

# Zhili's Account of "Six Identities and Dung Beetles"

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## 1. Introduction

During the Sui and Tang dynasties, Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛 (538-597) established the foundations of Tiantai (Jp. Tendai) doctrine, and Jingxi Zhanran 荆溪湛然 (711-782) systematically elaborated Zhiyi's thought. After Zhanran, however, Tiantai Buddhism underwent a period of atrophy lasting approximately two hundred years until its revival brought by Siming Zhili 四明知礼 (960-1028) in the Song China. Zhili is thus an important figure in the context of Tiantai Buddhism, and moreover played a significant role in the development of Tokugawa period Japanese Tendai Buddhism, which heavily relied on Zhili's thought.<sup>1</sup>

Bearing in mind this historical background, this talk investigates an aspect of Zhili's doctrinal exegesis as well as how his thought was received and developed by his successors in the Tiantai scholarly community. The Song period has produced many novel doctrinal positions, and among them the famous account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" (*jieqiang liuji* 蛄蟻六即説)<sup>2</sup> stands out as an important point of departure.<sup>3</sup> The term *jieqiang* is originally referred to in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* 大般涅槃經 translated by Huiyan 慧嚴 (363-443).<sup>4</sup> According to Zhanran, *jieqiang* indicates black beetles that eat dung.<sup>5</sup>

One characteristic of Zhili's interpretation of the Six Identities was that he claimed that dung beetles are the lowest level of the Six Identities, the so called Identity in Principle (*lijī* 理即), and can also attain the highest, Ultimate Identity (*jiujingji* 究竟即). While it is true that Zhili created the archetype of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles", his account came to be gradually transformed by his successors. Hence, it seems crucial to elucidate the formation process which led to the mature doctrine of the

<sup>1</sup> Shimaji (1929) pp.519-520.

<sup>2</sup> For previous studies concerning Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles", see Andō (1975) pp.1-162, and Ziporyn (2000) pp.295-306, among others.

<sup>3</sup> Japanese polemic literature composed in the Edo period, such as Echō Chikū's 慧澄癡空 *Shikan bugyō kōgi* 止觀輔行講義 (*Bukkyō taikai: Mohe zhiguan*, 1, p.389) and Daihō Shudatsu's 大宝守脱 *Kangyōsho myōshūshō kōjutsu* 觀經疏妙宗鈔講述 (*Tendaishū zensho*, 2, p.45b.) shows that the account of "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" was held in high esteem.

<sup>4</sup> T12.611a.

<sup>5</sup> *Fahua xuanyi shiqian* 法華玄義積籤, T33.923a.

"Six Identities and Dung Beetles" in order to reveal the actual shape of an important aspect of Song period Tiantai Buddhism.

In order to do so, I will first of all present Zhiyi's aim in establishing the theory of the Six Identities alongside Zhanran's commentary. This preliminary step will serve to clarify Zhili's intention in proclaiming the notion of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles". Second, I will examine the doctrinal connection between Zhili and the *Da boniepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏 (the commentary on the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*) of Zhang'an Guanding 章安灌頂 (561-632), which was established by Zhili's successors in the Northern Song period in their efforts to either appropriate or criticize him. Finally, I would like to consider how Tiantai scholar monks of the Southern Song period reinforced and developed Zhili's account.<sup>6</sup> Please note that the names stated here indicate Tiantai scholar monks I will take up in this talk, and the names are listed in chronological order.

Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛 (538-597)

Zhang'an Guanding 章安灌頂 (561-632)

Jingxi Zhanran 荆溪湛然 (711-782)

Shanjia 山家 lineage

Shanwai 山外 lineage

Siming Zhili 四明知礼 (960-1028)

Fantian Xianrun 梵天咸潤 (d.u.)

Jingjue Renyue 淨覺仁岳 (992-1064)→Post Shanwai 後山外 lineage

Nanping Fanzhen 南屏梵臻 (?-1103)

Zhuan Keguan 竹庵可觀 (1092-1182)

Baiting Shanyue 柏庭善月 (1149-1241)

