story. This suggests that before Buddhapāla was revered as a Chan ideal, his interactions with Mañjuśrī had become Chan masters' teaching material. Despite these sources, it is noteworthy to give particular attention to the two *wangsheng zhuan* 往生傳 (collections of rebirth accounts), a new Buddhist literary genre that includes Buddhapāla.

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<sup>267</sup> “Yingzhou ji fotuoboli wen” 穎州祭佛陀波利文. In *Quansong wen* 全宋文, book 32, compiled by Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 2006), 2672.

The *wangsheng zhuan* was a genre promoting the belief in the Pure Land Buddhism. While the term “*wangsheng*” 往生 (rebirth) can be found in Indian Buddhist texts,<sup>268</sup> its prevalence in China was closely tied to the popularity of the cult of Amitābha. The emergence of the *wangsheng zhuan* occurred during the prosperous Sui and Tang dynasties, which marked the pinnacle of the Pure Land faith’s dissemination.<sup>269</sup>

The legend of Buddhapāla reached its full development during the Tang dynasty, but it was not until the Song dynasty that his story was compiled into the *wangsheng zhuan*. According to Luo Jia-shin’s research, Jiezhu’s 戒珠 *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* and Wang Gu’s 王古 *Xinxiu jingtu wangsheng zhuan* are the only two surviving Northern Song *wangsheng zhuan* monographs that exist today.<sup>270</sup> Both works include the story of Buddhapāla, implying that Pure Land literature played a crucial role in the reappearance of Buddhapāla during the Song dynasty.

In these narratives, Buddhapāla was portrayed as an attendant in Mañjuśrī’s assembly within the hagiography of Fazhao, the putative forth patriarch in the Pure Land lineage. Fazhao embarked on a pilgrimage trip to Mt. Wutai, where he discovered Buddhapāla participating in

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<sup>268</sup> 若殺生者，一切皆墮泥犁中，多習行故，將往生彼。 *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經. T. no.99, 02:231c19-20.

<sup>269</sup> Liu Changdong 劉長東. *Jintang mile jingtu xinyang yanjiu* 晉唐彌勒淨土信仰研究 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 2005), 3.

<sup>270</sup> The *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* by the Northern Song monk Jiezhu includes stories recounting Pure Land rebirth of 75 Buddhists. According to the preface, Jiezhu collected these stories by referring to the *Eminent Monk* series and other Buddhist hagiographical sources. Advocating the faith in Pure Land, Jiezhu traced the tradition back to the Buddha, who affirmed that devout devotees could be reborn in the Pure Land. He also establishes a connection between this tradition and Huiyuan’s Lotus society. The *Xinxiu jingtu wangsheng zhuan* by Wang Gu was comprised with three fascicles, serving as a sequel of Jiezhu’s *Wangsheng zhuan*. Unfortunately, only fascicles 1 and 3 have been discovered in recent years, which contain stories of 25 and 31 figures, respectively. The missing text in Fascicle 2 includes the stories of three figures. Similar to Jiezhu, Wang Gu identified Huiyuan’s Lotus Society as the origin of the Pure Land tradition in the worldly realm. In addition, he highlights the Tiantai school’s bridging role, suggesting the importance of the Tiantai’s philosophy in shaping Pure Land ideology. This, coupled with Jiezhu’s emphasis on learning and wisdom, conveys a message that the trend of Pure Land ideology was not solely rooted in faith and practice but also underscored the importance of doctrinal study. See Luo Jia-shin 羅家欣. “Songdai fojiao wangsheng zhuan yanjiu” 宋代佛教往生傳研究. MA. Thesis, (National Chung Cheng University, 2009), 32-52.

the convocation held in the Vajra Cave. During their subsequent encounter, Buddhapāla assumed the role of a guide, leading Fazhao to Mañjuśrī. In comparison to Fazhao, who was an “outsider” to Mañjuśrī’s realm, Buddhapāla already held the position of a “host.”<sup>271</sup>

### **Analysis on Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra’s *Gong’an* Stories**

The earliest hagiographies of Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra can be traced back to the “Shulie zhuan” in the *Chu sanzang jiji*, and their accounts were later compiled into the *Mingseng zhuan* and the *Gaoseng zhuan*.<sup>272</sup> The hagiographies in these sources do not present distinct differences. Both masters were foreign arrivals in China during the chaotic 4<sup>th</sup> century and gained renown for their contributions to sūtra translation. They had close personal connections with Kumārajīva, the prominent leader of the Buddhist community at that time.

Buddhayaśas, also known as Jueming 覺明 in Chinese, hailed from Kaśmīra and arrived in Chang’an in 408 to meet Kumārajīva. In the eyes of Kumārajīva, Buddhayaśas earned respect as a teacher and played a significant role in assisting with the translation of the *Ten Stages Sūtra*.

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<sup>271</sup> Although the accounts of Fazhao found in three sources—the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, the *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan*, and the *Xinxiu wangsheng zhuan*—share significant similarities, each work contains unique contents. For example, in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, aside from Zanning’s commentary remarks, a notable episode involves a miraculous vision experienced by Fazhao and his disciples several years after the construction of Zhulin monastery. In this vision, Mañjuśrī, mounted on a lion, is said to have manifested in the skylight. According to this account, Fazhao eventually disappeared. It is plausible that the compiler Zanning’s Buddhist affiliation affected his rhetoric, particularly in addressing the conclusion of Fazhao’s hagiography. This part then appears to have been adapted in the two collections of rebirth accounts, where Fazhao is described as passing away shortly after completing the Zhulin monastery. His death, as mentioned in both records, verified the prediction from a previous Indian monk who predicted that Fazhao would be reborn in the Pure Land after fulfilling his duty of constructing the Zhulin monastery. See *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. T. no.2061, 50: 844a08-845b08, *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳, T. no.2071, 51: 121b17-122b01, *Xinxiu wangsheng zhuan* 新修往生傳, X. no.1546, 78: 154b11-156a13.

<sup>272</sup> Buddhayaśas’s accounts can be found in *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集. T. no.2145, 55: 0102a14-c19, *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳. T. no.2059, 50: 0333c16-0334b25. Buddhabhadra’s accounts can be found in *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集. T. no.2145, 55: 0103b27-0104a28. *Mingseng zhuan* 名僧傳. X. no.1523, 77: 0355a17-24. *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳. T. no.2059, 50: 0334b27-0335c14.

Proficient in Vinaya texts, Buddhayaśas further translated the *Four-Part Vinaya* and the *Longer Āgama Sūtra*. After completing his translations, Buddhayaśas was said to have returned to India, and no further historical records of his activities are available.

Buddhabhadra, also known as Juexian 覺賢, originated from northern India and was a descendant of King Amṛtodana. His notable expertise in *dhyāna* and Vinaya led him to travel to Chang'an in 408 to propagate the teachings. Initially aligned with Kumārajīva's assembly, Buddhabhadra later shifted his residence to Huiyuan's community, where he stayed for a considerable period. During his stay at Mt. Lu, Buddhabhadra undertook the translation of the *Contemplation of Dharmatrāta Sūtra*. Subsequently, he arrived in Jiankang 建康 in 415 and conducted his translation work at the Daochang monastery. Collaborating with Chinese Buddhist Faxian 法顯, Buddhabhadra translated *Mahāsaṅghika Vinaya* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. Additionally, he was also credited with the first Chinese translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.

Notably, in addition to their contributions to sūtra translation, both of their hagiographies contain episodes portraying them as practicing wonders. For instance, Buddhayaśas is depicted casting spell to the water which he used for washing his feet when he secretly left Kucha for Kumārajīva, the thaumaturgy of which allowed him to travel a great distance in a single night. Buddhabhadra, on the other hand, is said to have performed miracles in the presence of one of his peers, and some accounts detail this miracle by saying that he visited Tushita to worship Amitābha during his meditation. These episodes serve to enhance the imagery of the two translators and seem to provide a plausible explanation for their veneration as Chan ideals in the “Yinghua xiansheng” section. In contrast, the two interlocutors in their *gong'an* stories, Huiyuan and Daosheng, lack similar supernatural powers documented in their hagiographies and are primarily recognized for their prowess as expounders of doctrinal. This disparity may elucidate

why they are portrayed as inferior to the two translators in a section in favor of divine traces and miracle performance.

As for Huiyuan and Daosheng, both of them are classified in the division of “Yijie” 義解 (Doctrine Expounders) in the *Gaoseng zhuan*. These two Chinese masters were contemporaries and made significant contributions to Chinese Buddhist thought. Huiyuan was renowned for his expertise in Madhyamaka and Prajñā studies, while Daosheng was revered as the “Sage of Nirvana 涅槃聖” due to his innovative ideas on Buddha nature, and his concept of “the great sudden enlightenment 大頓悟” laid the groundwork for the notion of sudden awakening in Chinese Buddhism. Additionally, both masters were associated with Pure Land belief. Huiyuan established the Lotus Society on Mt. Lu, advocating for belief in Amitābha’s Pure Land. When the Pure Land lineage was created in the Southern Song, Huiyuan was honored as the founding patriarch. Daosheng was not only a disciple of Huiyuan, but also a prominent member in the Lotus Society. It is worth noting that Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra, in either legendary accounts or historical records, are said to have also joined Huiyuan’s Lotus Society.<sup>273</sup> I will further elaborate on this matter later.

The *gong’an* stories featuring Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra share several attentive similarities. First, Huiyuan and Daosheng were renowned for their profound insight in doctrinal matters, and their discussions revolve around doctrinal issues. Second, as mentioned earlier, the interactions between the Indian masters and their Chinese counterparts are depicted within a

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<sup>273</sup> Buddhabhadra: 於是率侶宵征，南指廬岳。沙門釋慧遠，久服風名，聞至欣喜若舊。 *Gao sengzhuan* 高僧傳. T. no.2059, 50: 0335b11-13. Buddhayaśas: 東晉之末，遠師憩跡廬阜。其時同意法師，釋道炳竺道生佛陀耶舍，泊在家英豪，劉遺民雷次宗周續之等一百二十三人，締結方外之遊。 *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2071, 51: 0108c15-18. For more information about the legend of Huiyuan’s Lotus Society, see Sun Changwu 孫昌武. “Huiyuan yu lianshe chuanshuo” 慧遠與“蓮社”傳說. *Wutaishan yanjiu* 五台山研究. 3 (2000): 9-17.

hierarchical relationship, in which Buddhayaśas and Buddhābhadrā are portrayed as being superior to their Chinese peers. Third, there is a recurring episode in both stories that involves using *ruyi* 如意 (scepter) as a pedagogical reference. The keyword in these episodes is centered around the notion “seeing” and “not seeing,” implying a deeper understanding of spiritual truths beyond mere visual perception.

#### Venerable Buddhayaśas

The Venerable Buddhayaśas visited to Master Yuan (Huiyuan). Yuan asked: “What is the Way?” Buddhayaśas responded: “No one is able to comprehend.” [Yuan] asked: “There are five hundred devotees here, among whom some are erudite scholars and intelligent intellectuals. How could it possible that no one comprehends [the Way]?” The master responded with a smile. In reverse, Yuan asked Buddhayaśas: “What is the Way?” The Master lifted a *ruyi* and presented it to Yuan, asking: “Do you see it?” Yuan said: “Yes, I see it.” The master further asked: “What do you see?” Yuan said: “I see the *ruyi* held in your hand.” The Master dropped the *ruyi* on the ground and asked: “Do you still see it?” Yuan answered: “Yes, I see it.” The master said: “What do you see?” Yuan said: “I see the *ruyi* in your hand dropped on the ground.” The Master picked up the *ruyi* and stated: “Seeing is exactly not seeing. Do you still see it?” Yuan became confused. The master reprimanded: “If I were to see, your insight is not superior to that of an average. How did you earn your name in the universe?” [Buddhayaśas], therefore, left with discontent for the Zixiao Peak.

耶舍尊者，訪遠法師。遠問：“如何是道？”師云：“無人能會。”云：“此間有五百聽徒，其中碩學高流，豈無一人會？”師微笑。遠復問：“如何是道？”師舉如意示之。云：“見麼？”遠云：“見。”師云：“見箇甚麼？”遠云：“見尊者手中如意。”師將如意，擲于地。云：“還見麼？”遠云：“見。”師云：“見箇甚麼？”遠云：“見尊者手中如意墮地。”師收起如意云：“見即不見，還見麼？”遠罔措。師斥云：“觀公見解，未出常流，何得名喧宇宙！”乃拂衣上紫霄峰。<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 0255c20-0256a03.

Venerable Buddhahadra

Chan master Buddhahadra of the Later Qin asked master [Dao]sheng: “What sūtra or treatise do you lecture?” Sheng said: “The *Mahaprajñāparamita Sūtra*.” Buddhahadra said: “How do you explain the meaning of form and emptiness?” [Daosheng] said: “The gathering of numerous particles is called form; the numerous particles being devoid of self-nature is called emptiness.” Buddhahadra said: “[There is a condition that] the numerous particles have not yet gathered. What is it called?” Sheng fell in confusion. Buddhahadra further asked: “What sūtras or treatises do you lecture other than that?” [Daosheng] said: “The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*.” Buddhahadra asked: “How do you explain the meaning of nirvana?” [Daosheng] said: “Nir- indicates not living; -vana indicates not extinguishing—[the state of ] not living but not extinguished is called nirvana.” Buddhahadra said: “This is the nirvana of the Buddha. What about your own nirvana, my master?” Sheng said: “How could nirvana have two meanings? I am only able to explain it as such. [I] do not know how will you expound nirvana?” Buddhahadra lifted a *ruyi* (scepter), asking: “Do you still see it?” Sheng said: “Yes, I can see it.” The master said: “What do you see?” Sheng said: “I see the *ruyi* held in your hand.” The Master dropped the *ruyi* on the ground, asking: “Do you still see it?” Sheng said: “Yes, I see it.” The master further asked: “What do you see?” Yuan said: “I see the *ruyi* in your hand dropped on the ground.” The master reprimanded him, saying: “If I were to see, your insight is not superior to that of an average. How did you earn your name in the universe?” [Buddhahadra] stormed off in a huff. One of Daosheng’s disciples could not stop his curiosity, and thus approached Buddhahadra and inquired further, “Our master [Sheng] expounded the meanings of form, emptiness, and nirvana, which one did not agree with [your view?] [We are wondering] how do you expound the meaning of form and emptiness?” Buddhahadra said: “[I] did not deem your master’s view as incorrect. Your master only explained the meaning of form and emptiness from the perspective of the result but failed to present the meaning of form and emptiness from the perspective of the cause.” [Sheng’s] disciple asked, “What is the meaning of form and emptiness from the perspective of the causal stage?” Buddhahadra said, “Because one single particle is empty, the numerous particles are empty; because the numerous particles are empty, one single particle is empty. In the emptiness of one single particle, there are no numerous particles; in the emptiness of numerous particles, there is no single particle.”

Fenyang [Shanzhao] speaks on behalf [of the disciples]: “Stop being entangled!”

秦跋陀禪師，問生法師：“講何經論？”生云：“大般若經。”師云：“作麼生說色空義？”云：“眾微聚曰色，眾微無自性曰空。”師云：“眾微未聚，喚作甚麼？”生罔措。師又問：“別講何經論？”云：“大涅槃經。”師云：“如何說涅槃之義？”云：“涅而不生，槃而不滅。不生不滅，故曰涅槃。”師云：“這箇是如來涅槃。那箇是法師涅槃？”云：“涅槃之義，豈有二耶？某甲只如此。未審禪師，如何說涅槃？”師拈起如意云：“還見麼？”云：“見。”師云：“見箇甚麼？”云：“見禪師手中如意。”師將如意，擲于地云：“見麼？”云：“見。”師云：“見箇甚麼？”云：“見禪師手中如意墮地。”師斥云：“觀公見解，未出常流，何得名喧宇宙！”拂衣而去。其徒懷疑不已，乃追師扣問：“我師說色空涅槃，不契。未審禪師，如何說色空義？”師云：“不道汝師，說得不是。汝師只說得果上色空，不會說得因中色空。”其徒云：“如何是因中色空？”師云：“一微空故眾微空，眾微空故一微空。一微空中無眾微，眾微空中無一微。”

汾陽代云：“休葛藤。”<sup>275</sup>

The episode involving the *ruyi* in the *gong'an* stories highlights its significance in conveying the Chan teaching. Both Buddhayaśas and Buddhahadra utilized the *ruyi* as a teaching tool to respond to questions posed by Huiyuan and Daosheng respectively regarding the meaning of the Way and Nirvana. The Indian masters presented similar teachings in their responses: they showed the *ruyi* to the Chinese masters and asked if they saw it. Upon receiving affirmative answers, Buddhayaśas and Buddhahadra further inquired about what they saw. As the Chinese masters focused on the superficial aspects, the Indian masters deliberately dropped the *ruyi* on the ground and posed further guiding questions. Once again, the Chinese masters responded based on the surface value, which drew criticism from the Indian masters. In Buddhayaśas's case, the Indian master pointed out that “Seeing is exactly unseeing,” implying

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<sup>275</sup> *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 0256a14-b06.

that the Chinese masters' perception actually reflected their blindness. Therefore, the essential question is: what does the *ruyi* symbolize?

Although the four figures in the *gong'an* stories lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the conversations were constructed in the context of Northern Song Chan Buddhism. As stated in the prefaces of the *Zongmen tongyao ji* and the *Liandeng huiyao*, the central theme of Chan literature during this period was "Seeing one's own nature and spontaneously attaining Buddhahood." In these *gong'an* stories, the Indian masters repeatedly asked two questions: "Do you see it" and "What do you see?" By using the *ruyi* as a teaching instrument, the Indian masters aimed to test whether Huiyuan and Daosheng could transcend the conceptual and physical aspects and perceive their inherent Buddha nature. When the Indian masters raised the *ruyi*, the Chinese masters should have "seen" their true nature other than the conditioned substance; when the Indian masters dropped the *ruyi*, the Chinese masters should have further realized that even the concept of "Buddha nature" needed to be relinquished. However, the two erudite Chinese masters disappointed the Indian masters as their perspectives still attached to the physical form, taking the *ruyi* as a tangible object. Hence, the meaning of "Seeing is exactly unseeing" is that they only saw the *ruyi* but failed to perceive their Buddha nature.

In addition to the teaching related to the *ruyi*, Buddhahadra's conversation with Daosheng also delves into the issue of the meaning of form and emptiness. Depicted as unenlightened, Daosheng's response was criticized by Buddhahadra as an incomplete understanding—only expounded the meaning of form and emptiness at the result stage but failed to expound their meaning at the casual stage. What does "form and emptiness at the result stage 果上色空" refer to? According to Daosheng's answer, form is the gathering of subtle particles, and emptiness refers to the absence of self-nature in these particles. Daosheng's response reflects

the perception gained from the “ultimate Buddhahood,” the spiritual state at the result stage. Buddhahadra further encouraged him to contemplate the nature of existence and emptiness before the subtle particles had yet to come together. Daosheng’s failure to respond implies that his understanding was confined by absolute emptiness, preventing him from perceiving the “existing” nature of subtlety.

The discussion between Daosheng and Buddhahadra reveals two aspects of the philosophical foundation of Chan Buddhism: Prajñā study and Buddha nature. While the core teaching of the Prajñā study focuses on absolute emptiness, the theory of Buddha nature emphasizes the permanent and universal existence of Buddhahood. In the *gong’an* story, Daosheng is portrayed as an adherent of the emptiness school, while Buddhahadra represents the existence school. However, it is worth noting that the conversation was fictionalized, as Daosheng is considered the founding father of the theory of Buddha nature in China. In fact, this episode was adapted from a conversation between Buddhahadra and Kumārajīva regarding the emptiness of dharma, which can be found in Buddhahadra’s hagiography compiled in the *Gaoseng zhuan*.<sup>276</sup> Kumārajīva, as a representative of the emptiness school, advocated for “absolute emptiness 畢竟空” and emphasized “nominal existence 假有.” While acknowledging the emptiness of form in terms of the absence of self-nature, Buddhahadra also asserted the existence aspect of subtlety—the principle of dependent origination. In the *gong’an* story, Buddhahadra’s view encompasses both emptiness and existence, with a particular emphasis on the aspect of existence. From the standpoint of the causal stage, the aspect of existence signifies

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<sup>276</sup> 羅什與賢數番往復，什問曰：“法云何空？”答曰：“眾微成色，色無自性，故雖色常空。”又問：“既以極微破色空，復云何破微？”答曰：“群師或破析一微，我意謂不爾？”又問：“微是常耶？”答曰：“以一微故眾微空，以眾微故一微空。”時寶雲譯出此語，不解其意，道俗咸謂賢之所計，微塵是常。餘日長安學僧復請更釋，賢曰：“夫法不自生，緣會故生。緣一微故有眾微，微無自性，則為空矣。寧可言不破一微，常而不空乎？”此是問答之大意也。 *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳. T. no.2059, 50: 0335a09-19.

the underlying cause for the arising of all phenomena, namely, the dependent origination. From the perspective of result stage, it refers to the genuine existence of Buddha nature. On the path of “seeing one’s own nature,” the attainment of ultimate enlightenment is impossible if one fails to perceive the aspect of existence. In this sense, Buddhahadra’s question into the meaning of form and emptiness aligns with his teaching of *ruyi*, which focuses on Buddha nature, the core teaching of Chan Buddhism. On the other hand, Daosheng, depicted as deluded, remains confined to absolute emptiness, which provokes Buddhahadra’s criticism.

The presence of Buddhayaśas and Buddhahadra in Song Buddhist texts parallels that of Buddhapāla. Prior to the Song dynasty, their names were primarily associated with their translation achievements and were predominantly found in Tang Buddhist catalogues.<sup>277</sup> However, during the Song dynasty, they emerged as central figures and were specifically referenced in Pure Land literature. In Chen Shunyu’s 陳舜俞 *Lushan ji* 廬山記, an early Song Buddhist work, Huiyuan, Daosheng, Buddhayaśas, and Buddhahadra are revered as four of the eighteen worthies of the Lotus Society. Their hagiographies in this work resemble those in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, but the compiler added additional details regarding their connections with Mt. Lu at the end of each account.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, Buddhayaśas presents in Jiezhu’s *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* and Wanggu’s *Xinxiu wangsheng zhuan*, where he is depicted as a dedicated adherent of Pure Land belief and had already been reborn in the Pure Land before Huiyuan.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> For example, in *Beishan lu* 北山錄, *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄, *Datang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄, *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄, and *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄.

<sup>278</sup> Buddhayaśas: *Lushan ji* 廬山記. T. no.2095, 51: 1041a24-b19. Buddhahadra: *Ibid.* 1041b21-c16.

<sup>279</sup> 佛告遠曰，我以本願力故來安慰汝。汝後七日當生我國。又見佛陀耶舍與慧持曇順在佛之側，前揖遠曰，法師之志在吾之先，何來之遲也。 *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳. T. no.2071, 51: 0110b23-b26. *Xinxiu wangsheng zhuan* 新修往生傳. X. no.1546, 78: 0148b24-c04.

Nevertheless, his connection with Huiyuan's assembly is likely to be more legendary in nature. In contrast, Buddhahadra's hagiography in the *Gaoseng zhuan* records his visit to Mt. Lu due to his ontological disagreements with Kumārajīva. Buddhahadra led his assembly left Chang'an for Mt. Lu and stayed with Huiyuan for several years.<sup>280</sup> During his residence in Mt. Lu, Buddhahadra played a significant role in both Chan and Pure Land traditions, for he translated numerous meditation sūtras. As aforementioned, he was venerated as a worthy in the Lotus Society in the *Lushan ji*. Aside from that, the *Lushan ji* also mentions that Buddhahadra erected a pagoda on Mt. Lu to house the three Buddha relics he brought with him.<sup>281</sup> Consequently, Buddhahadra became a prominent figure in Pure Land contexts, and his identity as a member of the Lotus Society even overshadowed his role as a translator in later Buddhist sources. In Southern Song or Yuan Buddhist sources, the names of Buddhayaśas and Buddhahadra only appear in the context of Pure Land Buddhism, as seen in works such as *Fozu tongji*, *Lushan lianzong baojian* 廬山蓮宗寶鑑, and *Jingtu shiyao* 淨土十要.

In addition to the textual sources, Northern Song literati also expressed their Pure Land ideologies through visual means. One of Su Shi's contemporaries, Li Gonglin 李公麟, created a series of paintings called "Lianshe tu" 蓮社圖 (White Lotus Society Picture), in which he projected his understanding of the Pure Land onto the iconography. It is worth noting that the picture included representations of Buddhayaśas and Buddhahadra, accompanied by their two

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<sup>280</sup> For detailed information on this topic, see Liu Xuejun 劉學軍, "Fotuobatuoluo beibin shimokao—Gaoseng zhuan de shuxie yu zhonggu fojiao jiaotuan de shehui zhengzhi jingyu" 佛陀跋陀羅“被擯”始末考—高僧傳的書寫與中古佛教僧團的社會、政治境遇. *Gudian wenxian yanjiu* 古典文獻研究 n.17 (1) (2014): 103-123. Hirai Yuokei 平井宥慶, "Rashu to futsutabatsutara" 羅什と佛陀跋陀羅. *Journal of Chisan Buddhist Studies*. v.46 (1997): 105-115.

<sup>281</sup> 賢有釋迦舍利三粒，自隨因葬北嶺，仍建塔焉。 *Lushan ji* 廬山記. T. no.2095, 51: 1041c15-16.

interlocutors in the *gong'an* stories, Huiyuan and Daosheng. Huiyuan was depicted engaging in a conversation with Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 beyond the Tiger Stream, while Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra were shown conversing within the monastic compound, and Daosheng was depicted preaching to a group of listeners further inside.<sup>282</sup> Surprisingly, Buddhapāla was not included in the iconography. However, an image of Mañjuśrī was prominently depicted in the central scene, highlighting the significant role of the cult of Mañjuśrī in the Pure Land Buddhism. Considering the popularity of Li's paintings among the literati, it is reasonable to assume that his artwork reflected the widely accepted concepts and religious ideological current of Pure Land Buddhism during that time.

