



A BUDDHIST LEADER IN MING CHINA. THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF HAN-SHAN TE-CH'ING, 1546-1623

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To the great regret of all who knew this gentle, ever joyous and helpful scholar, Mano Senryū died suddenly in 1980, an all-too-early death. The volume under review has thus turned into his legacy. The articles collected in this volume take up, in a very stimulating way, many important, sometimes badly neglected issues, and always clearly present the relevant text-materials and secondary studies. I found reading through this work again most rewarding. Even though some of the topics have, in the intervening years, received monographic treatment elsewhere, what Mano says in this book still informs and enlightens us.

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A BUDDHIST LEADER IN MING CHINA. THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF HAN-SHAN TE-CH'ING, 1546-1623. By Sung-peng Hsu. Pennsylvania, University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979. 221 pp. \$16.95

Han-shan Te-ch'ing, together with Tzu-po Chen-k'o (1543--1603), Yün-ch'i Chu-hung (1535-1615) and Ou-i Chih-hsü (1599-1655), were the four great Buddhist masters who revived Buddhism in the late Ming and set its course for the next several hundred years. As Hsu rightly observes, "present-day Chinese Buddhism seems to have been very much influenced by the great masters of the late Ming period" (ix). Despite its intrinsic interest and historical importance, Ming Buddhism until recently received little scholarly attention. Hsu's study of Te-ch'ing was the first attempt to remedy the situation.

Hsu's book was based on his dissertation of the same title, which the author finished in 1970. Those who have worked on Ming thought and religion have regularly cited Hsu's work either in the dissertation or the present book form. When Hsu decided to study Te-ch'ing in the late 1960s, the field of Ming Buddhism was indeed "a relatively unexplored field of study" (ix). It was only in 1975 that Chang Sheng-yen published MINMATSU CHŪGOKU BUKKYŌ NO KENKYŪ (Studies on Chinese Buddhism at the End of the Ming), which was an in-depth study of Ou-i Chih-hsü, the youngest of the four great Ming Buddhist masters. Although I finished my dissertation on Chu-hung in 1973, the book did not appear in print until 1981. Hsu thus enjoys the honor--as well as bears the burden--of being a pioneer in this field.

The book has four chapters. Chapter 1, "Introduction," discusses the author's methodology (which I shall discuss later), the sources, and ends with a chronological listing of Te-ch'ing's works. Chapter 2, "The Background of Han-shan Te-ch'ing's Life and Thought," introduces us to the intellectual and political trends of the late Ming. It also examines the major philosophical discourses of Indian and

Chinese Buddhism. To accomplish all this in 47 pages is not an easy task, and it is perhaps unavoidable that at times Hsu gives no more than a conventional recapitulation of known facts, or a cursory listing of major events and figures. This is true, for example, of the section, "Important Texts and Doctrines for Understanding Han-shan's Thought," in which he summarily discusses CHAO LUN, PRĀJNA-PĀRAMITĀ, HUA-YEN SUTRA, LOTUS SUTRA, LANKĀVATĀRA SUTRA, SŪRANGAMA SUTRA, THE AWAKENING OF FAITH, and THE SUTRA OF COMPLETE ENLIGHTENMENT, giving each one paragraph. The section, "Schools in the Golden Period of Chinese Buddhism," provides a recapitulation of Buddhist schools in the T'ang, using standard reference works such as Fung Yu-lan's A HISTORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY, W. T. Chan's A SOURCEBOOK IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY, Kenneth Ch'en's BUDDHISM IN CHINA, and Wm. Theodore deBary's THE BUDDHIST TRADITION IN INDIA, CHINA, AND JAPAN. Finally, under the section, "The Social and Political Background," Hsu devotes from half a page to one page to "the imperial court," "Empress Dowager Li," "Chang Chū-cheng," "the Tung-lin movement," "social and economic conditions," "Western contacts" and "border troubles."