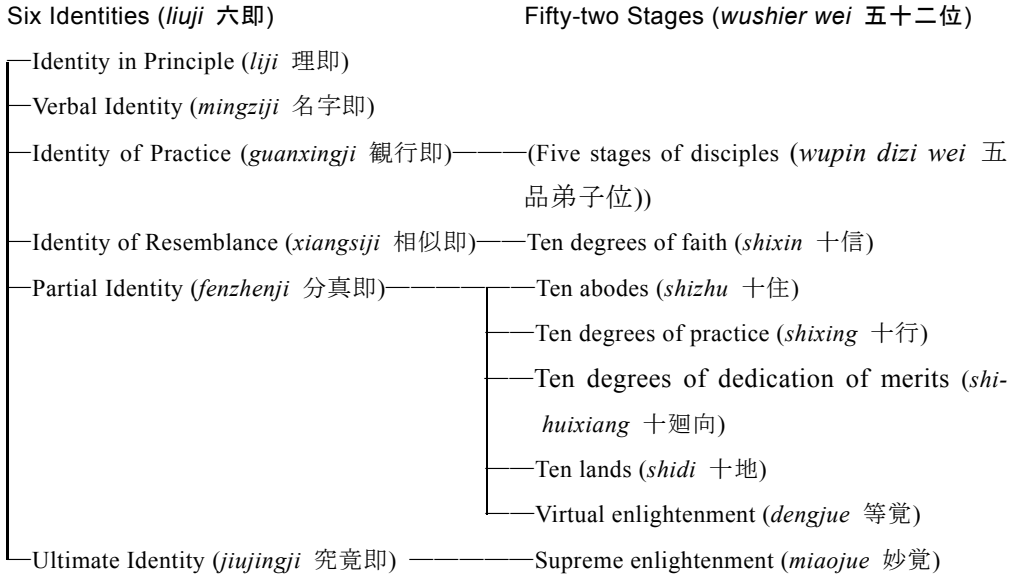
Yugang Mengrun 玉岡蒙潤 (1275-1342)

## 2. The Six Identities of Tiantai

Let me first outline Zhiyi's aim in establishing the theory of the Six Identities, which is intimately linked to the stages of practice that practitioners of the Tiantai Perfect Teaching (*yuanjiao* 円教) follow. In order to sketch the basic structure of this theory, I will rely on the *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, composed by Zhiyi and edited by Guanding.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For the principal study of Song period Tiantai after Zhili, see Andō (1959).

<sup>7</sup> T46.10b-11a. For an outline of the Six Identities, see Fukuda (1954) pp.241-254, Groner (1989), in *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, pp.61-68, Ōkubo (2001) pp.73-77, Swanson (2004) pp.115-124.



First, Identity in Principle is the level not yet involving any teachings. Identity in Principle is indeed the lowest level of the Six Identities, but it can also become the highest Ultimate Identity from a perspective that stresses “identity (*ji* 即)”. Second, Verbal Identity (*mingziji* 名字即) is the level at which people read and hear teachings through sūtras. Third, Identity of Practice (*guanxingji* 觀行即), which corresponds to the five stages of disciples (*wupin dizi wei* 五品弟子位), is the level of actual practice. Fourth, the Identity of Resemblance (*xiangsjī* 相似即), also known as the level of the purity of the six organs (*liugen qingjing wei* 六根清淨位), correlates to the ten degrees of faith (*shixin* 十信) within the fifty-two stages (*wushier wei* 五十二位). Zhiyi considered these four identities as the worldly stages (*fanwei* 凡位), while regarding Partial and Ultimate Identity as the celestial stages (*shengwei* 聖位). Fifth, Partial Identity (*fenzhenji* 分真即), also known as the Identity of Partial Realization (*fenzhengji* 分証即), points to the forty one stages, which begin with the first abode (*chuzhu* 初住) and end with virtual enlightenment (*dengjue* 等覺). Tiantai/Tendai advocates that practitioners can attain a “partial” realization of Buddhahood when they attain Partial Identity, particularly the first abode. Finally, Ultimate Identity indicates the supreme enlightenment (*miaojue* 妙覺) that the Buddha attained. Progressing through the forty two stages, or from Partial to Ultimate Identity, practitioners gradually extirpate the forty two types of defilement (*wuming* 無明).

Next, I would like to draw attention to the following passage from the *Mohe zhiguan* in which Zhiyi clarifies his intention in creating the Six Identities.