Regarding Mañjuśrī's role in Pure Land Buddhism, An-yi Pan highlights that initially, Mañjuśrī was revered as a tutelary deity in the Mt. Lu area before attaining the status of a state guardian during the Tang dynasty. In Li's painting, Mañjuśrī replaced Amitābha, which underscores the notion that Mañjuśrī, as the embodiment of wisdom, held paramount importance in the journey towards enlightenment. As Pan argues, Pure Land Buddhism should not be reduced to the cult of Amitābha alone. Instead, the devotion to the cult of Mañjuśrī exemplifies the multifaceted and intricate nature of the Pure Land faith during the Northern Song dynasty.<sup>283</sup>

Having discussed the presence Buddhayaśas and Buddhabhadra in Pure Land literature, let us now reconsider their *gong'an* stories within the context of Chan hagiographies. In the Pure Land literature and iconography, Huiyuan and Daosheng held a higher status compared to the two Indian masters. This distinction is particularly evident in Li Gonglin's painting, where the

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<sup>282</sup> An-yi Pan, *Painting Faith: Li Gonglin and Northern Song Buddhist Culture* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2007), 175.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.* 249-256.

two Indian masters are depicted conversing at the furthest point from the central part. It can be inferred that Huiyuan and Daosheng are portrayed as having greater authority than the Indian masters. There is no way for the Indian masters to surpass Huiyuan and Daosheng, the founder of the Lotus Society and the “Sage of Nirvana Study.” However, in the *gong’an* stories, this hierarchical relationship was reversed, and the authority was bestowed upon the Indian masters. In these stories, Indian masters question and defeat the Chinese masters in terms of spiritual attainment, while Huiyuan and Daosheng are disparaged as deluded individuals. This iconoclastic design serves as an expression of Chan Buddhism’s tradition of challenging authority, a tradition rooted in the recognition of all sentient beings as potential buddhas.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The three Indian masters discussed in this section held special positions and received various labels in the Buddhist context. They were the first group of foreign monks listed in the “Yinghua shengxian” section, the only group of masters from the division of “Sūtra Translators” in the *Eminent Monks* series, and their names were often associated with their renowned translated works in the Buddhist catalogs. However, questions arise when considering their veneration as Buddhist ideals in Chan historiographies. What led to their appearance in the Northern Song Buddhist context, and how were they portrayed in works focused on Chan Buddhism?

My research suggests that their images differed in Tang and Song sources before they were upheld in the “Yinghua xiansheng” section. While their identity as sūtra translators received more emphasis in Tang sources, this alone is not the reason for the attention given to them in Chan literature. Instead, starting from the early Northern Song dynasty, they began to

appear in Pure Land literature, such as gazetteers, collections of rebirth accounts, and even iconographies. It was their significant role in Pure Land Buddhism that provided the pre-context in which the compilers of Chan historiographies sought these figures.

Pure Land Buddhism became an integral part of different Buddhist denominations during the Tang and Song dynasties. In the early Northern Song period, the advocacy of the repentance ritual and the practice of *nianfo* 念佛 (chanting the Buddha) practice by Tiantai monks Siming Zhili and Ciyun Zunshi led to an unprecedented flourishing of Pure Land Buddhism. Various forms of Lotus Societies, modeled after Huiyuan's assembly in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, became popular among both Buddhists and laities.<sup>284</sup> As Pure Land faith permeated all social strata, it became one of the most important Buddhist ideologies participating in and contributing to the religious discourse of the Song dynasty. This demonstrates that the compilers of Chan historiographies were attentive to ideological currents that extended beyond Chan lineages. By modifying the portrayals of these figures to align them more closely with typical Chan masters, the Chan compilers infused Chan teachings and disseminated them through the words attributed to these figures. This adaptation can be seen as a process of appropriating the non-Chan figures, utilizing them to further the agenda of the Chan school.

In a broader context, towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the “Yinghua shengxian” section emerged as a new category in the Chan historiographical work, the *Zongmen tongyao ji*. Although it is evident that the section drew on the “Chanmen dazhe” section in the *Jingde chuan denglu* as an important reference, the compiler Zongyong made significant adaptations to fit the “Yinghua shengxian” section into the new religious context. As a result, the number of figures

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<sup>284</sup> Daniel A. Getz, Jr, “T’ien-t’ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate.” In *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), 477.

included in this section doubled, and they came from more diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, Zongyong depicted these figures in *gong'an* stories rather than traditional hagiographies, thus adapting their images into typical Chan masters and using their stories to convey Chan teachings. These changes can be attributed partially to the fact that both the *Zongmen tongyao ji* and the *Liandeng huiyao* were Chan historiographies sponsored by lay community and served the pedagogical purpose of Chan masters. Compared to the hagiographical style applied to the “Chanmen dazhe” section, the *gong'an* stories portray these figures in a livelier style and are more straightforward about the Chan values. Whether adopting the *gong'an* style or the hagiographical style, later compilers demonstrated different preferences in portraying these Chan ideals. Nevertheless, the “Yinghua shengxian” section became a recurring part of Chan historiographical works, indicating its influential status and the formation of a new tradition in the Song Chan historiographies.

## Chapter 4

### The *Jiatai pu denglu* and Its “Yinghua Shengxian” Section

#### The Nature of the *Jiatai pu denglu* and Its “Yinghua shengxian” Section

During the era of Jiatai 嘉泰, a new *denglu* work was presented to the court in 1204 to gain imperial authorization. Compiled by the Yunmen monk Zhengshou 正受, the *Jiatai pu denglu* then became the only imperial-sanctioned *denglu* work in the Southern Song dynasty. Following the stylistic conventions of its counterparts, the *Jiatai lu* was titled by the era name and an adjective word displaying its unique feature. As the *Jingde chuan denglu* emphasizes “*chuan* (transmitting),” the *Tiansheng guang denglu* accentuates “*guang* (extensive),” and the *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* underscores “*xu* (continued),” the *Jiatai pu denglu* highlighted “*pu* (universal).” According to the preface, Zhengshou’s master, Daochang 道昌, once lamented the differential growth of trees and grasses despite they receiving identical nourishment. The “nourishment,” as Zhengshou interpreted, indicates the light emanating from the “lamp”—the Buddha’s teachings, the benefits of which was not supposed to be confined to the Buddhist community. Lamenting that the prior *denglu* works only displayed exclusive interests in the Buddhist community but overlooked the lay community, Zhengshou broadened his scope of inclusion in an endeavor to present a comprehensive portrayal of those benefiting from and contributing to the prosperity of Buddhism.<sup>285</sup> To broaden the scope of inclusion, Zhengshou attended to sources neglected by the preceding three works and dedicated seventeen years to

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<sup>285</sup> 頃侍淨慈佛行禪師道昌。一日，指續燈錄，喟然謂(臣)曰，三草二木之不同，及其受潤則一也。彼之云潤者，即此之被照也。夫燈之明，等及一切，初不擇物而照。何獨收於比丘，而遺於帝王公卿師尼道俗耶。……燈雖曰續，惜其照之不普。 *Jiatai pu denglu zong mulu* 嘉泰普燈錄總目錄. X. no.1558, 79: 0269c21-0270a05.

collecting information. Stressing the pivotal role played by the laity as dharma protectors, advocators, and patrons in Buddhist activities, Zhengshou even organized separate fascicles for the emperors, bureaucrats, aristocrats, and common followers who actively promoted Buddhism.<sup>286</sup>

The universality is also manifested in the concept of integrating the Three Teachings. According to Zhengshou, the Three Teachings share a common essence but are distinguished only by different names. He states, "...thus it can be known that the essence of Confucian teaching is to make one's intention sincere; the essence of Daoist teaching is to make one's mind void; the essence of Buddhist teaching is to make one's nature revealed. The sincere intention, void mind, and revealed nature are named differently but share the same entity."<sup>287</sup> This view aligns with the prevailing synthesis of the Three Teachings, the distinctive feature in the ideological landscape during that period.<sup>288</sup> More importantly, this inclusive approach, as a novel expression of Chan Buddhism, transcended not only other schools within Buddhism but even extended beyond the boundaries of Buddhism as a whole. It embraced a universal incorporation of all traditions to establish itself in a dominant position. Compared to the *Jingde lu* and the *Tiansheng lu* in the Northern Song dynasty, which emphasized the unique nature of the Chan school, the *Jiatai lu*'s all-embracing representation demonstrates the Chan school's innovative approach to asserting superiority. This suggests that the Chan school gained greater confidence

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<sup>286</sup> The section of "Sege Rulers and Wise Ministers" occupies two fascicles in the *Jiatai pu denglu*.

<sup>287</sup> 乃知儒之為教，其要在誠意；道之為教，其要在虛心；釋之為教，其要在見性。誠意也，虛心也，見性也，異名同體。 *Jiatai pu denglu zong mulu* 嘉泰普燈錄總目錄. X. no.1558, 79: 0269b23-c02.

<sup>288</sup> For the integration of the Three Teachings in the Song dynasty, see Zhang Yupu 張玉璞, "Sanjiao rongshe yu songdai shiren de chushi xintai ji wenxue biao xian" 三教融攝與宋代士人的出事心態及文學表現. *Kongzi yanjiu* 孔子研究. 2 (2005): 86-101. "Songdai sanjiao heyi sichao lunshu" 宋代"三教合一"思潮述論. *Kongzi yanjiu* 孔子研究. 5 (2011): 107-116.

than before, a confidence undoubtedly stemming from its ultimate triumph in competition with other Buddhist schools.

However, Zhengshou only mentioned the three Northern Song *denglu* works and identified his work as the “fourth lamp” to continue the lamp tradition.<sup>289</sup> Why did he remain silent on the *Liandeng huiyao*? As discussed in the preceding chapter, the *Liandeng huiyao* was compiled under the sponsorship of local lay Buddhists and, lacking imperial endorsement, likely circulated primarily in regional areas. Other than that, the brief interval between the compilations of the two *denglu* works might also be a factor. While Wuming’s note indicates the completion of the *Liandeng huiyao* in 1183, Zhengshou likely initiated the compilation of the *Jitai lu* in just two years.<sup>290</sup> These circumstances might have rendered Zhengshou unaware of the existence of the *Liandeng huiyao*.

If such is the case, it raises a more pivotal question: is the inclusion of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in both works a coincidence or a deliberate outcome? Given the presence of the “Yinghua xiansheng” sections in both the *Zongmen tongyao ji* and the *Liandeng huiyao*, the *Jitai lu*’s incorporation of this section could be considered a reflection of prevalent ideological trends at the time. The notable popular trends, as many scholars have noted, were the proliferation of local cults and the expansion of pantheon.<sup>291</sup> Notably, the characteristics of the

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<sup>289</sup> 伏觀景德之初，宣慈禪師道原所進傳燈錄。真宗皇帝有旨，命翰林楊億撰序以賜。天聖之初，駙都尉李遵勉所進廣燈錄，仁宗皇帝親製序以賜。建中靖國之初，佛國禪師惟白所進續燈錄，徽宗皇帝亦親製序以賜。為其道可以參贊化育，啟迪生民。故得膺上聖之發揮，為有國之靈鎮。(臣)顧惟，何幸而是書復得際遇於陛下，成第四燈。 *Jitai pu denglu zong mulu* 嘉泰普燈錄總目錄. X. no.1558, 79: 0270a15-23.

<sup>290</sup> In his preface, Zhengshou notes that 101 years following the finalization of the *Jianzhong lu* in 1101, the *Jitai lu* was completed. This suggests that the *Jitai lu* was likely presented to the imperial court around 1202. Considering Zhengshou’s dedicated 17-year effort in compiling this *denglu*, the commencement of the compilation process can be traced back to approximately 1185.

<sup>291</sup> Many scholars have observed a noteworthy growth in folk religion and local cults during the Song dynasty, which resulted from a confluence of factors, including the promotion of efficacious god highlighted by Hansen, the intricate relationship between local cults and local religious culture analyzed by von Glahn, the dynamics between

“Yinghua shengxian” section in the *Jiatai lu* also captured these trends. For example, the hagiographical narratives encompass various divine traces of the figures, echoing the emphasis on “efficacy” as a prevailing value in religious discourse. Figures like Qiansui Baozhang, Koubing Zaoxian, and Nan’an Yan, who had established their cults in local areas, illustrate the dynamic interaction between folk Buddhism and institutional Buddhism.<sup>292</sup> In addition, the inclusion of numerous Northern Song figures in this new list of Buddhist ideals suggests a shift in the compiler’s focus from Buddhist texts, such as *Eminent Monks* series and Pure Land literature, to contemporary reality in search of potential candidates. All these features underscore the pivotal role played by the “Yinghua shengxian” section in depicting the development of Chan Buddhism during this specific period.

In the following sections, I conduct case studies on two figures from the “Yinghua shengxian” section. The first is the legendary monk Qiansui Baozhang, a representative of the amalgamation of local cults and institutional Buddhism. The second is the Daoist patriarch Zhang Boduan, serving as a representative for the synthesis of Buddhism and Daoism. The deliberate inclusion of both figures in the imperial-sanctioned Chan historiography showcases the active participation of the Chan school in the contemporary religious discourse.

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local and institutional religions examined by Hymes, and the active engagement of ordinary people in religious activities explored by Davis. See Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Edward Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001).

<sup>292</sup> For research on Koubing Zaoxian, see Lan Zongrong 蘭宗榮, “Ruiyan si yu koubing gufo” 瑞岩寺與扣冰古佛. *Fujian zongjiao* 福建宗教, 4 (2002): 43-45. Li Xiaoling 黎曉鈴, “Wuyi shan koubing gufo xinyang zhong de sanjiangjun xinyang kao” 武夷山扣冰古佛信仰中的三將軍信仰考. *Wuyi xueyuan xuebao* 武夷學院學報, 3 (2010): 7-10. For research on Nan’an Yan, Lin Guoping 林國平, “Dingguang gufo tansuo” 定光古佛探索, *Yuan Kuang Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 3 (1999): 224-242. Wang Chien-ch’uan 王見川, “Cong nanan yanzhu dao dingguang gufo: jiantan qi yu hexiangu zhi guanxi” 從南安巖主到定光古佛—兼談其與何仙姑之關係. *Yuan Kuang Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 10 (2006): 215-231.

## Case Study I

### From Local to the State

#### Acknowledging the Cult of Qiansui Baozhang in the Chan Historiography

Qiansui Baozhang (413 BC–657 AD), the first figure listed in the “Yinghua shengxian” section, is described as a legendary Indian monk said to have existed for over 1000 years from the twelfth year of King Weilie 威烈 of the Zhou dynasty to the second year of Xianqing 顯慶 of the Tang dynasty. Baozhang earned the name “Baozhang” (precious palm) due to a distinctive physical characteristic—according to the legend, he was born with his left hand clenched in a fist, which remained until the age of 7 years. From the Song dynasty onwards, Baozhang was revered as the founding patriarch of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery 中天竺寺 in Hangzhou as well as a number of significant Chan monasteries throughout China.<sup>293</sup> It is worth noting that while the legend suggests that Baozhang visited China during the Wei and Jin dynasties (220–420), records about him did not appear until the Song dynasty. The only two early sources providing his relatively comprehensive hagiographies are the local gazetteer *Jiatai kuaiji zhi* 嘉泰會稽志 and the Chan historiography *Jiatai pu denglu*, compiled in the early thirteenth century. This raises the possibility that Baozhang might be a figure constructed by the people of the Song dynasty, instead of a historical figure with verifiable accounts.

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<sup>293</sup> In addition to the Zhong Tianzhu monastery, Baozhang was regarded as the founding patriarch of the Daci monastery 大慈寺 in Chengdu and the Laozu monastery 老祖寺 in Huangmei. The veneration of Baozhang as the founding patriarch of the Daci monastery may have originated from his hagiography, indicating that the monastery was his first residence in China. Baozhang as the founding patriarch of the Laozu monastery can be referenced to *Huangmei laosi zhongshan zhi* 黃梅老寺中山志, edited by Shi Chaofa 釋超法 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe 廣陵書社, 2006), 40-45. Furthermore, it was reported that Baozhang had practice centers at several monasteries, such as the Duobao monastery 多寶寺 in Chengdu, as referenced in *Jiaqing Huayang Xianzhi* 嘉慶華陽縣志 fasc. 21, (Dongmen wenchangong block-printed edition 東門文昌宮藏板, 1816), 6a and the Lingyan monastery 靈巖寺, as referred in *Emei shanzhi* 峨眉山志. In *Zhongguo fosi shizhi huikan* 中國佛寺史志彙刊 Book 45 (Taipei: Tsung-ch'ing Publishing House, 1994), 55.

This research on Baozhang, therefore, revolves around several questions. First, it aims to ascertain the identity of Qiansui Baozhang and explore how he was portrayed in various sources. Second, it seeks to determine the timing and factors that led to his recognition as the founding patriarch of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. Third, it purports to investigate the roles of the *Jiatai pu denglu* and his portrayal as a Chan ideal in promoting his cult. By addressing these questions, I intend to delineate a general trajectory of the evolution of Baozhang's worship, tracing its progression from a local cult to a national figure.

### Local Cult Figure and External Alchemist: Baozhang in Local Gazetteers

Among the surviving sources, the earliest complete account of Qiansui Baozhang can be found in the *Jiatai kuaiji zhi*, a local gazetteer completed in 1201. However, literary works from the mid-Northern Song period also contain references to Baozhang. The Northern Song literatus Qiang Zhi 強至, who originated from Hangzhou, wrote two poems related to the sites associated with Baozhang, “Visiting Baozhang Cloister 遊寶掌院”<sup>294</sup> and “Being Caught in Rain When Visiting Mt. Baozhang—Replying to Chunfu by the Same Rhyme 次韻和純甫遊寶掌遇雨”.<sup>295</sup>

The common theme of the two poems is to emphasize the sanctity of the region that bears Baozhang's name. In the first poem, it has “While lay people are not permitted to leave any traces, it is the duty of the sacred site to protect the gate of the mountain. 不許俗人留轍迹, 却應神物護巖扃”. Qiang contrasts secular individuals with divine figures, suggesting that the

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<sup>294</sup> 當年秘寶已無形，獨有層峰似舊青。不許俗人留轍迹，卻應神物護巖扃。山腰猿嘯孤煙暝，洞口龍歸暴雨腥。今日一來探絕賞，始知全勝考圖經。In *Quan Songshi* 全宋詩, edited by Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1998), 7008.

<sup>295</sup> 游騎來逢雨，寧全是折磨。山神應洗路，恐惹俗塵多。 *Ibid.* 7054.

location of the Baozhang Cloister is a sacred religious realm. This contrast can also be seen in the second poem, where he said the mountain god should clean the road to prevent worldly impurities (山神應洗路, 恐惹俗塵多). In the last line of the first poem, Qiang summarizes that the rough sketch on the map was not comparable to the real scenery (今日一來探絕賞, 始知全勝考圖經). From Qiang's description, it becomes apparent that the Baozhang Cloister held enough fame to be marked on local maps. Additionally, considering that the complete account of Baozhang emerged relatively late, it is likely that the story of Baozhang was transmitted orally in this region prior to the mid-Northern Song period.

Unfortunately, Qiang did not provide specific information regarding the location of these sites. However, based on the poems, we can discern that a Buddhist complex called the Baozhang Cloister was located in a mountain also named after Baozhang. As the Northern Song sources offer limited details about Baozhang's sites, I have to rely on gazetteers compiled during the Southern Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties as references. According to these sources, the clusters of Baozhang's sites can be identified in three counties—Kuaiji 會稽, Zhuji 諸暨, and Pujiang 浦江. These counties were collinearly located from northeast to southwest in the Liangzhe East Circuit 兩浙東路, as the map shows (Figure 2):

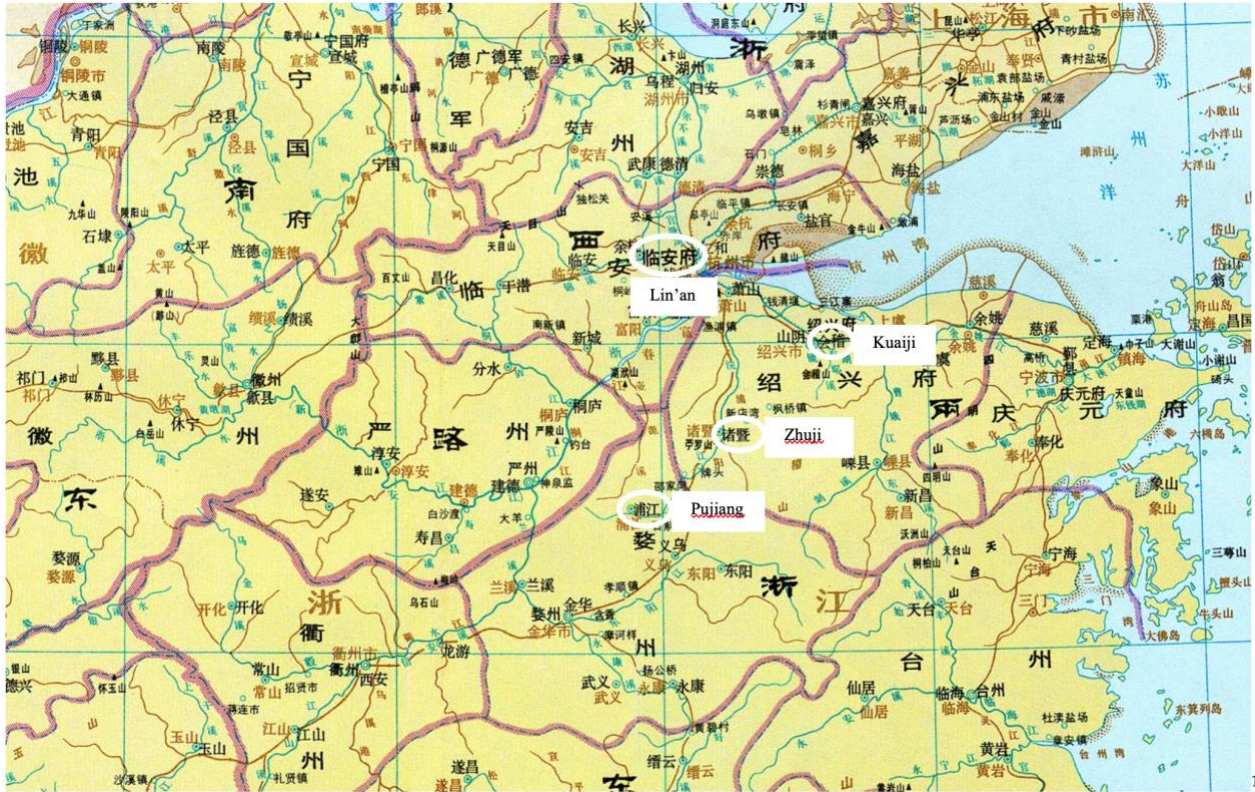


Figure 2. The Liangzhe Circuit in the first year of Jiading 嘉定 (1208).<sup>296</sup>

Information concerning Baozhang's sites in Kuaiji and Zhuji counties is primarily preserved in the *Jiatai kuaiji zhi*, which is the earliest reliable source for tracing these sites. This gazetteer lists five sites dedicated to the cult of Baozhang, including Mingjue Cloister 明覺院, Chongsheng Cloister 崇勝院, Yanqing Cloister 延慶院, Shang Purun Cloister 上普潤院, and Baozhang Cliff 寶掌巖.

Mingjue Cloister is located on Mt. Cifu, which was approximately thirty-five *li* east of the county [Kuaiji]. [This cloister] was initially constructed in the eighteenth year of Kaiyuan during the Tang dynasty. Unfortunately, it was destroyed during the Huichang persecution. Nevertheless, it was rebuilt in the

<sup>296</sup> Tan Qixiang 譚其驤, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中國歷史地圖集, Book 6 (2) (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe 中國地圖出版社, 1982). "Guoxue daohang 國學導航", Available online: <http://www.guoxue123.com/other/map/pic/13/07.jpg> (accessed on 3 August 2023).

eighth year of Tianfu during the Jin dynasty and renamed the Daming Cloister. Since the second year of Zhiping, its plaque was changed to the present name [Mingjue Cloister]. Within its premises, there is a pagoda of monk Qiansui, along with his stone tablet. The story [of monk Qiansui] is unsubstantiated and lacks verification. Nonetheless, the cloister itself is known for its exceptional seclusion and scenic beauty.

明覺院：在縣（會稽）東三十五里刺浮山。唐開元十八年建，會昌毀廢。晉天福八年復建，號大明院。治平二年改今額。有千歲和尚塔，亦有碑。而其說荒怪，不可攷質。然院頗幽絕可愛。<sup>297</sup>

Chongsheng Cloister is located approximately forty-five *li* southeast of the county [Zhuji]. This cloister was originally constructed in the fifteenth year of Zhenguan during the Tang dynasty by the Chan master Qiansui. However, it suffered destruction during the Huichang persecution. It was then rebuilt during the Dazhong period. In the second year of Xianping, the cloister was renamed Huayan Bore Cloister. Eventually, its plaque was changed to its present name.

崇勝院：在縣（諸暨）東南四十五里。唐貞觀十五年，千歲禪師開巖建。會昌廢，大中重建。咸平二年改華嚴般若院。後改今額。<sup>298</sup>

Yanqing Cloister is located approximately seventy *li* southeast of the county [Zhuji]. The cloister was constructed in the first year of Zhenguan during the Tang dynasty. Due to the Chan master Qiansui's practice at this location, it came to be known as Daochang Cloister (Cloister of Practice). Unfortunately, it was destroyed during the Huichang persecution. However, it was rebuilt in the eighth year of Xiantong and renamed Xishan Cloister. In the fifth year of Xiande in the Later Zhou dynasty, it was renamed Xingfu Yong'an Cloister. In the first year of Dazhong Xiangfu, it was bestowed its current plaque.

延慶院：在縣（諸暨）東南七十里。唐貞觀元年建，有千歲禪師修行於此，因號道場院。會昌廢，咸通八年重建，又號溪山院。周顯德五年改興福永安院。大中祥符元年改賜今額。<sup>299</sup>

Shang Purun Cloister is located approximately twenty-five *li* southeast of the county [Zhuji]. It was initially the residence of monk Qiansui. Within its premises, there is a small rock featuring carvings of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra.

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<sup>297</sup> *Jiatai kuaiji zhi* 嘉泰會稽志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書, no. 549 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co., 1983), 6272–73.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.* 6282.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

The cloister was built in the seventh year of Tianfu during the Jin dynasty and originally named Liquan yuan. Later, it was changed to the current name.

上普潤院：在縣（諸暨）東南二十五里。本千歲和尚所居。有小石巖，上有文殊普賢像。晉天福七年建，號醴泉院。後改今額。<sup>300</sup>

Baozhang Cliff, located approximately forty-five *li* southeast of the county [Zhuji], used to be Chan master Baozhang's residence. It is also known by the name of the Qiansui Cliff. The Chan master, whose name remains unknown, claimed to have been born towards the end of the Zhou dynasty. During the Wei and Jin dynasties, he traveled from the west to the Shu region. In the fifteenth year of Zhenguan, he began dwelling in this cave. He passed away in the first month of the second year of Xiande of the Latter Zhou dynasty, thereby living for 1072 years. The cliff features a carved portrait of him in the middle, approximately forty-nine *chi* high from the ground. The stone chamber has the capacity to accommodate over a hundred people. Within the cave, several stone tablets are present, appearing as though they have been meticulously polished. It is believed that this was a bathing spot for local inhabitants. Additionally, Chan master Qiansui once planted a palm tree here, which has thrived for several hundred years.

