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ABSTRACTS

ONE NAME, THREE MONKS: TWO EIGHTH-CENTURY NORTHERN CHAN MASTERS EMERGE FROM THE SHADOW OF THEIR CONTEMPORARY, THE Tiantai MASTER ZHANRAN (711-782)

Jinhua Chen

This article aims to clarify confusion about the identity of a Northern Chan leader who bore the same dharma-name as the Tiantai patriarch Zhanran (711-788) and has been wrongly identified with him. I begin with an inquiry into a series of Chan campaigns launched between 746 and 773 to augment the prestige of the obscure Third Chan Patriarch Sengcan (d. before 604). This inquiry shows that the monk called Zhanran who first participated and then led these drives was in fact a Northern Chan master, distinct from the Tiantai master of the same dharma name. I then discuss a Chan controversy allegedly involving a Dharma-master Zhanran. After identifying this Chan controversy with the famous 796 Chan council reported by Zongmi (780-841), I link the Northern Chan master Zhanran struggling for imperial recognition of Sengcan with the Dharma-master Zhanran who took part in this national Chan council as a, if not the, representative of Northern Chan. Seeing that the two are in all likelihood the same man, I have re-constructed the biography of this Northern Chan leader as follows:

Sometime between 746 and 762 this monk moved, from an unknown location, to the Shangusi at Wangongshan in Shuzhou (present-day Anhui Province). No later than 762, he had been made the Administrator (duweina) of the temple and acted as a care-taker of the pagoda erected at Wangongshan for Sengcan. He stayed at the Shangusi and became its supreme leader by the early 770s, when he initiated a new campaign promoting the prestige of Sengcan. Supported by three of his fellow-monks and two powerful local officials, this campaign succeeded in securing from the imperial court a formal title for Sengcan and a name for his Wangongshan stupa. His reputation as a Northern Chan leader grew significantly following this successful Chan campaign, so that in the 796 national Chan Controversy he took the role of defending the Northern Chan tradition. For political and/or religious reasons, he was defeated and was expelled from the debate with his followers. He died days later.

In addition to re-discovering this remarkable Northern Chan leader, in this article I collect and study epitaphic and literary sources that establish the existence of a third Zhanran, who, though contemporary with the Tiantai Zhanran and the Northern Chan master Zhanran, cannot be identified with either of them. He was, very likely, also a Northern Chan adherent and, interestingly, a bitter critic of Tiantai. He was celebrated in his time mainly for his talent in calligraphy. It is noteworthy that he was affiliated with prestigious Luoyang temples such as the Xiangshansi in Longmen and the Da Fuxiansi temple, the latter of which was the family temple of Empress Wu. His ties to the Da Fuxiansi were close and sustained, and eventually he became its abbot.

Thus, in the eighth century there lived three monks with the same dharma-name but very different religious affiliations. While we do not know with any certainty whether or not the Tiantai Zhanran had any personal connections with either of these two monks sharing his name, evidence shows that the other two Zhanrans knew and perhaps even befriended each other.

Further, the evidence collected in this article suggests that the activities of the Northern Chan leader Zhanran in the 770s can be taken as a significant indicator of the dynamism and influence the Northern Chan tradition showed in that period. It seems that the Northern Chan tradition continued to prosper at least until 796, when political intervention brought about the humiliating defeat of the Northern Chan tradition in a national Chan council and possibly hastened the death of one of its chief defenders.

An analysis of an epitaph written for a Southern Chan master corroborates the historical truth of an important and large-scale Chan council in 796. (Given the polemical context in which Zongmi reported this council, scholars have generally been skeptical of its authenticity.) However, the same epitaph also reveals that Zongmi's account of this Chan council cannot be accepted without reservation. While it is true that such a Chan council did take place in 796, it did not, as Zongmi claimed, result in the imperial recognition of Shenhui's (684-758) status as the seventh patriarch. This Chan council marked the victory of, in all likelihood, Southern Chan tradition represented by Mazu Daoyi (709-88), distinct from and almost certainly in competition with Shenhui's tradition.

I investigate in this article some evidence showing the importance of a nowadays almost forgotten monastery in Luoyang, the Da Fuxiansi, which used to be a center for East Asian Buddhism and in particular Northern Chan Buddhism. Finally, by nasalizing the connections the two Northern Chan masters (both named Zhanran) had maintained with the secular society, I try to shed some lights on issues like the political intervention in Buddhist inter-sectarian in-fighting, the way

the religious life of Chinese medieval literati-bureaucrats interacted with their political perspectives, and so on.

