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This book of five articles introduces new research on Ch'an and Hua-yen Buddhism by expanding upon Japanese and French research.

The first two articles describe Chinese Ch'an in Tibet.

Jeffrey Broughton, “Early Ch'an Schools in Tibet,” is a summary of research on the Ch'an from Szechwan that influenced Tibet in the 750s to 780s A.D. The Ching-chung Ch'an of the Korean monk Mu-sang (Wu-hsiang) was the first to reach Tibet. It was soon followed by the competing Ch'an of the Pao-t'ang “school” of Wu-chu. Therefore when the Northern Ch'an master Mo-ho-yen arrived in Tibet, he had to compromise with Pao-t'ang doctrine and adopt some of its pseudo-history in order to gain a hearing among the Ch'an followers he was asked to represent.

There is also some discussion of a third Ch'an lineage in Tibet, a Pure Land-style Ch'an. (For further details see Tsukamoto Zenryu, Tōchūki no Jōdokyō, Kyoto, 1976.) The article concludes with hints for further research which may reveal the contribution Ch'an made to the rDzogs-chen “school” which preserves many Ch'an works in Tibetan translation.

Translations from the Li-tai fo-pao chi and Tsung-mi's Yüanchüeh ching ta-shu ch'ao illustrate the history and doctrines of Szechwan Ch'an, and translations from Tibetan texts are used to outline the early history of Ch'an in Tibet. Luis O. Gomez, in “The Direct and the Gradual Approaches of Zen Master Mahayana: Fragments of the Teachings of Mo-ho-yen,” edits and translates the sayings and works preserved in Tibetan in scattered fragments of the Ch'an master Mo-ho-yen, who took part in a dispute between Chinese Ch'an teachers and Indian Madhyamika teachers in Tibet in the last half of the eighth century. An attempt is made to reconstruct the original texts and sort them into five genres. Not all the fragments attributed to Mo-ho-yen are included, but this is the most comprehensive work to date.

In the analysis of the texts, the author suggests that Mo-ho-yen's doctrinal position was that of an extreme non-dualist who thought practice came after enlightenment. Consequently Mo-ho-yen denied the value of means to that enlightenment, yet he still had to allow for a means for people of lesser abilities. This admission probably gave his opponents grounds for criticism.
There is a glossary of Tibetan terms and their Chinese equivalents based on a comparison of the fragments in Tibetan with the Chinese of the Tun-wu Ta-sheng cheng-li chüeh which depicts Mo-ho-yen's side of the dispute (for which it may have been profitable to consult Hasebe Koichi's edition from the Pelliot and Stein Chinese manuscripts, the "Toban Bukkyō to Zen", Aichigakuin Daigaku bungakubu kiyo no. 1). Gomez in fact suggests that terminological ambiguity was one source of misunderstanding between the Chinese and Indian parties. Recently R.A. Stein has begun work on the Tibetan translations of Chinese and Indian vocabulary ("Tibetica Antiqua", BEFEO 72, 1983) which sheds more light on the subject. For example, lun and mdo (Gomez p. 87, notes 23 and 39), or gzung and gzhun (Gomez p. 140) are interpreted slightly differently by Stein (pp. 175-6 and p. 179 respectively).

John McRae, in "The Ox-head School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," shows that the Ox-head (Niu-t'ou) "school" did not claim an independent lineage beginning from Fa-jung, a supposed pupil of Tao-hsin, the so-called fourth Ch'an patriarch, until after Shen-hui formulated the notion of a patriarchal lineage in the early eighth century. This they did to connect themselves with the increasingly popular Ch'an movement. The Ox-head even claimed to be a different and yet superior lineage because they transcended the dispute between Northern and Southern Ch'an initiated by Shen-hui. The early members claimed for the lineage could not have been a succession of master and disciples. They were contemporaries who lived in the same area of south China, and they practiced a meditation influenced by San-lun doctrine rather than Ch'an.

McRae analyses Ox-head doctrine primarily through the Chüeh-kuan lun which he suggests has some parallels with the Platform Sutra in its use of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. He agrees with Yanagida Seizan's theory that the Platform Sutra was compiled by the Ox-head "school". However, it also contains elements of Shen-hui's doctrine and the pseudo-history of Hui-neng which the Chüeh-kuan lun does not.