At the same time, Hsu shows admirable sophistication in his discussion of Mahayana Buddhism in the section, "Basic Problems in Understanding Buddhism." Hsu feels that in order to explicate Te-ch'ing's thought, he must offer a critique of Buddhist metaphysics and an account of the Buddhist answers to "the six perennial questions concerning the nature of ultimate reality, the nature of the universe, the nature of man, the nature of evil, the path of salvation, and the state of salvation" (p. 12). He tells us that he "developed the method of analyzing a religion in terms of the six problems" (xi) while teaching a course on Religions of Mankind. He returns to the same six problems in Chapter 4 where he analyzes Te-ch'ing's thought. While the answers to the first three questions provide the "theoretical or metaphysical aspect of Buddhist thought," the answers to the last three questions constitute the "practical or soteriological aspect of Buddhism" (p. 12). But because "the metaphysical aspect of the Buddhist belief-system is basically a projection of its soteriological convictions," some basic philosophical problems become, in Hsu's view, unavoidable. He succinctly discusses some of the problems (e.g., "no-self" and "self-surrogates," language, dialectic, negative ontological commitment vs. ontological noncommitment) on pages 13-25.

Chapter 3, "Han-shan Te-ch'ing's Life," gives an account of Te-ch'ing's life from his early childhood years until his death. Te-ch'ing wrote a unique document, CHRONOLOGICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY, which begins with the year of his birth (1546) and ends one year before his death in 1623. His lifelong attendant, Fu-cheng, wrote a commentary, providing additional information on Te-ch'ing's often laconic entries. Drawing on the AUTOBIOGRAPHY and its commentary, Hsu vividly describes the

the AUTOBIOGRAPHY and its commentary, Hsu vividly describes the key phases of Te-ch'ing's life that led to his widespread fame. After his death at 78, Te-ch'ing was regarded as the seventh patriarch of the Ch'an school and his "flesh-body" was installed at Ts'ao-hsi.

The fourth and final chapter, "Han-shan Te-ch'ing's Thought," is the longest, running 58 pages. Hsu calls Te-ch'ing's thought, "philosophy of Mind," a synthesis of the Hua-yen, T'ien-t'ai and Wei-shih traditions. Hsu uses the six categories again in discussing Te-ch'ing's thought. He also briefly mentions Te-ch'ing's classification of Buddhist doctrines and scriptures as well as his views of Taoism and Confucianism.

Hsu was trained in philosophy and his interest in Buddhist philosophy, rather than other aspects of Buddhism, is clear. He here primarily addresses those who are familiar with Western philosophy yet relatively ignorant of Buddhist thought. Occasionally, he betrays (perhaps unintentionally) an apologetic defensiveness in regard to Buddhism. For instance, he says, "Buddhist thought contains many ideas that are foreign to the main stream of Western thought" (xi). Again, "The philosophy of Mind is not entirely foreign to the history of Western thought, although it is different from the dominant philosophies of Western thought" (p. 166). The six questions were originally posed in order to help readers to come to grips with this presumably "foreign" way of thought. Discussing a religion in terms of a set of themes has admirably served as a model in the teaching of undergraduate world-religion courses. In this case, however, it imposes a framework that may be alien to Buddhism and Han-shan's thought. Hsu uses the six categories naively, without showing any awareness of their possible misleading connotations. All six categories imply dichotomies (such as ultimate reality vs. world, man vs. Buddha, and evil vs. salvation) which Han-shan, like all Buddhist thinkers trained in the Madhyamika dialectic and Hua-yen philosophy, would find objectionable.

One serious problem with Hsu's book is its organization. Each chapter is well-written and offers some important and useful information, yet the book does not hang together as an integrated whole. The first two chapters stand quite apart from the last two, and seem to bear no close relationship to each other. This may have to do with Hsu's lack of a clear sense of his audience. To readers familiar with Buddhist thought and Ming history, the first two chapters are unnecessary. And the same readers might find the substantive part of the book (namely, the last two chapters) at places to be unreflective and to lack scholarly sophistication.