寶掌巖：在縣（諸暨）東南四十五里，寶掌禪師所居也。一名千歲巖。禪師不知名氏，自云生於周末。當魏晉間，由西域入蜀。貞觀十五年開岩於此，周顯德二年正月遷化。壽一千七十二歲。真儀在半巖，去地四十九尺。石室可容百餘人，洞內石版數片如削。傳云裏人沐浴之所。禪師種貝多木一枝，亦數百年矣。<sup>301</sup>

The account of Baozhang Cliff can also be found in *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 by Wang Xiangzhi 王象之, which was compiled during the year of Baoqing 寶慶 (1225–1227).<sup>302</sup>

Furthermore, in the *Zhuji Xianzhi* 諸暨縣志 compiled during Emperor Kangxi's reign, the compiler references Ming literatus Cao Xuequan's 曹學佺 work, *Yudi mingshengzhi* 輿地名勝

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<sup>300</sup> *Jiatai kuaiji zhi* 嘉泰會稽志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書, no. 549 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co., 1983), 6283.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.* 6309.

<sup>302</sup> 千歲巖。在諸暨縣東南四十五里，一名寶掌巖，寶掌禪師所居也。See Wang Xiangzhi 王象之, *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1992), 546–548.

志, which provides information about Mt. Baozhang. It was revealed that this Mt. Baozhang is an alternative name for Baozhang Cliff recorded in the *Jiatai kuaiji zhi*.<sup>303</sup> In addition, the *Shaoxing fuzhi* 紹興府志 has a record regarding the palm tree planted by Baozhang, stating, “Palm tree: planted by Chan master Baozhang during the Zhenguan era in the Tang dynasty. It is located at Baozhang Cave in Zhuji”.<sup>304</sup>

Mt. Baozhang also appeared in Pujiang county. According to the *Wanli Jinhua fuzhi* 萬曆金華府志, Mt. Baozhang is located eight *li* north of the county and is near Mt. Xianhua 仙華. Moreover, in front of the mountain, there is a towering cliff known as Feilai Peak 飛來峰.<sup>305</sup> Since Pujiang county is in southwest of Zhuji, this Mt. Baozhang cannot be the same as the one in Zhuji. Interestingly, this Feilai Peak shares the same name as the more famous Feilai Peak on Mt. Tianzhu in Lin’an. It is possible that this substitution occurred after Baozhang became associated with the Hangzhou Feilai Peak. Within Mt. Baozhang, there is another site related to Baozhang called Baozhang Cold Spring 寶掌冷泉. The Yuan literatus Liu Guan 柳貫, who hailed from Pujiang, composed a poem dedicated to this spring.<sup>306</sup> Later, the Ming literatus

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<sup>303</sup> 寶掌山。在縣東南四十五里，一名千歲巖。唐貞觀中寶掌禪師開巖於此，自云年已千歲。真身在半巖，去地四十九尺。山巖中石室可容百餘人。洞口石壁數片如削。禪師種貝多木一株在巖上，時有頻伽鳥巢其上。See Shen Chunling 沈椿齡, and Buya Lou 樓卜涯. *Qianlong Zhuji Xianzhi* 乾隆諸暨縣志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書, no. 598 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co. 1983), 179.

<sup>304</sup> 貝多木。唐貞觀間寶掌禪師所植，在諸暨寶掌巖上。See Li Hengte 李亨特, and Pingshu 平恕. *Qianlong shaoxing fuzhi* 乾隆紹興府志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書 no. 221 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co. 1983), 459.

<sup>305</sup> 寶掌山。在縣（浦江縣）北八里與仙華山近。唐僧寶掌大師栖禪處。……前有高巖湧石類，翻騰飛舞之狀，亦號飛來峰。……浦陽山水惟此與仙華為最勝。See Wang Maode 王懋德, and Fengyi Lu 陸鳳儀. *Wanli Jinhua fuzhi* 萬曆金華府志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書, no. 498 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co. 1983), 271.

<sup>306</sup> 寶掌冷泉。寶掌山，唐千歲和尚道場，有看經行道洞岩。See Mao Fengshao 毛鳳韶. *Jiajing pujiang zhilue* 嘉靖浦江志略 fasc. 8. In *Tianyige cang mingdai fangzhi xuankan* 天一閣藏明代方志選刊 (Shanghai: Shanghai

Zheng Dongbai 鄭東白 had a poem titled *Visiting Baozhang Cave on Mt. Xianhua* 游仙華山寶掌洞記, suggesting the existence of another Baozhang Cave located in Mt. Xianhua.<sup>307</sup>

Upon reviewing the information gathered from local gazetteers regarding Baozhang's sites, it is appropriate to revisit Qiang Zhi's poems. Although Qiang Zhi did not provide specific details about the Baozhang site he visited, his occupational mobility can serve as a useful reference. Qiang Zhi's earliest biography in the surviving sources can be found in the *Xianchun lin'an zhi* 鹹淳臨安志, completed in 1268. It merely mentions that he was recruited by Han Qi 韓琦 (1008–1075) due to his well-rounded character and literary talent.<sup>308</sup> Qiang's chronological biography is preserved in the *Songshi yi* 宋史翼 by the Qing literatus Lu Xinyuan 陸心源. According to this account, Qiang's official career began with his appointment as the administrator for Public Order in Sizhou 泗州司理參軍. He was subsequently assigned to Pujiang, Dongyang 東陽, and Yuancheng 元城. In the fourth year of Zhiping (1067), he became a Confidential Copier 書記 under Han Qi and relocated to Bianjing 汴京. Following this, he was promoted to positions within the central government and remained in the capital city until his passing.<sup>309</sup>

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guji shudian 上海古籍書店, 1981), 5b. Liu Guan's poem can be found in *Liu daizhi ji* 柳待制集 fasc. 5. In *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 30b.

<sup>307</sup> 仙人麻。鄭東白游仙華山寶掌洞記。攀援亂石有異草，如絲縷狀，生峭壁上。舊傳仙人麻苧之遺。See Shen Yiji 沈翼機. *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志 fasc. 106. In *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 22a.

<sup>308</sup> 琦罷政事，鎮京兆。徙鎮相魏，常引至自助。琦為詩，合賓客屬和。至獨思致逸發，不可追躡。琦上奏及他書記，皆至屬稿。See Qian Shuoyou 潛說友, *Xianchun lin'an zhi* 鹹淳臨安志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co. 1970), 644-645.

<sup>309</sup> Lu Xinyuan 陸心源. *Songshi yi* 宋史翼 (Taipei: Wen-hai Press. 1967), 1113-1115.

This timeline roughly outlines the trajectory of Qiang’s life, which can be divided into two periods: Qiang resided in the southern regions prior to assuming the office of Yuancheng in the Hebei region, after which he lived in the north for the rest of his life. Given that he once held an office in Pujiang county, it is reasonable to speculate that he composed the two poems during his visit to Mt. Baozhang in that area. Thus, it can be inferred that the cult of Baozhang had already established its presence in Pujiang during the first half of the eleventh century.

The *Jiatai kuaiji zhi* may also have preserved an early version of Baozhang’s account, which differed significantly from the version found in the *Jiatai pu denglu*.

Monk Qiansui, also known as Chan master Baozhang, was an Indian who was born during the late Zhou dynasty. During the Wei and Jin dynasties, he arrived from the western regions. Instead of having regular meals, he only consumed lead and mercury. One day, while giving a lecture to his disciples, he said, “I desire to reside in this world for a thousand years. To date, I am 673 years old”. As a result, he acquired the title of monk Qiansui (1000 years). During the Zhenguan era of the Tang dynasty, he traveled throughout the Liangzhe region (Zhejiang xilu 浙江西路 and Zhejiang donglu 浙江東路). When he reached the foot of Mt. Lipu in Zhuji, he encountered an old man. The old man inquired, “Where are you planning to go?” The master replied: “To seek a place for practice as I am growing old”. The old man said: “Walk along the north side of this mountain. In the deep and tranquil woods covered by the hill screen, there is a stone chamber known as Lipu Cave. Why not go and live there?” During the mid-autumn, the master arrived at the cave. He was captivated by the lush mountain, clear springs, bright moon, and refreshing breeze. He made eulogies and wrote the line, “Having traveled throughout the four hundred prefectures of China, only this place is worth wandering”. He then constructed a cottage to reside in, devoting himself to silent meditation for 17 years. One day, he counted on his fingers and realized that he had reached the age of 1072. He conversed with his disciple Huiyun and said: “My death is impending. I will teach you the [method of making] the Reverted Elixir.” Presently, there is a Baozhang Cliff in Zhuji and a pagoda dedicated to monk Qiansui at the Mingjue monastery on Mt. Cifu in Kuaiji. Additionally, there is a Bone-Washing Pond of Qiansui associated with his legacy.

千歲和尚寶掌禪師，中印土人，生周末，當魏晉時來自西域。居常不食，唯服鉛汞而已。一日示眾，曰：“吾欲住世千歲，今六百七十三歲矣。”因號千歲和尚。唐貞觀中，周游二浙。至諸暨里浦山下，遇一老人，問：“欲何之？”師曰：“訪地修行，吾將老焉。”老人曰：“循山之陰，林嶂幽聳中，有石室，名里浦岩。盍往居之。”值中秋，師抵岩下。見其山秀泉潔，月白風清。為頌，有“行盡支那四百州，此中偏稱道人游”之句。遂結茆以居，宴坐十七年。一日屈指，一千七十二歲矣。語其徒惠雲曰：“吾將謝世，以還丹授汝。”今諸暨有寶掌岩，會稽刺浮山明覺寺有千歲和尚塔，又有千歲洗骨池。<sup>310</sup>

This account provides some basic information about Baozhang, such as his home country, life span, and the specific regions he resided in China. Moreover, it has some additional significant details. One striking aspect is that Baozhang is depicted as a practitioner of Daoist external alchemy, also known as *waidan* 外丹. Not only did he sustain his life by ingesting lead and mercury, but he also intended to transmit the method of making the reverted elixir, the essence of his teaching, to his disciple. Lead and mercury as two chief ingredients in the external alchemical practice were usually used for making elixir, a “medicine” to extend one’s lifespan and to attain immortality. The reverted elixir refers to the alchemical process primarily involving a firing method, through which metals like gold and jade will be refined to become elixir. According to *Baopuzi* 抱樸子, the reverted elixir will transform the practitioner into an immortal immediately.<sup>311</sup> By the end of his life, Baozhang sought to transmit the knowledge of creating the reverted elixir to his disciple, prioritizing this alchemical practice over doctrinal teachings or

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<sup>310</sup> *Jitai kuaiji zhi* 嘉泰會稽志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co. 1983), 6446.

<sup>311</sup> 聞之先師云，仙人或昇天，或住地，要於俱長生，去留各從其所好耳。又服還丹金液之法，若且欲留在世間者，但服半劑而錄其半。若後求昇天，便盡服之。 See Wang Ming 王明. *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱樸子內篇校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1986), 52.

meditation skills. The emphasis on Baozhang's alchemical practice rather than associating him solely with Buddhist elements presents a somewhat contradictory image of him as an external alchemical Buddhist practitioner. This account, which might be an early version or at least one circulated within local regions, introduces elements that have clear inconsistencies regarding the portrayal of Baozhang.

Furthermore, the account outlines Baozhang's travel route in China, particularly highlighting the Liangzhe region and Mt. Lipu in Zhuji county. Baozhang is said to have been deeply impressed by the extraordinary beauty of Mt. Lipu, leading him to choose it as his residence and even to compose a verse praising its splendor. Apparently, the compiler of this account likely intended to use Baozhang's legend to promote Mt. Lipu. Interestingly, in the account compiled in the *Jiatai pu denglu*, the same verse is used to extol the Feipai Peak on Mt. Tianzhu, indicating the different focuses of the compilers.

Lastly, the account mentions several cultic sites associated with Baozhang, including the Baozhang Cliff in Zhuji, the Baozhang pagoda, and the Bone-Washing Pond in the Mingjue monastery on Mt. Cifu in Kuaiji. The cliff and the monastery can be verified through the aforementioned sources. However, the Bone-Washing Pond is not mentioned in the entry for the Mingjue monastery, suggesting that it might be an additional piece of information. The story alluded to by this site can be found in the *Jiatai pu denglu*, which will be elaborated on later.

### **Founding Patriarch: Baozhang with the Zhong Tianzhu Monastery**

It is evident that the registration of these local sites in the gazetteers was ascribed to the legend and popularity of Baozhang. As Baozhang's story and his cult spread to other regions, his image started to be linked with more renowned sites like the Zhong Tianzhu monastery.

The Zhong Tianzhu monastery, alternatively known as Fajing monastery 法淨寺, was located on the Jiliu Peak 稽留峰 between the Shang Tianzhu monastery 上天竺寺, Faxi monastery 法喜寺, and the Xia Tianzhu monastery 下天竺寺, Fajing monastery 法鏡寺. Despite the unclear origin, the monastery witnessed several significant events during the Song dynasty. According to the *Fajing sizhi* 法淨寺志, in the first year of Taiping xingguo 太平興國 (976), the Wuyue king rebuilt it and renamed it Chongshou Cloister 崇壽院. In the fourth year of Zhenghe 政和 (1114), Emperor Huizong changed its name to Tianning Wanshou Yongzuo Chan monastery 天寧萬壽永祚禪寺. When the Song imperial court fled south, Emperor Gaozong sought protection from Bodhisattva Marici. It was reported that the deity exhibited sympathetic resonance and used divine power to conceal the emperor from Jurchen soldiers. Shortly after the Song imperial court settled in Lin'an, Emperor Gaozong bestowed the Zhong Tianzhu monastery a statue of Bodhisattva Marici, which was previously enshrined in the palace.<sup>312</sup>

It remains unknown the exact time period when Baozhang began to be venerated as the founding patriarch of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. However, an essay by literatus Wang Xin

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<sup>312</sup> For more information about the history of Fajing monastery, see Sun Jun 孫峻, *Fajing sizhi* 法淨寺志. In *Zhongguo fosizhi congkan* 中國佛寺志叢刊, edited by Bai Huawen 白化文 and Zhang Zhi 張智 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe 廣陵書社, 2006), 11. It is noteworthy that a detailed account of Emperor Gaozong's elicitation of sympathetic resonance from Bodhisattva Marici is preserved in a Daoist classic called *Xiantian doumu molizhitian qidao zougao dafan leishu* 先天斗姆摩利支天祈禱奏告大梵雷書. After the worship of Bodhisattva Marici was introduced in China, this Tantric deity drew the attention of Daoists for her divine power in protecting sentient beings and averting disasters. Bodhisattva Marici was then incorporated into the Daoist pantheon during the Tang dynasty and became a composite deity with the Daoist goddess Doumu Yuanjun 斗姆元君. Given that one of the major deities housed in the Zhong Tianzhu monastery has both Buddhist and Daoist origins, it is reasonable to speculate that this could be related to the selection of Baozhang, who also possesses Daoist element within his local cult identity, as the founding patriarch.

王信 evinces that Baozhang's cult was worshipped in the monastery before the mid-Southern Song dynasty.<sup>313</sup>

This essay, entitled the “Record of Huayan Pavilion”, was written for commemorating the restoration undertaken within the building complex of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery.<sup>314</sup> Due to the important information regarding the connection between Baozhang and the monastery, I will systematically analyze it by dividing it into several sections.

In the opening, Wang explicitly highlights the unfavorable circumstances confronting the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. Despite its location on a renowned mountain, the growth of the monastery was impeded by its dilapidated condition. In comparison to the other two Tianzhu monasteries, the Zhong Tianzhu appeared to be in isolation. Thus, it becomes evident that by the early Southern Song dynasty, both the size and financial resources of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery were incomparable to those of prominent monasteries like Lingyin monastery 靈隱寺 and Jingci monastery 淨慈寺, which enjoyed patronage from the imperial court. Even among the three Tianzhu monasteries, it is plausible that the Zhong Tianzhu was considered inferior to its sister monasteries, the Shang Tianzhu, and the Xia Tianzhu.

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<sup>313</sup> Wang Xin 王信 (1137–1194), hailing from Lishui 麗水 (belong to Zhejiang), achieved success in the imperial examination in the thirtieth year of Shaoxing (1160) and obtained the *jingshi* degree. He commenced his official career as an Instructor in Confucian Schools in Jianzhou Prefecture 建康府學教授. Due to his exceptional literary skills, he received appointments to several official positions. In the thirteenth year of Chunxi (1186), he was promoted to be Chamberlain for Ceremonials 太常少卿 and Secretariat Drafter 中書舍人. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed as Supervising Secretary 給事中, during which he wrote the “Record of Huayan Pavilion” for the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. See Tuo Tuo 脫脫. *Songshi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1977), 12139-12143.

<sup>314</sup> Wang Xin's *Huayangge ji* 華嚴閣記 can be found in Qian Shuoyou 潛說友, *Xianchun lin'an zhi* 鹹淳臨安志. In *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書 (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co., 1970), 785, and *Quan Songwen* 全宋文, compiled by Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 2006), 434-435.

The situation of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery was improved when monk Fahua assumed the abbotship, for he effectively rescued the monastery from its brink of bankruptcy. The most remarkable endeavor that Fahua made was the organization of a rain praying ceremony. In the fourteenth year of Chunxi 淳熙 (1187), the Zhong Tianzhu monastery received an official order, which instructed the monastery to pray for rain to Bodhisattva Guanyin, the primary deity enshrined in the three Tianzhu monasteries. The official records about this event were scarce, as it was likely a localized ceremony. Wang Xin, at the invitation of Fahua, documented the proceedings. Through his observation, we are able to gain insight into the revitalization of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. According to his account, in the main hall there resided a statue of Mahāvairocana, who was flanked by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. Surrounding these deities were the fifty-three wise men whom Sudhana visited in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra*. Adjacent to the main hall were the bell platform and the sūtra platform on the two sides. Wang was deeply impressed not only by the grandeur of the monastic complex, but also by Fahua's resolute determination and execution. In response to Fahua's request, Wang recorded the timeline and duration of the reconstruction project, which spanned over 3 years from 1183 to 1186.

Instead of seeking personal credit, Fahua humbly attributed this achievement to the power of Qiansui Baozhang, the divine monk who appeared in his dream. This brief account of Baozhang represents the earliest surviving source that documents his biographical information and his connection to the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. According to Fahua's introduction, Baozhang, who lived for an astonishing 1072 years from the twelfth year of King Weilie of Zhou (BCE 414) to the second year of Xianqing of Tang (657), was the founder of the monastery. In the winter of the sixth year of the Chunxi (1179), during the midnight of the fifteenth day of the eleventh month, Fahua dreamt about a monk who identified himself as monk Qiansu. In Fahua's

description, the monk showed a typical exotic appearance which is similar to a high horsehead and wearing golden earrings. Baozhang entrusted Fahua with the tasks of revitalizing the monastery and promoting his teachings. Interpreting this dream as an auspicious sign, Fahua gathered the assembly in the following morning and held a ceremony in front of Baozhang's portrait. While Wang expressed some skepticism towards Fahua's account, he discovered a line from a verse composed by Baozhang on his deathbed, which read, "[I will] come back in another life", serving as potential evidence to support Fahua's dream.

Wang's description of Fahua's dream provides several important pieces of information. First, it articulates Baozhang's year of birth and death, which aligned with those found in later hagiographies. This suggests that the basic information about Baozhang's legend had started to be substantiated. Second, it establishes the connection between Baozhang and the Zhong Tianzhu monastery, where he is revered as the founding patriarch, and his portrait is venerated. Since this record was written in 1187, it demonstrates that their connection predates the mid-Southern Song period. Third, when quoting Baozhang's verse, Wang mentions that he examined the lines and discovered that particular sentence. This implies that he might not be familiar with Baozhang's literary works, and it is possible that he had not previously read Baozhang's stories and verses until this visit. Lastly, showing up in Fahua's dream, Baozhang instructed him to renovate the monastery and thereby promote his teaching (今汝能建立, 吾道興矣). This detail suggests that Baozhang's presence probably remained unknown in Lin'an before the monastery's renovation took place.

Wang Xin's record highlights the critical role of Abbot Fahua in promoting Baozhang's cult at the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. Seizing the opportunity of the rain praying ceremony, Fahua extended invitations to a number of government officials. The ceremony served not only

to showcase the renovated monastery, but also to propagate the worship of Baozhang among literati.

Unfortunately, Fahua's biographical information is scarce in existing sources, and Wang's record appears to be the primary and perhaps the only account providing insights into this monk. According to Wang, Fahua originated from the Guangdong region (Guangnan East Circuit 廣南東路). Since he had the dream of Baozhang in the sixth year of Chunxi (1179), he must have resided at the Zhong Tianzhu monastery prior to that. The *Fajing sizhi* lists several notable abbots who had previously resided at the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. Among them, four were from the Song dynasty, including Haikong 海空, Fodeng 佛燈, Aotang Zhongren 拗堂中仁, and Chijue Yuanmiao 癡絕元妙.<sup>315</sup> Haikong was said to have resided at the monastery for 16 years during the reign of Emperor Ningzong 寧宗 (1194–1224). After his passing, the abbotship was passed on to Fodeng, who remained at the monastery for 12 years during the year of Jiading 嘉定 and Duanping 端平 periods. Aotang Zhongren, a disciple of Yuanwu 圓悟, assumed the abbotship of Dajue monastery 大覺寺 soon after the relocation of the imperial court to Lin'an. He then was appointed to administer Zhong Tianzhu monastery and Lingfeng monastery 靈峰寺 successively. Regrettably, the available source does not specify Zhongren's tenure at the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. Zhongren was summoned to the imperial court by Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 during the year of Chunxi (1174–1189) and passed away in the second year of Jiatai (1202). Considering Fahua's arrival at the monastery before the sixth year of Chunxi, it is highly likely that Fahua succeeded Zhongren as the next abbot. The last Song dynasty abbot on the list, Chijue

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<sup>315</sup> Sun Jun 孫峻, *Fajing sizhi* 法淨寺志. In *Zhongguo fosizhi congkan* 中國佛寺志叢刊, edited by Bai Huawen 白化文 and Zhang Zhi 張智 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe 廣陵書社, 2006), 101–103.

Yuanmiao, resided at the monastery during the early year of Shaoxing 紹興 (1131–1162). Given the timeline described above, it is reasonable to suggest that Zhongren assumed the abbotship after Yuanmiao, followed by Fahua’s succession.

### **Chan Ideal: Baozhang in the *Jiatai pu denglu***

Upon the completion of the *Jiatai pu denglu* in 1204, Baozhang’s prominence was solidified as he was listed as the first ideal in the “Yinghua shengxian” section. His hagiography underwent significant expansion, portraying him as a divine monk devoted to sūtra chanting and an awakener having attained enlightenment through direct instruction from Bodhidharma. Notably, his travel route throughout China covered nearly all the locations of great significance to the development of Chan Buddhism. In this account, the compiler Zhengshou rewrote Baozhang’s hagiography, ensuring that his portrayal fits well in the Chan context.

I will provide an analysis after each paragraph of the translation.

Chan master Qiansui Baozhang originated from the central region of India. In the twelfth year of King Weilie of the Zhou dynasty, he was born with divine qualities. His left hand remained clenched into a fist until the age of 7 years when he cut his hair to embark on his monkhood. It was due to this feature that he was named Baozhang. During the Wei and Jin dynasties, he traveled eastward and arrived in China. He visited Xishu (Western Shu) to pay homage to Samantabhadra and resided at the Daci monastery. He did not adhere to regular meals but instead devoted himself to reciting sūtras, such as reciting the *Prajñā Sūtra* for several thousand fascicles each day. Some people lauded him, saying, “His jade-like teeth toil in the cold, resembling the bursting of a rapid mountain spring.” Sometimes he would sit on the steps at midnight, evoking tears from both deities and ghosts. One day, he addressed the assembly, announcing, “I have a wish to reside in this world for a thousand years. Currently, I am at age six-hundred-and-twenty-six”. Consequently, people bestowed upon him the appellation Qiansui, meaning “thousand-year”.

千歲寶掌禪師，中印度人也。周威烈十二年丁卯，降神受質。左手握拳，至七歲祝髮乃展，因名寶掌。魏晉間，東游此土。入蜀禮普賢，留大慈。常不食，日誦般若等經千餘卷。有詠之者曰：“勞勞玉齒寒，似迸巖泉急。”有時中夜坐堦前，神鬼泣。一日，謂眾曰：“吾有願住世千歲。今年六百二十有六，故以千歲稱之。”<sup>316</sup>

The account begins by explaining the origin of Baozhang's name, which was derived from one of his divine qualities—the clenched left hand, and it opened soon after he became a monk. Along with providing specific details about his birth and death years, the account elaborates on Baozhang's travel route within China. It starts with his initial residence at the Daci monastery in Chengdu, where he worshipped Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Considering that the cult of Samantabhadra on Mt. Emei actually rose to prominence during the Song dynasty, scholar Wang Dawei proposes that Baozhang's case exemplifies the symbiotic relationship between the construction and association of a charismatic religious figure with a sacred mountain.<sup>317</sup>

Baozhang's residences after the Daci monastery in Xishu will be elaborated on in the subsequent sections. While the account also mentions that Baozhang did not take regular meals, rather than relying on alchemical elixirs, as highlighted in the *Jiatai kuaiji zhi*, he engaged in reciting sūtras for thousands of fascicles as part of his daily routine. This adaptation suggests that the author removed Daoist elements from Baozhang's hagiography and transformed him into a devout Buddhist figure.

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<sup>316</sup> *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 434a4–9.

<sup>317</sup> See Wang Dawei 王大偉. “Qiansui Baozhang heshang xinghua kao” 千歲寶掌和尚行化考. *Forum on Chinese Culture*, Issue 2 (2013): 128. The Daci monastery has held significant prominence in the Sichuan region since the Tang dynasty. Notably, the esteemed Northern Song literatus Su Shi 蘇軾, who originated from Emei, developed a lifelong friendship with Weijian 惟簡, a Chan monk from the Daci monastery, during Su's early years. However, despite Su's writings dedicated to Weijian, there is no mention of Baozhang. This further suggests that Baozhang's association with the Daci monastery was very likely established after the widespread dissemination of his story throughout the nation.

He then traveled to Wutai and successively resided in the Huayan on Zhurong, the Shuangfeng on Huangmei, and the Donglin on Lushan. Upon his arrival in Jianye, he encountered Bodhidharma, who had recently arrived in China by chance. The master embraced Bodhidharma's teachings and attained enlightenment. Emperor Wu esteemed his spiritual accomplishment and invited him to the inner hall of the palace. Shortly thereafter, he ventured to the Wuyue region. He composed a verse, stating: "Encountering my spiritual guide in China, I gained profound insight into the nature of my mind through meditative practice. As I traverse the Liangzhe region, I intend to explore all the enchanting mountains and rivers".

