

# Redefining the “Dharma Characteristics School” in East Asian Yogācāra Buddhism

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EAST ASIAN Yogācāra Buddhism is traditionally divided into two groups, the “Old” and the “New” Yogācāra tradition. The Old Yogācāra refers to the Dilun 地論 and the Shelun 攝論 schools, that is, the Yogācāra system developed before the renowned Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) imported a new corpus of Yogācāra literature from India. The New Yogācāra typically refers to the Faxiang 法相 school (also known as the “Dharma Characteristics School”), that is, the Yogācāra school that emerged on the basis of Xuanzang’s translations of the new literature. These two groups have been considered doctrinally antagonistic systems, particularly with regards to the issue of living beings’ capability for enlightenment. The general scholarly consensus is that the Old Yogācāra system, especially the Shelun school, takes the position that all living beings universally have the capability for enlightenment, on the basis of the doctrine of innate “Buddha Nature” (Ch. *foxing* 佛性), or *tathāgatagarbha*. By contrast, the New Yogācāra system maintains that living beings have different levels of spiritual ability and argues for the doctrine of “five distinct [spiritual] lineages” (Ch. *wuzhongxing* 五種性; Skt. *pañcagotra*).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These two traditions are often considered by scholars as tracing back to Indian Yogācāra origins, viz., the lineage of Sthiramati (ca. sixth century CE) and Paramārtha (499–569) for the Old school, and the lineage of Dharmapāla (ca. sixth century CE) and Śīlabhadra (529–645) for the New school. Ui Hakuju, for instance, says that Xuanzang

The “Dharma Characteristics School” of the New Yogācāra tradition has been widely used in Buddhist scholarship to refer to the school associated with the “New Yogācāra” doctrinal system. Thus, it has been generally used for all East Asian Yogācāra schools that putatively developed on the basis of Xuanzang’s translations, thereby encompassing the Chinese Faxiang, Korean Pōpsang, and Japanese Hossō schools.<sup>2</sup> This broad definition of the “Dharma Characteristics School” often leads to an assumption of a consistent similarity or commonality, if not an identical correspondence, in the Yogācāra tradition of East Asia. However, this ambiguous umbrella categorization of East Asian Yogācāra Buddhism after Xuanzang under the singular rubric of the “Dharma Characteristics School” turns out to have historical and doctrinal problems. This paper analyzes the problems associated with the notion of the “Dharma Characteristics School” and its implications in the East Asian Yogācāra tradition. I will first identify what the problematic issues are, and then move on to examine how, or in what way, these problems emerged in East Asian Buddhist history. Finally I discuss the significance of this issue in the broader perspective of the East Asian Yogācāra tradition.

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succeeded to Dignāga (ca. 480–540), Asvabhāva (n.d.), and Dharmapāla’s strand, and Paramārtha to Sthiramati’s; see Ui 1947, vol. 1, p. 305. Although this genealogical connection has gained sympathy among scholars, some scholars also suggest evidence against this connection. For instance, Takemura Makio indicates that there is research to show that Sthiramati is younger than Paramārtha and that the Chinese translation of Asvabhāva’s works, which serves as the evidence for his genealogical connection with Xuanzang, does not accord in many aspects with the equivalent Tibetan translations; see Takemura 1982, p. 270.

The antagonistic bifurcation of the Old and New Yogācāra has also been associated with the doctrinal dichotomy of “One Vehicle” (Ch. *yisheng* 一乘; Skt. *ekayāna*) and “Three Vehicles” (Ch. *sansheng* 三乘; Skt. *triyāna*). It is often thought that the Old Yogācāra takes the One Vehicle position, whereas the New Yogācāra advocates the Three Vehicles doctrine. In fact, the contrast between the One Vehicle and Three Vehicles appeared as a historical controversy during the seventh through eighth centuries between the Old Yogācāra thinkers who advocated universal Buddha Nature and those who defended the New Yogācāra position of discriminative Buddha Nature in sentient beings; for instance, there was a dispute between Lingrun 靈潤 (fl. 650) and Shentai 神泰 (fl. 645–657) at some time between 648 and 650, and another between Fabao 法寶 (ca. 627–705) and Huizhao 慧沼 (648–714) around the beginning of eighth century. See Yoshimura 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The different names of the schools are the vernacular readings of the same Chinese characters 法相.

*Problems of Identifying the New Yogācāra Buddhism as the Dharma Characteristics School*

Xuanzang returned to China in 645 from his pilgrimage to India and began to translate the new Buddhist literature with the support of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649). Xuanzang's return marked a turning point in the medieval Yogācāra tradition. The translation of the newly imported Yogācāra texts not only disclosed deficiencies in the Old Yogācāra doctrines,<sup>3</sup> but also contained innovative theories such as the "distinction of five spiritual lineages" (Ch. *wuxing gebie* 五性各別), which sharply contrasted to the Old Yogācāra doctrine that "all beings become [buddhas]" (Ch. *yi qie jie cheng* 一切皆成). The doctrinal conflict between the previous mainstream Buddhist position and the perspective of the newly imported literature led to controversies between exegetes of each group.<sup>4</sup> Modern scholars have regarded this polemic situation during the early Tang 唐 period (618–907) as evidence of the bifurcation between the Old and the New Yogācāra.

