The Sectarian Characteristics of Rinzai-Zen Songgu Poetry in the Song Dynasty*

Benta Hou
Jinan University
Guangzhou, China

Abstract—The number of Rinzai-Zen Songgu poems in the Song Dynasty is very large, which also shows remarkable sectarian characteristics. On the one hand, Rinzai-Zen Masters are good at using metaphors, and most of their ancestor metaphors, self-nature metaphors and illustration metaphors in the Songgu poetry are special metaphors belonging to Rinzai-Zen. On the other hand, the methods that regarding depreciation as praise, being uninhibited and violent style features and the use of predecessors' overbearing verses are all direct presentation of the inarguable and lively spiritual appearance of Rinzai-Zen.

Keywords—Rinzai-Zen; Songgu poetry; metaphor system; regarding depreciation as praise; uninhibited and violent style features

I. INTRODUCTION

The so-called "Songgu" (颂古) is actually an appreciation or commentary of the Zen case. It has the function of revealing the Buddhist principles and guiding the Buddhists to be consciousness. Because most of "Songgu" use the verse rhymes, they are regarded as part of the Zen poetry. The earliest use of the word "Songgu" was the Rinzai-Zen Master in the Northern Song Dynasty named Fenyang Shanzhao (汾阳善昭). He systematically created a hundred "Songgu", and said: "One hundred of the ancestors Zen cases are transcribed and spread to the world. The Zen cases, which are difficult or easy to understand, has become clear and easy to grasp through the "Songgu" poetry of Fenyang. Empty flower grows empty fruit, no before or after. It is necessary to extensively inform the Bodhisattvas to come together to understand the meaning of Zen" [1] 6). Shanzhao's purpose in creating "Songgu" is to "understand the meaning of Zen", that is, to recognize and realize the first meaning of the Zen, and the standard of creating "Songgu" is "Jiaoran" (成就, meaning: "the pure"), which means to let the buddhists understand the meaning of the case more clearly. From this point of view, gorgeous rhetoric is not the main focus of the "Songgu" written by Shanzhao. Bu Xu Guo Seng Zhaan (布衣国师禅) also said that, "Shanzhao's every word is a natural expression of self-centered nature, and the gorgeous rhetoric are not taken as a necessity." [2] Even so, the Songgu poetry of Shanzhao also caused extensive study of the Zen Master in the Song Dynasty. They have successively created the "one hundred Songgu", including Yunmen Zen Master Xuedou Chongxian (雪窦重显), Caodong Zen Master Tianzong Zhengjiu (天童正觉), and Rinzai-Zen Master Xutang Zhiyu (虚堂智愚) and so on. The creation of the Zen Master of the Rinzai-Zen was always the main force of the Songgu poetry in the Song Dynasty. According to my statistics, there are more than 5,000 Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry in the Song Dynasty with more than 300 authors; there were seven authors who had more than 100 Songgu works, including Shanzhao (善昭), Shouduan (守端), Huigun (慧勤), Keqin (克勤), Shigui (示珪), Zongguo (宗果) and Zhiyu (智愚). These Songgu poetry have different styles of appearance because they are created by different authors, but they also show more prominent characteristics of Rinzai-Zen on the whole. Wu Yansheng's Study on the Songgu Poetry of Rinzai-Zen although was based on the Rinza sect, but it only involved the Songgu poetry of Shan Zhao, Congyue (从悦), Kezhen (可真) and others, [3] 9-10 and has nothing about the overall style and characteristics of Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry. This paper chooses the perspective of the Zen sects, analyzes the metaphor techniques, comment methods and main styles of the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry, so as to observe the sectarian characteristics of the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry in the Song Dynasty.

II. SELF-NATURE AND ANCESTOR: THE METAPHOR SYSTEM OF RINZAI-ZEN SONGGU POETRY

As a kind of poetry, the biggest difference between Songgu poetry and ordinary poetry is the inevitable connection with Zen case. It can be said that, Songgu poetry is the poetic commentary of the Zen case. The purpose of the Zen case is to lead the Buddhists to realize the innocence of Nirvana, thus revealing the Zen thought of self-cleanness and non-existence, which requires the Songgu poetry must also have the characteristics of indicating the meaning of Zen. As a result, the words used in the Songgu poetry is often not a simple literal meaning, but shows a distinctive directivity features, which is similar to the "Sutra metaphor" in the rhetoric level. The metaphorical techniques in the Sutra have the characteristics of breaking the inertial way of thinking, and often enable people to gain a deeper understanding of the Buddhist principles in a refreshing way. The metaphors in the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry also have a more prominent performance in this aspect, and form a
unique metaphor system, thus showing distinct sectarian characteristics of the Rinzai-Zen.