次游五臺，徙居祝融之華嚴，黃梅之雙峰，廬山之東林。尋抵建鄴，會達磨入梁，師就扣其旨開悟。武帝高其道臘，延入內庭。未幾，如吳。有偈曰：“梁城遇導師，參禪了心地。飄零二浙游，更盡佳山水。”<sup>318</sup>

The following places in Baozhang's travel route hold significant historical importance in the context of Chan Buddhism. Upon departing Xishu for Mt. Wutai 五臺, Baozhang consecutively resided at Huayan monastery 華嚴寺 on Mt. Zhurong 祝融, Huangmei monastery 黃梅寺 on Mt. Shuangfeng 雙峰, and Donglin monastery 東林寺 on Mt. Lu 廬山. Mt. Wutai, revered as the center of Mañjuśrī's worship, experienced high prosperity during the Tang dynasty and retained its unsurpassable status in the Song Buddhist landscape. Zhurong Peak, a part of Mt. Heng 衡山 in Nanyue 南嶽, was once the residence of Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓. The Huangmei monastery 黃梅寺, located in Huangmei county at the foot of Mt. Shuangfeng, served as the residence of the fourth patriarch Daoxin 道信. Moreover, Huangmei county housed the Dongshan monastery 東山寺, which is associated with the fifth patriarch Hongren 弘忍. The Donglin monastery on Mt. Lu was the headquarters of Huiyuan's 慧遠 Lotus Society 蓮社, which played a prominent role in the Pure Land movement during the Song dynasty.

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<sup>318</sup> *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 434a9–13.

Subsequently, Baozhang is said to have met Bodhidharma in Jiankang 建康 and attained enlightenment through Bodhidharma's instruction. The intention of the author to include this episode is evident: despite the legendary status of Baozhang, he still required Bodhidharma's guidance to attain the ultimate awakening. Ironically, Baozhang as an Indian monk hailing from the birthplace of Buddhism, found enlightenment through the words of Bodhidharma, an emblematic figure of Chinese Chan Buddhism. This implies the superiority of Chan teachings within Buddhism, while also indicating the confidence of Chinese Buddhists when interacting with their Indian counterparts, which marks the maturity of Chinese Buddhism.

Descending the stream to the east, he left Qianqing for Tianzhu. He visited Maofeng, ascended to Taibai, and journeyed through Yandang. He extensively explored seventy-two cloisters on Cuifeng. Following that, he returned to Chicheng and consecutively resided at Yunmen Fahua, Zhuji Lipu, and Chifu Dayan. He then returned to Feilai and took shelter in a cave. He composed a verse, "Having traversed four hundred prefectures in China, I found only this place worth wandering." This occurred during the fifteenth year of Zhenguan.

順流東下，由千頃至天竺。往鄮峰，登太白，穿鴈蕩。盤礴於翠峰七十二庵。回赤城，憩雲門法華，諸暨里浦，赤符大巖等處。反飛來棲之石竇，有“行盡支那四百州。此中偏稱道人游”之句。時貞觀十五年也。<sup>319</sup>

Following his previous travels, Baozhang was said to have embarked on a southeast journey from Mt. Qianqing 千頃 to Tianzhu. The places he visited in the Liangzhe region were likely significant Buddhist centers, particularly during the Song dynasty. He explored Peak Mao 鄮峰, ascended Mt. Taibai 太白山, and passed through Mt. Yandang 雁蕩山, visiting a total of seventy-two cloisters on Peak Cui 翠峰. Upon returning to Mt. Chicheng 赤城山, he resided at

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<sup>319</sup> *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 434a13–17.

Mt. Yunmen 雲門山, Fahua 法華, Zhuji Lipu 諸暨裡浦, and Chifu Dayan 赤符大巖.

Eventually, he returned to Tianzhu and resided in a cave on Peak Feilai 飛來峰.

According to Wang Dawei's research, it is documented that Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運, the founding patriarch of the Huangbo branch of the Linji school, established his teachings on Mt. Qianqing.<sup>320</sup> Moreover, Tang Chan masters Chu'nán 楚南 and Wuzhu Wenxi 無著文喜 preached there. Mt. Tianzhu was renowned for its three Tianzhu monasteries, among which Baozhang was associated with the Zhong Tianzhu, as discussed earlier. Peak Mao and Mt. Taibai, home to Yuwang monastery 育王寺 and Tiantong monastery 天童寺, respectively, held the second and third positions in the Five Mountain system. Although scholars have noted that the consensus on the Five Mountain system and their ranks had not concurred until the end of the Southern Song dynasty, it is evident that these mountains enjoyed fame throughout the Song dynasty.<sup>321</sup> Mt. Yandang gained prominence due to the residence of monk Zhenxie Qingliao's 真歇清了 in the early years of Taiping Xingguo era (976–984). In the Southern Song period, Mt. Yandang was said to have numerous monasteries, with the Nengren monastery 能仁寺 being the most famous one. Wang's findings suggest that the Southern Song gazetteers registered an increasing number of monasteries on Mt. Yandang, implying that the mountain was a significant Buddhist site during that period.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Wang Dawei 王大偉. "Qiansui Baozhang heshang xinghua kao" 千歲寶掌和尚行化考. *Forum on Chinese Culture*, Issue 2 (2013): 130.

<sup>321</sup> For more information about the Five Mountain System, see Liu Changdong 劉長東. "Songdai wushan shicha sizhi kaolun" 宋代五山十剎寺制考論. *Religious Studies* 2 (2004): 100–108.

<sup>322</sup> Wang Dawei 王大偉. "Qiansui Baozhang heshang xinghua kao" 千歲寶掌和尚行化考. *Forum on Chinese Culture*, Issue 2 (2013): 131.

The location of Peak Cui cannot be determined because peaks bearing the same name can be found in Suzhou, Kuaiji, and Siming.<sup>323</sup> Chicheng refers to Mt. Chicheng near Mt. Tiantai. Yunmen refers to Mt. Yunmen, located thirty *li* south of Kuaiji, which also houses a Mingjue Cloister.<sup>324</sup> Fahua indicates Mt. Fahua, located twenty-five *li* south of Shanyin county 山陰縣, which is home to Tianyi monastery 天衣寺.<sup>325</sup> Zhuji Lipu, located to the west of Kuaiji, had several sites dedicated to the worship of Baozhang, as aforementioned. Chifu Dayan could potentially refer to a place near Kuaiji.

Baozhang was said to return to Peak Feilai on Mt. Tianzhu at the end and expressed supreme admiration for its scenery with the verse: “Having traversed four hundred prefectures in China, I found only this place worth wandering.” Interestingly, this line was written for Mt. Lipu in the local gazetteer. This shift reflects the compiler’s intention to emphasize the significance of the Hangzhou region as the new Buddhist center at the time. As the *Jitai pu denglu* was an imperial-sanctioned Chan historiography and a formally distributed “historical record” aimed at standardizing the Chan history, this alteration also suggests that Baozhang’s worship, which had been a local cult, was promoted, recognized, and propagated by the state.

Following his previous travels, Baozhang settled at Baoyan in Pujiang, where he developed a friendship with master Xuanlang. Whenever they exchanged letters, Baozhang would dispatch a white dog, and in response, Xuanlang would send a black ape. This correspondence led Baozhang to inscribe a verse on Xuanlang’s wall, which read, “The white dog came with a letter in

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<sup>323</sup> Wang Dawei 王大偉. “Qiansui Baozhang heshang xinghua kao” 千歲寶掌和尚行化考. *Forum on Chinese Culture*, Issue 2 (2013): 131

<sup>324</sup> The Mingjue Cloister documented in the *Jitai kuaiji zhi* was located on Mt. Cifu, which was thirty-five *li* east of Kuaiji county, whereas Mt. Yunmen was located thirty *li* south of Kuaiji. Given these geographic distinctions, the two Mingjue Cloisters cannot be the same one.

<sup>325</sup> Wang Dawei 王大偉. “Qiansui Baozhang heshang xinghua kao” 千歲寶掌和尚行化考. *Forum on Chinese Culture*, Issue 2 (2013): 131.

its mouth. The black ape returned with a washed alms bowl at hand". Over time, all the places where master Baozhang traveled became esteemed sites of significance.

後居浦江之寶巖，與朗禪師友善。每通問，遣白犬馳往，朗亦以青猿為使令。故題朗壁曰：“白犬嚙書至，青猿洗鉢回。”師所經處，後皆成寶坊。<sup>326</sup>

Subsequently, Baozhang relocated to Cliff Bao 寶巖 in Pujiang and passed away there.

Zhengshou appears to attribute Pujiang as the last residence of Baozhang, possibly explaining the abundance of the sites dedicated to him in Pujiang. However, based on previous analysis, it seems more plausible to consider Pujiang as the birthplace of Baozhang's cult. This account introduces an additional episode depicting the interactions between Baozhang and Chan master Xuanlang 玄朗. Xuanlang's hagiography can be found in Zanning's *Song gaoseng zhuan*, where he is portrayed as a devoted ascetic whose lectures could captivate even wild animals such as apes and blind dogs.<sup>327</sup> It is possible that Zhengshou designed the episode of the two masters' letter exchange based on Zanning's description. However, in Xuanlang's account, there is no mention or allusion to Baozhang, the renowned divine monk who had supposedly enjoyed great fame since the Wei and Jin dynasties. This seems to evince that while Baozhang's legend and worship might have been prevalent in the local area, they had not yet reached the attention of the monk scholars participating in the compilation of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* in the early Song dynasty.

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<sup>326</sup> *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 434a17–19.

<sup>327</sup> 此後或猿獼來而捧鉢，或飛鳥息以聽經。時有盲狗來至山門，長嗥宛轉于地，朗憫之，焚香精誠，為狗懺悔，不踰旬日，雙目豁明。See *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T. no.2061, 50: 875c24–27.

After providing a concise overview of Baozhang's travels, Zhengshou makes the comment that "Over time, all the places where master Baozhang traveled became esteemed sites of significance". In history, these places gained significance due to the presence of the notable Chan masters. However, the account reverses the causality and gives all the credit to Baozhang, a legendary divine monk. This strategy adopted by the compiler serves to enhance Baozhang's authority and elevate his status within Chan Buddhism. By bestowing this higher religious authority upon Baozhang, the renowned Chan masters and the sites dedicated to them also obtained a higher reputation. Additionally, it reinforces the superiority of the Chan school over other traditions within the Buddhist landscape.

On the first day of the second year of Xianqing, Baozhang started handcrafting a statue. By the ninth day, the statue was fully formed. He inquired his disciple Huiyun, "Whom does this statue resemble?" Yun replied: "It bears no distinction from you, Master." Baozhang then proceeded to cleanse himself and change his clothes. Assuming a lotus position, he conversed with Yun: "I have been residing in this world for a thousand and seventy-two years. Now that I am going to depart. Listen to my verse: 'Originally, there is no existence of life and death. Yet, now, I shall demonstrate life and death to you. Although I depart, my mind will remain. In another lifetime, I shall return.'"

顯慶二年正旦，手塑一像，至九日像成。問其徒慧雲曰：“此肖誰？”雲曰：“與和尚無異。”即澡浴易衣，趺坐謂雲曰：“吾住世已一千七十二年，今將謝世。聽吾偈曰：‘本來無生死，今亦示生死。我得去住心，他生復來此。’”<sup>328</sup>

The verse recited by Baozhang on his deathbed was also documented by Wang Xin in his records. Therefore, this verse had to be included in Baozhang's account which is preserved in the Zhong Tianzhu monastery, as well.

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<sup>328</sup> *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 434a20–23.

At that moment, Baozhang entrusted Huiyun, saying, “Sixty years after my passing, a monk will come to retrieve my relics. Do not refuse him.” With these final words, Baozhang breathed his last. Fifty-four years later, Elder Cifu arrived at the pagoda from Yunmen. He paid reverence to the pagoda and said, “Pagoda, please open your gate”. After a while, the gate of the pagoda truly opened. Baozhang’s bones interlocked as if they were gold. Elder Fu then transported Baozhang’s bones to Mt. Qinwang and built a stupa to enshrine them.

頃時囑曰：“吾滅後六十年，有僧來取吾骨，勿拒。”言訖而逝。入滅五十四年。有刺浮長老自雲門至塔所。禮曰：“冀塔洞開。”少選，塔戶果啟。其骨連環若黃金。浮即持往秦望山，建窣堵波奉藏。<sup>329</sup>

This account also includes the events after Baozhang’s passing. As Baozhang predicted, master Cifu 刺浮長老 from Mt. Yunmen carried Baozhang’s relics to Mt. Qinwang 秦望山 and erected a monument for him. In the account, the compiler referred to the monk as “Cifu”. It is worth noting that according to the *Jiatai kuaiji zhi*, Cifu was a mountain located in the east of Kuaiji, which housed the Mingjue monastery with Baozhang’s pagoda, stele, and Bone-Washing Pond, as previously mentioned. Mt. Yunmen, on the other hand, was in the south of Kuaiji, and it was not part of the same mountain range as Mt. Cifu. The *Yunmen zhilue* 雲門志略, compiled during the Ming dynasty, mentions the Mingjue monastery on Mt. Yunmen, which was one of the six divisions of the old Yunmen monastery.<sup>330</sup> It also featured a pagoda and Bone-Washing Pond.<sup>331</sup> Strikingly, the entry for Mt. Yunmen in the *Jiatai kuaiji zhi* does not mention any sites associated with Baozhang. This suggests that the second Mingjue monastery on Mt. Yunmen was very likely constructed after the circulation of the *Jiatai pu denglu*. Finally, the author chose

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<sup>329</sup> *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 434a23–b3.

<sup>330</sup> Zhang Yuanbian 張元忭. *Wanli yunmen zhilue* 萬曆雲門志略 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe 廣陵書社, 2006), 27.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.* 50-51.

Mt. Qinwang, the most famous and highest mountain in the Kuaiji region, as the final resting place for Baozhang's relics. This brief episode connects Baozhang to three mountains in the Kuaiji area, at least two of which had Baozhang's sites registered on local gazetteers. This not only demonstrates the influence of Baozhang's cult in local regions, but also reveals how a religious paradigm, possessing great religious value, becomes assimilated into local culture.

Considering that between the twelfth year of King Weilie of the Zhou dynasty to the second year of Xianqing during the reign of Emperor Gaozong of the Tang dynasty, that was 1072 years, Baozhang had lived in China for more than 400 years. However, none of the Buddhist historiographies ever recorded his story. During the year of Kaiyuan, a monk named Zongyi, who was a disciple of Huiyun, carved Baozhang's story on a stone tablet.

以周威烈丁卯至唐高宗顯慶丁巳攷之，實一千七十二年。抵此土歲歷四百餘。僧史皆失載。開元中，慧雲門人宗一者，嘗勒石識之。<sup>332</sup>

Huiyun, the only disciple mentioned in Baozhang's hagiography, was reported to have a disciple named Zongyi 宗一. Unfortunately, no hagiographies for Huiyun or Zongyi have been preserved in existing sources. Nevertheless, an entry in the *Pujiang zhilue* 浦江志略, a Ming dynasty gazetteer, is attentive. Under the section of "Stele 碑碣", there is a record entitled "Record of Monk Qiansui of Baoyan Cloister by monk Zongyi in the fourth month of the second year of Kaiyuan in the Tang dynasty."<sup>333</sup> It is plausible that Zhengshou read this information in local records and regarded it as substantial evidence when compiling Baozhang's hagiography.

The incorporation and adaptation of Baozhang's hagiography in the *Jitai pu denglu* exemplify how a valuable religious paradigm underwent recognition and promotion,

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<sup>332</sup> *Jitai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 434b3–6.

<sup>333</sup> 寶巖院千歲和尚記，唐開元二年四月僧宗一撰。Mao Fengshao 毛鳳韶. 1981. *Jiaqing pujiang zhilue* 嘉靖浦江志略 fasc. 7. In *Tianyige cang mingdai fangzhi xuankan* 天一閣藏明代方志選刊 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji shudian 上海古籍書店, 1981), 7b.

transforming from a local cult into an esteemed Buddhist ideal within an imperial-sanctioned Buddhist work. The widespread circulation of the *Jitai pu denglu* afforded Baozhang an opportunity to emerge as a celebrated figure on a national scale. Consequently, his legend found inclusion in many subsequent Buddhist works, while also gaining veneration as a founding patriarch in purportedly affiliated monasteries.<sup>334</sup> Notably, the reason that Baozhang could captivate the attention of the compiler of the *Jitai pudeng lu* was due to his establishment of a popular base within local regions. As his story gained widespread dissemination, individuals were inspired to either construct or designate local sites bearing his name. Moreover, the compiler Zhengshou skillfully integrated locations of significance to the Chan school's history into Baozhang's hagiography, embellishing his encounter with Bodhidharma. As a result, Zhengshou capitalized on Baozhang's intrinsic value to promote the status of the Chan school, thereby validating its superiority over the schools featuring doctrinal teachings.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This article commences with two poems by Qiang Zhi, a literatus from the Northern Song era, which are considered the earliest surviving records pertaining to Baozhang. To identify the locations where Qiang visited, I examined various local gazetteers and revealed three distinct clusters of Baozhang-related sites in Pujiang, Zhuji, and Kuaiji. Given Qiang's prior service in an official post in Pujiang, it is reasonable to infer that the sites mentioned in his poems were located in Pujiang, meaning that the cult of Baozhang had already established a presence in this region before the mid-eleventh century. Later, a Southern Song "yimin 遺民" (refugee) Fang

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<sup>334</sup> Zhengshou's version of Baozhang's story can be found in many later sources, such as *Shishi tongjian* 釋氏通鑒, *Shishi jigulue* 釋氏稽古略, *Wudeng yantong* 五燈嚴統, *Zhiyue lu* 指月錄, *Wudu facheng* 吳都法乘, *Emei shanzhi*, *Huangmei laosi Zhongshan zhi*, etc.

Feng 方鳳 who hailed from Pujiang, documented his visits to Baozhang-related sites in his two poems: *Visiting the Monastery in Mt. Baozhang* 遊寶掌山寺 and *Visiting Mt. Baozhang with Gaoyu and Zishan* 與皋羽子善遊寶掌山.<sup>335</sup> This attests to the prosperity of Baozhang's cult within the Pujiang region over several centuries.

Notably, the *Jitai kuaiji zhi* not only offers detailed entries concerning Baozhang's sites, but also preserves an early version of Baozhang's account. In this account, Baozhang is portrayed as a "hybrid" figure, embodying both Buddhist and Daoist elements. This amalgamation suggests that this particular version of Baozhang was likely a popular figure within the local culture, as the inconsistencies in his identity remain unresolved, and he had yet to be firmly established as a pure Buddhist model. While Pujiang appears to have been the probable birthplace of Baozhang's cult, tracing its spread among the three clusters proves to be challenging.<sup>336</sup> What can be determined is that during its dissemination, numerous sites dedicated to Baozhang's cult were constructed or designated. As a result, various replicas of Baozhang's sites emerged, such as Baozhang Cliff and Mt. Baozhang in different counties. The replication even occurred within Kuaiji county, with both Mt. Cifu and Mt. Yunmen claiming to have Mingjue monasteries and Baozhang's steles. This phenomenon demonstrates the captivating appeal of Baozhang as a legendary figure within popular culture, garnering widespread popularity and following. This phase represented the period when Baozhang's cult was revered in local regions.

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<sup>335</sup> *Quan Songshi* 全宋詩, edited by Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1998), 43326, 43335.

<sup>336</sup> Considering the geographic locations of the three counties, I would suggest that the cult of Baozhang in Pujiang initially spread northeastward to Zhuji and continued in the same direction to reach Kuaiji.

It remains unknown the exact timing of the spread of Baozhang's cult to Hangzhou and the establishment of the connection between Baozhang and the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. However, by the latter half of the twelfth century, Baozhang was already venerated as the founding patriarch of the Zhong Tianzhu monastery. Nevertheless, it is very likely that during this period, Baozhang's story remained unfamiliar in the capital city. It was through the efforts of abbot Fahua, who seized the opportunity to host a rain praying ceremony, that Baozhang gained recognition among literati. This event played a crucial role in promoting Baozhang's cult and propagating his story in the Hangzhou region. As Baozhang's reputation grew, it ultimately led to his inclusion by Zhengshou, the compiler of the *Jiatai pu denglu*. Zhengshou not only positioned Baozhang as the first figure in the "Yinghua shengxian" section, but also made significant adaptations to Baozhang's hagiography. An analysis of the text reveals that the author achieved several objectives through his writing: 1) The author removed all Daoist elements and portrayed Baozhang as a devoted Buddhist. 2) The author highlights the significance of Chan Buddhism by incorporating the encounter between Baozhang and Bodhidharma and aligning Baozhang's travel route with important sites in Chan history. 3) The author emphasizes the Liangzhe region, particularly Lin'an, as the new Buddhist center at the time. 4) The author asserts the superiority of the Chan school and its teachings by depicting Baozhang's attainment of enlightenment under Bodhidharma's instruction. 5) The author utilized Baozhang's fame, in reverse, to honor the Chan masters who made great contributions to the development of the Chan school.

The *Jiatai pu denglu*, as an imperial-sanctioned *denglu* work, played a critical role in standardizing the teachings and history of the Chan school. The incorporation of Baozhang into the *Jiatai lu* thus elevated him from a local popular cult figure to a national precepted Buddhist

ideal. Zhengshou's version of Baozhang's account subsequently found its way into various Buddhist historiographies, indicating that it helped Baozhang's story popularize in a wider range.

At last, incorporating Baozhang in the *Jiatai pu denglu* exemplifies how the state recognized individuals initially revered as popular cult figures in local regions. By examining the figures selected in the "Yinghua shengxian" section in the *Jiatai lu*, we can observe that the compiler included individuals from more diverse backgrounds, with various divine attributes, and living during the Song dynasty, such as Monk Jiuxian Yuxian, Mahasattva Fahua Yanzhi, and True men Zhang Boduan. This demonstrates that the *denglu* works went beyond exclusively documenting the teachings and lineages of the Chan school, acknowledging and incorporating popular trends beyond Chan Buddhism. Therefore, a thorough examination of the "Yinghua shengxian" sections provides us with valuable insights and prompts a reevaluation of our understanding and utilization of the Chan *denglu* works.

## Case Study II

### Interpretation and Misinterpretation

#### Converting Daoist Patriarchs in the Chan Historiography

The “Yinghua shengxian” section in the *Jiatai pu denglu* includes two Daoist masters, Lü Dongbin and Zhang Boduan, whose theories were considered to establish the foundation for Internal Alchemical Daoism 內丹 in the Song dynasty. Differing from the elusive records of the mythical monk Qiansui Baozhang, both Daoist masters are well-documented historical figures with hagiographies preserved in historical sources. Lü Dongbin, a Tang Daoist, was reportedly a descendant of the Tang politician Lü Wei 呂渭.<sup>337</sup> Originally named Lü Yan 呂巖, he adopted the Daoist name Chunyangzi 純陽子. In addition to being revered as one of five patriarchs of the Quanzhen school 全真派, he also held a place among the Eight Immortals 八仙 in the Daoist pantheon. In folk culture, he was regarded as a deity overseeing dreams, examinations, and wealth. He was bestowed the title “*Miaodao Zhenjun*” 妙道真君 (Perfected Lord of the Wondrous Way) by Emperor Huizong 徽宗 in the first year of Xuanhe 宣和 (1119). Another Daoist master, Zhang Boduan, was active in the early Northern Song dynasty. He bore the courtesy name Pingshu 平叔, an alternative name Yongcheng 用成, and a literary name Ziyang 紫陽. Upon attaining the Way, he was titled as the True Man Ziyang 紫陽真人. Renowned for authoring the *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇, a classic in the studies of Internal Alchemy, Zhang Boduan was venerated as a founding patriarch of the Southern School 南宗 in Daoism.

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<sup>337</sup> 先生名岩，字洞賓，河中府人，唐禮部尚書渭之孫。 *Yueyang fengtu ji* 岳陽風土記. In *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 5b.

These two figures, serving as symbolic Daoist patriarchs, however, were incorporated into Chan historiography, appearing as Buddhist ideals and even being designated as dharma hires in Chan lineages.<sup>338</sup> In their accounts in the *Jitai pu denglu*, they are portrayed either as converts to Chan Buddhism or proponents asserting the superiority of Buddhism over Daoism. This phenomenon, as some scholars have observed, reflects the escalating conflicts between Chan Buddhism and Internal Alchemy Daoism during the Song dynasty.<sup>339</sup>

As a consequence of the “turning inward” tendency in ideology, discussions on the mind and nature became a shared focal point among the three major teachings—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism.<sup>340</sup> By virtue of the long history of engagement with issues related to the mind and nature, Chan Buddhism achieved great prosperity in the Song dynasty, not only receiving official recognition but also enjoying imperial patronage. Daoism, traditionally focused on extending lifespan through external elixir, underwent a shift toward internal elixir cultivation since the Tang dynasty. This shift reached its zenith in the Song dynasty, as Daoism compensated for its deficiency in the theory of mind-nature by incorporating Chan philosophy. Although Internal Alchemical Daoism still pursued immortality, it internalized the external alchemical framework into human body. By treating the human body as an elixir cauldron,

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<sup>338</sup> In the Lü Dongbin’s tale, he was portrayed to attain enlightenment under Chan master Huanglong 黃龍. *Jitai pu denglu*, X. no.1559, 79: 436c15.

<sup>339</sup> See Wu Guangzheng 吳光正, “Fodao zhengheng yu Lü Dongbin feijian zhan huanglong gushi de bianqian” 佛道爭衡與呂洞賓飛劍斬黃龍故事的變遷. *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產, 4 (2005): 103. Joshua Capitano, “Portrayals of Chan Buddhism in the Literature of Internal Alchemy.” *Journal of Chinese Religions*, v.43. n.2 (2015): 119-120. “Buddhist Tales of Lü Dongbin,” *T’oung Pao*, vol. 102, Fasc. 4/5, (2016), 449-450.

<sup>340</sup> In *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century*, James T.C. Liu uses the term “turning inward” to indicate the shift of literati’s focus from state affairs in the outer realm to moral cultivation in the inner realm. The tragic political changes at the end of the Northern Song era distanced literati from the court and political engagement. Literati dedicated themselves to philosophical learning, which paved the way for the rise of Neo-Confucianism. However, this “turning inward” trend in ideology began with the flourishing of Chan teachings and the prosperity of the Chan school, which fostered an atmosphere of probing mind and nature. Inspired by Chan teachings, Daoism shifted its focus from external alchemy to internal alchemy.

Internal Alchemy aims to cultivate an immortal *spiritual body* through a series of physical, mental, and spiritual practices.

The Song dynasty also witnessed the great synthesis of the Three Teachings, which set the stage for intricate interactions between Buddhism and Daoism. Participants in this intellectual discourse included not only literati but also esteemed scholars from the Buddhist and Daoist traditions. Instead of a simplistic amalgamation, the process of integration was achieved through persistent intellectual debates and conflicts. Despite the predetermined structure of the synthesis, positing “Confucianism as dominant, Buddhism and Taoism as supplements,” the hierarchical order of Buddhism and Taoism remained a contentious issue. Advocates of Chan Buddhism asserted its superiority, while Daoist adherents argued that Internal Alchemy was a more comprehensive teaching. During this dispute, symbolic figures from Buddhism and Daoism emerged as valuable religious paradigms, woven into diverse narratives.<sup>341</sup> Authors of these narratives manipulated the images of these religious models by applying literary tropes, leveraging the value of these figures to advance their perspective agendas. Notably, Lü Dongbin and Zhang Boduan as early proponents of the integration of Daoists and Buddhist teachings, became focal points in this “image war.” Revered as remote patriarchs of Internal Alchemy, they became protagonists in both Daoist and Buddhist literature, and their images were strategically employed in the competition for the superiority of either Daoist or the Buddhist teachings.

