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◇**Note 2**

A Critical Study of Yongjia Xuanjue's Biographies

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Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄覺 (665-713) is well-known as a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng 慧能 (638-713) in Chinese Chan Buddhism. Authorship of the famous Chan work, *Song of Enlightenment* (*Zhengdao ge* 證道歌) is also attributed to him. However, Zhipan 志磐 (d. u., Song dynasty), a historian of the Tiantai 天台 school, also claims that Xuanjue is a disciple of the Tiantai school. The attribution of *Song of Enlightenment* to Xuanjue has also been critically questioned by Tiantai monks and modern scholars.

The controversy of Xuanjue's scholastic identity is related to the divergent accounts contained in Xuanjue's biographies dating from the Tang to the Song dynasties. However, Xuanjue's biographies have not been critically examined in previous scholarship. This article attempts to investigate Xuanjue's biographies chronologically in order to find out the significance of his differing biographies. As it will be shown in this article, Xuanjue's biographies compiled in different time periods also reflect the development of the concept of "school" (zong 宗) in Chinese Buddhist history.

The earliest account of Xuanjue's life is found in the preface of the *Yongjia ji* 永嘉集 (713-). The *Yongjia ji* was compiled after Xuanjue's death by Xuanjue's contemporary Wei Jing 魏靜(d.u.). Wei Jing's account reveals some important information. First, Xuanjue is not obviously affiliated with any school. Second, there is no description of

Xuanjue's encounter with the Sixth Patriarch. Finally, Wei Jing's anthology does not contain the *Song of Enlightenment* (T48, 387b18-c15). The characteristics of Xuanjue's earliest biographical account correspond to the early development of Chinese Buddhist schools. In the early Tang, the so-called Chinese Buddhist "schools" (*zong* 宗) had not yet come into existence. It is only sometime after 750 that Chinese Buddhist schools appeared, complete with the elements of founders, lineages, orthodox transmissions of doctrine, and large numbers of followers (Stanley Weinstein 1987, 482-487). The short biography of Xuanjue written by Wei Jing soon after Xuanjue's death in 713 exhibits this non-sectarian characteristic.

Two-hundred and forty years later, another version of Xuanjue's biography appeared in the Zutang ji 祖堂集 (compiled in 952), a collection of biographies of "Chan" masters. Xuanjue's biography is entitled "The Monk Who Stayed Overnight" (*yisujue heshang* 一宿覺和尚), which depicts the most famous story about Xuanjue's encounter with the Sixth Patriarch of the Chan school. Based on this fascinating story of Xuanjue staying overnight in the Sixth Patriarch's temple, the author of the *Zutang ji* biography claims that Xuanjue belonged to the Sixth Patriarch's Dharma lineage. In order to convince his readers, its author ends this encounter with Xuanjue's words, "Encountering Caoxi 曹溪, I realize that life and death are not relevant" (Sun 2007, 186-189). However, this sentence is problematic. Modern scholars have traced back the origin of the term "Caoxi" and discover that this term did not appear until 744-749, which is about 30 years after Xuanjue's death (McRae 1987, 234). It is impossible that Xuanjue could have said the sentence himself.

The *Zutang ji* was compiled in the Five Dynasties, which was after the Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan schools had made their appearance during the second half of the Tang dynasty. The Chan school was especially interested in constructing a lineage to prove an unbroken line from the Buddha, through Bodhidharma to the Sixth Patriarch Huineng and his prosperous descendants. This intention is seen in the *Zutang ji* with the claim that Xuanjue was the Sixth Patriarch's disciple in the story of Xuanjue staying in the Sixth Patriarch's temple for one night. As we can see in extant Chan literature, the image of Xuanjue as a Chan master originated during the late Tang or the Five Dynasties.

