contributions to Song intellectual life. The perseverance of these influences into the Ming and Qing (like my colleague Jiang Wu’s work on Buddhism in the Ming) need to be explored and exposed as well. In general, my main methodological point is that we need to read “beneath” our sources and not trust them as presenting objective information. We have now long been exposed to the fallacies of objectivism and we must look to our “trusted” sources like the dynastic histories for their inherent perspectival biases to find their true value. This brings us to basic questions to inform our research: who wrote/compiled what, and why, rather than focusing just on what they say. This, of course, applies to all other sources as well (not just Confucian), but it just so happens that the dominant narrative on the meaning of the Tang-Song transition is largely a Confucian informed one and needs to be unravelled. Uncovering and exposing author/compiler motive puts narratives on a different track and creates new understandings of how the narrative process informs our work and hopefully, creates new and more accurate renditions of the past.

Billy: What lead you to select the prolific 10th-century cleric Yongming Yanshou (永明延壽, 904-975), a figure recognized as a “patrician” in both Chan and Huayan traditions, as the focus for your third book? Albert: A prolific writer and leading cleric in the pre-Buddhist kingdom of Wu (呉, 907-936), Yanshou is a major figure in Chinese Buddhist history. Because of his eunuchical stance, wide-ranging interests, and multifaceted thought, in later East Asian Buddhism it is easy to speak not of one but of many Yanshou-s. In addition to Yanshou the Chan master, there is Yanshou the Pure Land patriarch, as well as legitimate discussion regarding Yanshou’s Lotus Sutra influence and to the social and intellectual transformations occurring within Chinese culture and society during the transition from the Tang (618-907) to the Song Dynasties (960-1279), it is easy to speak out of one but of many Yanshou-s. In addition to Yanshou the Chan master, there is Yanshou the Pure Land patriarch, as well as legitimate discussion regarding Yanshou’s Lotus Sutra devotionism, his influence on Tiantai, his Huayan thought, his contributions to Yogacara theory and so on. Given Yanshou’s pan-Buddhist influences, it is natural to regard him in terms of a multifaceted identity.

What is Yanshou’s editorial agenda in compiling the encyclopedic Zongjing lu or Records of the Source-Mirror in one-hundred fascicles? What is criteria for inclusion in his encyclopedic work?

Billy: What do you mean by “orthodoxy”?
Albert: As with other orthodoxies, Chan/Zen formulae function as fundamental statements of principles, devised on the basis of political and social contingencies. What distinguishes orthodoxies, then, is not the assumption of a correct doctrine deemed as universally valid, a seemingly ubiquitous characteristic of ideologically-based belief systems, but the protocols that shape them and give them their unique formulation.

Chan and Zen are more about what one does, a series of cultural habits that define them, rather than what one believes. Chan places more emphasis on knowing how in terms of how to practice, rather than knowing that in terms of knowing that certain doctrinal prepositions are true. I do not dispute the value of emphasizing orthopraxis over orthodoxy and its applications to the East Asian and other religious contexts for calling attention to religious practitioners’ unconscious and unarticulated religious activities, but I do not see this as an excuse for ignoring the very powerful role exerted by orthodoxies in East Asia, including the Chan and Zen traditions. Controversies over orthodoxy in Chan, for example, rarely concerned internal issues of monoistic training or spiritual cultivation. The focus was on the public, political role of Chan in society, on debates about how to secure prestige, patronage, and privileges (as witnessed in work of Morten Schlüter).

Rather than assume Japanese Rinzaï Zen interpretations as normative, as has frequently been the case in modern discussions of Zen in the West, I explore alternative models of orthodoxy in the Chan/Zen tradition, attempting to shed light on how questions relating to orthodoxy are decided and what criteria are used to determine orthodox principles and practices. Rather that posit a single orthodoxy, which is the aim of orthodoxy itself, multiple orthodoxies exist in Chan/Zen tradition, rooted in the sociopolitical and religio-spiritual concerns of contending groups and historical circumstances.