In previous scholarship, Wu Guangzheng and Joshua Capitano undertook a comprehensive examination of the narrative evolution of the story “Lü Dongbin bisecting Chan

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<sup>341</sup> Bernard Faure interprets Bodhidharma as a textual and religious paradigm, suggesting that his biographies hold more literary value than historical value. In essence, the portrayal of Bodhidharma was deliberately constructed to align with an imaginary modal beneficial to the evolution of Chan Buddhism. Similarly, figures like Lü Dongbin and Zhang Boduan transcend mere historical identities, their images imbued with anticipated religious values. For more information, see Bernard Faure, “Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm.” *History of Religions*, 25, no.3 (1986): 187-198.

master Huanglong” across popular literatures and Buddhist sources. Wu highlights that the legend of Lü Dongbin’s interaction with Chan master Huanglong originated in the Chan *denglu* works, where Lü is portrayed as Huanglong’s dharma heir attaining enlightenment through Chan exchanges. The widespread influence of this narrative led to its incorporation into *zaju* 雜劇 (drama scripts) and *huaben* 話本 (vernacular novels), with varying versions emerging of Huanglong converting Lü to Buddhism. However, this Buddhists-favored portrayal of Lü, faced resistance from Daoist followers, prompting Daoist authors to rewrite the story. For example, in the narrative by the famous Daoist patriarch Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾, Lü triumphed over Huanglong at the end. This revised theme then gained prominence among later Daoist compilers.<sup>342</sup> In addition to exploring the evolution of the story, Capitano discusses the function of mythological and hagiographical narratives in serving authors’ intentions and shaping followers’ identities. He observes that the writing and rewriting of hagiographical stories provide convenient means for Buddhism or Daoism to claim their respective superiority.<sup>343</sup>

Given the extensive analysis of Lü’s narrative in prior scholarships, I shift my focus to another Daoist master, Zhang Boduan.<sup>344</sup> Since the adaptation of Zhang’s story in the *Jiatai pu denglu* centers on his attitude towards Buddhism, I investigate various sources specifically addressing this aspect. Through a thorough examination of these texts, I present diverse

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<sup>342</sup> Wu Guangzheng 吳光正, “Fodao zhengheng yu Lü Dongbin feijian zhan huanglong gushi de bianqian” 佛道爭衡與呂洞賓飛劍斬黃龍故事的變遷, *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產, 4 (2005): 102.

<sup>343</sup> Joshua Capitano, “Buddhist Tales of Lü Dongbin,” *T’oung Pao*, vol. 102, Fasc. 4/5, (2016): 451.

<sup>344</sup> Capitano also discusses Zhang Boduan and his synthesis of Chan Buddhism and Daoism, but his discussion ends with the commentary works to Zhang’s *Wuzhen pian*, where Chan Buddhism is portrayed as inferior to Daoism. In contrast, my analysis delves into the ongoing dispute over Zhang’s image within the Buddho-Daoist conflict, emphasizing the reciprocal nature of the argument. Additionally, I highlighted the pivotal role of the *Jiatai pu denglu* as catalyst, which intensified the conflict between Buddhist and Daoist adherents.

interpretations on Zhang's integration of Buddhist theories into Daoist teachings. From there, I argue that Zhang, as a valuable religious paradigm, became an objective of contention among different religious groups. In the religious domain of the Southern Song dynasty, individuals vied for his association to enhance the competitiveness of the tradition they represented.

### The Biography of Zhang Boduan

In contrast to Lü Dongbin, whose hagiography had undergone significant mythologization, Zhang Boduan as a Daoist figure from “this dynasty 本朝” appears to be a more plausible historical figure for the Song people. However, despite being revered as a founding patriarch of the Daoist Southern School, Zhang did not establish any religious group during his lifetime. As a result, there are many inconsistencies in later compilations of his hagiographical records. An example is found in self-preface of the *Wuzhen pian*, where Zhang used the signature “Preface by Zhang Boduan, Pingshu, from Tiantai.”<sup>345</sup> Since Tiantai was also referred to Taizhou 台州 in the Song dynasty, it led to disputes about Zhang's hometown, whether it was Tiantai or County Linhai 臨海 in Taizhou.<sup>346</sup> Modern scholars, through extensive investigations in local gazetteers, have clarified that Zhang indeed hailed from Linhai.<sup>347</sup> The

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<sup>345</sup> 天台張伯端平叔序。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian zhushu 紫陽真人悟真篇註疏。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 915.

<sup>346</sup> He was described as having originated from Tiantai in the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 曆世真仙體道通鑒, from Taizhou in the *Xu wenxian tongkao* 續文獻通考, and from Linhai in the *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志. See *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 曆世真仙體道通鑒. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 5 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 382; *Xu wenxian tongkao* 續文獻通考. In *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), fasc. 148, 9a; *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志, fasc. 200. In *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1983), 27b.

<sup>347</sup> See Fan Guangchun 樊光春, “Zhang Boduan shengping kaobian” 張伯端生平考辯, *Zhongguo Daojiao* 中國道教, 4 (1991): 12. Luo Zhengming 羅爭鳴, “Zhang Boduan jiqi wuzhenpian zhu wenti de zai tantao” 張伯端及其《悟真篇》諸問題的再探討. *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu* 中國文學研究, 2 (2021): 34-35.

ongoing debate over Zhang's hometown reflects the inherent ambiguity in the biographies of figures like Zhang Boduan, who, despite being nearly contemporaneous with the Song people, had biographical details shrouded in vagueness. This also demonstrates that many places vied to claim to be his hometown, as his fame could be used to boost local prestige and to promote tourism. Following being revered as a patriarch of the Daoist Southern school and deified in Daoist culture, his portrayal became akin to an "arrow mound", subject to repeated rewriting and reinterpretation to align with the objectives of various parties during circulation.

For an in-depth exploration of Zhang's biography, his self-preface and postscript stand as the most important sources. In addition, records by Weng Baoguang 翁葆光 and Lu Yanfu 陸彥孚 are deemed relatively more reliable due to their indirect personal connections with Zhang. Weng Baoguang, known by the courtesy name Yuanming 淵明 and literary name Wumingzi 無名子, was active during the Southern Song dynasty. He received teachings from Liu Yongnian 劉永年, one of Zhang's major disciples. Weng contributed several commentary and sub-commentary works to Zhang's *Wuzhen pian*. His *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen zhizhi xiangshuo sancheng miyao* 紫陽真人悟真直指詳說三乘秘要 includes an account of Zhang, titled *The Whole Story of True Man Zhang* 張真人本末.<sup>348</sup> Lu Yanfu was a grandson of Lu Shen 陸詵, who had a previous friendship with Zhang. During the era of Zhiping 治平, Lu Shen served in Guilin 桂林, where he met Zhang. Zhang was recruited and followed Lu ever since. Following Lu's demise in Chengdu 成都, Zhang relocated to Shanxi 陝西 and entered the service of Ma Mo 馬默, the magistrate of Fufeng 扶風. Six years later, when Ma was

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<sup>348</sup> *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen zhizhi xiangshuo sancheng miyao* 紫陽真人悟真直指詳說三乘秘要. In *Daozang* 道藏 vol. 2. (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1024.

summoned back to the imperial court and returned to the capital, he received the *Wuzhen pian* from Zhang Boduan. During his tenure as a Vice Minister of the National Granaries 司農少卿 at the court, Ma presented Zhang's work to his superior, Zhang Gonglü 張公履, who happened to be Lu Shen's son-in-law. Gonglü then passed the work to Lu Shen's son, Lu Shimin 陸師閔, who, in turn, handed it down to his son Lu Yanfu. Relying on firsthand information about Zhang and his renowned *Wuzhen pian*, Lu Yanfu authored a record, now preserved in the *Wuzhen pian jizhu* 悟真篇集註 by Qing scholar Qiu Zhaoao 仇兆鰲.<sup>349</sup>

In Zhang's self-preface, composed in the eighth year of Xining 熙寧 (1075), he asserted that his reading range extensively encompassed various subjects and he amalgamated the Three Teachings into "good approaches 善道" without differentiation. However, his interest in the alchemical elixir craft was particularly perplexing, as he struggled to find a master to impart the details. Lu Yanfu's record suggests that Zhang "studied for a *jinshi* degree at youth," implying that he succeeded in the imperial examinations and attained a *jinshi* degree.<sup>350</sup> Nevertheless, as Fan Guangchun doubts, if Zhang had indeed obtained the *Jinshi* degree, there would not be an absence of any mention in the *Gazetteer of Taizhou Fu* 台州府志.<sup>351</sup> He was said to serve in a common post in the local government but was later demoted to Lingnan 嶺南.<sup>352</sup> During his demotion, Zhang encountered Lu Shen in Guilin, who recruited him as a personal councilor.

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<sup>349</sup> *Wuzhenpian jizhu* 悟真篇集註. In *Sandong shiyi* 三洞拾遺, vol. 8 (Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House, 2005), 462.

<sup>350</sup> 少業進士。 *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> Fan Guangchun 樊光春, "Zhang Boduan shengping kaobian" 張伯端生平考辯. *Zhongguo Daojiao* 中國道教. 4 (1991): 12-13.

<sup>352</sup> For the discussion about his demotion, see Luo Zhengming 羅爭鳴, "Zhang Boduan jiqi wuzhenpian zhu wenti de zai tantao" 張伯端及其《悟真篇》諸問題的再探討. *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu* 中國文學研究. 2 (2021): 34.

Zhang then followed Lu to Chengdu in the second year of Xining 熙寧(1069). In Chengdu, Zhnag encountered a “True Man 真人” who imparted the essence of the alchemical elixir. Upon attaining the Way, Zhang wrote the *Wuzhen pian*.

Since Zhang did not clarify the identity of this True Man, it sparked debates in later times. In Weng Baoguang’s account, Zhang was said to have received the secret teachings from Qingcheng Zhangren 青城丈人.<sup>353</sup> The preface of the *Wuzhen pian zhu* 悟真篇註 by Chen Daling 陳達靈 also had a record: “The immortal elder Wuzhen heard the Way in Qingcheng.”<sup>354</sup> However, when Bai Yuchan, the actual founder of the Southern school in Daoism, established the lineal lineage for the tradition, he conceived that Zhang’s tutor was Liu Haichan 劉海蟾, a legendary Daoist from the Five dynasties and Ten Kingdoms.<sup>355</sup> Bai’s move seemingly aimed to enhance the prestige of the lineage by linking it to a more renowned Daoist patriarch.

By the completion of the *Wuzhen pian*, Zhang had gained considerable fame, attracting numerous followers. However, seeking for reliable successors proved challenging. According to his self-postscript, after three unsuccessful attempts, Zhang eventually found Shi Tai 石泰 and Liu Yongnian, successfully transmitting his teachings to them.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> (张伯端)晚年遇青城丈人于成都，尽得金丹妙旨，洞晓阴阳颠倒互用之机，天地返覆生成之理。 *Ziyang zhenren wuzhenpian zhushu* 紫陽真人悟真篇註疏. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 911.

<sup>354</sup> 悟真仙翁聞道於青城之上。 *Ibid.*

<sup>355</sup> The lineage includes Zhong Liquan 鐘離權, Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, Liu Haichan 劉海蟾, Zhang Boduan 張伯端, Shi Tai 石泰, Xue Daoguang 薛道光, Chen Nan 陳楠, Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾. See *Haiqiong chuandao jixu* 海瓊傳道集序. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 33 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 147.

<sup>356</sup> 既成而求學者奏然而來，觀而意勤，心不忍怪，乃擇而授之。然而所授者皆非有鉅勢強力，能持危拯溺，慷慨特達，能仁明道之士，初再罹禍患，心猶未知，竟至於三，乃省前過。 *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu* 紫陽真人悟真篇三註. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1018.

In his final years, Zhang resided at the Tongbai Palace 桐柏宮 in Taizhou. In the fifth year of Yuanfeng 元豐 (1082), he passed away at the age of ninety-nine.

### The Teaching of Zhang Boduan

Zhang Boduan's exploration of the cultivation of the Golden Elixir 金丹 primarily unfolds in the *Wuzhen pian*. According to Zhang's postscript, after reflecting on the challenges in transmission, he chose to encode his teachings by applying rhetorical tropes. Followers decipher the teachings based on their own qualities, and those talented would inevitably attain the Way through their inherent virtue.<sup>357</sup> To elucidate his encoding rationale, Zhang draws a parallel between the *Wuzhen pian* with the teachings of Bodhidharma and the six patriarch Huineng 慧能, explicating that it was individual's uneven capabilities that resulted in the distinctions among the three vehicles.<sup>358</sup> Consequently, the *Wuzhen pian* is presented in rhythmic literary forms such as poems, verses, and eulogies. As Zhang expounds in the preface, the *Wuzhen pian* comprises eighty-one regulated verses 律詩, including sixteen seven-character of the four-line verses, sixty-four five-character of the four line verses, one five-character of the eight line verse, and twelve *ci* poems in the tune of *Xijiangyue* 西江月. This arrangement holds significance, as the quantity of each form represents a stage of accomplishment.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> 此悟真篇中所詠大丹、藥物、火候細微之旨，無不備悉，倘好事者夙有仙骨，睹之則智慮自明，可以尋文解義，豈須僕區區授之矣。如此乃天之所賜，非僕之輒傳也。 *Ibid.* 1018-1019.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.* 1019.

<sup>359</sup> 磬所得成律詩九九八十一首，號曰《悟真篇》，內七言四韻一十六首，以表二八之數。絕句六十四首，按《周易》諸卦。五言一首，以象太一之奇。續添《西江月》一十二首，以周歲律。其如鼎器尊卑、藥物斤兩、火候進退、主客後先、存亡有無、吉凶悔吝，悉備其中矣。 *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu* 紫陽真人悟真篇三註。 In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 974.

The essence of Zhang's teaching, as he articulates in the preface, centers on integrating the mind-nature theory of Chan Buddhism into Daoist cultivation. Upon completing the book, Zhang recognized a deficiency—he only covered the nourishment of the body but overlooked the investigation of one's original nature. To rectify this gap, Zhang delved into Buddhist literature, specifically exploring episodes about Chan masters' enlightenments in the *denglu* series. Inspired by the Buddhist works probing into the human mind and nature, Zhang composed thirty-two Buddhist verses.<sup>360</sup> These literary works were compiled into the *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian shiyi* 紫陽真人悟真篇拾遺 and included in the *Daozang* 道藏.<sup>361</sup>

Zhang expresses his embracing attitude towards the Three Teachings in the opening part of the preface.

Therefore, Daoism (the teaching of Laozi) and Buddhism open with the provisional approach by offering studies on nature and life, which teach people about cultivation and nourishment to escape from birth and death. Buddhism centers around emptiness. If one attained sudden enlightenment and perfect penetration, he reached the nirvana directly. If he had habituated tendencies and old attachments not fully extinguished, he still has life. Daoism takes practice and cultivation as the truth. If one obtains its essence, he ascends to the rank of sages immediately. If he had not thoroughly comprehended his nature, he only labors an unreal form. In addition, the *Book of Change* has words about exhaustively investigating the principle, fulfilling nature, and completing life; the *Analects* has the teaching on abstaining from foregone conclusions, arbitrary predeterminations, obstinacy, and egoism. This is what Confucius ultimately realized about the profound meaning of nature and life.

故老釋以性命學，開方便門，教人修種，以逃生死。釋氏以空寂為宗，若頓悟圓通，則直超彼岸。如有習漏未盡，則尚徇於有生。老氏以鍊養為真，若

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<sup>360</sup> 又覺其中惟談養命固形之術，而於本源真覺之性有所未究。 *Ibid.* 974.

<sup>361</sup> *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian shiyi* 紫陽真人悟真篇拾遺. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1030-1033.

得其樞要，則立躋聖位。如其未明本性，則猶嘵於幻形。其次周易有窮理盡性至命之辭，魯語有毋意必固我之說，此又仲尼極臻乎性命之奧也。<sup>362</sup>

He contends that all Three Teachings highlight the significance of human life, albeit from different perspectives. While Daoism advocates strengthening the body and evading death, Buddhism emphasizes spiritual liberation through the realization of Buddha nature. Daoist practices and Buddhist teachings, in Zhang's opinion, are mutually complementary to each other. Zhang's teaching thus is characterized as a dual cultivation of nature and life 性命雙修. Later, this became one of the distinct features of Internal Alchemical Daoism.

Zhang's special attention to nature and mind was undeniably inspired by Chan teachings. His writings reveal a particular admiration for Chan master Xuedou Chongxian's 雪竇重顯 *Zuying ji* 祖英集. Xuedou Chongxian, a contemporary of Zhang, was venerated as a patriarch leading a revival of the Yunmen school during the Northern Song dynasty. The revitalized Yunmen school soon became a dominant force, competing with the burgeoning Linji school in the Buddhist landscape of that era. Living in the heyday of the Yunmen lineage's renaissance, Zhang was drawn to Xuedou's teachings. In a verse dedicated to Xuedou, Zhang not only respectably treated him as "my master,"<sup>363</sup> but also employed Buddhist tropes to convey his understanding of the Chan teachings. Zhang encapsulates the thusness or the true original nature as non-formed, ineffable, and untraceable, precisely interpreting the principle of conceiving

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<sup>362</sup> *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu* 紫陽真人悟真篇三註. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 973.

<sup>363</sup> 吾師近而言語暢。"Du xuedou chanshi zuying ji" 讀雪竇禪師祖英集, *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian shiyi* 紫陽真人悟真篇拾遺. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1031.

thusness as “To be not attached to any phenomenon.”<sup>364</sup> According to Zhang, the essence of attaining the true mind 真心 lies in the realization of the fact that there is no absolute boundary between truth and illusion; the distinction is created by relativity. The differentiation between truth and illusion arises from discrimination, which is, in itself, another illusion.<sup>365</sup> Thus, the state of “No obstruction presented 無呈礙” indicates a state of mind being free from discrimination. In a light-hearted manner, Zhang even uses humor to express his spiritual intimacy and resonance with Xuedou: “[Master Xuedou] was called by me last night. He punched a hole on the nose (note: a metaphor of the penetration of the Chan teaching) and laid [the wisdom] on the walking stick. I asked him what the ultimate teaching is? He only said all words are slanders.”<sup>366</sup> In Zhang’s perspective, Chan teachings also lead to the highest state—either the Way in Daoist terms or ultimate enlightenment in Buddhist terms.

As aforementioned, Zhang’s emphasis on dual cultivation stemmed from his recognition of the inadequacy of the mind-nature theory in traditional Daoist practice. Historically, Daoist practice predominantly aimed at attaining immortality through the consumption of external elixirs. However, Zhang diverged from this tradition by not advocating for either producing or taking external elixirs. Instead, he believed that comprehending the principle of nature was pivotal for cultivating life.

I am worried about the Daoist learners who do not comprehend the principles of the nature but only focus on making the golden elixir. In that way, because they

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<sup>364</sup> 真如實相本無言，無下無高無有邊，非色非空非二體，十方塵刹一輪圓。正定何曾分語默，取不得兮捨不得。但於諸相不留心，即是如來真軌則。“Du xuedou chanshi zuying ji” 讀雪竇禪師祖英集, *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian shiyi* 紫陽真人悟真篇拾遺. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1031.

<sup>365</sup> 為除妄相將真對，妄若不生真亦晦。能知真妄兩俱非，方得真心無呈礙。 *Ibid.*

<sup>366</sup> 昨宵被我喚將來，把鼻孔穿放杖上，問他第一義如何，卻道有言皆是謗。 *Ibid.*

have not learned the way of nature and life, they cannot operate their mind in its entirety. As the material world and the self are separate, how are they able to attain the ultimate perfect penetration and surpass the three realms?

此恐學道之人，不通性理，獨修金丹。如此既性命之道未修，則運心不普，物我離齊。又焉能究竟圓通，迴超三界。<sup>367</sup>

In addition to highlighting the deficiency in mind learning of External Alchemical Daoism, it is noteworthy that Zhang also criticized their tendency to “Separating the material world and the self 物我離齊.” If practitioners solely pursued the elixir externally, it implies that they still held a division between the objective world and the subjective self. This suggests that the practitioner had not yet achieved the integrated state of harmony between man and Heaven, remaining confined by dualistic thinking. In contrast, Zhang’s teachings internalized the objective world, encompassing the universe within the human body. By projecting the principles of the universe onto the human body, Zhang shifted the focus from external to internal, creating a unified world without discrimination. In fact, the extinguishing of the distinction between the objective and the subjective worlds in Zhang’s teachings can be traced back to Zhuangzi’s philosophy. Zhuangzi’s concept of the integration of the world and oneself is articulated in his famous essay “The Adjustment of Controversies 齊物論,” where he declares, “Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one.”<sup>368</sup> From this perspective, Zhang’s theory can also be considered a return to the original Daoist philosophy.

Guided by the emphasis on exploring nature and mind, Zhang’s theory does not aspire to create an immortal body but instead regards the body as a vessel for cultivating the spirit. The

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<sup>367</sup> *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian shiyi*. In *Daozang 道藏*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1030.

<sup>368</sup> 天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一。Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Zhuangzi jinzhuzhu jinyi 莊子今註今譯* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009), 80.

objective of nourishing the body is to develop an immortal spiritual body. Zhang cautions against the pursuit of external elixirs, dismissing it as a mere illusion. He emphasizes that the crux of creating the internal Golden Elixir lies in returning to the primal state of the nature. In order to encourage individuals to delve into the realms of mind and nature, Zhang even employs the allure of immortality, stating, “This *Wuzhen pian* first employs the life essence of immortals to captivate dedicated practitioners. Subsequently, it harnesses the miraculous powers of various Buddhas to expand one’s supernatural abilities. Ultimately, it facilitates the realization of the true nature of Suchness, guiding practitioners to relinquish illusions and return to the source of emptiness and tranquility.”<sup>369</sup>

Nevertheless, despite Zhang’s overt admiration for Chan teachings and his incorporation of Buddhist theory into Daoist practice, his foundational standpoint and ultimate goal consistently revolved around nourishing the body and prolonging the life, as the body serves as the inhabitation for the spirit. In the opening of the preface, he laments: “How difficult to gain a human body! [But] how quickly does time change!”<sup>370</sup> He categorizes life-cultivation into two types: one is deemed easy to practice but difficult to accomplish, and the other is considered difficult to practice but easy to accomplish.<sup>371</sup> Among the methods listed in the first category, only “holding breath 閉息” is deemed worthwhile, as it closely resembles Chan meditation.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> 故此《悟真篇》者，先以神仙命脈誘其修鍊，次以諸佛妙用廣其神通，終以真如覺性遺其幻妄，而歸於究竟空寂之本源矣。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian shiyi 紫陽真人悟真篇拾遺。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1030.

<sup>370</sup> 人身難得，光陰易遷。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian zhushu 紫陽真人悟真篇註疏。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 914.

<sup>371</sup> 且今人以道門尚於修命，而不知修命之法理出兩端，有易遇而難成者，有難遇而易成者。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian zhushu 紫陽真人悟真篇註疏。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 914.

<sup>372</sup> 其中間惟閉息一法，如能忘機絕慮，即與二乘坐禪頗同。若勤而行之，可以入定出神。Ibid.

The drawback of this method is that it can only bring spiritual liberation without cultivating the body, making it impossible for the practitioner to gain immortality in his spiritual body.

Comparatively, Zhang validates the efficacy of methods in the second category.

The making of the Golden Fluid Reverted Elixir is the practice which is difficult to handle but easy to accomplish. [The practitioner] has to have the knowledge of *yin-yang* and the insight in the Nature. Only then, he is able to trace the air of *yin* and *yang* in the zodiac and meet essence, energy, and spirit at the primordial spiritual palace. After gathering the Five Agents and making the four divisions harmonious, [the practitioner will achieve a state, in which] dragons roar and tigers growl (note: from stillness it arises movement), and the husband sings and the wife follows (note: the harmonious state of *yin* and *yang*). In the jade cauldron the hot water is boiling; in the golden vessel the fire is flaming. Only then, the mysterious bead (internal elixir) starts forming, and the *Taiyi* (note: the Way) returns to the original purity. All these will be completed in a short while, but they can permanently sustain the unlimited pleasure. As to the prevention from danger and consideration on the risk, [one should] be cautious about the operation, effect, remove, and increase. Cultivate the vital energy and hold the excess energy. The pivotal is to maintain the female feebleness and hold [it with the male strength] together in one embrace. In so doing, it is natural that the *yang* living air comes back, and the *yin* killing form is peeled off. Once the solar terms complete a cycle, the body will be shed off and [the practitioner will] transform into a deity. [His] name will be registered on the list of immortals, and [he] will be ranked in the title of True Man. This is the time when a man wins success and recognition.

夫鍊金液還丹者，則難遇易成，須要洞曉陰陽，深達造化，方能追二氣於黃道，會三性於元宮，鑽簇五行，和合四象，龍吟虎嘯，夫唱婦隨，玉鼎湯煎，金爐火熾，始得玄珠成象，太乙歸真，都來片餉工夫，永保無窮逸樂。至若防危慮險，慎於運用抽添，養正持盈，要在守雌抱一。自然返陽生之氣，剝陰殺之形，節氣既周，脫胎神化，名題仙籍，位號真人，此乃大丈夫功成名遂之時也。<sup>373</sup>

The so-called Golden Fluid Reverted Elixir 金液還丹 demands a much higher level of proficiency from practitioners in terms of knowledge, comprehension, body-control, mind

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<sup>373</sup> *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu* 紫陽真人悟真篇註疏. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 914.

training, and even timing. Unlike practices involving the purification of metal ingredients to produce a solid golden elixir, Zhang's Golden Elixir seems more like a metaphor describing one's essence 精, energy 氣, and spirit 神 refined within the human body, which are universally possessed by everyone. For example, Zhang expresses in a verse, "Everyone was born with the longevity elixir but abandoned it because of taking the wrong path."<sup>374</sup> Most practitioners, unfortunately, fail to realize that the true Golden Elixir resides within their own bodies and fruitlessly seek it externally.

Indeed, Zhang underscores that the ultimate state of Buddhism and Daoism is the same. However, he also discerns the differences between the two teachings. Buddhism primarily seeks spiritual liberation, considering the human body an obstacle to attaining the para-nirvana state, while Daoism advocates for sustaining and strengthening the body in order to achieve longevity. Evidently, mind and body are the two focal points of Buddhism and Daoism in self-cultivation. Capitano notes that Zhang compiled his Buddhist verses separately from the *Wuzhen pian*, which may suggest an intention to distinguish Daoist practice from Chan teaching.<sup>375</sup> In Zhang's view, they can be unified through Daoist practice because the body serves as the foundation for the spirit, which enables the exploration of the mind and nature. By utilizing Buddhist teachings to address shortcomings in Daoist practice, Zhang contends that he offers a more comprehensive approach, asserting the superiority of Daoism over Buddhism.