The next biography of Xuanjue is found in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (compiled in 988). It is entitled *Tang Wenzhou Longxingsi Xuanjue zhuan* 唐温州龍興寺玄覺傳 and categorized in the Chapter of Meditators (*xichan pian* 習禪篇). In addition to the account of Xuanjue and Huineng, the author of Xuanjue's biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* adds the explanation that Xuanjue had previously gone to Shenxiu's 神秀 (605-706) temple to inquire about the Dharma, but obtained enlightenment only after visting Caoxi Huineng (T50, 758a9-b21). The author of this biography not only tells us that Xuanjue was Huineng's disciple, but also uses Xuanjue's case to prove that Huineng's teaching is superior than that of Shenxiu. Xuanjue's biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* was

probably compiled in a time when the Southern school of Chan was trying to establish the orthodoxy of Huineng over Shenxiu's Northern school after 732.

The *Jingde chuandeng lu* (1004), based on the story of the Monk Who Stayed Overnight, lists Xuanjue as a disciple of Huineng, who has other 42 disciples. This Song dynasty biography contains new and interesting information about Xuanjue. The *Jingde chuandeng lu* biography emphasizes that Xuanjue mastered Tiantai meditation (*zhiguan* 止觀). Xuanjue is also said to have gone to see the Sixth Patriarch because of Tiantai master Zuoxi Xuanlang's 左谿玄朗 (673-754) encouragement. Furthermore, for the first time, the *Song of Enlightenment* is attributed to Xuanjue (T51, 241a27-b15). The *Jingde chuandeng lu* biography paints a new picture of Xuanjue's sectarian identity. Xuanjue is described as an expert of Tiantai meditation practices and Xuanlang's recommendation that Xuanjue seek the Sixth Patriarch also implies that Xuanjue was not satisfied with the Tiantai school. Huineng's sanctioning of Xuanjue's understanding, combined with Xuanjue's authorship of the *Song of Enlightenment* indicate that a conversion to the Chan school has taken place.

In response to the *Jingde chuandeng lu's* portrayal of Xuanjue as a Chan monk, Zhipan, the compiler of the famous Song Tiantai chronological record *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 lists Xuanjue a Tiantai meditation monk. Zhipan pairs Xuanlang and Xuanjue as peer students under the Seventh Patriarch Tiangong Huiwei 天宮慧威 (634-713) in the "Lineage Chart of the Buddhas and Patriarchs" (*fozu shixi biao* 佛祖世繫表) of the Tiantai school (T49, 201a9, 250a9, and 251c3-5). Zhipan's counterattack to the *Jingde chuandeng lu* on Xuanjue's school identity shows a competitive atmosphere among Buddhist schools in the Song. In response to the challenge of Chan school's genealogical construction, Tiantai historians also started to compile universal histories of Buddhism presented from a Tiantai perspective (Shinohara 1999, 524-525). The contradictory sectarian identities of Xuanjue in the Chan text *Jingde chuandeng lu* and the Tiantai chronological record *Fozu tongji* can be seen as direct evidence of the competition between Chan and Tiantai schools in the Song dynasty.

The divergences among Xuanjue's biographies ranging from the Tang to the Song reflect the development of the concept of school in the history of Chinese Buddhism. In the early Tang, the short biography of Xuanjue written by Wei Jing after Xuanjue's death exhibits a non-sectarian characteristic. Following the development of schools, the image of Xuanjue as a Chan master started to appear from the Five Dynasties to the Song. The sectarian identity of Xuanjue is further complicated when interesting new elements are added to his biographies reflecting both the competition between Northern and Southern Chan in the late Tang, and the rivalry between Chan and Tiantai in the Song dynasty.

By examining Xuanjue's biographies chronologically, the author does not try to argue which biographies are more accurate or determine Xuanjue's proper sectarian identity. These biographical sources themselves have become part of the history of Chinese

Buddhism and provide valuable information to Buddhist historians. The importance is how we read them in order to understand the historical meanings behind the discrepancies.

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◇研究所収書目録◇

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