A few examples will illustrate my point.

1. Te-ch'ing inherited a long and rich Buddhist

tradition, yet Hsu often makes him stand in a void, instead of placing him in a historical context. When he discusses Te-ch'ing's classification system, which puts Confucianism ("teaching for men") lower than Taoism ("teaching for gods") on p. 151, it would be good to compare it with Tsung-mi's (780-840) evaluation of the same in his famous essay, "On the Original Nature of Man." Similarly, when he discusses Te-ch'ing's effort to match the Buddhist five precepts with the Confucian five virtues, it would be useful to know that the Sung monk Chi-sung, among others, had already done pioneering work on that. But Hsu mentions neither. When he does mention Yung-ming Yen-shou (904-975) as the originator of the dual practice of Ch'an and Pure Land (p. 44), a practice which Te-ch'ing advocated, he does not offer a definite opinion as to whether Te-ch'ing was influenced by the former.

2. Without placing Te-ch'ing in an historical context or perspective by comparing him to earlier thinkers, Hsu unhesitatingly passes judgment on Te-ch'ing's lack of originality. He does not regard Te-ch'ing as a serious scholar or an original thinker, and he maintains that Te-ch'ing mainly "rehashes" what had been said before (p. 164). Hsu passes over several of Te-ch'ing's ideas that are, in my view, truly original:

(1) Te-ch'ing, like most of his contemporaries, advocated the dual practice of Ch'an and Pure Land. However, to show his preference for Ch'an, he assigned the upper levels of rebirth to those who practiced Ch'an, but the middle levels of rebirth to those who recited Buddha's name and scripture, and the lower levels of rebirth to those who kept the five precepts and ten virtues (p. 115). This is very different from the traditional "nine-grade rebirth" as set down in THE LARGER SUKHAVATIVYUHA SUTRA and shows Te-ch'ing's originality in finding a hierarchical harmony among divergent ways of religious practice.

(2) By using the "time-sequence" as well as the "nature of doctrine," Te-ch'ing formed a synthesis between those of T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen in his pan-chiao (classification of Buddhist teachings) system (pp. 145-50). He also showed originality in his view that the LANKĀVATĀRA SUTRA reveals li (principle), whereas the LOTUS SUTRA reveals shih (event or fact) (p. 149). This is a creative use of Hua-yen hermeneutics.

(3) Because of his own intense meditational experiences, Te-ch'ing emphasized the central importance of samadhi. This led him to two very interesting ideas. First, he regarded Ch'an as essentially samadhi (p. 128), and this differed from Hui-neng, who viewed wisdom and samadhi as one and the same. Second, he also understood Ch'an enlightenment in a rather unconventional way. While fully

aware of the age-old controversy between sudden vs. gradual enlightenment, he could nevertheless hold that, "Even within the category of sudden enlightenment,...a distinction can be made between sudden-sudden and sudden-gradual enlightenment" (p. 132). He affirmed the central importance of cultivation (hsiu). But he also believed that only sudden enlightenment (wu) was the true enlightenment. "Hsiu cannot be without wu, and wu cannot be without hsiu" (p. 122).

