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THE MASTERS OF HONGZHOU IN THE TANGUT STATE

The Tangut collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies preserves two Tangut manuscripts with practically the same title — “Notes on the Basic Intentions of the Masters of the Hongzhou Lineage” [1]. One of the manuscripts, call number Tang 112, No. 2540, is somewhat more extensive than the other and bears a broader title — “Notes on the Basic Intentions of the Masters of the Hongzhou Lineage with Explanation and Commentary” [2]. It presents in effect an expanded version of Tang 111, No. 2529. As my earlier research has demonstrated, both of the texts are in fact identical. The present paper will focus on the more detailed text, which comprises a rather extensive commentary, i.e. Tang 112, No. 2540.

The dimensions of the manuscript under discussion are about 15.0 × 22.0 cm. The manuscript contains approxi-

mately 18 characters per line. The basic text is written in large characters, while the commentary is written in smaller characters. This lengthy version contains 23 butterfly pages and the smaller one only about 5 pages.

Surprisingly, the text written in large characters in Tang 112, No. 2540, which corresponds to the contents of Tang 111, No. 2529, does not constitute a single, logical exposition. This section of the “Notes” is a collection of statements and explanations, sometimes fairly lengthy, rather than the coherent text we find in Tang 111, No. 2529.

Elsewhere, the author of the present paper has made a general survey of the text of the “Notes” [3]. Here I present some additional observations on the contents of the manuscript.

Origin of the Text

It is fortunate that in both the versions the text has been preserved in full. From the colophone of the lengthier version we even learn the name and birthplace of the original commentator. According to this colophone, the commentary (註) was composed by a *śramaṇa* Fa-yong, a native of a place called *Yuanxiang* [4].

Although the colophone of the Tangut text has survived, it bears neither the date of its compilation nor a hint at the origin of the text in general. Judging from the paper, the manuscript can be dated, like other Khara Khoto findings, to the mid-twelfth century. The abridged text in Tang 111, No. 2529 has no colophone at all. The person of Fa-yong is not mentioned in any of the Chinese biographical sources known to me. However, some observations concerning the time of the compilation of the original text can be made on the basis of the text itself [5].

The “Notes on the Basic Intentions of the Masters of the Hongzhou Lineage with Explanation and Commentary” reflect, in the main, a later development of the basic ideas of classical Chan-Buddhism in the late Tang period, namely, the concepts of Ma-zu Dao-yi (馬祖道一; 709—788) and his disciples — Huangbo (黃檗; d. 850) and Baizhang (百丈; 720—814). The latter is mentioned in the text. The founder of the teaching, Ma-zu, preached mainly in the area of Hongzhou in Jiangxi, whence the title of the school: the

“Hongzhou line”. This term seems to have been invented by Guifeng Zong-mi (圭峰宗密; 780—841). It was used in the so-called “Chan Chart” by Zong-mi, which contains an analysis of various schools and teachings contemporary to the author, whose aim was to unite the rites of Chan with the doctrinal teachings [6].

Since our Tangut text mentions both Baizhang and Ma-zu and bears a title linking its author, whoever he might be, with the tradition of Zong-mi (and with Buddhism as a whole in the north-west China), it appears reasonable to date the compilation of the “Notes on the Basic Intentions” to the mid-ninth century and not earlier than 788, for the text mentions, if vaguely, the posthumous title of Ma-zu — Daji (大寂 — “The Great Tranquillity”), which Ma-zu received in that year. No other names are mentioned in either text, which would enable us to date the text to a later period. Moreover, there is some ambiguity concerning the nature of the text, which seems to deny any connections with Zong-mi’s teaching and lacks mention of his writings. Nevertheless, the connection of the texts with Zong-mi’s thought leaves little room for doubt: the “Notes” seem to share both some of the concepts characteristic of Zong-mi’s tradition and his general search for the unity of doctrinal Buddhism and Chan — i.e. for harmony between the schools and the doctrines (宗教一致).