SHANDAO AND HŌNEN.
APROPOS OF JULIAN F. PAS'S BOOK
VISIONS OF SUKHĀVATĪ

Jérôme Ducor

Julian Pas's *Visions of Sukhāvātī* is to be welcomed as an important contribution to our knowledge of Shandao's life and main work. His use of original Chinese sources fills a major gap in Western studies of Chinese Buddhism. However, the book advocates an unprecedented thesis: that Shandao's interpretation of nembutsu as the oral pronunciation of Amida Buddha's name is a misunderstanding on the part of Japanese Jōdo-Shinshū scholars going back to Shinran himself. Nevertheless, this interpretation was first advanced not by Shinran but by his teacher Hōnen, who himself considered his founding of the Pure Land school (Jōdo-shū) to be the mere continuation in Japan of Shandao's original doctrine. The real question then is: was Hōnen's interpretation legitimate? The core of his reasoning is the definition by Shandao of the nembutsu as the right determining action "because it is in keeping with [Amida] Buddha's vow". But the main point discovered by Hōnen is that Shandao does not refer to the vow as it appears in the Larger Sūtra, where Amida's name is not even mentioned. Shandao's originality lies in his own rewording of the vow as "If ... beings pronounce my name (shō ga myōgō)

The weakness of Pas's argumentation is partly due to his failure to refer to the original Japanese sources, even to those written in Chinese, such as Hōnen's *Senchaku-shū*. In his rare use of Western-language sources Pas is also misled: one wonders how it is possible to mistake Yamamoto Kōshō's English translation of Hōnen's *Sansen-mon* with Shandao's definition of practices (Pas, p. 271). Still the main flaw lies in Pas's systematic misreading of Shandao's real intention: that the *Contemplations' Sūtra* is to be read in the light of the Larger Sūtra. It is noteworthy that in this fashion Shandao removed the *Contemplations' Sūtra* from the group of the so-called "meditation sūtras" – like the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra* – to include it in the group of the "birth-in-the-Pure-Land sūtras," together with the Larger Sūtra and the Amida Sūtra. Pas's misreading of Shandao's intention also explains why he (p. 242) cannot understand Shandao's interpretation of "deep mind" (*jinshin*) as "faith" (*shinjin*). Nor does he see that Shandao interprets the meditative parts of the *Contemplations' Sūtra* as mere "skilful means" (*hōben*),

provided by Śākyamuni only at the request of Vaidehī. On the contrary, Hōnen found a clear confirmation of his interpretation in the treatment by Shandao of the concluding part of the Contemplations' Sūtra where Amida's name is entrusted to Ānanda [T.37, 1753, k.4, p.278a23-26.] – one of the parts of Shandao's Commentary used by Hōnen but ignored by Pas. Also neglected by Pas are some original views of Shandao clearly emphasized by Hōnen, i.e., that the vocal nembutsu is both easy and quick and still excellent, thus allowing rebirth in the Pure Land for all ordinary beings, even the worst criminals on the verge of death.

While Pas's translations from Shandao are generally correct, some need amendments, such as the passages related to Vaidehī (p. 290-291) or to the length of practice (p. 295-296). When quoting from the sūtra passage concerning the lower rank of the lower beings to be born in the Pure Land, Pas (p. 264) refers to the Taishō edition of the Contemplations' Sūtra instead of its vulgate used by Shandao – this is not without consequences for Pas's interpretation.

INTRODUCTION TO ALEXANDER VON STAËL-HOLSTEIN'S ARTICLE
“ON A PEKING EDITION OF THE TIBETAN KANJUR WHICH SEEMS TO
BE UNKNOWN IN THE WEST”

Edited for publication by Jonathan A. Silk

In 1934 Alexander von Stael-Holstein prepared an article on a 1692 edition of the Tibetan Kanjur. That article, however, had remained unpublished until now. Here the article is presented with a few additional notes intended to clarify some of the author's references, and bring things up to date. The article discusses the history of the Peking editions of the Tibetan Kanjur, and their text-critical value.

THREE BODHISATTVAPIṬAKA FRAGMENTS FROM TABO:
OBSERVATIONS ON A WEST TIBETAN MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

Ulrich Pagel

The Tabo collection of Tibetan manuscripts is now widely recognised as constituting one of the most significant recent finds of early bKa' 'gyur materials. Palaeographic and codicologic examination of a cross-section of the material has shown that large parts of the collection date to the beginning of the second millennium AD. Hence, there is reason to believe that the Tabo corpus contains works belonging to the oldest surviving bKa' 'gyur manuscripts discovered outside Central Asia. Among the many texts found in the monastic library of Tabo, philological research has identified three distinct manuscript fragments belonging to

the Bodhisattvapiṭaka sūtra (Ratnakūṭa no. 12). These three manuscripts, measuring altogether 106 folios, contain passages found in ten different chapters of the 'modern' editions of the Bodhisattvapiṭaka and amount to approximately 48% of the total length of the text. While probably not belonging to the earliest stratum of Tabo materials, they are nevertheless of interest for their text-critical features. While in content very similar to the established versions of the *Thems spang ma* tradition, in a number of places the Tabo Bdp manuscripts show interesting variant readings. In the course of this paper I shall present an overview of these divergencies and proffer an explanation with regard to their origin. On the basis of these variant readings, I shall then proceed to position the three manuscripts in the overall stemmatic genealogy of Bodhisattvapiṭaka blockprint and manuscript versions and examine the extent to which my findings corroborate text-critical conclusions reached by colleagues working on other Tabo materials.