約六即—顯是者、為—初心是—、為—後心是—。  
 答。如—論焦炷—。非—初、不—離—初。非—後、不—離—後。若智信具足、聞—一念即是—、

信故不<sub>レ</sub>謗、智故不<sub>レ</sub>懼。初後皆是。若無<sub>レ</sub>信、高推<sub>二</sub>聖境<sub>一</sub>非<sub>二</sub>己智分<sub>一</sub>。若無<sub>レ</sub>智、起<sub>二</sub>增上慢<sub>一</sub>謂<sub>二</sub>己均<sub>一</sub>。初後俱非。為<sub>二</sub>此事<sub>一</sub>故、須<sub>レ</sub>知<sub>二</sub>六即<sub>一</sub>。謂、理即・名字即・觀行即・相似即・分真即・究竟即。此六即者、始<sub>レ</sub>凡終<sub>レ</sub>聖。始<sub>レ</sub>凡故、除<sub>二</sub>疑怯<sub>一</sub>。終<sub>レ</sub>聖故、除<sub>二</sub>慢大<sub>一</sub>。<sup>8</sup>

(translation)

Revealing the right (*shi* 是) from the viewpoint of the Six Identities, should the right be thought of as the beginning (*chuxin* 初心), or should the right be thought of as the end (*houxin* 後心)?

Answer: It is like [the simile] of a burning wick [in *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論].<sup>9</sup> It is neither at the beginning nor separate from the beginning. It is neither at the end nor separate from the end. When someone has both wisdom and faith and hears that a thought at single moment (*yanian* 一念) is identical with the right, faith prevents them from slandering, and wisdom prevents them from being afraid. In this case, both the beginning and the end are right. If someone does not have faith, he feels sure that the high state of the sage cannot be his own position. If someone does not have wisdom, he has enormous conceit and thinks that he is equal to the Buddha. In this case, both the beginning and end are wrong (*fei* 非). This is why we should know the Six Identities. The Six Identities are Identity in Principle, Verbal Identity, Identity of Practice, Identity of Resemblance, Partial Identity, and Ultimate Identity. These Six Identities begin with the worldly (*fan* 凡) [level] and end with the sagely (*sheng* 聖) [level]. Because of beginning with the worldly [level], doubts and fears can be removed. Because of ending with the sagely [level], conceits can be removed.<sup>10</sup>

It is obvious that the purpose Zhiyi had in establishing the six gradual stages and the principle of identity is to prevent practitioners from falling into conceit and fear. Furthermore, Zhanran's comment on this theory is found in the following passage from his *Zhiguan dayi* 止觀大意.

已發<sub>二</sub>円心<sub>一</sub>未<sub>レ</sub>知<sub>二</sub>円心<sub>一</sub>。為<sub>二</sub>初心是<sub>一</sub>、為<sub>二</sub>後心是<sub>一</sub>。為<sub>二</sub>初即<sub>一</sub>後、為<sub>二</sub>初異<sub>一</sub>後。若初非<sub>レ</sub>後是。若初心異<sub>レ</sub>後。俱非<sub>二</sub>円融<sub>一</sub>。故辨<sub>二</sub>六即<sub>一</sub>而判<sub>二</sub>是非<sub>一</sub>。謂、理即・名字即・觀行即・相似即・分真即・究竟即。即故初後俱是。六故初後不<sub>レ</sub>濫。理同故即、事異故六。凡諸經中有<sub>二</sub>即名<sub>一</sub>者、如<sub>二</sub>生死即涅槃之流<sub>一</sub>。皆以<sub>二</sub>六位<sub>一</sub>甄<sub>レ</sub>之。使<sub>二</sub>始終理同、而初後無<sub>レ</sub>濫。<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> T46.10b.

<sup>9</sup> T25.585c.

<sup>10</sup> For an alternative English translation, see Swanson (2004) pp.115-117.

<sup>11</sup> T46.459c.

(translation of underline)

Because of identity, both the beginning [level] and the end [level] are right. Because of [the separation between] six [levels], the beginning and the end are not confused. Owing to the sameness of Principle (*li* 理), [all levels are] identified [with the Buddha]. Owing to the difference of Concrete Forms (*shi* 事), there is [the separation between] six [levels].

Here, Zhanran defines identity and the separated six levels with unchangeable Principle (*li* 理) and changeable Concrete Forms (*shi* 事), respectively. Keeping in mind Zhiyi and Zhanran's ideas concerning the Six Identities, how should we place dung beetles within this theory? It seems fair to say that dung beetles belong to the level of Identity in Principle, but as has been mentioned earlier, Zhili proposed an alternative interpretation, according to which dung beetles can attain Ultimate Identity.

### 3. Zhili's Account of the Six Identities and Dung Beetles

This section explores Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles." His account is first introduced in the following passage from the *Guan wuliangshoufo jing shu miaozongchao* 觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔.