Against the backdrop of these doctrinal conflicts between the Old and the New Yogācāra exegetes, the Faxiang school has been considered to represent the whole New Yogācāra group. Ji 基 (632–682),<sup>5</sup> one of Xuanzang's major disciples, systemized the newly introduced Yogācāra teachings in such commentarial works to the new literature as the *Cheng weishilun shuji* 成唯識論述記, the *Weishi ershi lun shuji* 唯識二十論述記, and the *Dasheng fayuan yilin chang* 大乘法苑義林章, and he was later identified as the first patriarch of the Faxiang school. Xuanzang's new Yogācāra teaching, along with Ji's works, rapidly spread into Korea and Japan, and there the new teaching became identified with the Faxiang school. In Korean Buddhist scholarship, the Silla Yogācāra monk Taehyōn 大賢 (ca. eighth century) is typically regarded as the founder of the Pōpsang chong 法相宗, or the Silla "Dharma Characteristics school," under the presumption that the Faxiang school constitutes the representative of the New Yogācāra.<sup>6</sup> In the Japanese Buddhist

<sup>3</sup> Tullyun 遁倫 (alt. Toryun 道倫; n.d.), a Silla Yogācāra monk, indicates in the *Yugaron gi* 瑜伽論記 that the canonical basis that the Old Yogācāra exegetes consulted for the doctrine of "the ninth consciousness" (Skt. *amalavijñāna*; lit. "Immaculate Consciousness"), one of the significant doctrines of the Old Yogācāra tradition, turned out not to exist in Xuanzang's new translations (see *Yugaron gi*, T no. 1828, 42: 318a11–19). See Yoshimura 2002, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> See n. 1 above.

<sup>5</sup> In light of the problems regarding the traditional name "Kuiji" 窺基, I use the name "Ji" in this article. For discussions of these problems, see Weinstein 1959, pp. 129–36; Fukaura 1954, p. 256, n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> For detailed information about Taehyōn's career and works, see Ch'ae 1983.

tradition, three Faxiang exegetes, namely, Ji, Huizhao 慧沼 (648–714), and Zhizhou 智周 (668–723), are known as the three successive generations of the “orthodox” Faxiang school after Xuanzang.<sup>7</sup>

Some scholars, however, raise questions about the “orthodoxy” of Ji’s Yogācāra position, by challenging, for instance, the previous assumption that Xuanzang passed on the essential Yogācāra teaching only to Ji through the translation of the *Chengweishi lun* 成唯識論.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the Yogācāra scholastic line of Wōnch’ūk 圓測 (613–696), another major disciple of Xuanzang, came to be recognized as a proper line of the New Yogācāra.<sup>9</sup> Previously Wōnch’ūk’s Ximing 西明 school was seen as a “heterodox” faction in contrast to Ji’s “orthodox” Cien 慈恩 school on the basis of the record in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (The Song Dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks), composed by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), but it now appears that this record on Wōnch’ūk was a baseless fabrication.<sup>10</sup>

Some scholars highlight the distinction between Xuanzang’s and Ji’s doctrinal positions. For instance, Mitsukawa points out that while Xuanzang translated the *Dasheng zhangzhen lun* 大乘掌珍論 of Madhyamaka exegete Bhāvaviveka (a.k.a., Qingbian 清辨/清辯; ca. 500–570), Ji harshly criticizes Bhāvaviveka in his commentaries on the *Chengweishi lun*, such

<sup>7</sup> In this respect, the exegetical interpretations of these three patriarchs are defined as the “judgement of the three patriarchs” (Jp. *sanso no jōhan* 三祖の定判). See Fukaura 1954, pp. 246–57.

<sup>8</sup> It is recorded that Xuanzang translated the *Chengweishi lun*, the major canonical reference of the Faxiang school, working only with Ji (see *Cheng weishi lun zhangzhong shuyao* 成唯識論掌中樞要; T no. 1831, 43: 608b29–c14), and based on this record Ji is usually considered to have received the essential teaching from Xuanzang as his major disciple. However, Hayashi presents several pieces of evidence that disclose that Ji’s relationship with Xuanzang was not as special as scholars usually have presumed. See Hayashi 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Yoshimura argues that Wōnch’ūk’s position, which has been generally regarded as “heterodoxy,” in fact consistently accords with the New Yogācāra doctrine of “distinction in five spiritual lineages” and even contains initiative doctrinal elements for Ji’s views, and thus he is not a “heterodox” Yogācāra exegete, but rather one of the exegetes who succeeded Xuanzang’s Yogācāra teaching as well as Ji’s senior colleague; see Yoshimura 2004b, p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> Zanning records that Wōnch’ūk eavesdropped on Xuanzang’s lectures on the *Chengweishi lun* and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* that were exclusively intended for Ji (see *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 725c24–726a4), and thereby insinuates the “heterodoxy” of Wōnch’ūk’s scholasticism. But scholars generally agree that this record of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* is a later fabrication. In addition, Huizhao, a disciple of Ji’s, takes a very critical attitude in his *Cheng weishilun shuji* 成唯識論述記 towards the perspective of Wōnch’ūk and his disciple Tojūng 道證 (fl. 692) on the *Chengweishi lun*. For Huizhao’s view on Wōnch’ūk’s position and its problems, see Kitsukawa 1998.

as the *Cheng weishilun shuji* 成唯識論述記.<sup>11</sup> In the article on the reception of Bhāvaviveka's concept of inference (Skt. *anumāna*; Ch. *biliang* 比量) in East Asia, Moro also notes that Xuanzang does not show any evident criticism of Bhāvaviveka, whereas Ji strongly criticizes Bhāvaviveka's concept of inference as false (Skt. *anumānābhāsa*; Ch. *si biliang* 似比量).<sup>12</sup> Yūki also says that it was not until Ji's Yogācāra strand became dominant over other strands that Xuanzang was associated with Ji's strand.<sup>13</sup>

The broad categorization of the Dharma Characteristics School also contains problems in understanding the Silla monk Taehyōn's Yogācāra views. Taehyōn's extant works show that he accepted not only the Dharma Characteristics School's main tenets, but also defended other doctrinal views that do not seem to belong, or are even opposed, to the Faxiang/Pōpsang school. While Taehyōn followed the New Yogācāra school concerning the main doctrinal points, he also criticized some doctrinal points made by Ji and defended the Old Yogācāra position.<sup>14</sup> Since the New and Old schools are normally regarded as doctrinally antagonistic to each other, Taehyōn's seemingly dualistic attitude was controversial among his contemporary Buddhist exegetes.<sup>15</sup>

When considering these pieces of evidence, which point to the doctrinal diverseness of the New Yogācāra tradition, we have to question why Ji's Yogācāra position has been considered the "orthodox" teaching to succeed Xuanzang's Yogācāra views and therefore to represent the entire tradition of the New Yogācāra. In other words, given that Ji's doctrinal position does not accord with Xuanzang's, and that Xuanzang had other disciples who doctrinally disagreed with Ji, why has Ji's Yogācāra perspective been established as the most authorized teaching in the New Yogācāra tradition? This phenomenon requires more explanation. I will first discuss the origin of the term "Faxiang school," and then the process by which the Faxiang school was accepted throughout East Asia.