The above analysis reveals Zhang Boduan's open-minded approach to Chan Buddhism. However, he consistently maintained Daoism as his standpoint, seeking to enhance Daoist

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<sup>374</sup> 人人自有長生藥，自是迷途枉擺拋。 *Ibid.* 924.

<sup>375</sup> Joshua Capitano, "Portrayals of Chan Buddhism in the Literature of Internal Alchemy," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 43, no.2 (2015): 131.

practice. Buddhist theories only served as a source for him to draw inspiration to perfect Daoist cultivation and enrich Daoist teachings. As Internal Alchemical Daoism gained popularity and developed into the Southern School, the conflict between Buddhism and Daoism intensified. Zhang's initially friendly attitude towards Buddhism became a target of criticism among devoted Daoist followers. Conversely, Buddhists seized upon Zhang's appreciation of Buddhism and portrayed him as a convert to their teachings.

### **Competing for the Religious Paradigm: the Portrayal of Zhang Boduan in Daoist and Buddhist Sources**

With the increased attention garnered by Zhang Boduan's *Wuzhen pian* from commentators and practitioners, Zhang himself was promoted to the status of a founding patriarch of Internal Alchemical Daoism. As a result, Zhang's interest in Buddhism became a sensitive topic, transforming him into a valuable religious paradigm and a contested figure between Daoist and Buddhist adherents. Buddhist followers leveraged Zhang's appreciation for Chan teachings, intentionally misinterpreting his words to subordinate Daoism to Buddhism. In response, staunch supporters of Daoism sought to "correct" Zhang's words, depicting him as a pure Daoist patriarch. In the following pages, I will present the battle over Zhang's image within commentary and hagiographical writings.

The *Wuzhen pian* captivated numerous scholars to write commentary and sub-commentary works since it came out. According to Mu Wang, there were at least four versions of such works circulating in the Song and Yuan dynasties, in which the comments by Xue

Daoguang 薛道光 and Weng Baoguang being considered early works.<sup>376</sup> Xue Daoguang, alternatively known as Xue Shi 薛式 and Xue Daoyuan 薛道元, was venerated as the third patriarch of the Southern school. As a former ordained Buddhist monk with the dharma name Zixian 紫賢, Xue encountered Shi Tai during the winter of the fifth year of Chongning 崇寧 (1106), from whom he received the teachings on the Golden Elixir. Subsequently, Xue converted to Daoism and transmitted the teaching to Chen Nan 陳楠. Weng Baoguang, who studied Daoism during the era of Chunxi 淳熙, received teachings from Liu Yongnian. According to the prefaces in the *Wuzhen pian sanzhu* 悟真篇三註 and the *Wuzhen pian zhushu* 悟真篇註疏, Xue and Weng's comments were completed in 1169 and 1173, respectively, placing them within the same period.

From Xue and Weng's commentaries, it is evident that their stance on Zhang's interest in Buddhism was relatively neutral. They acknowledged Zhang's affinity for Buddhism and did not dispute his authorship of the Chan verses.<sup>377</sup> In Weng's explanation regarding his decision not to comment on Zhang's Chan verses, he stated: "Therefore, the *Diamond Sūtra* has: 'If the Thusness has lectures on the Dharma, that will be a slander on the Buddha. And thus, if there are words, they are slanders.' Now that the immortal elder [Zhang] composed eulogies to chant the principles of nature because he had no choice. The words have already been verbose, which is why I did not add any explications. I do not want to ruin the effect by adding anything

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<sup>376</sup> Wang Mu 王沐, *Wuzhenpian qianjie* 悟真篇淺解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1997), 4-6.

<sup>377</sup> 故以禪宗性道歌頌詩詞三十六首，畢其卷末。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu 紫陽真人悟真篇三註。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 912.

superfluous.”<sup>378</sup> When Xue commented on *Another Poem in the Tone of the Xijiangyue* 又西江月一首, he equated the Daoist Way with the Buddhist ultimate truth, stating: “This Way is exactly the same with the meaning of my patriarch Bodhidharma coming from the West. What has been passed down generation by generation is all referred to this meaning.”<sup>379</sup> Both Daoism and Buddhism uphold the Great Way but only explain it in different terms—“There are no differentiations in the Way. There is only one Way.”<sup>380</sup> It was likely due to his experience as a monk that in many places, he used expressions like “my patriarchal master Bodhidharma”<sup>381</sup> and “the teaching of my Thusness.”<sup>382</sup>

Several decades later, the compilation of the *Jiatai pu denglu* in 1204 initiated a prolonged debate between Buddhist and Daoist adherents regarding the images of Daoist patriarchs Lü Dongbin and Zhang Boduan. The two symbolic figures in Daoism were incorporated into the “Yinghua shengxian” section in this imperial-sanctioned Chan historiography and were intentionally portrayed as converts to Buddhism. In their accounts in the *Jiatai lu*, Lü attained enlightenment under the guidance of Chan master Huanglong; Zhang reversed his course and returned to the ancestral Way (Buddhist teaching).

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<sup>378</sup> 故《金剛經》云：如來有所說法，即為謗佛。是以有言皆是謗也。今則仙翁歌詠性道，亦不獲已而言之，固已贅矣，此余所以不復加之解釋者，不欲為畫蛇添足也。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen zhizhi xiangshuo *sancheng miyao* 紫陽真人悟真直指詳說三乘秘要。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1022-1023.

<sup>379</sup> 此道正是我達磨祖師西來底意，祖祖相傳，皆此道也。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu 紫陽真人悟真篇三註。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 1016.

<sup>380</sup> 道無彼我，唯一而已。Ibid. 1017.

<sup>381</sup> 我達磨祖師。Ibid. 1016.

<sup>382</sup> 我如來法門。Ibid.

In the following part, I will translate the account of Zhang Boduan in the *Jiatai pu denglu* and discuss his image in Buddhist sources.

True Man Zhang Yongcheng, courtesy name Pingshu, originally hailed from Tiantai. In the second year of Xining, he arrived in Chengdu, where he met a person who taught the External Alchemy. After a long time of practice, he achieved accomplishment. He then said: “Although my body is robust, I have not investigated the nature of the original enlightenment. How can I slack off?” Hence, he started exploring Buddhist books and had reflections when reading the *denglu* series. He wrote the *Wuzhen pian* to admonish the public and composed verses and eulogies for chanting the Chan Buddhism. He self-stated: “I am worried about the Daoist learners who do not comprehend the principles of the nature but only focus on making the [external] golden elixir. In that way, because they did not learn the way of nature and life, they cannot operate their mind in its entirety. As the material world and the self are separate, how are they able to attain the ultimate perfect penetration and surpass the three realms?” Therefore, *Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra* said: “For the ten kinds of immortals, all of them reach extreme longevity by strengthening mind and taking herbals. But because they do not pursue the right enlightenment, they will be reborn in this world again after all their merits have been consumed and will be dispersed into all destinies of existence.” The *Eulogies on the Diamond Sūtra* by bodhisattva Maitreya said: “Even if [they] have experienced eighty-thousand eons, they will end up with achieving nothing.” Thus, this *Wuzhen pian* uses the life-prolonging techniques of immortals to induce people to practice at first. Then, it uses the marvelous capacity of buddhas to extend their [understanding on] the supernatural power. At last, it uses the principles of Thusness and emptiness to dismiss their illusions, leading people to return to the origin of the utmost quiescence. (Recently, some Daoists said that the story about master Lü meeting Huanglong was not authentic. It was Buddhists who made this story to show the superiority of Buddhism. However, if we use Zhang’s story as a reference, the story of master Lü seeking instruction [can be verified]. It is thus clear that no matter in the history or in the present, practitioners who take medication and cultivate the body are not few. But only these two masters did not claim personal credits for their achievements. They returned to the ancestral Way and thus surpassed the three realms. Alas! For those who are inferior to these two masters, what should they do?)

張用成真人，字平叔，天台人也。熙寧己酉，至成都。有授以丹砂者，久之功乃成。且曰：“吾形雖固，而本源真覺之性有所未究，豈宜自怠？”遂探佛書。讀傳燈有省，著悟真篇警於世。嘗作禪宗歌頌，其自敘曰：“此恐學道之人，不通性理，獨修金丹。於性命之道未備，則運心不善，物我難齊。

又焉能究竟圓通，迥超三界？”故首楞嚴經言：“十種仙，皆是人中鍊心堅固服餌。壽千萬歲，不修正覺，報盡還來，散入諸趣。”彌勒菩薩金剛經頌有云：“饒經八萬劫，終是落空亡。”故此悟真篇，先以神仙命術誘其修鍊，次以諸佛妙用廣其神通，後以真如空性遣其幻妄，而歸於究竟空寂之本源矣。(近有黃冠謂呂公見黃龍，初無是說，乃釋輩欲神其禪宗耳。苟以平叔方之，則呂公參問，可見古今服藥鍊形之士不為不多，獨二公不以功成自居，回心祖道，殆出三界。其下於二公者，為如何哉吁。)<sup>383</sup>

Because Zhang embraced Buddhism, the compiler Zhengshou even did not need to fabricate stories for him but only exaggerated his interest in Buddhist teachings. Zhengshou selectively extracted words from Zhang's self-preface such as “without comprehending the principles of nature but only focus on making golden elixir... How can [they] attain the ultimate perfect penetration and surpass the three realms?” and interpreted them by referring to *Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra* and the *Eulogy on Diamond Sūtra*. Skipping Zhang's insistence on the sustainment of life, Zhengshou highlighted the importance of cultivating the right mind. At the end of this account, Zhengshou used Zhang's statement to support Lü's conversion, arguing that the eminent Daoists like Lü and Zhang were superior to common practitioners because they were aware of the deficiency of Daoism and would like to “return to the ancestral Way.” This ancestral Way, in Zhengshou's concept, could not be anything else but the Buddha's teaching.

Portraying the most famous Daoist patriarchs surrendering to Buddhism, Zhengshou's strategy was not novel in asserting the superiority of its tradition. This tactic finds historical precedent in the “Laozi conversing with the barbarians”老子化胡論. It states that the Buddha was merely an incarnation of Laozi, the spiritual progenitor of Daoism. In so doing, Daoist adherents sought to establish their superiority over Buddhism. While these fabricated stories

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<sup>383</sup> *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X. no.1559, 79: 437a10-22.

aimed to enhance the cohesion of religious communities, they concurrently precipitated heightened ideological conflicts. The *Jitai pu denglu*, as an imperial sanctioned Chan historiography disseminated in nation-wide, played a pivotal role in standardizing the Chan lineages and teachings. Zhengshou's account elicited responses from Buddhist fellows, but it exacerbated tensions between Buddhism and Daoism as well.

In the *Rentian Baojian* 人天寶鑒 by monk Tanxiu 曇秀 completed in 1230, Zhang is described to have written the *Wuzhen pian* based on the reflections he gained from the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*. Furthermore, he is depicted as actively exploring the significance of the Golden Elixir through an examination of the *Diamond Sūtra* and the *Perfect Enlightenment Sūtra*. Tanxiu discerns Zhang's endeavor to synthesize Daoism and Buddhism, yet he interprets Zhang's teachings as fundamentally influenced by Buddhism.<sup>384</sup>

Later, when Zhipan 志磐 compiled the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, he stressed the profound impact of Buddhism on Zhang's accomplishments, portraying him as an awakener through sudden enlightenment.<sup>385</sup> Moreover, Zhipan notes that Zhang produced Buddhist relics after cremation, suggesting Zhang's essence as a distinguished Buddhist.<sup>386</sup> In his remarks addressing Daoist practitioners, Zhipan criticizes the prevalent delusion among Daoist practitioners, attributing it to their ignorance of the ultimate truth, the Buddha nature, and the Chan teachings.

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<sup>384</sup> 則知平叔乃求出離生死之法，必歸仗於佛為究竟爾。 *Rentian Baojian* 人天寶鑒, X. no.1612, 87: 12a16-17.

<sup>385</sup> 嘗遍參禪門大有省發。後讀雪竇祖英集，頓明心地。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 0417a10-12.

<sup>386</sup> 未幾跏坐而化，鍊其蛻得舍利千百，紺碧色若雞頭。 *Ibid.* 417a14-16.

He highlights the rarity of superior Daoists, such as Zhang Boduan, who comprehended the Buddha nature, and Lü Dongbin, who grasped the essence of Chan teaching.<sup>387</sup>

Buddhists' aggressive adaptations to and deliberate misinterpretations on Lü and Zhang's narratives prompted strong reactions from Daoists. The *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu* contains a commentary works by Chen Zhixu 陳致虛, a renowned Internal Alchemical Daoist in the Yuan Dynasty. Like many predecessors, Chen also advocated for the synthesis of Daoism and Buddhism, but he positioned Daoism as the overarching framework to expound Buddhism. He employed Daoist concepts to reinterpret Buddhist elements. For example, he equated the mani-jewel, a revered treasure in Buddhism, with the essence of the Golden Elixir.<sup>388</sup> When elucidating the Golden Elixir, Chen used a metaphor of a private garden, drawing parallels between it and one's body as the locus for producing the elixir. According to Chen, Buddhist awakeners like Vimalakirti and Mahassatva Fu attained enlightenment by sowing seeds in this metaphorical garden.<sup>389</sup> Despite acknowledging commonalities between Buddhism and Daoism, Chen asserted the superiority of Daoist practice. He openly critiqued Buddhism, particularly its emphasis on the sitting meditation. He disparaged Chan master Mazu's meditation sitting as akin to "sharpening the brick"<sup>390</sup> and satirized Bodhidharma's famous wall-facing meditation as "cold

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<sup>387</sup> 學仙之流已執所得，知佛道為究竟者不多有也。如張平叔明佛性，呂洞賓悟禪理，時一見耳。今世道流不知學，謂仙為陽魂，釋為陰鬼。著此說以誤後人，皆不知佛性禪理之過。 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T. no.2035, 49: 417a19-23.

<sup>388</sup> 釋名大乘般若九品蓮臺，光明藏大如意妙法靈感牟尼寶珠。 *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu* 紫陽真人悟真篇三註. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 986-987.

<sup>389</sup> 還丹之法，蓋家園自有.....維摩傳大士輩，皆得此園而下種，故如來號之曰給孤獨園也。 *Ibid.* 1004.

<sup>390</sup> 馬祖未修大藥而枯坐求佛，是有磨磚之譏。 *Ibid.* 980.

sitting 冷坐.”<sup>391</sup> In Chen view, even the breath holding meditation deviated from the true path and was characterized as “not the way.”<sup>392</sup> He further recounted a tale from the “Biography of Dongbin” 洞賓傳 to deride Buddhist monks who falsely regarded sitting meditation as a genuine practice.<sup>393</sup>

Upon the publication of the *Wuzhen pian sanzhu*, Zhang Shihong 張士弘, the Minister of the Ministry of Works at the Yuan court, authored the preface “Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian quanti” 紫陽真人悟真篇筌蹄. In this brief essay, he downplayed Buddhists as “people who have comprehension on nature but do not know sustain their life.”<sup>394</sup> Furthermore, he dismissed the authenticity of Zhang’s Chan verses, asserting, “Recent years, someone deceived people by fabricating verses and eulogies and complied them into the latter part of this book. The nonsensical works such as *Reading Zuying ji* and *Reading Cantongqi* advocate for the studies of nature and life, and there are more than forty Chan Buddhist verses and eulogies. [These literary

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<sup>391</sup> 達磨已向長廬而入室下功，是向少林冷坐。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu 紫陽真人悟真篇三註. In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 980.

<sup>392</sup> 閉氣養息，一陰而已，饒經萬劫，終落空亡，此非道也。 *Ibid.*, 1017.

<sup>393</sup> 《洞賓傳》載：一日，洞賓化作一道人遊廬山開先寺，見僧法珍坐禪二七年，頗有戒行。道人問曰：坐可了道乎。珍曰：然。道人曰：佛戒貪嗔癡為甚，方其坐時，謂無心。及其遇物，不能暫忘。偶著於愛，則四種心紛然莫禦。若欲端坐，先煉其心。既能煉心，須伏其氣。既能伏氣，雖終日睡眠，而道在其中。豈專在坐乎。珍尚未悟，道人乃與珍歷雲堂，見一僧方酣寢，道人謂珍曰：此僧平日何所為。珍曰：打坐積功，以圓成佛。道人曰：五偕子少坐于此，試觀此僧坐功。良久，珍見睡僧頂門出一小赤蛇，長三寸餘，緣床自左足至地遍遊，遇涕唾食之，後循上尿器中飲而去。乃出軒外，度小溝，繞花若駐玩狀。復欲度一小溝，以水溢而返。道人當其來處，以小刀插地迎之，蛇見畏縮，尋別徑至床右足，循僧頂門而入。睡僧遽驚覺，問訊道人及珍曰：吾適一夢，與二子言之。初夢從左門出，逢齋供甚精，食之。又逢美酒，飲之。因褰裳度門外小江，逢美女數十。欲度小江，水驟漲，不能往，遂回。逢一賊，欲見殺，走從捷徑，至右門而入，遂覺。道人與珍大笑而去，謂珍曰：以床足為門，以涕唾為供，以溺為醞，以溝為江，以花木為美女，以刀為賊。人之夢寢幻妄如此，人以坐而求道成佛，可乎。珍曰：為蛇者何。道人曰：此僧性每多嗔，薰染變化，已成蛇相。他日瞑目，即受生于蛇矣。可不懼哉。吾呂公也，見子精誠，故來教子。珍遂隨往，不知所終。世之兀坐修佛者，視此豈不愧乎。 *Ibid.*

<sup>394</sup> 有悟性而不知修命者。 *Ibid.* 972.

works are] in superficial wording. How can people illuminate their natures by reading works like that?”<sup>395</sup>

By the Yuan Daoist Zhao Daoyi 趙道一 compiled the *Lishi zhenxiandao tongjian* 曆世真仙道通鑿, he fabricated a story of Zhang’s competition in magical powers with a Buddhist monk.<sup>396</sup> The competition was a spiritual trip to Yangzhou 揚州. Before they set off, they made an agreement to bring back a flower from the destination as proof. Despite the monk’s earlier arrival, only Zhang returned with a real flower to the meditation room. Zhang’s disciple explains the significance of the story, which can also be seen as the opinion of the author Zhao Daoyi. Daoism, advocating dual cultivations of life and nature, yields the “true spirit in form 真神見形,” which is also called the *yang*-spirit 陽神. In contrast, Buddhism focuses on the origin of the nature, and thus it only produces the formless *yin*-spirit 陰神. Compared to Daoism which may require more time for accomplishment, Buddhism was seemingly a short-cut approach. Since Daoism offers a more comprehensive teaching encompassing life and nature at the same time, Zhao concludes that Daoism was a superior teaching.

### Concluding Remarks

In this section, I discussed how Zhang Boduan as a religious paradigm became a focal point in the image war between Buddhist and Daoist adherents. As a distinguished Daoist figure, Zhang’s significant contributions to Daoism warranted veneration and worship among Daoist

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<sup>395</sup> 兼以近世有輩妄人，偽作歌頌，記于此書之後，以瞽性命之學如《讀祖英集》，《讀參同契》等禪宗歌頌四十餘篇，措辭殊甚鄙陋，似此何能明性。Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu 紫陽真人悟真篇三註。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 972.

<sup>396</sup> *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 曆世真仙體道通鑿。In *Daozang* 道藏, vol. 5 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2019), 382-384.

followers. However, it was also because of his achievements and his influence, he drew the attention of Buddhists. By intentionally “misinterpreting” his writings, Buddhist authors leveraged his paradigmatic status, making him a compelling example to assert the superiority of Buddhism.

It should be noted during this image war, the participation of the *Jiatai pu denglu* undoubtedly intensified the debate, largely due to its role in the religious discourse. As the first and the only imperial-sanctioned *denglu* work in the Southern Song dynasty, the *Jiatai lu*'s aggressive adaptation to the images of Daoist patriarchs should be considered an action approved by the official authority. This implied an official stance on the hierarchical order of the two teachings, prioritizing Buddhism over Daoism. As the preface of the *Jiatai lu* articulates, the aim of its compilation was to expand the range of the Buddha's heirs to include emperors, elites, nuns, and even Daoists. The incorporation of Lü and Zhang thus fulfilled this agenda. However, the *Jiatai lu* was an authoritative work for standardizing the history of the Chan Buddhism, and its content was circulated and accepted as a national perception, which eventually fueled the dispute between the two traditions.

As Capitano points out, hagiographical writing on religious paradigms goes beyond serving as a platform for authors to express their personal stance and interpretation of the image of the protagonist. More importantly, it plays a pivotal role in shaping the self-identity of adherents.<sup>397</sup> Consequently, hagiographical writing becomes a battleground for Buddhist and Daoist followers in defining their religious identities.

At last, this case also exemplifies how institutional Buddhism actively engaged in appropriating significant religious paradigms within the Song religious domain through

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<sup>397</sup> Joshua Capitano, “Buddhist Tales of Lü Dongbin,” *T'oung Pao*. Vol. 102, Fasc. 4/5 (2016): 451.

historiographical writing. If we consider that religious paradigms in this “market” were assigned with varying values based on their potential impact, Lü and Zhang definitely held substantial appeal for both Buddhist and Daoist adherents. When they were portrayed as advocates of a particular teaching, their perceived value was directly proportional to the strength of their assertions regarding the superiority of that teaching. The rewriting and reinterpretation of hagiographies of religious paradigms, consequently, transformed their intrinsic value into a potent voice, catering to any needs of the author.

## Chapter 5

### The *Wudeng Huiyuan* and Its “Yinghua Shengxian” Section

#### The Nature the *Wudeng huiyuan* and Its “Yinghua shengxian” Section

The compilation and publication of the *Wudeng huiyuan* was similar to the process of the *Liandeng huiyao*. According to the earliest preface by literatus Wang Yong 王樞, the compilation of the *Wudeng huiyuan* was led by Huiming 慧明, the abbot of the Lingyin monastery, while the publication was patronaged by a lay Buddhist named Shen Jingming 沈淨明. Their activity received appreciation and support from Dachuan Puji 大川普濟, a figure with more prominent presence in social networks and closer ties with literati.<sup>398</sup> Despite Puji contributing only a preface to the *Wudeng huiyuan*, he was often credited as the compiler of the *Wudeng huiyuan*, as attaching his name to the publication would enhance its influence within intellectual circles.<sup>399</sup> Notably, the initiation of this compilation came from the lay patron Shen Jingming. It was him who requested Huiming to compile a new *denglu*.<sup>400</sup> This suggests that the lay community played a more crucial role in shaping the course of Buddhist initiatives.

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<sup>398</sup> 沈居士捐財鳩工，鋟梓於靈隱山，實大川老盧都寺贊成之。See *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (Taipei: Wenchin Publishing Company, 1986), 2.

<sup>399</sup> In popular opinion, Dachuan Puji is usually considered the compiler of the *Wudeng huiyuan*, and the prefaces of the second and third editions support this viewpoint. However, scrutiny of the earliest prefaces of the first edition reveals that the compilation of the *Wudeng huiyuan* was a collaborative effort led by Huiming and involving the participation of a group of monks at the Lingyin monastery. Huang Chun-chuan's research suggests that Dachuan Puji, possessing a prominent reputation and closer ties with literati, would enhance the work's influence if published under his name. Nevertheless, by the time the *Wudeng huiyuan* commenced printing, Puji had already passed away. This could be one of the reasons for the limited circulation of the compilation. See Huang, *Chanzong dianji wudeng huiyuan yanjiu* 禪宗典籍五燈會元研究 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publications, 2008), 12-26.

<sup>400</sup> 切見禪宗語要，具在《五燈》。卷帙浩繁，頗難兼閱。謹就景德靈隱禪寺，命諸禪人，集成一書，名曰《五燈會元》，以便觀覽。See *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (Taipei: Wenchin Publishing Company, 1986), 3.

As a laity-sponsored *denglu* work, the *Wudeng huiyuan* did not circulate widely after its publication. The preface for the second edition reveals that the *Wudeng huiyuan* failed to gain acceptance in the Buddhist canon after its compilation, which negatively impacted its dissemination. This challenges the prevailing notion that the *Wudeng huiyuan* swiftly supplanted the previous five *denglu* works soon after its release.<sup>401</sup> To enhance the influence of the work, a monk called Daxi 大曦 from Guangdong persuaded a surveillance surnamed Cao 曹 to lead the reprinting project. As the project gained significant traction, half of the work was completed by the time the preface was written.<sup>402</sup> Remarkably, the third edition of the *Wudeng huiyuan* emerged almost a century later after its initial compilation. The organizer of this edition, a local gentry surnamed Han 韓, deplored for the destruction of the tablets and thus initiated a fundraising. His advocacy proved highly effective, attracting not only donations from bureaucrats who contributed their salaries but also garnering support from the Buddhist community in the Wuyue area.<sup>403</sup> Similar to the *Liandeng huiyao*, the publication and circulation of the *Wudeng huiyuan* did not hinge on imperial patronage but rather relied on voluntary support from local laities and Buddhists.

The motivation behind the compilation of the *Wudeng huiyuan*, as reiterated in its prefaces, was the creation of a concise anthology achieved through the revision and condensation

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<sup>401</sup> Feng Guodong contends that the *Wudeng huiyuan* did not supplant the preceding five *denglu* works until the Qing dynasty, a transition marked by its inclusion in the *Dragon Canon*. See Feng, “Wudeng huiyuan banben ji liuchuan” 五燈會元版本及流傳. *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 宗教學研究. Issue 4, (2004): 89-91.

<sup>402</sup> 謀於觀察曹君為之首倡。募諸同信工過半矣。 *Wudeng huiyuan mulu* 五燈會元目錄. X. no. 1564, 80: 1a24-b01.

<sup>403</sup> 其鄉先生韓莊節公為之記。公今年及八十，每慨五燈會元板燬，學者於佛祖機語無所攷見，於是罄衣鉢之資以倡施者。惟是太尉開府儀同三司上柱國江浙等處行中書省左丞相兼知行樞密院領行宣政院事康里公，首捐俸資，而吳越諸師聞而翕然相之。板刻既成，使其參徒妙嚴徵言敘其端。 *Ibid.* 2a01-07.

of the previous five *denglu* works. The aim was to provide Chan learners with a portable and convenient *denglu*.<sup>404</sup> For this reason, its “Yinghua shengxian” section was also like an anthology, incorporating figures primarily from the preceding three “Yinghua shengxian” sections. To be specific, the entities ranging from “Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī” to “Demon King Zhangbi” originated from the *Liandeng huiyao* Fascicle 1 “Qianzhu Yinghua Shengxian” 乾竺應化聖賢 (Sages and Worthies as Earthly Manifestations of Buddhist Deities in India). Baozhi, Shanhui, Fenggan, Shide, and Budai were sourced from the *Jinde lu*. Huisi, Zhiyi, Sengqie, Hanshan, Buddhabhadra were derived from the *Liandeng huiyao*. Qiansui Baozhang, Koubing Zaoxian, Fahua Zhiyan were drawn from the *Jitai pu denglu*. Notably, the only new addition to this section was Prince Nezha, which I will elaborate in the next section.

