

The Chan School as Seen through the Tang Knowledgebase

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At the Institute for Research in Humanities, work has begun recently on a project that aims at constructing a “Knowledgebase of Tang Civilization.” This project is intended to develop a comprehensive database of all information relevant for the study of the Tang. While this project is still in the very early stages of its development, it seems important to think of how it could be used to look for answers to complex research questions.

Due to the different perspectives and objectives of official historiography (on which currently the content of the Knowledgebase is based) and Chan-Buddhist chronicles, there is little common ground to a casual observer. On the other hand, the events these sources purport to report on, did take place in a common cultural setting, so there must be some kind of overlap.

The question this presentation tries to clarify is, whether the Knowledgebase can be used to make up for this kind of discrepancy and what specific requirements would be needed to find more of a common ground. It goes without saying that at this moment there can be no definite answer; but rather, some experiments might show the direction to proceed in.