<sup>11</sup> See Mitsukawa 1965, p. 615.

<sup>12</sup> See Moro 2004, pp. 300–11.

<sup>13</sup> See Yūki 1956, p. 372.

<sup>14</sup> For instance, in the *Sōng yusik non hakki* 成唯識論學記 (Study notes on the *Cheng-weishi lun*), Taehyōn accepts the doctrine of "five distinct [spiritual] lineages," the major doctrine of Faxiang school, but does not accept Ji's position that criticizes Madhyamaka exegete Bhāvaviveka; see Pang 1995. In his *Pōmmang gyōng kojōkki* 梵網經古迹記, he also clearly says that all sentient beings have Buddha Nature, echoing the Old Yogācāra position of *tathāgatarbha* (see *Pōmmang gyōng kojōkki*, T no. 1815, 40: 700a7–16). See also Ch'oe 1993; Hō 2005, pp. 236–42. Yoshizu also points out that Taehyōn quotes Ji much more than Wōnch'ūk; see Yoshizu 1992, pp. 118–19.

<sup>15</sup> Ch'ae 1983, pp. 21–22.

*Origin of the “Faxiang School” and its Reception in the East Asian Buddhist Tradition*

The term “Faxiang zong” was first used by Fazang 法藏 (643–712), the eminent Huayan exegete, in his doctrinal taxonomy (Ch. *jiaopan* 教判).<sup>16</sup> In the *Shiermenlun zongshi yiji* 十二門論宗致義記, Fazang uses the term “Faxiang” when contrasting the view of Yogācāra exegete Śīlabhadra (Ch. Jiexian 戒賢; 529–645) with that of Madhyamaka exegete Jñānaprabha (Ch. Zhiguang 智光; n.d.) on the Buddha’s three-period teachings (Ch. *sanshi jiao* 三時教). Śīlabhadra attributes the third and most superior teaching to “Mahayana of Dharma Characteristics” (Ch. *faxiang dasheng* 法相大乘), while Jñānaprabha to “Mahayana of No Characteristics” (Ch. *wuxiang dasheng* 無相大乘).<sup>17</sup> Later in the *Qixin lun yiji* 起信論義記, Fazang presents a doctrinal taxonomy of the four-level teachings, which includes “Faxiang zong” on the third level.<sup>18</sup> Fazang’s disciple Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839) also used this term in juxtaposition with “Dharma Nature School” (Ch. *Faxing zong* 法性宗), with the purpose of denigrating Ji’s Yogācāra strand.<sup>19</sup> In other words, although this denominational name is widely used among modern scholars to refer to Ji’s Yogācāra line or sometimes even to the entire New Yogācāra tradition of East Asia, it was never used inside the circle of Ji’s strand.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Yoshizu 1983, p. 303.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Shiermenlun zongzhi yiji*, T no. 1826, 42: 213a11–b2.

<sup>18</sup> The four-level teachings are as follows: Teaching of (1) Attachment to Dharmas Following Their Characteristics (Ch. Suixiang fazhi zong 隨相法執宗), (2) No Characteristics of Real Emptiness (Ch. Zhenkong wuxiang zong 真空無相宗), (3) Dharma Characteristics of Consciousness-only (Ch. Weishi faxiang zong 唯識法相宗), and (4) Dependent Origination from *tathāgatagarbha* (Ch. Rulaizang yuanqi zong 如來藏緣起宗); see *Dasheng qixinlun yiji* 大乘起信論義記, T no. 1846, 44: 243b22–28. In the *Rulengqixin xuanyi* 入楞伽心玄義, Fazang also clearly mentions the designation “Teaching of Dharma Characteristics” (Ch. Faxiang zong 法相宗) as the third of level teaching in his doctrinal taxonomy of four-levels of teaching, that is, the teaching of (1) Existence of Characteristics (Ch. Youxiang zong 有相宗), (2) No Characteristics (Ch. Wuxiang zong 無相宗), (3) Dharma Characteristics (Ch. Faxiang zong), and (4) True Characteristics (Ch. Shixiang zong 實相宗); see *Rulengqixin xuanyi*, T no. 1790, 39: 426b29–c1.

<sup>19</sup> Chengguan makes a hierarchical contrast between the “Dharma Nature School” and the “Dharma Characteristics School” by interpreting them respectively as fundamental/major and subsidiary/subordinate. He says that in the Dharma Nature school, the One Vehicle corresponds to the truth, while the Three Vehicles correspond to the expedient means; in the Dharma Characteristics school, vice versa (see *Dafangguang fo huayanjing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, T no. 1735, 35: 511a8–b5).