又復、応<sub>レ</sub>知。六即之義、不<sub>レ</sub>專在<sub>レ</sub>仏。一切仮実・三乗・人天、下至<sub>レ</sub>蛄蟻・地獄色心<sub>レ</sub>、皆須<sub>レ</sub>六即辯<sub>レ</sub>其初後<sub>レ</sub>。所謂理蛄蟻、名字乃至究竟蛄蟻。今、釈<sub>レ</sub>教主<sub>レ</sub>故就<sub>レ</sub>仏辯。以<sub>レ</sub>論<sub>レ</sub>十界皆理性<sub>レ</sub>故、無<sub>レ</sub>非<sub>レ</sub>法界<sub>レ</sub>、一一不<sub>レ</sub>改。故名去、不<sub>レ</sub>唯顯<sub>レ</sub>仏、九亦同彰。至<sub>レ</sub>於果成<sub>レ</sub>十皆究竟。故蛄蟻等皆明<sub>レ</sub>六即<sub>レ</sub>。<sup>12</sup>

(translation)

Moreover, all temporary and true [beings], the Three Vehicles, humans and gods, extending [even] to the lowest dung beetle and the bodies and minds [of those dwelling in hell], [for] all these, their beginnings and ends should be discussed according to the Six Identities. In other words, there are dung beetles of Identity in Principle, dung beetles of Verbal Identity, and dung beetles of Ultimate Identity. Now, [this text] discusses the Buddha in order to interpret the founder of the teaching. When we discuss the [sameness of the] Ten Realms (*shijie* 十界) from [the perspective of] Principle and Nature (*lixing* 理性), everything is held in the dharma realm and each one [of the realms] is unchanging. Therefore, [the five identities] from Verbal Identity [to Ultimate Identity] reveal not only the realm of Buddha but also the nine realms other than the

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<sup>12</sup> T37.200a.

Buddha. When one accomplishes the result, all Ten Realms are equal to the ultimate [identity]. Consequently, dung beetles and all the others reveal the Six Identities.<sup>13</sup>

According to this passage, Zhili asserts that even dung beetles and beings dwelling in hell can attain all six levels. This claim is associated with the notion of *shijie hujū* (十界互具), that each of the Ten Realms contains the other nine.<sup>14</sup> The perhaps most crucial passage for understanding Zhili's position almost immediately follows the above quote, namely "the six names of identities mean the non-duality of Concrete Forms and Principle"<sup>15</sup>. Here, Zhili attempts to overcome Zhanran's interpretation introduced above, that "owing to the sameness of Principle, all levels are identified with the Buddha. Owing to the difference of Concrete Forms, there is the separation between six levels."<sup>16</sup> Thus, one can assume that Zhili's emphasis of the non-duality of Principle and Concrete Forms has been the basis of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles".

#### 4. Criticism of Zhili's Account

Zhili's successors offered various criticisms of his account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles". The first monk who criticized Zhili was Fantian Xianrun 梵天咸潤 (d.u.). Xianrun belonged to the Shanwai 山外 lineage, which was competing with Zhili's own Shanjia 山家 lineage. Xianrun's criticism on Zhili is as follows:

且智者之意、正為<sub>二</sub>諸大乘教<sub>一</sub>、<sub>一</sub>円談<sub>二</sub>法性<sub>一</sub>、皆言<sub>三</sub>一切諸法、俱同一性、更無<sub>二</sub>迷悟·高下·依正·自他·因果之別<sub>一</sub>。慮<sub>二</sub>彼円修之人<sub>一</sub>、易<sub>レ</sub>生<sub>二</sub>叨濫<sub>一</sub>。故立<sub>二</sub>六即之位<sub>一</sub>簡<sub>レ</sub>之。定不<sub>レ</sub>通<sub>二</sub>於<sub>レ</sub>蛄蟻等<sub>一</sub>也。乃至云、理即在<sub>レ</sub>迷故、則有<sub>二</sub>蛄蟻·地獄等名字<sub>一</sub>。在<sub>レ</sub>悟、則五即皆仏。如何却於<sub>二</sub>此五<sub>一</sub>、而立<sub>二</sub>蛄蟻等名<sub>一</sub>乎。然、妙覺無<sub>レ</sub>瞋、則任以<sub>二</sub>蛄蟻畜生之名<sub>一</sub>召<sub>レ</sub>之。未<sub>レ</sub>審。皇臣貴人、敢以<sub>二</sub>此名<sub>一</sub>召<sub>レ</sub>之。否。莫<sub>レ</sub>見。<sup>17</sup>

(translation of underlined passage)

Considering the practitioners of Perfect Teaching, they easily give rise to confusion [regarding the order of stages]. Consequently, the establishment of the six levels of identity prevents such confusion. The dung beetles and such like definitely do not correspond [to the levels of Verbal Identity and above]. Because the Identity in Principle exists in worldly desires, there are the

<sup>13</sup> For an alternative English translation, see Ziporyn (2000) p.297.