First part is the ancestor metaphor. Rinzai Yi Xuan (臨濟義玄), lived in Nanhua, Caizhou, the founder of Rinzai-Zen. He once took charge of the Zhenzhou Rinzai Temple and other places, and proposed "San Xuan San Yao" (三玄三要). "Si He" (四合), "Si Bin Zhu" (四宾主), "Si Liao Jian" (四料拣) and other means of introduction and inscription. These means are called "Rinzai Menting" (臨濟門庭) and it has been widely used by the Rinzai-Zen Master later after Yi Xuan. For this reason, Zen master often treat Yi Xuan as the "Bainianzai" (白拈自性). This kind of saying was first promoted by Xuefeng Yicun (雪峰義存). Jing De Chuan Deng Lu (景德傳灯录) is the Chinese translation.

"Bainianzai" refers to the thief who steals with bare hands and without any trace. Here, it is said that Yi Xuan can freely pick up the Buddhists and break their ignorance. This metaphor has been widely used by the Rinzai-Zen Master. For example, the 11th Rinzai-Zen Master Yunyan Yin (正法眼) once put forward the "Wuwei Zhenren" and "Wuyi Zhengxin" to describe the respectivity heart of ANan, which is the most difficult part to defend. The second one was made for the case of the "The poor Caoshan family was robbed" (曹山家贫遭劫). The record of Xu Gu Zun Yu Lu (续古尊语录) is more detailed: "Q: 'How does the poor family be robbed?' Master said: 'The thief can't steal everything.' Q: 'Why?' Master said: 'The thief is domestic relatives.' Q: 'Since he is domestic relatives, why does he turn into a domestic thief?' Master said: 'He can't get enough at home nor can he make a fortune in the society.' Q: 'What happened when people suddenly catch him?' Master said: 'The information was cut off between inside and outside.' Q: 'Whose merit it is for catching the thief?' Master said: 'The merit was never heard.' Q: 'How it comes when he caught the thief without any merit?' Master said: 'It doesn't mean that the man has no merit, but means that he doesn't accept that merit.' Q: 'Why doesn't he accept merit?' Master said: 'As the saying goes, peace and tranquility are caused by the general, but the general can't be allowed to live to see that peace.' [8] 897 II. Actually, Dao Yan inherited the statement of Zen Master Caoshan Benji (曹山本寂), who advocated that the "domestic thieves" is the heart, the "domestic relatives" is the self-nature, and the so-called "He can't get enough at home nor can he make a fortune in the society" is the insight of Zen's "the heart is the self-nature". In the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry, there are some self-nature metaphors with distinct sectarian characteristics of Rinzai-Zen, but there are also many self-nature metaphors has absorbed other Zen faction's vocabularies.

The last part is the illustration metaphor. From the perspective of the translation between Sanskrit and Chinese, Ding Min divides the "metaphor" in the Chinese translation...
Buddhist sutra into three parts: the rhetoric metaphor, the illustration metaphor and the Apothek. [9] 10 If the above-mentioned self-nature metaphor and ancestor metaphor are close to the rhetoric metaphor, there are many illustration metaphors in the Songgu poetry for the Zen cases. This form of metaphor often appears in the answer to "how is the Buddha" (如何是佛) and "how is the meaning of Bodhidharma come to China" (如何是祖师西来意), which has been widely used in the Songgu poetry, such as the Zen case "Shoushan New Bride" (首山新妇): "Q: How is the Buddha?" Master said: "The new bride rides a donkey and her mother-in-law leads ahead." [10] 127 The absurdity of the question itself can be illustrated by the example of the mother-in-law leading a donkey for her daughter-in-law, which implies that the first meaning of the Zen Buddhism is inexpressible, and it is just fit the so-called metaphor principle "Since direct notification is difficult to understand, thus borrowing something normality or not to manifested." [11] 326 Most of the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry also adopted this meaning. For example, Zen Master Haiyin Chaoxin (海印超信) said that "The new bride rides a donkey and her mother-in-law leads ahead, the Old Wang drives an iron ship and sailing in the air. Hanging sail at the bottom of the well, the wind is urgent and the waves almost rushed to the summit of Mount Sumeru." [5] 424 The four unreasonable examples are used to illustrate the meaning of the case. In addition, there are many innovative metaphors in Rinzai-Zen, such as "three-legged donkey" (三脚驴子) and "octagonal grinding disc" (八角磨盘), and most of them have the effect of transforming the abstract into concrete, making it easier for people to understand.