<sup>20</sup> Yoshizu suggest that Xuanzang’s disciples called their doctrinal position “Great Vehicle” (Ch. Dasheng 大乘); for instance, Ji used this term in one of his major works, *Dasheng*

In China, it was during the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279) that a denominational name for Ji's Yogācāra school emerged. Yet this denominational name was not "Faxiang school," but "Cien school," named after Ji's epithet. For instance, the *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, a Tiantai chronicle compiled by Zongjian 宗鑑 (n.d.) in 1237, contains a list of schools including the Cien school.<sup>21</sup> The *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, an encyclopedic historical record written by Tiantai monk Zhipan 志磐 (1220–1275) in 1269, also mentions "Teaching of the Cien school" (Ch. *Cien zongjiao* 慈恩宗教), along with other schools.<sup>22</sup>

In the Korean Yogācāra school, the Yogācāra scholastic tradition had been mostly referred to as the "Yogācāra school" (K. *Yuga chong* 瑜伽宗, or *Yuga ōp* 瑜伽業), or sometimes "Chaŭn school" (K. *Chaŭn chong* 慈恩宗; Ch. *Cien zong*), until the beginning of the Koryŏ 高麗 dynasty (918–1392).<sup>23</sup> The designation Pŏpsang chong first occurs in the epitaph of Ŭich'ŏn 義天 (1055–1101), one of the major scholar-monks in Korea.<sup>24</sup> But scholars agree that this designation just refers to a doctrinal teaching, not an institutional school with a proper lineage. Moreover, it is "Chaŭn school" that is found most often in historical materials as the name for Ji's Yogācāra school from the late Koryŏ dynasty through the early Chosŏn 朝鮮 dynasty (1392–1910).<sup>25</sup>

It was in Japan that the designation Faxiang school was accepted and later established as the official denominational name for the Yogācāra school. When Fazang's Huayan school was imported to Japan at the end of the eighth century, "Faxiang zong" (Jp. Hossō shū 法相宗), the term that Fazang used in his doctrinal taxonomy to refer to Ji's Yogācāra strand, was also transmitted. At first the name "Hossō" school was used by those outside

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*fayuan yilin zhang*; see Yoshizu 1997, p. 474. Yoshimura also indicates that Xuanzang's disciples added "Dasheng" in front of their names, as in, for example, Dasheng Ji 大乘基; see Yoshimura 2004a, p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> The *Shimen zhengtong* lists five schools, that is, the Chan 禪, Xianshou 賢首 (a.k.a., Fazang), Vinaya (Ch. Lü 律), Esoteric (Ch. Mì 密), and Cien schools (see *Shimen zhengtong*, X no. 1513, 75: 255b22–c08).

<sup>22</sup> The entire twenty-ninth fascicle of the *Fozu tongji* constitutes an explanation of the five "schools," that is, the Chan school of Bodhidharma (Ch. Damo chanzong 達磨禪宗), the Xianshou school (Ch. Xianshou zongjiao 賢首宗教), the Cien school (Ch. Cien zongjiao 慈恩宗教), the Esotericism of Yogācāra (Ch. Yuqie mijiao 瑜伽密教), and the Vinaya school of the Southern mountain (Ch. Nanshan lüzong 南山律宗). Here, the first three patriarchs of the Cien school are listed as Śīlabhadra, Xuanzang, and Ji (see *Fozu tongji*, T no. 2035, 49: 294a29–b02).

<sup>23</sup> See Kim 1997, pp. 412–15; Hō 1986, pp. 209–15.

<sup>24</sup> Kim 1997, pp. 398–404.

<sup>25</sup> For detailed explanation, see Hō 1986, pp. 209–23.

the school to refer to the Yogācāra school, but gradually was adopted by the school members themselves.<sup>26</sup> Afterwards, this designation became the official name for the Yogācāra school in Japan, and modern Japanese scholars also have come to widely use it for Ji's Yogācāra strand in China and, sometimes, in Korea as well. Furthermore, as mentioned above, since Ji's Yogācāra line has been considered the "orthodox" Yogācāra school to succeed Xuanzang in the Japanese tradition, the name Faxiang school often signified the New Yogācāra Buddhism derived from Xuanzang's translation of the new texts in general. It seems that in this process the Japanese concept of the Hossō school has become established in modern scholarship as the name to indicate the entire tradition of New Yogācāra Buddhism. It appears then that the pervasive use of "Dharma Characteristics School" among modern scholars has resulted from an improper retrospective application of this idea of the Hossō school. In other words, a specific concept for the Japanese Yogācāra school, which was grounded upon Fazang's perspective on Ji's Yogācāra strand, was expanded to cover all New Yogācāra strands throughout East Asia.

The reason that the Faxiang school cannot be identified with the whole tradition of New Yogācāra is not just confined to the fact that the geographical area in which this term was in use did not cover all of East Asia. In terms of its scholastic position, the Hossō school refers specifically to Ji's Yogācāra school, as we can see from the fact that this term was transmitted to Japan through Fazang's Huayan system. When accepting the concept of a "Hossō shū" through Fazang's doctrines, Japanese Buddhist thinkers also accepted Fazang's viewpoint on Yogācāra doctrines, that is, the view that the Yogācāra system is doctrinally antagonistic to the Madhyamaka.

<sup>26</sup> In his article on the school name "Hossō," Yoshizu divides the evolution of the name into five stages, that is, the period when: (1) Yuishiki shū 唯識衆 and Shōron shū 攝論衆 were used (around 747); (2) Hosshō shū was used (around 752); (3) Hossō daijō 法相大乘 was used (around 776); (4) Hossō shū was used by those outside of the school (around 798); and (5) Hossō shū was also used by the school members (around 830). Particularly, Yoshizu says, when the term "Hossō daijō" appears, the school equivalent to the Sanron 三論 school appears in the name of "Musō daijō shū" 無相大乘宗; these two contrasting school names appear exactly as such in Fazang's *Shiermenlun zongzhi yiji*, representing Fazang's recognition of the contemporary conflict between the Madhyamaka and the Yogācāra schools, and thus we can see that the term "Hossō school" originated from Fazang's usage of it; see Yoshizu 1997, pp. 468–76. Yoshizu's explanation is also supported by Inoue's study that indicates that the first appearance of the school name of "Kegon shū" 華嚴宗 is around 751 (see Inoue 1961, pp. 12–14). This implies that the terms "Hossō shū" or "Hossō daijō" had not appeared until the Kegon school was transmitted.