<sup>14</sup> See Andō (1975) pp.56-60.

<sup>15</sup> *Guan wuliangshoufo jing shu miaozongchao*, T37.200a-b. "六種即名、皆是事理体不二義。"

<sup>16</sup> See f.n.11.

<sup>17</sup> *Zhixia* 指瑕, *Xucangjing*, 95, p.856b.

names of dung beetles, of hell, and so on. [If the five identities from Verbal Identity to Ultimate Identity] exist in enlightenment, all of the five identities are the Buddha. There must not be any names of dung beetles and so on in these five identities.

To sum up, Xianrun argues that dung beetles are enlightened only in the framework of Identity in Principle, but cannot attain the latter five identities. Considering Zhiyi's basic theory of the Six Identities, Xianrun's criticism to Zhili seems appropriate.

Another contemporary Tiantai scholar monk, Jingjue Renyue 淨覺仁岳 (992-1064) is nowadays said to have been a member of the Post Shanwai 後山外 lineage. Renyue studied under Zhili, but later defected from his teacher. While Renyue was studying under Zhili, he composed the *Juemo shu* 抉膜書 in order to defend Zhili's thought.<sup>18</sup> In this doctrinal exposition, Renyue draws on the following theory from Guanding's *Da boniepan jing shu* in order to demonstrate the orthodoxy of Zhili's account.

一切衆生皆有<sub>二</sub>仏性<sub>一</sub>、而無<sub>レ</sub>見<sub>レ</sub>用、即無分仏。初住・初地能百界作仏、即少分仏。二住・二地已上、是多分仏。妙覺、是滿分仏。以<sub>二</sub>是義<sub>一</sub>故、一一法門皆有<sub>二</sub>權實・本迹<sub>一</sub>、即此義也。

問。蝘蟻・蝮・蠶義、復云何。

答。夫一善法、即有<sub>二</sub>四分<sub>一</sub>。例<sub>二</sub>一惡法<sub>一</sub>、亦<sub>レ</sub>如<sub>レ</sub>是。未<sub>レ</sub>見<sub>二</sub>名教<sub>一</sub>、置而不<sub>レ</sub>論。且就<sub>二</sub>權者<sub>一</sub>言<sub>レ</sub>之、小菩薩所作、是無分蝮蠶。初地・初住所作、是少分。乃至十地・十住等所作、是多分。如來所作、是滿分。<sup>19</sup>

(translation of underlined passage)

Question: As to dung beetles (*jieqiang* 蝘蟻), poisonous snakes (*fu* 蝮) and insects (*chai* 蠶), how should this theory be understood?

Answer: A single good *dharma* thus has four ranks (*sifen* 四分)[, which are no-rank (*wufen* 無分), lesser-rank (*shaofen* 少分), greater-rank (*duofen* 多分), full-rank (*manfen* 滿分) of the Buddha]. A single evil *dharma* too has the same four ranks; and this idea has neither been recognized nor discussed. Now, as for the case of temporary beings, [I] say that activities of small[-minded] bodhisattva are equal to poisonous snakes and insects of no-rank; activities of the first land [within the Separate Teaching (*biejiao* 別教)], or the first abode [of the Perfect Teaching] are equal to snakes and insects of the lesser rank; activities of [the second to] the tenth land (*shidi* 十地) [within the Separate Teaching], or of [the second to] the tenth abode (*shizhu* 十住) [within the Perfect Teaching] equate to snakes and insects of the greater rank; and

<sup>18</sup> *Xucangjing*, 95, pp.857a-859a.

<sup>19</sup> T38.48c.

activities of supreme enlightenment correspond to snakes and insects of the full rank.

