

Summary

Study on History of Linji's Chan Thoughts

--Their Formation and Development

by WU Jingan (Jie Fa)

This thesis investigates the role of Linji Yixuan's (AD ?-866) Chan Thoughts in the history of Chinese Chan Thoughts, and elaborates on the historical background and development of Linji Yixuan's Chan Thoughts.

In most of literature studies, Linji Chan Thoughts were considered as directly inherited from Mazu Daoyi's (AD 709-788). However, today's new research perspectives call for a re-examination of the difference between these two systems of Chan Thoughts. During the late Tang Dynasty when Linji was alive, Chan Buddhism was being practiced by an increasingly wider population. At that time, re-examination of the Mazu Chan became one of the major topics for discussion among Chan monks about Chan meditation. It was under this background that Linji developed his Chan thoughts. Therefore, it is necessary to answer the following three questions, in order to find out the role of Linji Chan in the history of Chinese Chan Thoughts: (1) How did Chan Buddhism Thoughts get developed prior to Linji? 2) How did Linji build on those thoughts, overcome their limitations and develop his own thoughts? 3) How did Linji Chan Thoughts get developed after Linji? In particular, the development of the enlightenment thought of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature", proposed by Mazu, is of significant importance to our understanding of the development history of Chan Buddhism Thoughts in the transition period of mid-to-late Tang Dynasty. In this way, this thesis is mainly focused on investigation of the enlightenment thought.

This thesis consists of two parts. Part I, with the title of "*Background of Development History of Linji Yixuan's Chan Thoughts – Inheritance, Critique, and Correction of Mazu Chan Thoughts*", looks into the development history of Chan Thoughts in the transition period of mid-to-late Tang Dynasty. This part is composed of the following six chapters.

Chapter One The Foundation of Chan Buddhism Thoughts in Tang Dynasty, which is focused on on Mazu Daoyi's Enlightenment Thought of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature"

Chapter Two A Comprehensive Investigation into the Popularization and Reflection of Mazu Daoyi's Enlightenment Thought of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature" in the Transition Period of Mid-to-Late Tang Dynasty

Chapter Three Dazhu Huihai's Chan Thoughts

Chapter Four Nanquan Puyuan's Chan Thoughts

Chapter Five Baizhang Huaihai's Chan Thoughts

Chapter Six Huangbo Xiyun's Chan Thoughts

In order to understand the history of Chan Buddhism Thoughts during the transition period of the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty, Chapter One discusses Mazu Daoyi's Thoughts, especially the enlightenment thought of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature", which set the tone of the Chan Buddhism Thoughts in Tang Dynasty. Section One briefly presents the viewpoints from early-stage Chan Thoughts on "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature", based on original Dunhuang literatures and other literatures. Viewpoints similar to "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature" have been found in the early-stage Chan Thoughts prior to MaZu, but not playing an important role. Section Two collates the thoughts and methods of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature", proposed by Mazu. In addition, the enlightenment thought of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature" differs from traditional Buddhism thoughts. This brings a new question how Buddhists should understand and follow the thoughts and methods of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature".

Mainly based on *the Timeline of Buddhism* and *the Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*, Chapter Two conducts a comprehensive investigation into the development of the enlightenment thought of "the Union of function and Buddha Nature" during the transition period in the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty, from the popularization of Mazu's Chan Buddhism Thoughts to the history of inheritance, criticism, reflection and re-examination of Mazu's Chan Thoughts. Chapter Two also clarifies that the history of Chan Buddhism thought during the transition period in the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty should be considered as an extension of Mazu's Chan Thoughts, instead of the extension of the opposition between Mazu system and Shitou system.

Chapters three to six study cases of Chan Thoughts with more details, based on the history of Chan Thoughts discussed above. These four chapters respectively investigate the Chan Thoughts of Mazu's disciples including Dazhu huihai, Nanquan Puyuan, Baizhang Huaihai and Baizhang's disciple, Huangbo Xiyun. The chapters also discuss the development process of Mazu Chan in the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty. The enlightenment thought of "the Union of Function and Buddha Nature" proposed by Mazu was epoch-making and innovative in the history of Buddhism thoughts. It shocked the Buddhist community at the time, but also led to various drawbacks. Therefore, Mazu's disciples early on began a re-examination of this Thought, including criticisms, reflections and corrections, which lead to various new thoughts

In summary, this thesis attempts to deviate from the usual timeline practice of Chan history which relies on literatures similar to the *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*. Instead, this thesis tries to understand the historical background of Linji Thoughts, focusing on the very popular Mazu Thoughts—What was the impact of Mazu Thoughts? What problems did it create? How did people later on understand and deal with Mazu Thoughts?

Based on the above historical background, Part II investigates Linji Chan Thoughts and further explores how the Thoughts get developed after Linji's time. It consists of the following three chapters.

Chapter Seven Linji Yixuan's Chan Thoughts

Chapter Eight The Spread of Linji Chan Thoughts in Southern China and the Formation of Linji School

Chapter Nine The Formation of the Linji School Outline in the *Record of Linji*, Which Focused on *San Xuan San Yao*, *Linji Sanju*, and *Si He*.

Chapter Seven discusses Linji Chan Thoughts, based on the influence of Mazu Chan Thoughts mentioned above, and the history of inheritance, critique, and correction of Mazu Chan Thoughts. While Linji Chan Thoughts was mostly inherited from Mazu Chan Thoughts, the difference between them was created partly by the re-examination of Mazu's Chan Thoughts during the late Tang Dynasty when Linji was alive. It was under this historical background that Linji formed his own thoughts in late Tang Dynasty, especially the thought of "Always Be the Master of Self" which is worthy of our attention. In addition, Linji's Chan Thoughts should not be simply positioned as part of the Mazu system nor the Shitou system, rather it is an extension of Mazu Chan and should be related to "the re-examination of Mazu Chan Thoughts".

Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine as well as the Appendix "On the Formation of 'the Four Distinctions' of *the Record of Linji*" explore the evolving history of Linji Chan Thoughts from late Tang Dynasty to Song Dynasty. Specifically, Linji Chan started in the late Tang Dynasty and later transformed into Linji School in the Song Dynasty. Since the late Tang Dynasty, Linji Chan Thoughts had been gradually spread from Hebei province to southern China, during which the Linji School of thoughts began to form and *The Record of Linji* started to take shape. Further, the Linji School modified the Linji Chan Thoughts from the late Tang Dynasty. These activities were not driven by Linji himself, but rather by the third generation disciple Nanyuan Huiyong (about AD 860-930) who disseminated Linji Chan Thoughts at Ruzhou in Henan Province and also by Nanyuan Huiyong's disciples. Moreover, Ruzhou was perceived as the new center of Linji Chan Thoughts, and this new center was the source of Chan thoughts of the Linji School in Song Dynasty, and this line of heritage persists till today.

These findings above help to understand what roles Linji Chan Thoughts played in Chinese Chan Thoughts. The findings also present how Chan Thoughts get developed during the transition period in the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty and the Wudai Dynasty (In another way, this transition period is roughly from Tang Dynasty and Song Dynasty).

In conclusion, this thesis focuses on exploring the role of Linji Chan in the history of Chan Thoughts,

under the historical background of the transformation of Chan Buddhism in the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty. Please note that this thesis does not explore other important issues due to limitation of thesis length. For future work, the author would like to examine the different schools of Buddhism thoughts beyond Chan School during the transition period in the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty and the relationship between Chinese society and the history of Chan Thoughts.