This view may be better explained in the broader context of the contemporaneous conflicts between the Madhyamaka and the New Yogācāra, now known as the "Emptiness-Existence (Ch. *kongyou* 空有) controversy." As Xuanzang translated the new canonical texts brought from India, such a work as the *Dasheng zhangzhen lun*, a translation of Madhyamaka exegete Bhāvaviveka's *Mahāyāna-hastaratna-śāstra*, led to a controversy regarding the doctrinal differences between Madhyamaka and New Yogācāra,<sup>27</sup> and Fazang was well aware of this conflict.<sup>28</sup>

The polemics that emerged between the Sanron 三論 and the Hossō schools from the Nara 奈良 period (710–794)<sup>29</sup> through the Heian 平安 period (794–1185) also confirm that the position of the Hossō school conforms to Fazang's view of the Yogācāra school. Revolving around the issue of the Indic authenticity of the so-called *Śūramgama-sūtra* (hereafter, *Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經),<sup>30</sup> which contains a verse<sup>31</sup> very similar to Bhāvaviveka's famous verse in the *Dasheng zhangzhen lun*,<sup>32</sup> Sanron exegetes who defended Bhāvaviveka's position argued that the scripture was authentic, while Hossō exegetes who criticized Bhāvaviveka dismissed

<sup>27</sup> For instance, Ji criticizes Bhāvaviveka's position as "wrongly attached emptiness" (Ch. *equ kong* 惡取空) in the *Chengweishilun shuji* (see T no. 1830, 43: 494b24–26).

<sup>28</sup> In the *Shiermenlun zongzhi yiji*, Fazang makes a contrast between the Madhyamaka and the Yogācāra, referring to them respectively as "Mahayana of No Characteristics" (Ch. Wuxiang Dasheng 無相大乘) and "Mahayana of Dharma Characteristics" (Ch. Faxiang Dasheng 法相大乘); see n. 17, 19 above. Fazang's *Qixinlun yiji* is also well known for his interpretation of the *Dasheng qixin lun* as a synthetic work that mediates the conflict between the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra systems through the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching.

<sup>29</sup> Matsumoto demonstrates that the controversy between the Sanron and Hossō schools began during the early Nara period, not during the Heian period as previously presumed (see Matsumoto 1990), thereby disclosing that the controversy between the schools arose almost at the same time Fazang's Huayan teaching was transmitted, that is, around 751 (see n. 26 above). This in turn raises the possibility that the Hossō school reflects Fazang's understanding of the Faxiang school.

<sup>30</sup> The full title of the scripture is *Da foding rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhupusa wanxing shoulengyan jing* 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 (Jp. *Dai butchō nyorai mitsu-in shushō ryōgi shobosatsu mangyō shuryōgon kyō*).

<sup>31</sup> The passage reads as follows: "In their true nature, the conditioned [dharmas] are empty. / Since they originate dependently, they are like an illusion. / The unconditioned [dharmas] neither arise nor vanish. / They are unreal, like flowers in the sky." (眞性有為空 緣生故如幻 無為無起滅 不實如空花; *Shoulengyan jing*, T no. 945, 19: 124c12–13).

<sup>32</sup> Bhāvaviveka's verse reads as follows: "In their true nature the conditioned [dharmas] are empty, / since they originate dependently like an illusion. / The unconditioned [dharmas] are devoid of any reality. / They do not arise, like flowers in the sky." (眞性有為空 如幻緣生故 無為無有實 不起以空華; *Dasheng zhangzhen lun*, T no. 1578, 30: 268b21–22).

it as an apocryphal text.<sup>33</sup> This conflict between the Sanron and the Hossō schools, the Japanese counterparts of the Madhyamaka and the Yogācāra schools, exactly parallels the Emptiness-Existence controversy in China. We can thus see that the Hossō school is the Japanese equivalent of Ji's Yogācāra strand. Along with the problems in regarding Ji's Yogācāra school as the only representative school of the New Yogācāra tradition, as discussed above, this leads us to conclude that the Hossō school, merely as an equivalent of Ji's school, cannot be representative of the New Yogācāra.

### *Gyōnen's Role in Establishing the "Faxiang School" and its Problems*

With regards to the matter of the establishment of the Hossō school in Japan, one might say that the Hossō teachings had arrived in Japan before Fazang's Huayan system was imported. This interpretation would be based on the record of the *Sangoku buppō denzū engi* 三國佛法傳通緣起 (Circumstances of the Transmission of Buddhism through the Three Countries), a historiography of Buddhism dated 1311, by the Kegon 華嚴 monk Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1321). In this work, Gyōnen describes the fourfold transmission of the Hossō school, which has been widely accepted in the Japanese Buddhist tradition. According to this story, the first transmission of Hossō teaching occurred in the seventh century by Dōshō 道昭 (629–700), who had learned it from Xuanzang; the second transmission was conducted by two monks named Chitsū 智通 (fl. 658–672) and Chidatsu 智達 (fl. 658), who studied under both Xuanzang and Ji; the third by Chihō 智鳳 (fl. 706), Chiran 智鸞 (n.d.), and Chiyū 智雄 (n.d.), who studied under Zhizhou; and, the fourth by Genbō 玄昉 (fl. 746), who also learned it from Zhizhou.<sup>34</sup> The pervasive view in the Japanese Buddhist tradition that Ji, Huizhao, and Zhizhou are the three "orthodox" Faxiang patriarchs who succeeded to Xuanzang's Yogācāra teachings, appears to be based on this fourfold transmission story.<sup>35</sup> Gyōnen's description afterwards was received as the standard explanation on the transmission of the Hossō school in Japanese Buddhism.