The important point to note here is that Guanding proposes that a single evil dharma, which includes dung beetles, poisonous snakes and insects, is classified into the four ranks (*sifen* 四分) of the Buddha in the same manner as a good one is. On the basis of this notion of Guanding, Renyue assesses Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" as orthodox. Renyue argues that Zhili's formulation "dung beetles of Ultimate Identity" relies on Guanding's statement, "snakes and insects (*fuchai* 蝮蠱) of the full rank (*manfen* 滿分)". However, it should be underlined that when Zhili himself advocated the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles", he did not refer to the *Da boniepan jing shu* at all. Yet, after defecting from Zhili, Renyue revised his own opinion and started to criticize Zhili's account in the same way as Xianrun did.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Renyue accused Zhili of misusing Guanding. In other words, Guanding's theory of the four ranks of the Buddha was positioned as evidence in criticizing Zhili.

The above summarizes the gist of the reactions to Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" as evinced by his contemporaries. His account has been poorly received until the Southern Song period.

## 5. Defence and Development of Zhili's Account

This section analyses the later assessment of Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" in the Southern Song period, during which the account experienced a revival. As for the Northern Song period, Nanping Fanzhen 南屏梵臻 (?-1103), one of Zhili's pupils, has composed the so called Stanzas of the Six Identities (*liuji song* 六即頌) and seems an useful example to expose the state of doctrinal debate during this time. Fanzhen's original text containing the stanzas is no longer extant, but the *Zhuan caolu* 竹庵草錄 by Zhuan Keguan 竹庵可觀 (1092-1182) records them as follows:

跋<sub>一</sub>六即頌<sub>一</sub>  
 仏許<sub>一</sub>六即辨<sub>一</sub> 蛄蟻何不<sub>レ</sub>通 知<sub>レ</sub>一不<sub>レ</sub>知<sub>レ</sub>二 失<sub>レ</sub>西還失<sub>レ</sub>東  
 三千若果成 一切皆常樂 蛄蟻不<sub>レ</sub>究竟<sub>一</sub> 諸仏斷<sub>一</sub>性惡<sub>一</sub> <sup>21</sup>

(translation)

[I] cite the "Stanzas of the Six Identities";

[1] The Buddha allows the Six Identities; why can dung beetles not be included in the Six

<sup>20</sup> *Yixue zhibian* 義學雜編, in Beifeng Zongyin's 北峰宗印 (1148-1213) *Beifeng jiaoyi* 北峰教義, *Xucangjing*, 101, p.472a.

<sup>21</sup> *Xucangjing*, 101, p.396b.



Identities? [He] knows One but does not know Two; he loses West and East.

[2] If all three thousand things realize Buddhahood; all beings are always contented. If dung beetles could not attain the Ultimate Identity; all Buddhas would come to eliminate the nature of evil [as an undesired result].

Fanzhen's stanzas praising Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" allows for dung beetles attaining Ultimate Identity. According to Keguan's commentary, few monks who knew these stanzas,<sup>22</sup> and consequently his contemporaries did not pay attention to them. Furthermore, Keguan points out that the term "dung beetles" in Zhili's *Guan wuliangshoufo jing shu miaozongchao* was drawn from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* translated by Huiyan.<sup>23</sup> This remark reveals that Keguan's opinion - which resembles Renyue's original standpoint before his defection - also presupposes a relation between Zhili's account and Guanding's theory of the four ranks of the Buddha advocated in the *Da boniepan jing shu*.<sup>24</sup>

Also Baiting Shanyue 柏庭善月 (1149-1241) of the Southern Song assessed the Stanzas of Six Identities positively, and defends Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" as follows:

或曰、南屏二頌發明此旨。其說如何。曰、此捩門庭規矩之論。盡可。其如遮情・絕想。則未敢聞命。或又曰、近代有言曰、如來終日与・蛞蝓同、蛞蝓終日与・如來異。其說可否。曰、是正坐分別中。若論此旨不分同異可也。然、則事異・理同、如何。曰、事異・理同、正不分同異。若然、今究竟蛞蝓理同耶、事異耶。曰、苟得向意不勞此問也。雖然、其如文。何文曰理性十界。而又曰、約豎論即何也。曰、是各捩一端爾。合而言之方盡其旨。或者又曰、究竟蛞蝓、既聞命矣。滿分蝮蠱義、復云何。曰、彼之滿分既約權行、是如來普現色身也。此之蛞蝓既論究竟、即仏界之性惡也。然、性惡本也。普現色身迹也。本迹雖殊、其理同也。故曰諸仏若斷性惡普現色身從何而立。蓋、其理甚明、因論蛞蝓。故寄或者之間於此。<sup>25</sup>

(translation of underlined passages)

[1] Someone says, "Fanzhen's two stanzas reveal the gist [of Zhili's account of the 'Six Identities and Dung Beetles.']" How should this position be understood?