Biographies are given for all prominent members of the lineage, especially those who in later times forged the lineage. This is a thought-provoking article, but it does have some minor errors:

p. 236 note 1: Shao-shih is the name of a mountain, not a cave.

p. 239 note 16: Fa-jung and Ching-chüeh were probably not of related clans as Fa-jung was from Jun-chou in Kiangsu and
Ching-chüeh was a member of the capital territory Wei clan.

p. 188: Was Ju-hai an "ordained student" of Hsuan-su? Hsuan-su died on 21st Dec. 752, but Ju-hai only became a monk in North China in 755 after having served in the civil service in Ch'eng-tu. There is no evidence that earlier he was in the lower Yangtze region where Hsuan-su was. The Ma-su referred to in the stele may not refer to Hsuan-su.

p. 193: The Emperor who invited Fa-ch'in to court in 789 must be Te-tsung, for Tai-tsung died in 780. Fa-ch'in did not die in 792, but on 13th Feb. 793.

The final two articles deal with the practical aspects of Hua-yen.

Peter N. Gregory's "The Teaching of Men and Gods: The Doctrinal and Social Basis of Lay Buddhist Practice in the Hua-yen Tradition" concerns the adoption of a preparatory, karmic moralism, made up of the five Buddhist precepts for the laity, as the lowest level of Buddhist teaching by the Ch'an and Hua-yen master Tsung-mi (780-841) in his Yuan-jen lun (Inquiry into the Origin of Man). By practising these precepts it was claimed one could be reborn as a man or a god. Originating in the Northern Wei forgery of c. 460 A.D., the Ti-wei Po-li ching, the teaching of men and gods was a co-ordination of the five Buddhist precepts with Chinese cosmology and the five Confucian virtues. Tsung-mi instead co-ordinated these precepts and virtues with the Buddhist cosmology of the states of rebirth.

Tsung-mi gave Confucianism and Taoism a provisional status as paths leading to morality, but only Buddhism contained the ultimate teaching that leads to Buddhahood. So while Tsung-mi was more syncretic and less partisan than his Hua-yen predecessors in that he adopted Confucianism into his scheme, he also criticised Confucianism and Taoism by saying that their ideas of Heaven, Tao, tzu-jan and yüan-ch'i could not account for the origins of evil, or provide an "ontological" basis for morality, both of which Buddhism did by means of the doctrines of causation and karma.

Tsung-mi was attempting to blunt the Confucian and Taoist attacks on Buddhism by shifting the grounds of the dispute from partisan social and racist polemics to a philosophical debate. His inclusion of Confucian values was also a response to the growth of lay Hua-yen Buddhist societies in his time. The history and background to these societies is outlined and the relevant section from the Yuan-jen lun is translated.

Robert M. Gimello, in "Li T'ung-hsüan and the Practical
Dimension of Hua-yen," attempts to take Hua-yen studies beyond its traditional "sectarian" confines by showing that the obscure and "unorthodox" Hua-yen layman Li T'ung-hsüan (653-730) probably had more influence on non-Hua-yen thinkers than the mainstream Hua-yen philosophers.

At first Li was known only in Shansi as a miracle-worker, but by the Sung dynasty his ideas were used widely by Lin-chi lineage Ch'an monks, and as a result his works spread to Korea and Japan where they were used by such important figures as Pojo Chinul (1158-1210) and Kōben (Myōe Shōnen, 1173-1232).

The Korean Sŏn (Ch'an) monk Chinul used Li's idea that the initial arisal of faith is the sudden understanding of one's own inherent buddhahood which is the culmination of the stages of the bodhisattva. This faith then is the practical equivalent of the potential for buddhahood. Chinul, who was trying to harmonize the contending Hua-yen and Ch'an of Korea, found Li's concern with the path of spiritual cultivation useful in his endeavour.

Kōben, a Japanese Shingon monk, found Li's explanation that the light emitted by the Buddha Vairocana would induce faith in the contemplator an aid in interpreting his own visionary experiences as well as in explaining the Shingon Mantra of the Buddha's Radiance. Using these authorities, Kōben created the Samadhi of the Buddha's Radiance, asserting that it was effective in the Period of the Termination of the Dharma even for beginners.

These monks thought that Li T'ung-hsüan had made the abstruse doctrines of Hua-yen available to ordinary practitioners by providing simpler and more experiential methods of practice for entering the ineffable state Hua-yen theory tried to describe.


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