III. REGARDING DEPRECIATION AS PRAISE: THE CREATIVE MEANS OF RINZAI-ZEN SONGGU POETRY

Although the Zen Master of the Song Dynasty wrote a lot of text works, the fundamental position of "Buliwenz" (不立文字, meaning: the followers of Rinzai-Zen rely on the tacit agreement and understanding between the Master and themselves to achieve enlightenment, instead of solely relying on the Sutra) has never changed. This has brought new demands to the creation of Songgu poetry, that is, to break the sanctity and inviolability of the Zen cases when they are creating the comments. Zen Master Wumen Huikai (无门慧开) often starts with negative perspective, and use the Rinzai-Zen’s "Hefo Mazu" (呵佛骂祖) means into the Songgu poetry, which can be regarded as the representative of the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry. Specifically, the creative techniques of Huikai's Songgu poetry mainly have the following two aspects.

Firstly, Huikai often introduce Zen cases with a sentence that express the opposite meaning. The Cha Zong Wu Men Guan (禅宗无门关) written by Huikai is a collection of Zen cases, Prose commentary and Songgu poetry. In the prose commentary section, he often used critical words to express praise. For example, the 19th Zen case titled "normal heart is the way" (平常是道), Huikai's commentary said: "When Nanquan Zen Master was asked by Zhaozhou Zen Master, there was no way to explain clearly. Even though Zhaozhou Zen Master was enlightened at that time, he needed to practice meditation for another 30 years." [12] 94 Huikai believes that, on the one hand, Nanquan has lost all his means when asked by Zhaozhou, on the other hand, although Zhaozhou achieved sudden enlightenment, he still has to study 30 years more to get full understanding. As can be seen, Huikai is dissatisfied with both of them. However, the Songgu poetry he created later is really praise to "normal heart is the way" which put forward by Nanquan Zen Master: "There are flowers in spring, moon in autumn, cool breeze in summer and snow in winter. If there is nothing to worry about, it's a good season in the world." Another example is the 21st case titled "Yunmen Shijue" (云门直指), Huikai's commentary said: "The Zen Master Yunmen Wenyuan (云门文偃) is too poor to afford even a vegetarian diet, and he is also too busy to write a word. It is easily for him to use the "Ganshijue" to inspire the Buddhist, thus the rise and fall of the Dharma is obvious." [12] 101 Although Huikai said that Zen Master Wenyuan used dry shit to inspire the Buddhist, showing the decline of Dharma. However, the Songgu poetry later is praise towards the application of "Ganshijue", as the saying goes that "The light of fulmination, the fire from hit stone, blink of an eye, missed instantly." Another example is the 40th case titled "Tidao Jingping" (提倒净瓶), Huikai comments that: "Master Weishan kicked the pure bottle with temporary courage, but he still could not jump out of the Zen Master Baizhang's dominion. By careful analysis, the Zen Master Lingyou actually avoided the trivial and dwelt on the important. What is the reason? He took off the headscarf with no weight and took up a heavy iron lock." [12] 106 Although Huikai said that Zen Master Weishan Lingyou (沩山灵佑) was a brave person just for a moment, and he couldn't jump out of the trap of Baizhang Huaihai (百丈怀海). But the Songgu poetry followed said: "The difficulties set by Baizhang could not stop him, and various Buddhas were kicked out by the feet of Weishan." It's still a complete praise. It can be seen that, Huikai seems to have dissatisfaction with all the past eminent monks through the comment perspective. Only by combining Songgu poetry and prose commentary, can people better understand Huikai's creative means of "compliment after criticism".