<sup>33</sup> For detailed information on the disputes between the Sanron and Hossō schools on this issue, see Hirai 1979; Matsumoto 1990.

<sup>34</sup> BZ, vol. 62, pp. 14a–b.

<sup>35</sup> Although these three exegetes are regarded as the three successive Faxiang patriarchs in the Japanese Buddhist tradition, there is no record, as Hasegawa indicates, regarding the "three patriarchs" in Chinese materials. Hasegawa suggests that this theory of three patriarchs probably originated from Gyōnen's four-fold transmission story. Hasegawa also notes that there is no available record to identify Huizhao as the second, and Zhizhou as the third, patriarch; see Hasegawa 2002, p. 666. For the problem of the Faxiang lineage, see also Moro 1999.

However, researchers have highlighted many problems with this transmission story. At first, Gyōnen himself provides different explanations in his other works, such as the *Hasshū kōyō* 八宗綱要 and the *Tōdaiji gusho* 東大寺具書, by changing the order of the transmissions or deleting a transmission from the list.<sup>36</sup> Particularly in the first transmission by Dōshō, scholars indicate that Ji's works that served as the doctrinal basis for the Faxiang school, such as the *Cheng weishilun shuji*, the *Chengweishilun zhangzhong shuyao*, and the *Weishi ershi lun shuji*, had not even appeared yet during the time when Dōshō resided in China.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, it has been noted that before the appearance of the term "Hossō shū," "Hosshō shū" (Dharma Nature School) was used to refer to the Yogācāra teaching in Japan.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it may be expected that what Dōshō learned from Xuanzang was not Ji's Faxiang doctrine, and, in this respect, some scholars suggest that Silla Yogācāra Buddhism was involved in the process of the transmission.<sup>39</sup> From the perspective of the bifurcation of East Asian Yogācāra, according to which the "Dharma Nature School" is doctrinally opposed to the "Dharma Characteristics School," the transition of the school name from the former to the latter may sound odd.<sup>40</sup> Although we do not have all the answers to the questions surrounding this issue for now, what is

<sup>36</sup> In the *Hasshū kōyō*, Gyōnen attributes Chitsū and Chidatsu to the first transmission, Chihō to the second, and Genbō to the third, deleting Dōshō's transmission. But in the *Tōdaiji gusho*, Chitsū and Chidatsu are described as conducting the first transmission, and Dōshō the second, with no mention of Genbō (Sueki 1992, p. 127). See also Kitsukawa 2002, pp. 182–83.

<sup>37</sup> Dōshō resided in China from 653 through 661. The *Cheng weishilun shuji* and the *Chengweishilun zhangzhong shuyao* were composed sometime between 659 and Ji's death in 682, and the *Weishi ershi lun shuji* between 661 and 682. Further, the *Weishi ershi lun shuji* is cited in the *Cheng weishilun shuji*, and the *Yibuzong lun lun shuji* 異部宗輪論述記, which was composed after 662, is cited in the *Zhangzhong shuyao*. See Sueki 1992, p. 128; Kitsukawa 2002, pp. 183–84. Also, there is a study that shows the *Cheng weishilun shuji* and the *Zhangzhong shuyao* were consistently revised by Ji throughout his life; see Hayashi 2012, pp. 193–96, 199–201.

<sup>38</sup> Quite a few scholars point this out. See, for instance Fujino 1957; Shikazono 1957; Ienaga 1966; Yoshizu 1997.

<sup>39</sup> Shikazono suggests that there is a connection between the Hōsshō shū and the Yogācāra scholastic line of Silla exegetes, such as Wōnch'ūk and Tojūng; see Shikazono 1957, pp. 82–88. See also Sueki 1992, pp. 129–32; Kitsukawa 2002.

<sup>40</sup> In relation to this issue, Shikazono indicates that although Gyōnen defines the Hōsshō shū as referring to such schools as the Kegon or the Tendai 天台 schools in opposition to the Hossō school, or as referring to the Sanron school later, in ways that accord to the bifurcated model of the Dharma Nature vs. Dharma Characteristics school, the older Shōsōin 正倉院 materials clearly describe the Hōsshō shū as one of the eight schools of Nara, along with the Sanron shū and the Kegon shū; see Shikazono 1957, pp. 76–77.

certain to us at this point is that Yogācāra teaching prior to the import of the designation “Hossō shū” was not identical to what is now known to us as the “Hossō school.”

Now, the question arises: if more than one Yogācāra school was transmitted to Japan, why did Gyōnen attempt to explain the transmissions of the Yogācāra teachings only within the frame of the Hossō school? The fact that Gyōnen himself was not consistent in describing the transmission story in his works suggests that he did not have definite information on the transmissions, if he did not intentionally manipulate the story about them. Nevertheless, Gyōnen construed the transmission of Yogācāra teachings as that of the Hossō school. Why then did Gyōnen explain the Yogācāra transmission to Japan within the frame of the Hossō school?

An answer to this question may be found in Gyōnen’s historical worldview, namely, “transmission across the three countries” (Jp. *sangoku denzū* 三國傳通; viz., the transmission of Buddhism from India to China and to Japan). In Gyōnen’s time, the “three countries” structure in the transmission of Buddhism served as a conceptual basis to provide Japanese Buddhism with pride and authority by linking it directly to Indian and Chinese origins.<sup>41</sup> This historical view first appeared in the ninth century to elevate Japanese people’s confidence in their Buddhist tradition. Later on, in the thirteenth century this notion became settled in Japanese Buddhist literature as an established historical paradigm.<sup>42</sup> It was during this time that Gyōnen compiled the *Sangoku buppō denzū engi*, the widely accepted reference for the “three countries” model thereafter. In his already entrenched historical outlook, which is centered on the three countries, Gyōnen conceivably could not find any room for other countries’ histories of Buddhism to be included in his historical narrative.