The most exciting part of this book is Hsu's analysis of the "nature of the universe" found in the three teachings (pp. 111-12) and his discussion of Han-shan's interpretation of Confucianism and Taoism (pp. 155-63). It is a pity that Hsu did not devote more space to this important and fascinating topic. He states on p. 158 that Te-ch'ing spent fifteen years studying LAO TZU, yet he allots only three pages (pp. 160-62) to Te-ch'ing's very original commentary on LAO TZU, and only half a page to that of CHUANG TZU. In general, Te-ch'ing interprets Confucian and Taoist texts in the light of his "philosophy of Mind." Hsu theorizes that "Te-ch'ing's main purpose in studying Taoism and Confucianism may be considered apologetic....Han-shan's approach is one not of outright attack but of subtle assimilation." But, at the same time, Hsu notes: "He criticizes those Buddhists who fail to recognize the ultimate identity of the three religions. Taoism and Confucianism are for him the lower members of the Buddhist family" (p. 153). Hsu's interpretation is of course reasonable and conventional. But I would suggest that by the late Ming, the FOUR BOOKS, LAO TZU and CHUANG TZU had become the common heritage of all educated Chinese, Buddhists included. Therefore, Te-ch'ing's studying and writing on these works does not necessarily imply an ulterior motive. Hsu, however, definitely sees Te-ch'ing as a Buddhist apologist who viewed the other two traditions as alien to his own. Consequently, Hsu several times mentions that there was a "problem" (p. 152) and "tension" (p. 153) between Te-ch'ing's Buddhism and his attitude toward the world. If fact, Te-ch'ing does not seem to find a tension between other-worldly transcendence and this-worldly activism. As a novice, Te-ch'ing had studied the important texts of the three traditions for six years, and later in life he noted: "I always remind myself of three things: without a knowledge of the SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS, one cannot live in the world, without an understanding of the LAO TZU and CHUANG TZU, one cannot forget the world, and without the practice of Ch'an, one cannot leave the world" (p. 151). As Hsu himself says, "Han-shan's life seems to have been a combination of the three ways of life" (p. 151).

A few minor flaws unnecessarily mar the scholarship of the book. For some reason, Hsu chooses to read the name of the Japanese Taoist scholar Yoshioka Yoshitoyo as Gihō. This reading is possible, but is not the one used either by Yoshioka

comb" (p. 95), but a bamboo staff of office about three feet long which Ch'an masters hold during dharma debates. When Hsu discusses the genre of the "ledger of merit or demerit" and, in particular, Chu-hung's RECORD OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE (p. 48), it would be appropriate to cite Sakai Tadao's study. One might also note that a chapter on--and a complete translation of--Chu-hung's RECORD can be found in my 1973 dissertation as well. Again, when he discusses the Pure Land "Association for Releasing Life" (fang-sheng hui), Hsu supplies a single footnote citing the entry in Ting Fu-pao's GREAT BUDDHIST DICTIONARY, which was published in 1920. These are not the only instances in which he ignores contemporary scholarship. His discussion of Li Chih would have been strengthened by references to the recent studies done by Jean Francois Billeter and deBary. Instead, he cites an article of 1938 by K. C. Hsiao (p. 176). He also does not refer to Tu Wei-ming's work when he discusses Wang Yang-ming on page 48.

Some of Hsu's generalizations are questionable. For instance, what evidence led him to state, "Monks roamed the empire, and since they were economically dependent on society, they often became robbers and caused social disorder" (p. 51)? Again, are we supposed to infer that many Ming intellectuals wrote commentaries on Taoist religious texts when we read, "Unlike many of his contemporaries, Han-shan did not write any commentary on Taoist religious texts" (p. 159)? If so, where is the evidence that this was indeed the case?

Despite my criticism, the book contains much valuable information. It puts Ming Buddhism on a scholarly agenda and has already helped students to work on Ming Buddhism. For bringing attention to a long neglected field, we owe Hsu much gratitude.

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Frederic Wakeman, Jr. THE GREAT ENTERPRISE: THE MANCHU RECONSTRUCTION OF IMPERIAL ORDER IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CHINA. 2 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. xiv, 1337 pp. Illustrations, Appendixes, Western-Language Sources, Chinese and Japanese Sources, Index and Glossary.

Frederic Wakeman's new study, THE GREAT ENTERPRISE: THE MANCHU RECONSTRUCTION OF IMPERIAL ORDER IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CHINA, is itself no small undertaking. The two volumes, consisting of 1,337 pages of which 1,127 are text and the rest lengthy bibliographies and a long glossary-index, took the author a decade and a half to complete. Handsomely boxed by the University of California Press, this massive work gives a detailed and well-rounded look at the seventeenth century transition from Ming to Qing rule.