As previously mentioned, the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in the laity-sponsored *denglu* works, namely the *Liandeng huiyao* and the *Wudeng huiyuan*, depict figures in *gong'an* stories. Compared to the hagiographical style of writing, *gong'an* stories do not aim to chronologically present the life of the protagonist. Instead, they focus on conveying Chan teachings by illustrating a brief episode attributed to the protagonist. The episode could be an excerpt from the figures’ hagiography or even a fabricated anecdote created by Chan compilers. Despite concerns about authenticity, these *gong'an* stories were oriented by strong pedagogical purposes. The distinct writing styles of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections also imply the different functions of the imperial-sanctioned and the lay-sponsored *denglu* works. The former served as official records documenting the development of Chan lineages, while the latter functioned as “textbooks” for Chan masters in their teachings.

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<sup>404</sup> 靈隱大川禪師濟公以五燈為書浩博，學者罕能通究，迺集學徒作五燈會元以惠後學。 *Wudeng huiyuan mulu* 五燈會元目錄. X. no. 1564, 80: 1c10-12.

## Case Study

### Peeling Off the Wrathful Appearance

#### Nezha in Song Chan Historiographies

As previously mentioned, the *Wudeng huiyuan* is an anthology that selectively compiles contents from the previous five *denglu* works. Consequently, its “Yinghua shengxian” section predominantly consists of figures from previous “Yinghua shengxian” sections. However, there is one notable addition, Prince Nezha, who does not occupy the last position on the list. Preceding him are eight figures from the *Liandeng huiyao*’s Fascicle 1, a section entitled “Qianzhu yinghua xiansheng” 竺乾應化賢聖, which incorporates popular characters such as Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and Venerable Subhūti and adapted them into *gong’an* stories to propagate Chan teachings. While these figures retain their unique personalities, they are presented within the framework of Chinese Chan Buddhism, which diverges from their original literary context.<sup>405</sup> Subsequent to Nezha, the remaining figures are historical Buddhists from Chinese sources. Thus, Nezha serves as a demarcation between the Indian Buddhist deities and the Chinese Chan ideals. Interestingly, Nezha himself embodies both facets: originating as a mythological figure from India, he evolved to become an important deity in Chinese folk tales, integrated into the Daoist pantheon, and domesticated in Chinese culture.

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<sup>405</sup> For example, in the *gong’an* story featuring Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, a conversation unfolds between Mañjuśrī and Antizhenü 菴提遮女 about a rhetoric question regarding the meaning of birth and death. In response, Antizhenü articulates that the essence of birth is to refrain from giving rise to, while the essence of death is to refrain from causing demise, as the four material elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—lack inherent self-nature. Birth occurs only when causes and conditions converge, and death transpires when causes and conditions disperse. Curious about why sentient beings, even with this understanding, remain ensnared in the cycle of birth and death, Antizhenü queries the bodhisattva. In reply, the bodhisattva posits that despite mastering the doctrine, sentient beings continue to be prisoned by the cycle due to the lack of practice. *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元. X no. 1565, 80: 0065b05-16.

The analysis of Nezha's *gong'an* story revolves around the following research questions:

1) In Chan literature, how was Nezha depicted and what specific Chan teachings did the compiler aim to convey? 2) What transformations in Nezha's image and narrative, particularly during the late Southern Song period, led to his inclusion in the "Yinghua shengxian" section of the *Wudeng huiyuan*?

The *gong'an* story of Nezha is very concise.

Prince Nezha divided [his] flesh, returning [it] to his mother; [he] divided [his] bones, returning [them] to his father. [He] subsequently revealed his original body and wielded his extraordinary divine power to deliver a dharma lecture for his parents.

那吒太子，析肉還母，析骨還父。然後現本身，運大神力，為父母說法。<sup>406</sup>

Although this *gong'an* was included in the "Yinghua shengxian" section for the first time, it had previously been compiled into Chan literature. In the *Jingde chuan denglu* Fascicle 15, this story is referred as a pedagogical question in Touzi Datong's 投子大同 account:

[Disciples posed a] question: "Prince Nezha divided his bones to return to his father and divided his flesh to return to his mother. What is the original body of Nezha?" The master set down the staff he had been holding.

問：“那吒太子析骨還父，析肉還母，如何是那吒本來身？”師放下手中杖子。<sup>407</sup>

Similar question also appeared in the account of Tiantai Deshao 天台德韶:

[Disciples posed a] question: "Prince Nezha divided his flesh to return to his mother and divided his bones to return to his father. He then delivered a dharma lecture on a lotus flower for his parents. [I] do not know what the [original] body of the prince is?" The master said: "Everyone can see [it]."

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<sup>406</sup> *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元. X. no. 1565, 80: 66a24-b01.

<sup>407</sup> *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no. 2076, 51: 319c06-08.

問：“那吒太子析肉還母，析骨還父，然後於蓮華上為父母說法。未審如何是太子身？”師曰：“大家見。”<sup>408</sup>

It remains uncertain the exact time when Nezha's story was adapted into the teachings of Chan masters. However, considering that Touzi Datong and Tiantai Deshao were active in the Later Liang dynasty and the Wuyue Kingdom, it can be inferred that the *gong'an* story must have been created no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

As for the Buddhist origins of this *gong'an* story, it was also unclear. In the *Zuting shiyuan* 祖庭事苑, a Buddhist dictionary by the Northern Song lay Buddhist Chen Shanqing 陳善卿, he states that he is unaware of the scriptural sources for Nezha's *gong'an* story.<sup>409</sup> It is highly likely that Nezha's fame had already gone beyond Buddhism, and his story had been enriched through incorporation into folk tales.

The Northern Song literatus Su Zhe 蘇轍 had a poem entitled “Nezha,” which attests to this speculation. In the poem, Nezha is portrayed as an unruly child of the Heavenly King in the North, who shows respect only to the Buddha and not his own father. Recognizing that Nezha cannot be tamed, the Buddha instructs the Heavenly King to carry a pagoda. When Nezha bows to the pagoda, his posture would be as if he is showing respect to his father.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no. 2076, 51: 408a13-15.

<sup>409</sup> 叢林有析骨還父，析肉還母之說。然於乘教無文，不知依何而為此言，愚未之知也。 *Zuting shiyuan* 祖庭事苑. X. no. 1261, 64: 399c15-16.

<sup>410</sup> 北方天王有狂子，只知拜佛不拜父。佛知其愚難教語，寶塔令父左手舉。兒來見佛頭輒俯，且與拜父略相似。佛如優曇難值遇，見者聞道出生死。嗟爾何為獨如此，業果已定磨不去。佛滅到今千萬祀，只在江湖挽船處。“Nezha” in *Luancheng ji-sanji* 樂城集-三集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2009), 1161.

Significantly, the poem already introduced a father-son tension, an episode absent in any Buddhist sources.<sup>411</sup> Nikaido Yoshihiro suggests that this conflict was derived from Nezha's *gong'an* story. According to Confucian ethics, it would be inappropriate for Nezha, as a son, to lecture his parents on dharma. Chan writers detached Nezha from the concept of kinship to justify his actions as an awakener. Nevertheless, over time, this emphasis on the detachment gradually evolved into a more dramatic opposition between the father and the son.<sup>412</sup>

Now, let us delve back into the *gong'an* story. The underlying meaning of this case is not difficult to discern. Nezha shedding his physical body can be interpreted as attaining liberation from the conditioned world, which led to his enlightenment. This vividly exemplifies the Chan slogan of "Seeing through the nature and becoming the Buddha." Qualified as an awakener, Nezha thus was able to impart the dharma to his parents. The crux of the question lies in the concept of the "original body," which symbolizes the inherent Buddha nature. The responses of Datong and Deshao further illuminate this topic—Datong's act of setting down his staff signifies liberation from all attachments, while Deshao reminds disciples that everyone is able to see their innate Buddha nature.

However, where did Nezha come from? What was his Buddhist origins? How did his image evolve within the Buddhist context and eventually find its way into Chan literature?

Moreover, what made him capture the attention of the compiler of the *Wudeng huiyuan* and

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<sup>411</sup> Meir Shahar proposes that the father-son conflict embedded in Nezha's narrative was potentially derived from the tale of Kṛṣṇa, an infant god in Hindu myths. In the story of Kṛṣṇa, his maternal uncle, King Kāṃsa, assumes the role of a paternal figure in the father-son conflict. Kṛṣṇa, in this context, slays his malevolent uncle and ascends to the throne. See Shahar, *Oedipal God: The Chinese Nezha and His Indian Origins* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 176-180. However, this tension is absent in any Sanskrit sūtras featuring Nezha that was introduced to China. Given that the acceptance of Nezha in China predominantly relied on Buddhist sūtras, it is highly suspicious that the Hindu myths shape the father-son conflict in Nezha's narrative.

<sup>412</sup> Nikaido Yoshihiro 二階堂善弘, "Nata taishi kō 哪吒太子考." In *Meisei ki ni okeru busin to sinsen no hatten* 明清期における武神と神仙の発展 (Suita: Kansai University Press 関西大学出版部, 2009), 9.

become the only additional figure in this anthologized “Yinghua shengxian” section? To address all these questions, I will begin with an examination of Nezha’s exotic names.

Nezha, also known by his Sanskrit name Nalakuvara or Nalakubala, had several Chinese names derived from Sanskrit transcriptions. These names include Naluojiupo 那羅鳩婆, Nanutian 那拏天, Nazhajiuba(fa)luo 那吒鳩跋(伐)羅, Nazhajuwaluo 那吒矩鞮羅, Nazhajufaluo 那吒俱伐羅, and etc.<sup>413</sup> According to Shahar’s research on Nezha’s Indian origin, Nezha was a fusion of two figures Hindu tales—Nalakūbara and Kṛṣṇa. Nalakūbara was a *yaksha* who served as a protective deity for the Buddha, while Kṛṣṇa was a divine infant considered an incarnation of Vishnu. Shahar notes that these two figures were the respective sources for Nezha’s aggressive nature and formidable power.<sup>414</sup>

Nezha was introduced to China alongside the spread of Buddhism to the East, and the earliest Chinese source containing references to Nezha can be found in the *Fo suoxing zan* 佛所

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<sup>413</sup> For detailed information about Nezha’s translated names and their appearances in specific scriptures, see Cheng A-tsai 鄭阿財. “Fojiao jingdian zhongde nezha xingxiang” 佛教經典中的哪吒形象. In *Diyijie nezha xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 第一屆哪吒學術研討會論文集, edited by Guoli Zhongshan daxue qingdai xueshu yanjiu zhongxin yu xinying taizigong guanli weiyuanhui 國立中山大學清代學術研究中心與新營太子宮管理委員會 (Taipei: Shin-wen-feng Print Company, 2003), 528-531.

<sup>414</sup> Shahar traced the prototypes of Nezha back to Hindu myths and proposes that Nezha is likely a composite character drawing from two figures from Hindu tales—Nalakubara and Kṛṣṇa. Nalakubara, a *yaksha*, served as a protective deity for the Buddha, and his story involved an uncle named Ravana who abducted and assaulted Nalakubara’s beloved wife. According to Shahar, the attributes of Nalakubara laid the groundwork for Nezha’s violent disposition. The tension between Nalakubara and his uncle is posited as a potential source for the tension between Nezha and his father. As for the portrayal of Nezha as a formidable child, Shahar believes that this image draws inspiration from the divine infant Kṛṣṇa in Sanskrit literature. In these narratives, Kṛṣṇa, an incarnation of Visnu, exhibits divine strength even in infancy. Similarly, like Nezha, Kṛṣṇa is depicted slaying a dragon (naga) and defeating King Kamsa, who serves as a father-like figure. In a story from Kṛṣṇa’s cycle, Nalakubara and his brother Manigriva face punishment by being transformed into twin Arjuna trees, inciting the anger of Sage Narada. A hundred celestial years later, the divine infant Kṛṣṇa uproots the trees, liberating siblings, who then become devout followers of Kṛṣṇa. Shahar’s research indicates the dissemination of the cult of Kṛṣṇa to China, dating back no later than the thirteenth century. The descriptions of Nalakubara and Kṛṣṇa in Hindu tales served as an embryonic form of the image and story of Nezha. See Shahar, *Oedipal God: The Chinese Nezha and His Indian Origins* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2015), 174-180.

行讚 by Aśvaghōṣa. This sūtra was translated by Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 during the Northern Liang dynasty. In this text, Nezha is referred to as Naluojiupo 那羅鳩婆 and is depicted as the son of the Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa.<sup>415</sup> Later, the rise of the cult of Nezha in China was also inseparable from the growing popularity of the Vaiśravaṇa cult.

The cult of Vaiśravaṇa began to rise during the Southern and Northern Dynasties, but it did not reach its peak until the Tang dynasty. The proliferation of Vaiśravaṇa's images and sūtras occurred primarily after the high Tang period. A key figure who played a significant role in promoting Vaiśravaṇa's divine power was Samarkand monk Amoghavajra 不空. In the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, Amoghavajra traveled to Tang China, bringing along numerous Sanskrit scriptures, including several that specifically propagated the cult of Vaiśravaṇa. As the cult continued to thrive, this Indian deity underwent a process of gradual domestication, and his image became associated with Li Jing 李靖, a famous general from the early Tang dynasty. The exact time when these two figures merged into one remains uncertain, but according to Li Xiaorong, this likely occurred no later than the mid to late Tang period.<sup>416</sup>

Attentively, Nezha as one of the major supporting characters in Vaiśravaṇa's story also appeared in Amoghavajra's translated sūtras. But even prior to these scriptures, references to Nezha could be found in the *Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing* 不空羈索神變真言經 by

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<sup>415</sup> *Fosuoqing zan* 佛所行讚. T. no.192, 4: 3c23-24. See Nikaido Yoshihiro 二階堂善弘. "Nata taishi kou' 哪吒太子考." In *Meisei ki ni okeru busin to sinsen no hatten* 明清期における武神と神仙の発展 (Suita: Kansai University Press 関西大学出版部, 2009), 6-7.

<sup>416</sup> Examining the relevant Dunhuang manuscripts, Li Xiaorong highlights the widespread prevalence of the Vaiśravaṇa cult during the Southern and Northern Dynasties extended into the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties periods. Particularly noteworthy is the surge in statues and sūtras dedicated to Vaiśravaṇa, a trend that gained prominence, especially in the post-High Tang era. See Li Xiaorong 李小榮. "Nezha gushi qi yuan bukao" 哪吒故事起源補考. *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究. 3 (2002): 141.

Bodhiruci 菩提流志 and the *Hongjia tuoye yigui* 毗迦陀野儀軌 by Vajrabodhi 金剛智. In these texts, Nezha is identified as a deity—“deity Nazhajuboluo” 那吒俱鉢羅神, a *yaksha*—“great general *yaksha* Nazhajiuboluo” 那吒鳩鉢囉藥叉大將, and a demon king—“mighty divine demon king Nazha” 大神那吒鬼神王.<sup>417</sup> These designations indicate Nezha’s divine status and his affiliations within Buddhism. In fact, the role of *yakshas* as the primary subordinates of Vaiśravaṇa can be traced back to Hindu mythology. According to the legends, *yakshas* followed the lead of Vaiśravaṇa and defeated Ravana, an evil king on the island of Lanka. *Yakshas* were subsequently recruited into Buddhism, serving as dharma protectors and being listed among the Eight Legions.<sup>418</sup> Although they were regarded as benevolent deities, their appearances were often described as “extremely frightening.” As creatures that were half human and half deity, *yakshas* possessed certain non-human characteristics, such as red bellies and multi-faced heads. Due to their duty to protect the Buddha and the Dharma, they were often depicted carrying weapons of destruction, such as swords, blades, and halberds. Nezha’s heritage from a *yaksha* in these early sources legitimizes his portrayal with multiple heads and arms in later depictions.

Regarding the relationship between Nezha and Vaiśravaṇa, Xiao Dengfu highlights that in the translated sūtras during the reigns of Empress Wu 武后, Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 and

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<sup>417</sup> *Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing* 不空羂索神變真言經, T. no.1092, 20: 286a15-16, 332a11. *Hongjiatuoye yigui* 毗迦陀野儀軌, T. no.1251, 21: 234a19-22. Liu Cunren suggests that in the first year of Shangyuan (760) during Suzong’s reign, Li Jing was venerated as one of the ten servants of King Wucheng 武成王. Revered as a Daoist deity, he held a significant place in the Daoist pantheon. According to Li weigong biezhuān 李衛公別傳 by an anonymous author, “Before Jing made his name, he often lodged in the homes of commoners on his travels. One day, around midnight, a woman approached him with a water vessel, saying, ‘Heaven mandates you bring forth rain.’” 靖微時，常山行民家寄宿。夜將半，一婦人持水瓶授之曰：“天命行雨。” Later, when Amoghavajra promoted the cult of Vaiśravaṇa, the Daoist deity Li Jing became integrated with the Buddhist Heavenly king Vaiśravaṇa. See Liu Ts’un-yan 柳存仁, *Hefeng tang wenji* 和風堂文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1991), 1048.

<sup>418</sup> 北方天王名毗沙門，領諸悅叉鬼。 *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經. T. no.1, 1: 80a05-06.

Gaozong 高宗, Nezha was not explicitly identified as a son of Vaiśravaṇa. However, he was portrayed as a close attendant within Vaiśravaṇa's assembly.<sup>419</sup> Later, in Amoghavajra's series of sūtras dedicated to Vaiśravaṇa, including the *Beifang pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa yigui* 北方毗沙門天王隨軍護法儀軌, the *Beifang pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa zhenyan* 北方毗沙門天王隨軍護法真言, and the *Pishamen yigui* 毗沙門儀軌, Nezha and Vaiśravaṇa were depicted as being related by kinship, and his episodes were mainly used to enrich the stories of Vaiśravaṇa.

In the *Beifang pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa zhenyan*, it is mentioned that the Buddha appointed Nezha, the third son of Vaiśravaṇa, to protect the dharma with his father, for Vaiśravaṇa's fierce and terrifying eyes could be unsettling to sentient beings.<sup>420</sup> Nezha was commended to stay close to his father, implying a harmonious and relatively intimate father-son relationship. This kinship, nevertheless, was interpreted as grandfather-grandson in the *Beifang pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa yigui*. Nezha himself claims to be the second grandson of Vaiśravaṇa. As a dharma protector, Nezha had the duty to subdue evil beings and those with malicious intentions. He served not only as a guardian deity for the Buddha but also as a protector for the king and his subjects. In this sūtra, Vaiśravaṇa is depicted as a deity safeguarding the Tang court from invaders, while Nezha, as a *yaksha*, fulfills the role of guarding the state.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Hsiao Teng-fu 蕭登福. "Nezha Suyuan" 哪吒溯源. In *Diyijie nezha xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 第一屆哪吒學術研討會論文集, edited by Guoli Zhongshan daxue qingdai xueshu yanjiu zhongxin yu xinying taizigong guanli weiyuanhui 國立中山大學清代學術研究中心與新營太子宮管理委員會 (Taipei: Shin-wen-feng Print Company, 2003), 25.

<sup>420</sup> 其毘沙門面，作甚可畏形惡眼視一切鬼神勢。其塔奉釋迦牟尼佛，教汝若領天兵守界擁護國土，何護吾法。即擁遣第三子那吒捧行莫離其側，汝眼毒惡恐損眾生。 *Beifang pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa zhenyan* 北方毗沙門天王隨軍護法真言. T. no. 1248, 21: 225c12-16.

<sup>421</sup> 爾時那吒太子，手捧戟，以惡眼見四方白佛言，我是北方天王吠室羅摩那羅闍第三王子其第二之孫，我祖父天王，及我那吒同共每日三度。白佛言，我護持佛法，欲攝縛惡人或起不善之心。我晝夜守護國王大

The inconsistency in the depictions of Nezha's kinship with Vaiśravaṇa suggests that Nezha was not the central focus of Amoghavajra's translated works. Rather, he served as one of the supporting characters in the sūtra, helping to promote the cult of Vaiśravaṇa. This arrangement is also evident in Yuan Youliang's 元友諒 writing, the *Wenchuan xian tang weirongjun zhizao tianwang dian ji* 汶川縣唐威戎軍制造天王殿記, where the Heavenly king Vaiśravaṇa is depicted as residing in the Crystal Palace and perform the duty of protecting sentient beings. Nezha and a goddess, who holds a pagoda and carries flowers respectively, as two supporting characters are positioned in front of Vaiśravaṇa.<sup>422</sup> Although Yuan Youliang's biography is not well-documented in historical records, he was a nephew of Tang poet Yuan Jie 元結 (719-772). Since Yuan Jie was a contemporary of Amoghavajra (705-774), Yuan Youliang can be presumed to have been active during the late 8<sup>th</sup> century. His description aligns with the prevailing understanding of the relationship between Vaiśravaṇa and Nezha during that time. However, as Nezha's episodes became more detailed, his image grew more vivid compared to other supporting characters, gradually developing out his own distinct storyline.<sup>423</sup>

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臣及百官僚，相與殺害打陵。如是之輩者，我等那吒以金剛杖刺其眼及其心。若為比丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆夷起不善心及殺害心者，亦以金剛棒打其頭。爾時毘沙門孫那吒，白佛言世尊，我為未來諸不善眾生，降伏攝縛皆悉滅散故，亦護持國界故。*Beifang pishamen tianwang sui jun hufa yigui* 北方毗沙門天王隨軍護法儀軌. T. no. 1247, 21: 224c12-225a05.

<sup>422</sup> Tang literatus Yuan Youliang had “Wenchuan xian tang weirongjun zhizao tianwang dian ji” 汶川縣唐威戎軍制造天王殿記. He depicts the mural as “The majestic Heavenly King reveals his divine power. Residing in the Crystal Palace, guarding the Yama realms, Nezha stands in front, holding a pagoda, while celestial maidens, with flowers in hand, gaze in awe, illustrating his majestic and auspicious presence.” 赫然天王示其威神也。住水晶宮，護閻浮界，那吒捧塔以前峙，天女持花以凝睇，示其威福也。*Quan tangwen* 全唐文. Fasc. 620 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1983), 6262b.

<sup>423</sup> Cheng A-tsai 鄭阿財. “Fojiao jingdian zhongde nezha xingxiang” 佛教經典中的哪吒形象. In *Diyijie nezha xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 第一屆哪吒學術研討會論文集, edited by Guoli Zhongshan daxue qingdai xueshu yanjiu zhongxin yu xinying taizigong guanli weiyuanhui 國立中山大學清代學術研究中心與新營太子宮管理委員會 (Taipei: Shin-wen-feng Print Company, 2003), 534.

The *Kaitian chuanxin ji* 開天傳信記 by late Tang literatus Zheng Qi 鄭綮 was a collection of stories taking place during the Kaiyuan 開元 (713-741) and Tianbao 天寶 (742-756) periods. There is a story that recounts an encounter between Nezha and the Vinaya master Daoxuan.<sup>424</sup> It is noteworthy that this story marks the first recorded instance of Nezha interacting with a Chinese Buddhist, indicating a significant step in Nezha's Sinicization process.

The diligent Vinaya master, [Dao]Xuan, dedicated himself to rigorous practice and often engaged in meditation at midnight. Once, [while in the meditation,] he was on the verge of achieving a higher state but unexpectedly fell. However, he suddenly sensed someone holding onto his feet. Xuan looked around and discovered a young teenager. He thus inquired: "Who are you? And why are you here at midnight?" The teenager replied: "I am not an ordinary person but the son of Vaiśravaṇa, Prince Nezha. As a dharma protector, I have been supporting and safeguarding you for a long time." Xuan said: "Please do not worry about my practice. [I am sorry for] inconveniencing you, the prince, to use your extraordinary abilities for my benefit. [But] If there is anything in the West that could be used for Buddhist ceremonies, I sincerely wish you could let me have it." The prince said: "I have the tooth relic of the Buddha, which I have cherished as a treasure for a long time. [To protect the Dharma,] I am willing to sacrifice my head and eyes. How could I not offer it to you?" Xuan humbly begged for the relic, which is now preserved in the Chongsheng monastery.

宣律精苦之甚，常夜行道。臨階墜，忽覺有人捧承其足。宣律顧視之，乃少年也。宣律遽問：“弟子何人，中夜在此？”少年曰：“某非常人，即毗沙王之子那吒太子也。護法之故，擁護和尚久矣。”宣律曰：“貧道修行無事，煩太子威神自在。西域有可作佛事者，願太子致之。”太子曰：“某有佛牙，寶事雖久，頭目猶舍，敢不奉獻？”宣律求之，即今崇聖寺佛牙是也。<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Hsiao Teng-fu believes that Daoxuan personally fabricated the legendary background of the buddha's tooth. The enigmatic narrative surrounding this relic served as a compelling draw for worshippers, potentially leading to increased attendance, while simultaneously providing Daoxuan with personal benefits through the resulting publicity. See Hsiao Teng-fu 蕭登福. "Nezha Suyuan" 哪吒溯源. In *Diyijie nezha xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 第一屆哪吒學術研討會論文集, edited by Guoli Zhongshan daxue qingdai xueshu yanjiu zhongxin yu xinying taizigong guanli weiyuanhui 國立中山大學清代學術研究中心與新營太子宮管理委員會 (Taipei: Shin-wen-feng Print Company, 2003), 21.

<sup>425</sup> *Kaitian chuanxin ji* 開天傳信記. In *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成, case 2 (Taipei: Yee Wen Publishing House, 1965), 9b.

The purpose of the story was to extol Daoxuan's unwavering dedication to the practice, though, it also contains some notable characteristics of Nezha. First, Nezha is described as a teenager. In previous Buddhist sources, Nezha merely appeared as a son of Vaiśravaṇa, but there is no specific information about his age. Second, Nezha is a tutelary deity of Buddhist dharma, and his role as Daoxuan's long-time protector serves as a reward for Daoxuan's committed practice. Third, Nezha possesses a relic of Buddha's tooth and presented it to Daoxuan. This relic, said to be preserved at the Chongsheng Monastery, is also mentioned in the travel log of Japanese monk Ennin 圓仁, titled the *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji* 入唐求法巡禮行記. Ennin recounts his formal visit to the monastery in the first year of Huichang 會昌 (841) to worship the relic.<sup>426</sup> As he heard people's discussion about the origin of the Buddha's tooth associated with the prince of Vaiśravaṇa, it suggests that the story of Daoxuan and Nezha would have been well-known by the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century. Last, Nezha's willingness to "sacrifice (abandon) his head and eyes" to protect the Buddha's relic can be viewed as a rhetoric language to demonstrate his loyalty to the dharma. It may also be a reference to the episode of "returning bones to father and flesh to mother" in the *gong'an* story.