Besides the “three countries” paradigm, Gyōnen followed another framework in his historical discourse, that is, employing the term “sect,” or “school” (Jp. *shū* 宗). The scheme of the “eight schools” (Jp. *hasshū* 八宗), which is seen in the title of the *Hasshū kōyō* (Outline of the Eight Schools), one of Gyōnen’s major works dated to 1286, had been already established under official recognition in the early Heian period.<sup>43</sup> At this time, however, tensions still remained between the “six schools of Nara” (Jp. *nanto rokushū* 南都六宗), the previous religious authorities, and the newly approved Tendai

<sup>41</sup> For a detailed discussion on the development of the “transmission across the three countries” paradigm, see Blum 2002, pp. 87–93.

<sup>42</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> For the formation of the “Eight Schools” system in Japan, see Yoshida 2003, pp. 18–19.

天台 and Shingon 眞言 schools.<sup>44</sup> It was in Gyōnen's time of relative political and social stability that the eight schools were received as established religious orders. But the eight schools were then challenged by such new schools as the Zen 禪 and Jōdo 淨土 schools. In this milieu, Gyōnen, as a Buddhist historian who originally belonged to the six schools of Nara, was probably tasked with confirming the legitimacy of the eight established schools, that is, the six schools of Nara as well as the Tendai and Shingon schools, by providing a definite historical description of their origins and lineages. In other words, Gyōnen sought to find the authoritative origin of each school within the well-established "three countries" paradigm in order to legitimize the already set "schools." Thus, Gyōnen recognized only the eight "meaningful" schools in his historical structure, while dismissing any other schools or strands.<sup>45</sup> This also explains Gyōnen's silence on any form of Yogācāra school transmitted to Japan prior to the Hossō school or the Silla Yogācāra school. In summary, Gyōnen constructed his historical narrations within the ready-made notions of "transmission across the three countries" and "schools," and therefore simply disregarded historical facts outside these categories.

If the Hossō school that Gyōnen attempted to establish through the four-fold transmission was the Faxiang school, which was imported together with Fazang's Huayan system, and if Gyōnen's establishment of the Hossō school was based on the confined worldview of the "three countries" and his own sectarian consciousness, then it becomes obvious that the concept of

<sup>44</sup> One example of this tension may be found in the *Sangoku dentō ki* 三國傳燈記 (Record on Transmission across the Three Countries) composed by Hossō monk Kakuken 覺憲 (1131–1213) at the end of the Heian period (1173). Just like Gyōnen, Kakuken also employed the frame of the "three countries," but scholars point to the difference in the usage of this paradigm between them. Whereas Gyōnen used it to reestablish the sectarian orders of the time in a relatively stable environment, Kakuken adopted it to elevate his own school's political and social status in the urgent situation of sectarian crisis due to the rise of the new schools such as the Tendai school. For more discussion of Kakuken's view on the "three countries," along with its political and social background, see Ichikawa 1994.

<sup>45</sup> Gyōnen not only disregarded the schools that did not fit into his historical model of "transmission across the three countries" and "schools," but also created schools that in fact did not exist at least in the sense that Gyōnen meant. He presents a list of thirteen Chinese schools (i.e., the Pitan 毗曇, Chengshi 成實, Lü, Sanlun 三論, Niepan 涅槃, Dilun, Jingtū 淨土, Chan, Shelun, Tiantai 天台, Huayan 華嚴, Faxiang, and Zhenyan 眞言 schools) in the same sense as he used for the eight schools in the *Sangoku buppō denzū engi*. But scholars generally agree that such schools as Pitan, Chengshi, Niepan, Dilun, and Shelun were just scholastic strands or exegetical groups, not independent sectarian institutions as Gyōnen meant. For more discussion on the sects/schools in Chinese Buddhism, see Weinstein 1987, pp. 482–84.

the Hossō school cannot represent the entire tradition of the New Yogācāra Buddhism. Gyōnen's fourfold transmission story has led scholars to associate the Faxiang school not only with Ji's exegetic line but also with Xuanzang's scholastic position. However, Xuanzang in fact appears to have been unwittingly placed into Ji's line due to the emphasis given in the Japanese Buddhist tradition to Ji's Faxiang strand as the "orthodox" teaching. It should be noted that in this process of identifying Ji's line with Xuanzang's scholastic position, two independent facts have been conflated: the fact that the predominant Yogācāra school based on Xuanzang's new translations was Ji's Faxiang school, and the fact that New Yogācāra Buddhism refers to all the Buddhist teachings based on Xuanzang's new translations. Even though Ji's Faxiang school emerged on the basis of Xuanzang's new translations, this fact does not mean that Xuanzang, in turn, belonged to Ji's Faxiang lineage; neither can Ji's Faxiang school be identified with the entirety of the New Yogācāra Buddhism that was derived from Xuanzang's translations. Although Gyōnen attempted to establish a consistent identity for the Japanese Hossō school in the scheme of the three countries by including not only Ji's but also Xuanzang's line in the transmission story, it appears that the Faxiang/Hossō school should be confined just to Ji's lineage.

Furthermore, it is difficult to apply the concept of "schools," the basic frame in Gyōnen's historical narration, to the Buddhist tradition of the early Tang period, in which a school as an independent institutional religious community had not yet emerged. As previous studies demonstrate, it was not until the latter half of the eighth century that sectarian consciousness appeared in Chinese Buddhism.<sup>46</sup> For instance, it was Chengguan, Fazang's disciple, who first recognized the Huayan school as an independent school with sectarian identity<sup>47</sup> and used the designation "Huayan school" (Ch. Huayan zong 華嚴宗). Chengguan's disciple, Zongmi 宗密 (780–841), also presented an orthodox list of successive Huayan patriarchs and thereby established the lineage of the Huayan school.<sup>48</sup> Zhanran 湛然 (711–782), a contemporary of Chengguan later identified as the sixth (or ninth) patriarch of the Tiantai school, first used the designation "Tiantai school" (Ch. Tiantai zong 天台宗) in the *Fahua dayi* 法華大意,<sup>49</sup> attempting to prove his school's superiority over the rival Chan tradition. However, even in this period the

<sup>46</sup> See Weinstein 1987, pp. 485–87. See also Hirai 1966, pp. 112–13.

