

Death Narratives in the *Zutang Ji*: A Study of Buddhist Patriarchs of East Asia

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ABSTRACT:

As a continuation of “Death Narratives in the *Zutang ji*: A Study of the Buddha and the Buddhist Patriarchs of India,” this study focuses on 173 records relating to 103 prominent figures of East Asian Buddhism compiled in the *Zutang ji*, beginning with Bodhidharma. This paper examines how the early exponents of Chinese Chan trained themselves to face death, as well as their views about death and how they spoke of it. A detailed analysis is conducted on death narratives (Chan masters’ characterizations of death, records of their funerals, reactions to death and teachings on death), the significance of death narratives (views and attitudes toward death) and the style of death narratives (diction and the sequence of ideas). This paper also explores the ways in which the Chan School regards, portrays and discusses death, as well as its teachings on transcending death. Finally, this article discusses the significance of the death narratives of the Chan School and its novel views of death by examining the way in which it superimposes representations of enlightenment and death.

Keywords: Chan (Zen), *Zutang ji* (*Anthology from the Patriarchs’ Hall*), death narratives, patriarchs of Chan Buddhism

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