During the Song dynasty, the translation project of Buddhist scriptures eventually brought a sūtra featuring Nezha as the protagonist. The *Foshuo zuishang mimi nanatian jing* 佛說最上秘密那拏天經, translated by Dharmadeva, was a Tantric sūtra revolves around Nana Deva, which is an alternative name of Nezha. Nana made his debut at a magnificent gathering for the Buddha's lecture in Vaiśravaṇa's Palace. He is described as a youthful and handsome deity,

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<sup>426</sup> 三月二十五日，詣崇聖寺。禮釋迦牟尼佛牙會。有人多云，終南山和尚，隨毘沙門天太子，得此佛牙。那吒太子從天上將來，與和尚。今置此寺供養。 *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji* 入唐求法巡禮行記. B. no.95, 18: 89a04-06.

holding the sun, the moon, and various dharma instruments in his hands. Adorned with splendid ornaments, Nana radiates a dazzling brightness. Notably, his *luoye* 絡腋 (chest scarf) and belt are made from the skin of three *naga* kings—Nanda, Upananda, and Takshaka, which foreshadows the popular folk tale of “Nezha Conquers the Dragon King.” Nana’s power is as mighty as Nārāyaṇa, a manifestation of Vishnu.<sup>427</sup>

In the scripture, prior to the lecture, the Buddha emitted a radiant light from his head to inform the assembly. The light then returned to the Buddha’s forehead and subsequently entered Nana’s head. At that moment, Nana underwent a transformation, assuming a mighty form resembling Mt. Sumeru, and his face alternated between fierce and laughing expressions. He generated thousands of arms, carrying Kapala (a dharma instrument made of skull) and other dharma instruments. This transformation caused an earthquake that terrified the entire audience. Nana expressed to the Buddha that in this manifestation, he had the power to subdue not only *asura* and *yaksha* but even heavenly kings.<sup>428</sup>

Nezha is given unprecedented emphasis in this sūtra. Not only does he receive special blessings from the Buddha, but even heavenly kings became supporting characters. In a section that instructs prayers on the proper method of painting Nana’s portrait, Nana states that his image should be placed in the center of the scroll. The painter should depict him with a magnificent face and sixteen arms, each holding a dharma instrument. Surrounding Nana’s image should be a

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<sup>427</sup> 色相殊妙面現微笑，手持日月及諸器仗。眾寶嚴飾光踰日月，以難陀烏波難陀二龍而為絡腋，得叉迦龍以為腰條。有大威力如那羅延。 *Foshuo zuishang mimi nanatian jing* 佛說最上秘密那拏天經. T. no.1288, 21: 358b11-14.

<sup>428</sup> 佛光照已悉皆警覺，其光迴還遶佛三匝入於佛頂，復從面門出七色光入那拏天頂。時那拏天光入頂已，即現大身如須彌山。面忿怒相復大笑相，而有千臂，手持葛波羅及諸器仗，以虎皮絡腋葛波羅而為莊嚴，光明熾盛具大威力。是那拏天現此身時，大地震動觀者皆怖。時那拏天合掌向佛白言，世尊我有心明，善能調伏阿脩羅眾，及一切夜叉羅剎部多毘舍左等，乃至大梵天王那羅延天大自在天咸令歸伏，亦能句召一切天龍之眾。 *Ibid.* 358b11-c19.

group of essential heavenly kings and deities such as Vaiśravaṇa, Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa, and Lakṣmī.<sup>429</sup>

Attentively, the scripture describes Nana's appearance in three distinct forms. In addition to the splendid god-like appearance and the wrathful deity appearance, Nana also has a manifestation of his "original form": "Nana thus manifested his original form, which is like his appearance in Mandala."<sup>430</sup> However, the connections among these three appearances are not elaborated in the sūtra.

According to Tantric Buddhism, Mahāvairocana is described as having three chakra-bodies: the self-nature chakra-body 自性輪身 represents the buddha body of Mahāvairocana, which benefits sentient beings; the true dharma chakra-body 正法輪身 refers to the bodhisattva bodies emanated from Mahāvairocana, which teaches sentient beings with the True Dharma; the edification chakra-body 教令輪身 is the wrathful emanation used to tame undisciplined and disobedient beings.<sup>431</sup> The latter two chakra-bodies are temporary manifestations of Mahāvairocana, implying that the benevolent bodhisattva and the wrathful deity are two expedient appearances generated from the Buddha's true essence, the embodiment of the Buddha nature.

Applying this understanding to Nana's case, the "original body" represents his self-nature or the Buddha nature body, while the wrathful deity appearance is a manifestation of his

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<sup>429</sup> 爾時那拏天復說畫像法。……於幢中心畫那拏天作端嚴相，有十六臂各執器仗，於左右畫大梵天那羅延天大自在天毘沙門天寶賢天滿賢天力天大力天吉祥天大辯天。 *Foshuo zuishang mimi nanatian jing* 佛說最上秘密那拏天經. T. no.1288, 21: 363c28-364a06.

<sup>430</sup> 彼那拏天即現本身，如前曼拏羅中相。 *Ibid.* 363c04-05.

<sup>431</sup> See Shi Ciyi 釋慈怡. *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典 (Taipei: Foguang Publisher, 1988), 680.

edification body, and the splendid god-like appearance represents his dharma body. These two manifestations from the same entity of the Buddha nature provide us with a fresh perspective to interpret Nezha's *gong'an* story.

In Chan literature, the image of Nezha typically manifests in two forms: a wrathful deity with multiple faces and arms, and a serene essence embodying the Buddha nature. As previously mentioned, the latter one preaches the dharma to his parents. Although these two appearances appear in different Chan texts, examining them together allows us to observe the collective imagination of Nezha in the Chan context.

Nezha's dharma preaching look in his *gong'an* story has been analyzed earlier. His irate look, as well as the portrayal of him with multiple heads and arms, are popular poetic images in Song dynasty Chan poems. For example, Fenyang shanzhao uses the line "With three heads and six arms, he astonished the heaven and the earth. The wrathful Nezha threw himself at the dharma bell"<sup>432</sup> to illustrate the intense exchange between an enlightened master and a guest. Fayuan Yuanjian 法遠圓鑑 employs "The wrathful Nezha lost his power; Kharakanitiha was struck dumb"<sup>433</sup> to describe the stunning state when illumination and activity function simultaneously. Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 also uses the image of "wrathful Nezha" to depict the moment of breaking through all the affiliations and attaining enlightenment, stating, "The wrathful Nezha turned around Mt Sumeru in his hand. With one split, he broke it into hundreds of pieces."<sup>434</sup> Chen Hsiao-Yi argues that Chan masters regarded Nezha as a symbol of

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<sup>432</sup> 三頭六臂驚天地，忿怒那吒撲帝鍾。 *Jingde chuan denglu* 景德傳燈錄. T. no.2076, 51: 305a26-27.

<sup>433</sup> 忿怒那吒失却威，騫馱佉羅口目瞪。 *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* 建中靖國續燈錄. X. no.1556, 78: 817c13-14.

<sup>434</sup> 忿怒那吒把須彌，一擘百雜碎。 *Yuanwu fogou chanshi yulu* 圓悟佛果禪師語錄. T. no.1997, 47: 747c19-20.

enlightenment, with his irate look serving as a metaphor for the power of wisdom that can dismantle karmic hindrances and defilements.<sup>435</sup>

Nezha's another terrifying look, the depiction with multiple heads and arms, is even more prevalent in Chan literature, which serves the same purpose as the irate look in presenting the astonishing state of awakening. For instance, Chan master Guangjian 廣鑑 wrote, "The eight-arm Nezha casted the iron credential and used the golden mallet on the top of Mt. Sumeru."<sup>436</sup> Dawei Fabao 大滄法寶 expressed, "There are profoundness and essentials, but who can find out? [Only] the eight-arm Nezha lifted up iron pillars."<sup>437</sup> Baoning Renyong 保寧仁勇 described, "[When] Nezha's ten eyes were moving on his ten faces, the formless spiritual luminosity (note: Buddha nature) obscured the sun."<sup>438</sup> Some utilize Nezha to convey the profound insights and the mighty power associated with attaining enlightenment. Fenyang Shanzhao wrote, "Who can solve the [puzzle] of the diamond transparent casket? Only Nezha with the best capacity."<sup>439</sup> Zhenjing kewen 真淨克文 expressed, "The sudden loud shout stupefied two ears. Nezha's eyes led Huangbo to enlightenment."<sup>440</sup>

Meanwhile, Nezha's *gong'an* story also became an ancient precedent for Chan masters to examine and comment upon. The *Chan zong songgu lianzhu tongji* 禪宗頌古聯珠通集 by

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<sup>435</sup> Chen Hsiao-yi 陳曉怡. "Nezha renwu ji gushi zhi yanjiu" 哪吒人物及故事之研究. MA. Thesis, (Feng Chia University, 1994), 35.

<sup>436</sup> 八臂那吒鑄鐵券，須彌頂上運金槌。 *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu* 建中靖國續燈錄. X. no.1556, 78: 759c12-13.

<sup>437</sup> 有玄有要孰得知，八臂那吒擎鐵柱。 *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 155a04-05.

<sup>438</sup> 那吒十面十眸動，無相靈光翳日輪。 *Jiatai pu denglu* 嘉泰普燈錄. X. no.1559, 79: 316c13-14.

<sup>439</sup> 金剛透匣誰能用，唯有那吒第一機。 *Fenyang wude chanshi yulu* 汾陽無德禪師語錄. T. no.1992, 47: 605b26.

<sup>440</sup> 突然一喝雙耳聾，那吒眼開黃蘗面。 *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X. no.1557, 79: 139c09-10.

Southern Song monk Faying 法應 recorded Nezha's *gong'an* story along with the comments of five esteemed Chan masters, including Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲, Zide Huihui 自得慧暉, Shaoshi Guangmu 少室光睦, Bejian Jujian 北澗居簡, and Wuzhun Shifan 無准師範.<sup>441</sup> All of these showcase that Nezha became a popular poetic image in Southern Song Chan literature.

Nezha's popularity even extended beyond the realm of Buddhism. His image as a powerful child deity was so captivating that he eventually found a place in the Daoist pantheon. While Nezha is not included in any Tang or Song Daoist classics, a story from the *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 by Southern Song literatus Hong Mai 洪邁 suggests that Nezha was already recognized as a Daoist deity by that time. The story recounts a Daoist master surnamed Cheng successfully defeated a stone spirit by using "the hand gesture of Nezha's fireball spell."<sup>442</sup> This indicates that Nezha's mighty divine power made him an efficacious deity. As Davis posits, Nezha had been completely assimilated into the pantheons of many therapeutic lineages of Daoist Ritual Masters by the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>443</sup> In the sociocultural environment that highly valued efficacy, Nezha eventually became a folk deity promoted by various traditions.

Furthermore, Nezha's *gong'an* story had a significant impact beyond religious sphere and even found its way into literary criticism. The Southern Song poetry critic, Yan Yu 嚴羽, referred to Nezha's *gong'an* story as a metaphor for his own critical style in his *Canglang shihua*

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<sup>441</sup> *Chan zong song gu lian zhu tong ji* 禪宗頌古聯珠通集. X. no.1295, 65: 491b12-c03.

<sup>442</sup> 張村程法師，行茅少正法，治病驅邪。附近民俗，多詣壇叩請，無不致効。旁村新定人詹聰，暴感疾，招使拯之，隨即平復。時已昏暮，程欲歸，聰父子力挽留待旦，不從而行。一更盡，到孫家嶺，月色微明，值黑物如鐘，從林間直出正前，圓轉有聲，若與為敵，急誦呪步罡。略無所憚，漸漸逼身，程知為石精，遂持那吒火毬咒結印叱喝云：“神將輒容罔兩敢當吾前，可速疾打退。”俄而見火毬自身後出，與黑塊相擊，久之，鏗然響迸而滅。火毬繞身數匝，亦不見。時山下住人項通，舉家聞山上金鼓喧轟，如千百人戰聲，與其子姪遙望，唯見程兀立持誦，寂無燈燭。就呼之，乃覺，即拉之歸宿，心志方定，自是不敢夜行。 *Yijian sanzhi xin* 夷堅三志辛。 In *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1981), 1429-1430.

<sup>443</sup> Edward Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 288.

滄浪詩話,<sup>444</sup> implying that his critiques could penetrate the surface forms, rhetoric, and techniques of literary works to reveal their essence. Later, “*Nezha shouduan*” 那吒手段 (Nezha’s means) as a terminology became widely adopted in many fields, including literary theory, fiction and poetry criticism, and even calligraphy and painting appreciation.<sup>445</sup> It served as a powerful metaphorical tool to describe the ability to discern deeper layers of meaning and appreciate the artistic essence.

### Concluding Remarks

The analysis above highlights the two major developments in the evolution of Nezha’s image. The first phase presents Nezha’s depiction in Sanskrit scriptures that were introduced to China, where he was portrayed as a *yaksha*, a demon king, an attendant of Vaiśravaṇa, and a heavenly prince. These early depictions focused on his connections to Vaiśravaṇa. The second phase represents Nezha’s domestication in Chinese culture, where he gradually became independent from Vaiśravaṇa’s storyline. In this phase, he took on various roles as a loyal dharma protector, a tranquil dharma preacher, an unruly child god, and a wrathful deity with multiple faces and arms. This domestication process allowed for the development of Nezha’s unique characteristics and his popularity in Chinese society.

It is worth noting that although Nezha’s portrayal as a deformed *yaksha* can be traced back to the High Tang period or even earlier translated sūtras, this image may not have been as prominent as his identity as the “son of Vaiśravaṇa.” The majority of stories developed during

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<sup>444</sup> Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Canglang shihua jiaoshi* 滄浪詩話校釋 (Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1983), 253.

<sup>445</sup> Zhan Hanglun 詹杭倫. *Zhongguo wenxue shenmei mingti yanjiu* 中國文學審美命題研究 (Hongkong: Hongkong University Press, 2010), 129-140.

his domestication emphasized his role as the heavenly prince. It was not until the introduction of the *Scripture of the Supreme Secrets of Nana Deva* that Nezha's image as a wrathful deity found full expression in the poems of Chan masters, which largely facilitated Nezha's popularity extending to realms beyond Buddhism. Considering Nezha's *gong'an* story could be the potential origin for the father-son conflict depicted in Ming and Qing fictions, it can be concluded that Chan literature played a pivotal role in Nezha's domestication. During the Song dynasty, particularly in the Southern Song period, Nezha's image underwent constant adaptation and interpretation in various contexts, which established him as a high-value iconic figure of that era. Recognizing the value of Nezha, the compiler of the *Wudeng huiyuan* incorporated him into the Chan historiography and appropriated him to be a Chan ideal. This could be the reason why Nezha became the sole addition to the "Yinghua shengxian" section.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

In this dissertation, my research focuses on the “Yinghua shengxian” sections within the *Five Lamps* series. Indeed, this section constitutes a relatively small portion of the *denglu* works, and thus some may question the worthiness of the study. However, its persistent recurrence does not need further evidence to prove its significance. Although previous scholars have examined several figures incorporated in the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, none have systematically explored these figures within the framework of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections or considered their roles as special Chan ideals in Chan literature or, more broadly, within the Chan school in Song China. Through a chronological examination of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in Song *denglu* works, I contend that these sections contain some crucial information about the development of the Chan school, a facet that has been previously overlooked.

In the *Jingde chuan denglu*, the “Chanmen dazhe” section captured my attention for its especially long title and its incorporation of the figures with diverse background. These prompt my primary research questions: why did the Chan compilers establish a separate section dedicated to these particular figures? What aspects about them garnered the attention of the Chan compilers? In addressing these questions, I meticulously scrutinized their hagiographies in comparative analysis, examining the accounts edited by Chan compilers with those found in other sources. I discovered that the Chan compilers demonstrated deliberate adaptations to the hagiographies, selectively omitting highlighted episodes found elsewhere and incorporating additional episodes to enhance the portrayal of these figures. To comprehend the purpose and significance of these modifications within Chan historiography, an examination of the distinctive status of the *Jingde lu* in early Song cultural context becomes necessary. As the first Chan

historiography to receive patronage from the Song court, the *Jingde lu* bore the role in standardizing the Chan history and establishing the Chan school as a new orthodox Buddhist institution. Keeping these considerations in mind, I revealed that the Chan compilers purposefully infused values and qualities emphasized by the institutionalized Chan school into these figures, and selectively omitted episodes deemed detrimental or contrary to the principles of the Chan school. Simultaneously, additional questions arise: As the *denglu* works supplanted the *Eminent Monks* series in serving as a new platform to showcase collective images of Buddhist ideals, why was it insufficient for the Chan school to accomplish its agenda by venerating Chan masters within the lineages as ideals? What made the Chan compilers have to utilize the “Chanmen dazhe” section to promote figures outside the lineages as Chan ideals?

The answer may lie in the Chan compilers’ classification of the figures as “*chanmen dazhe*,” the distinguished masters in the *chan* gate. It is crucial to note that this *chan* gate indicates the *dhyāna* tradition rather than the institutionalized Chan school. The Chan compilers recognized these individuals not as part of Chan lineages but as esteemed figures in their respective eras, implying that the Chan compilers appreciated the figures’ significant religious values. By leveraging their prominence and adjusting their portrayals, the Chan compilers strategically utilized these figures to promote the Chan school and its teachings, thereby capitalizing on their inherent value and transforming them into a persuasive voice advocating for the Chan school. Meanwhile, this endeavor established connections that bridged the *dhyāna* tradition and the institutionalized Chan school, demonstrating the Chan school’s intention to legitimize its orthodoxy within religiosity by highlighting its profound and longstanding historical background, a lineage that can be traced back to the Buddha.

The absence of the “Chanmen dazhe” section in the subsequent two *denglu* works, the *Tiansheng guang denglu* and the *Jianzhong jingguo xu denglu*, may be attributed to the Chan compilers’ concentrated focus on internal Chan school matters and the evolution of ongoing Chan lineages during the mid-Northern Song dynasty. Another plausible explanation could be that the institutionalized Chan school no longer deemed it necessary to emphasize its *dhyāna* background or origin to legitimize its position within religiosity. This could be a result of the Chan school’s elevated status as the state Buddhism, enjoying unparalleled patronage from the imperial court. Later, the compilation of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections in the *denglu* works supports the assertion that the Chan school actively sought to engage in a broader religious discourse.

The tradition of promoting individuals outside Chan lineages as Chan ideals was initiated with the “Chanmen dazhe” section and subsequently continued through the “Yinghua shengxian” sections. The Chan compilers modified the images of these non-Chan figures, adding typical Chan features to ensure that their images seamlessly integrated into the Chan context. This appropriating process can be considered as an act of “conversion” or “domestication,” whereby the non-Chan figures were strategically depicted as upholding the Chan school.

The Chan compilers, in fact, employed a similar strategy of utilizing external influences to bolster the Chan school. Despite the Chan school attaining a dominant position among Buddhist institutions, the compilers persisted in incorporating external forces to assert the school’s orthodoxy and superiority. This inclination may stem from the competitive dynamics within this open “religious market,” where it is a common practice for different traditions to lay claim to valuable religious ideals. For instance, figures like Hanshan and Shide, initially Buddhist hermits, were also revered as Daoist immortals; Nezha, originally a Buddhist deity,

found inclusion in the Daoist pantheon and folk culture. A noteworthy consideration regarding the values associated with these religious ideals is the organic interdependence that may allow for mutual fulfillment. Traditions claiming these religious ideals strategically capitalized on their associated values, consequently enhancing the influence of these traditions. At the same time, for the ideals revered by diverse traditions, an increase in followers embracing their life stories would increase their associated values in return. Ultimately, these traditions prospered, and the ideals may extend their influence into additional realms, such as fine art and folk tales.

Differing from other fascicles in the *denglu* works, which predominantly focus on Chan masters with relatively undisputed identities, the “Yinghua shengxian” sections incorporate a diverse array of figures. Because these figures were not inherently affiliated with the Chan school, when the Chan compilers modified their hagiographies or created their images, this process usually took place in a shared space, a space that could be an intersection of Chan and Tiantai, Chan and Pure Land, Buddhism and Daoism, or even Buddhism and folk culture. These were the contexts where image wars often occurred.

As for the motivation for various traditions to participate in the image wars, it lies largely in the function of hagiographical writing. Hagiographical writing holds significance not only for the authors and compilers seeking to disseminate and commemorate the narratives of these distinguished religious figures but, more importantly, for establishing role models for followers. These narratives inspire adherents to shape their identities as they navigate their spiritual practices. The repeated emphasis on exemplary qualities in hagiographies contributes to the formation of values collectively embraced by adherents, thereby enhancing the cohesion of the community.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>446</sup> For the topic on the role of Buddhist hagiographical writing in forming religious tradition and religious community, see Reginald Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations* (New York:

In this dissertation, to reveal the characteristics of each “Yinghua shengxian” section and to elucidate the significance of compiling these sections within the *denglu* works, I examined the motivations driving these compilations and revealed the divergent nature of the *denglu* works. I demonstrated that the six works in the *Five Lamps* series followed two modes of compilations: the imperial-sanctioned *denglu* works, disseminated as national perceptions, and the laity-sponsored *denglu* works, circulated in local regions. The different natures of these *denglu* works dictated the writing styles of their “Yinghua shengxian” sections. While the former adhered to the hagiographical form, in alignment with the *Eminent Monks* series, the latter depicted all the figures through *gong’an* stories, fulfilling the pedagogical purpose.

The second part of each chapter comprises case studies on specific figures from the four “Yinghua shengxian” sections. The examination of Huisi and Zhiyi unveils heated issues in the Chan-Tiantai conflict; the exploration of the “Three Sages of Tiantai” illuminates the core value upheld by the Chan school; the scrutiny of the Indian Elders highlights the Chan school’s interest in Pure Land literature; the analysis of Qiansui Baozhang presents the promotion of a local Buddhist cult figure to a national perceptive Chan ideal; the study on Zhang Boduan showcases the image war in the Buddho-Daoist dispute; the investigation on Prince Nezha exemplifies the Chan literature’s involvement in creating a folk deity. In each case, we can discern the Chan school’s consideration of, reactions to, and interactions with prevalent ideological currents of the time. This underscores that the Chan history preserved in the *denglu* works extends beyond the expansion of Chan lineages and teachings of Chan masters. For these reasons, the study on the “Yinghua shengxian” section deserves more attention in the study of Chan history.

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Oxford University Press, 1994). Kathryn Ann Tsai, *Lives of the Nuns: Biographies of Chinese Buddhist Nuns from the Fourth to Six Centuries: A translation of the Pi-ch’iu-ni chuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994).

Furthermore, the study on the “Yinghua shengxian” sections offers a novel perspective to observe how the Chan school shaped its identity and adjusted its position through dynamic interactions with other traditions in religiosity. In early *denglu* works, the Chan school asserted its superiority by emphasizing its uniqueness and stressing the slogan “a separate transmission outside the teaching.” The “Chanmen dazhe” section in the *Jingde lu* utilized the value of renowned Buddhists outside Chan lineages, incorporating their achievements into its own system. This suggests that the early institutional Chan school lacked the confidence it later gained, necessitating a connection with the broader *dhyāna* tradition to legitimize its status in Buddhist conventions. In Southern Song *denglu* works, however, Chan Buddhism displayed its predominance by encompassing not only Buddhist traditions but also ideologies beyond Buddhism. The “Yinghua shengxian” sections actively appropriated figures from Daoism, Confucianism, local cults, and folk culture. The Chan school’s intention to be an all-embracing teaching implies its increased confidence and inclusivity, signifying a strategy to claim superiority in religiosity.

In terms of the legacy of the “Yinghua shengxian” sections, since its inception in the Song dynasty, this section started to be incorporated into later Buddhist works, such as the *Zhiyue lu* 指月錄 by Qu Ruji 瞿汝稷, the *Wudeng yantong* 五燈嚴統 by Feiyin Tongrong 費隱通容, the *Yuezang zhijin* 閱藏知津 by Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 in the Ming dynasty, and the *Zongjian falin* 宗鑒法林 by Jialing Xingyin 迦陵性音 in the Qing dynasty. Moreover, “yinghua shengxian” became a fixed term used to identify extraordinary Buddhist figures. For instance, in the *Yunqi fahui* 雲棲法彙 by Zhuhong 株宏, Nanyue Huisi is addressed as “Nanyue *yinghua*

*shengxian*.”<sup>447</sup> *Zongtong biannian* 宗統編年 by Ji Yin 紀蔭 notes that “*yinghua shengxian*” refers to those difficult to categorize,<sup>448</sup> and monk Baozhi as a *yinghua shengxian*, “transcending ordinary language and thought.”<sup>449</sup> Similarly, the *Longjing wenjian lu* 龍井見聞錄 by Wang Mengjuan 汪夢錫 explains that the reason for honoring Zhiyi as a sage is because he was addressed as a *yinghua shengxian* in the *Jingde lu* and the *Zhiyue lu*.<sup>450</sup>

The recurrent use of the term “*yinghua shengxian*” in later dynasties can be attributed to its popularity among readers, indicating its widespread acceptance. An extensive chronological examination on its reception may reveal additional intriguing aspects of Chan Buddhism’s development in subsequent religious contexts. This could be a potential direction for future studies.

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<sup>447</sup> 南嶽應化聖賢。 *Yunqi fahui* 雲棲法彙. J. no.B277, 33: 65c24.

<sup>448</sup> 應化聖賢。難以格定者。 *Zongtong biannian* 宗統編年. X. no.1600, 86: 67b09.

<sup>449</sup> 誌法身大士應化聖賢。機用語言。皆全提向上。不可以心思意解者。 *Ibid.* 127a06-07.

<sup>450</sup> 《傳燈》、《指月》等書俱稱智者為“應化聖賢”，故曰聖人。 *Longjing jianwen lu* 龍井見聞錄. GA. no.20, 22: 47333a07-08.

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X = (*Wan*) *xu zangjing* 卍字續藏經. Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, 1968–1970. Reprint of Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, et al., eds. Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō 大日本續藏經, 120 cases. Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1905–1912.

B = *Da zangjing bubian* 大藏經補編. Lan Chi-fu 藍吉富 et al., eds. Taipei: Huayu chubanshe 華宇出版社, 1985.

J = *Jiaying da zangjing* 嘉興大藏經. Taipei: Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, 1987.

GA = *Zhongguo fosi shizhi* 中國佛寺史志彙刊. Du Jiexiang 杜潔祥, et al., eds. Taipei: Mingwen shuju 明文書局, Danqing tushu gongsi 丹青圖書公司, 1980-1994.

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*Lushan ji* 廬山記. T. no. 2095, 51.

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*Rutang qiufa xunli xingji* 入唐求法巡禮行記. B. no. 95, 18.

*San tendai godai san ki* 參天台五台山記. B. no. 174, 32.

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