<sup>47</sup> See Kamata 1965, p. 51.

<sup>48</sup> See Weinstein 1987, p. 485.

<sup>49</sup> See Hirai 1966, p. 113.

independent schools in the sense of "school" proper do not seem to have been fully established because Enchin 圓珍 (814–891), a Japanese Tendai monk who traveled to China from 853 through 858, stated that there were no schools in the Tang dynasty at that period.<sup>50</sup> Judging from all these facts, it seems very unlikely that the Faxiang school existed as an independent school during the early Tang period.

Despite all the historical and doctrinal discrepancies, Gyōnen's historical perspective, along with the frameworks of the "three countries" and the "eight schools," significantly influenced later Buddhist historians and scholars even until modern times. His outlook has been received as the standard model in interpreting this process not only for Japanese Buddhist history but also for the whole Buddhist tradition of East Asia. The above discussion on the defective aspects of Gyōnen's historical view and its subsequent influence may be summarized as follows: (1) Gyōnen attempted to explain Japanese Yogācāra Buddhism only within the category of the Hossō school, while disregarding other Yogācāra strands transmitted to Japan, such as the Hōsshō school. (2) On the basis of the historical framework of "transmission across the three countries," Gyōnen ignored the history of other countries in his narration, such as the role of the Silla Yogācāra school, in the process of the formation of Japanese Yogācāra Buddhism. (3) Gyōnen connected the Japanese Hossō school to the Chinese Yogācāra tradition through the scheme of four-fold transmission, and this entailed the careless assumption that a school named "Faxiang school" existed in China. (4) In relation to (3), Gyōnen included Xuanzang in his four-fold transmission story of the Hossō school, and as a result, Xuanzang has been mistakenly regarded as having provided the doctrinal basis of the "Faxiang school," although he has no direct relation to the "Faxiang school" or Ji's Yogācāra line. (5) As a result of (4), the "Faxiang school" has been interpreted as the "orthodox" Yogācāra strand that succeeded Xuanzang, and, consequently the entire New Yogācāra tradition of East Asia, which is based on Xuanzang's new translations, tends to be interpreted under the frame of the "Faxiang school." In short, the concept of the "Faxiang school" may be seen as one of the mistaken retrospective Japanese Buddhist concepts that has influenced modern scholarship on Buddhism.

<sup>50</sup> In the *Bussetsu kan fugen bosatsu gyōhō kyō ki* 佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經記, attributed to Enchin, we find: "In the Tang, there are no schools, and [they] eliminate the discussion of unwholesome attachments" (唐無諸宗絕惡執論; T no. 2194, 56: 247a1–2).

*A Broader Implication of the Issue of the “Faxiang School”*

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned that East Asian Yogācāra Buddhism is divided into two doctrinally antagonistic systems, that is, the Old, and the New, Yogācāra traditions, and that the New Yogācāra group typically refers to the Faxiang school. If we may conclude that the Faxiang school, or Ji’s Yogācāra strand, is not the only strand that constitutes the New Yogācāra tradition on the basis of the discussion above, the antagonistic paradigm of the Old and the New Yogācāra, or Tathāgatagarbha and Yogācāra, should also be reconsidered. This is because this contrasting bifurcation builds upon the presumption that the entirety of the New Yogācāra is represented by Ji’s “Faxiang school,” which took an antagonistic position vis-à-vis the *tathāgatagarbha* theory of the Old Yogācāra. This suggests that the contrasting framework of the Old Yogācāra vs. the New Yogācāra is associated with the careless application of Ji’s “Faxiang school” to the entire New Yogācāra tradition. The traditional bifurcation of Tathāgatagarbha and Yogācāra in this respect should be confined to a doctrinal contrast between the Tathāgatagarbha position of the Old Yogācāra and Ji’s Yogācāra perspective. If we consider other New Yogācāra scholastic traditions, such as the Yogācāra schools of Wōnch’ūk or Taehyōn in Silla, or the Hosshō strand in Nara, which were excluded from Gyōnen’s historical worldview of the Hossō school, we will be able to find more doctrinal aspects of the New Yogācāra Buddhism than have thus far been known to us.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- BZ *Dainihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書. 100 vols. Ed. Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan 鈴木學術財団. Tokyo: Kōdansha. 1970–73.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. 85 vols. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai. 1924–32.
- X *Shinsan dainihon zoku zōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經. 150 vols. Ed. Kawamura Kōshō 河村孝照. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai. 1975–89.



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*Chengweishi lun zhangzhong shuyao* 成唯識論掌中樞要. T no. 1831, 43.  
*Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏. T no. 1735, 35.  
*Dasheng qixin lun yiji* 大乘起信論義記. T no. 1846, 44.  
*Dasheng zhangzhen lun* 大乘掌珍論. T no. 1578, 30.  
*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. T no. 2035, 49.  
*Pōmmanggyōng kojōkki* 梵網經古迹記. T no. 1815, 40.  
*Ru lengqie xin xuanyi* 入楞伽心玄義. T no. 1790, 39.  
*Sangoku buppō denzū engi* 三國佛法傳通緣起. In BZ, vol. 62, pp. 7–22.  
*Shiermen lun zongshi yiji* 十二門論宗致義記. T no. 1826, 42.  
*Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. X no. 1513, 75.  
*Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經. T no. 945, 19.  
*Song gaosengzhuan* 宋高僧傳. T no. 2061, 50.  
*Yugaron ki* 瑜伽論記. T no. 1828, 42.

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