Secondly, the negative form of "Songgu". In order to give full play to its role in helping people enlightenment, Huikai has adopted many measures to write Songgu poetry. Such as the targeted question commentary in the 31st case titled "Zhaozhou Kanpo" (赵州勘婆), and the three and a half sentences Songgu poetry in the 20th case titled "Da Li Liang Ren" (大力量人), but the negative form of Songgu should be paid more attention. Look at the 2nd case named "Bai Zhang Ye Hu" (百丈野狐), it tells a story about an old man who has been a wild fox for 500-years because of he once said the words "Bu Luo Yin Guo" (不落因果), and suddenly got rid of the fox body because of Baizhang Huaihai's words "Bu Mei Yin Guo" (不昧因果). Huikai's Songgu Poetry said: "Bu Luo Bu Mei, Liang Cai Yi Sai; Bu Mei Bu Luo, Qian Cuo Wan Cuo." (不落不昧，两头不是；不昧不落，千错万错) [12] 24 What he means is that don't think "Bu Luo Yin Guo" will fall into "cause and effect", saying that "Bu Mei Yin Guo" can be separated from "cause and effect". In fact, there is no fundamental difference between "Bu Luo Yin Guo" and "Bu Mei Yin Guo". If you are obsessed with it, you will make
The above-mentioned practices of Wumen Huikai Zen Master can be explained from his Zen thinking. He once said that, "Secret Preaching in Lingshan (灵山密付), Yellow Leaves Make Children Stop Crying (黄叶止啼), Personally Teach in the Shaoshi Mountain (少室亲传), Imagined Plum Quenches Thirst (灵山密付), and even Tokuyama Stick (德山杖), Rinzahei He (临济喝), Xuefeng Roller Ball (雪峰铁球), Daowu Brandish Scepter (道吾棒喝), Mimo Hold Up Fork (弥摩举叉), Songgu really treats the Zen case as a means of inspiring Buddhists. Huikai uses the Songgu poetry to explain his own views for the Zen cases, at the same time makes the Zen cases alive.

The first one is the Zen case named "Broken Sand Basin" (破砂盆) about Master Mi'an Xianjie. The following two Zen cases as well as their Songgu poems that have a detailed record of this: "One day, the Ying'an Tanhua (延平楚江) Zen Master asked: 'How is the Dhamma eye?" The Mi'an Zen Master said: 'Broken sand basin.' Ying'an Master nodded and commanded the Mi'an Master to follow him, thus gaining the support of everyone. When the Mi'an Master returned township to visit his parents, Ying'an Master sent him with the Buddhist hymn: The full understanding speculative sentence, just like the sun shines overhead. Interact with each other for four years, every moment interrogate each other has been satisfied. Although not yet given the alms bowl to you, your bearing can throughout the universe. You called the Dhamma eye a broken sand basin. Visit family this time, do not slack off and regress. I have the most thorough sentence, and will tell you to follow when you come back'. After Mi'an Master came back from Fujian, Ying'an Master recommended him to talk about Dharma independently, and said that: 'A stick can hit a scar, and a slap can hit a piece of blood. Rinzahei Xiyuan is a blind donkey, until today still can not see anything. There has big waves on the top of Mountain Sumeru; there is no drop of water in the ocean. What a stalwart person, the third eye above his head which can distinguish between dragon and snake in the Baicao Tou (百草头), and grab the tiger effortlessly. Fierce people's nostrils, broken off Monk's tongue, although it is still not touching the meaning of Zen. So what is the meaning of Zen?" please ask Mi'an Zen Master.'

In terms of style, Mi'an Xianjie answered the Dhamma eye with a "Broken Sand Basin" is very similar to "Yunmen Ganshi jiu" (云门干屎橛) and "Dongshan Masanjin" (洞山麻三斤). All of them are swift and indisputable. Master Tanhua (延平楚江) affirmed the style and enlightenment of Mi'an, and said that it is like the sun shining above the head and everything is clear and easy to understand, and Tanhua also praised him as a natural color man (本色人). Based on the keynote set by Tan Hua Master,
the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poetry about this Zen case also showed vigorous style. For example, Xutang Zhiyu said: "Say what broken sand basin; it overturns the sea and mountains, and making the sky dim. The Dingmenyan (顶门 野) is really blind, misleading the people who learn Buddha in later generations." [15] 202 It is also a negative Songgu poetry. Literally, he said that Xianjie's "Broken Sand Basin" only reinforces the troubles, and misleading the people who learn Buddha in later generations. But the implied meaning is that the "Broken Sand Basin" is worthy learning for future generations. The words "Xian Fan Hai Yue" (掀翻海岳) and "Ding Men Zhen Xia" (顶门真峡) are all show a violent and rough style. It should also be noted, "misleading Buddhist in later generations" (后累九孙) is a commonly negative praise method used by the Rinzai-Zen, which has been used in the Songgu poetry by the Zen Masters such as Yue’an Shanggu (月庵善果), Dawei Hongzhi (大沩洪智), and Tianmu Wenli (天目文礼) and so on.