Answer: These stanzas are based on the normative theory of the [Tiantai] school. This is [a]

<sup>22</sup> *Zhuan caolu, Xucangjing*, 101, pp.396b-397a.

<sup>23</sup> *Zhuan caolu, Xucangjing*, 101, p.396b.

<sup>24</sup> See f.n.19.

<sup>25</sup> *Shanjia xuyuji* 山家緒余集, *Xucangjing*, 101, p.522a.

completely correct [position. ...].

[2] Again someone says, "I have already heard about the dung beetles of the Ultimate Identity. How should snakes and insects of the full rank [as described in the *Da boniepan jing shu*] be understood?"

Answer: The full rank is a thought drawn from the viewpoint of expedient means; which means that various physical bodies emanate from the Buddha throughout (*puxian seshen* 普現色身). Hence, [Zhili's opinion of] dung beetles that attain the Ultimate Identity means the nature of evil in the realm of Buddha. Moreover, the nature of evil is the origin (*ben* 本). The Buddha's various physical bodies are the manifestations (*ji* 迹). The origin and the manifestations are indeed different, but they are the same in terms of the Principle. Therefore, [Zhanran] says "when the Buddha entirely removes the nature of evil, the Buddha will be unable to manifest his various bodies throughout."<sup>26</sup> [I] deem [that Zhili established] the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" by relying on such clear principles.

Shanyue has a high opinion of Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles". In the second question of this quote, he explains the relationship between Zhili's account and Guanding's theory. According to Shanyue, if the account that dung beetles can attain the Ultimate Identity is true, snakes and insects of the full rank are expedient means, and are the manifestations (*ji* 迹) of the Buddha. Shanyue then asserts that even if Zhili's account was given relying on Guanding's theory, there is a consistency between Zhili and Guanding or Tiantai orthodoxy, because "the origin (*ben* 本) and the manifestations are indeed different, but they are the same in terms of the Principle". This implies that Shanyue refuted Renyue's criticism of Zhili, by coopting its basic premise.

The influence of Zhili's account also extended to Yuan dynasty Tiantai works such as Yugang Mengrun's 玉岡蒙潤 (1275-1342) *Tiantai sijiaoyi jizhu* 天台四教儀集註. In Japan, Mengrun's account of Tiantai doctrine was used widely as an introductory text to Japanese Tendai teachings from the Tokugawa period onward. Mengrun quotes from Zhili's *Guan wuliangshoufo jing shu miaozongchao* to the effect that "the six names of identities mean the non-duality of Concrete Forms and Principle".<sup>27</sup>

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Zhili's account of the "Six Identities and Dung Beetles" is a doctrinal exegesis according to which dung beetles can attain the Ultimate Identity. Zhili's intention for establishing the Six Identities originally was to protect practitioners from conceit and fear. Zhili, on the other hand, established the account of

<sup>26</sup> *Zhiguan yili* 止觀義例, T46.450c. "四、仏本不<sub>レ</sub>断<sub>二</sub>性惡法<sub>一</sub>。故。性惡若断、普現色身從<sub>レ</sub>何而立。"

<sup>27</sup> *Bukkyō taikai: Sijiaoyi jizhu*, 2, pp.523-524. See also above, f.n.15.

the “Six Identities and Dung Beetles” on the basis of the notion that each of the Ten Realms contains the other nine in order to demonstrate that “the six names of identities mean the non-duality of Concrete Forms and Principle.” It should be mentioned that Zhili’s account might have exacerbated the danger of practitioners falling into false conceits.

His contemporaries criticized Zhili’s account harshly. It is not possible to judge whether during the Northern Song period Zhili’s account received an impartially hearing even in his own Shanjia lineage. In the Southern Song, however, some positive reactions such as the “Stanzas of the Six Identities” composed by one of Zhili’s disciples, Fanzhen, emerged. Moreover, another Southern Song Tiantai scholar monk, Shanyue, demonstrated the identification of the origin and the manifestations by means of Zhili’s account and Guanding’s theory of the four ranks of the Buddha. That is to say, Shanyue even appropriated Renyue’s criticism to support Zhili’s account.

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