The second one is the Zen case named "Da Li Liang Ren" (大力量人) about Master Songyuan Chongyue (松源崇悦). According to the record of Nan Song Yuan Ming Chan Lin Song Bao Zhaun, "Chongyue Zen Master values random interviews. Whenever he meets a guest, he asks: 'Why can't Da Li Liang Ren lift the feet up?' Whenever he meets the Zen Buddhist, he asks: 'For those people who have realized the Saddhamma, why didn't they break the red thread wrapped around their feet?' Someone answered his question: he just smiled and watched him. At that time, everyone said that Chongyue Zen Master got the ontology of Ying’an Zen Master and the action means of Mi’an Zen Master."[14] 229 People hold different views towards the interpretation of this case. One view is that "Da Li Liang Ren" refers to those who have not broken self-obsession, and thus can't get rid of troubles. This view is obviously wrong. According to Ku Ya Man Lu (枯崖漫录): "When Chongyue Zen Master wants to pass the Baiyun Shouduan’s vestments to the successor, he leaves three questions: the conversation has nothing to do with the tongue; why can't the Da Li Liang Ren lift the feet up? Why didn't the Da Li Liang Ren break the red thread wrapped around his feet?" [16] 202 According to this, "Da Li Liang Ren" and the "Ming Yan Na Seng" (明眼衲僧) have the same meaning, which refers to people who are clear-minded. This argument can also find two evidences. Yingan Tanhua said: "Those who have worked hard to learn Zen, work hard towards the nature selves, and keep learning until the epiphany, why can't they be called Da Li Liang Ren?" [17] 854 ii Hanshan Deqing (寒山德清) said: "As for the Da Li Liang Ren, they can immediately understand their self-nature and always be in the real place." [18] 202 ii There is another point of view that the meaning of the Chongyue's question is that people who gain great power through refined practice still don't want to stand up to end the meditation. This statement is also not exact. Among the Chinese expression, the word "Buqi" (不起) placed after the verb means that the power is not enough. Therefore, the meaning of the Chongyue's question is not that he doesn't want to stand up, but he can't lift his feet. In fact, the most powerful people can't lift his own feet up which is a common sense of life. This can also be seen in the comment of Xutang Zhiyu (虚堂 智愚): "A monk asked: 'Why can't a Da Li Liang Ren lift the feet up?' Master said: 'Lions bite person, Han Lu chases soil blocks.'" [15] 201 Throwing the soil blocks to the Han Lu and the loin, Han Lu tried to catch the blocks in vain while the loin went straight to kill the peeson. Master Zhiyu answered the scholar's question with Han Lu and the loin's nature instincts which implies that it is one's natural to be unable to lift his own feet up. It can be seen that Chongyue's question forced the Buddhists to the edge of the cliff, thus no matter what Buddhists do will be wrong. Most of the Rinzai-Zen Songgu poems associated with the case "Da Li Liang Ren" are created from the perspective of "Da Li Liang Ren". Wumen Huikai said: When the 'Da Li Liang Ren' lifts his feet, then he can turn over the Perfume Sea, he even needs to bow his head to see the Four Zen heavens. But his entire body has no place to depend on, please continue with the last sentence." [12] 98 Xutang Zhiyu said: "You need to know that it is difficult to lift the feet up, and excellent horses don't need to be whipped. It can jump over the Thirty-six Caves in a leap, and mortals can become gods at that time." [15] 202 The former poetry claimed that the "Da Li Liang Ren" could turn over the Perfume Sea surrounding the Mountain Sumeru by a step, while the latter poetry claimed that the "Da Li Liang Ren" could cross the Thirty-six Caves in a leap, which all shows his great power. Same as the crude words, the bold image in the Songgu Poetry is also a direct manifestation of the strong and powerful Rinzai-Zen style.

V. CONCLUSION

As part of Chinese classical poetry, the research on the Zen Songgu poetry is still inadequate. On the one hand, the artistic level of the Songgu poetry is uneven, which is an important reason for the less attention. On the other hand, Songgu poetry needs to be read with the corresponding Zen case, which makes the true connotation more difficult to understand. Due to the above two reasons, current research on the Zen Songgu poetry of Song Dynasty is mainly concentrated on the case analysis of Xuedou Chongxian (雪窦 重显), Dahui Zonggao (大慧宗杲) and Fenyang Shanzhao (汾阳 善昭). The study on the characteristics of Songgu poetry is also mostly concentrated in the general features such as the combination of elegance and vulgarity, as well as the combination of rhyme and dispersion. Therefore, starting from the perspective of Zen sects to analyze the sectarian characteristics of Songgu poetry is undoubtedly one of the important ways to promote the research of Zen Songgu poetry.

REFERENCES


