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**“The Twenty-Five Answers Concerning the Buddhist Principles”:  
A Tangut Buddhist Manual  
from St. Petersburg Tangut Collection**

The Tangut Buddhist texts preserved in St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences) have attracted scholarly attention since the very beginning of Tangut studies as a separate field. The value of the Buddhist sources in Tangut language is twofold: on the one hand, they throw some light on the development and contents of the Buddhist faith in the Tangut area; on the other hand, they demonstrate the peculiarities of the development of Chinese Buddhism itself.<sup>1</sup> Several attempts in this regard have been undertaken recently, but are not exactly satisfactory. However, initial research into the Tangut Buddhism has also demonstrated outstanding potential for this kind of research. Still, there are two major obstacles, which hindered the progress of the Tangut studies, especially research into the Tangut Buddhist texts. One is the nature of the Tangut language itself, while the other is the lack of the reference material and historical data necessary for the proper understanding of the texts and their location within the general framework of East Asian Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> Insofar, Tangut Buddhist texts are treated as some kind of a curiosity, rather than an object for proper scholarly research in its own right. Therefore, one of the appropriate approaches to the research of the Tangut Buddhist texts, especially those not found in their Chinese or Tibetan versions might be their broad presentation to the scholarly public in their most readable form. In this regard I see my responsibility as a Tangut scholar to provide Chinese reconstructions (or Chinese versions), however tentative they might seem, of the relevant texts and preparing translations with the utmost possible accuracy. Thus the Tangut Buddhist works and compilations could be brought into a broader circulation and could be researched by a community of qualified scholars rather than be an object of independent research.

The present paper intends to introduce one of Tangut Buddhist texts, “The Twenty-five answers to the questions on the Buddhist Principles, posed by the monks before the State Preceptor Tangchang while [he] was staying in the Palace of Light Monastery” (further: *Twenty-Five Answers*), with a Chinese reconstruction and preparatory translation, to the scholarly audience. Thus, alongside my own observations, other qualified scholars of Chinese Buddhism could arrive to their own conclusions concerning the nature of the text.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This paper uses following abbreviations: T. for Taisho Tripitaka, letters t, m, b together with the page number represent top, middle or bottom column of Tripitaka text. BIHP represents “Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology”, Academia Sinica, Taiwan.

<sup>2</sup> One of the examples of such kind of research is: *Solonin K.J. Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi (780–841): A Tangut Source // Asia Major*, 3rd series, vol. 16, p. 2 (2003): 57–102.

<sup>3</sup> In the main body of text I limit myself only to Chinese renderings of the Tangut characters. This is done only due to the technical imperfection of Tangut input software and my own limited skills. The English translation attached to the end of the paper does contain Tangut characters together with their call numbers according to M.V. Sofronov’s system, modified by Academia Sinica. In the course of discussion I will refer to other Tangut Buddhist compilations, namely *The Mirror* (鏡) and *Notes on the Essence of Hongzhou Doctrine* (further: *The*

*Twenty-Five Answers* is one of the most remarkable Tangut texts in the St. Petersburg Tangut collection, and presumably, one of the most popular Buddhist works in the Tangut State. As of now, this text can be considered a purely Tangut compilation and as such should be valued not only as a Buddhist source, but as source on Tangut culture in general as well. Unlike other Tangut Buddhist texts, for the *Twenty-Five Answers* we have definite testimony of the text's popularity in the Tangut State: a substantial number of woodblock copies of the work were located in St. Petersburg Tangut holdings. What is even more important, we also have different editions of the same work, which sometimes differ substantially.<sup>4</sup> The present study bases itself on two versions of the same text and intends to collate them in order to achieve a better understanding of the work. The present study is primarily based on the complete edition of *Newly Carved Twenty-Five Questions and Answers* (Tang. 186, #2536 in St. Petersburg holding), and another text (Tang. 186, #2514) was used as reference. This second text is apparently much longer, complicated and more elaborate than the first one, but it is not complete and partially damaged. It features a different second character in State Preceptor Tangchang's name.<sup>5</sup> This Tangut character might be phonetically rendered as Chinese *Zhong* (something like Chinese 中), making the Master's name sound as "Tangzhong"), therefore below this text is referred to as the *Zhong* text. The basic version of the text, a complete woodblock edition, is a plain text without any signs of editing, outside the division between the "questions and answers", which are marked as separate entries. The most important thing about the *Zhong* text is that it is interwoven with a lengthy commentary in small characters, which provides a number of actual names of the Tangut Buddhist personalities and contains some other valuable notes about Tangut religion in general. In my translation, I have referred a lot to the *Zhong* text, which, unfortunately, remains incomplete. Among other things, the text actually contains some clear indications of Tangut familiarity with Daoism.

The title of the text speaks for itself. Both texts actually do contain the "twenty-five questions and answers" dealing with various Buddhist matters, mainly concerning the "Buddha nature", "substance", "concentration" and other predominantly Chan topics. At the same time, the State Preceptor Tangchang talks about hell, crimes of the living beings, but in a specific manner. As a general observation of the nature of the text, one might mention that Tangchang's approach is somewhat similar to that of one Huineng (638–713) demonstrated in *The Platform Sutra*: the State Preceptor tends to provide his own definitions to such Buddhist terms and concepts as "eight liberations" (encounter XI in the Translation) or "three *asankheya kalpas*". This reminds of Huineng's specific definitions of the "three bodies of Buddha" and other terms, given in the *Platform Sutra*. Thus, one might assume that the State Preceptor Tangchang is following his peculiar mode of thinking and preaching, rather than imitating some other master or following some type of "sectarian" guidelines.

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*Essence* 洪州宗趣要記). Both texts were partially researched and their translations were published, all the bibliographical directions will be provided in the due course. Here I would limit myself to a brief notion that *The Mirror* is a Chan "classification of teaching text" (判教), which is extremely close to the treatise *Xianmi yuantong Chengfo xinyaoji* (顯密圓通成佛心要集, T. 46 #1955) by Khotan Buddhist master Daochen (1056–1147) in its approach and even vocabulary (see: note 72). *The Essence* is a compilation by an unknown monk Fayong, which tries to bring together Chan Huayan tradition, Chan lineage of Heze and the evolving tradition of Mazu Daoyi.

<sup>4</sup> *Kychanov E.I.* Katalog Buddijskikh Pamyatnikov Instituta Vostokovedeniya Akademii Nauk RF. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 1999, lists altogether 16 various copies of the same compilation (See: items 719 to 734). The metrical dimensions of various editions are to be found in the catalog as well. I am inclined to think that, except for sutras, the *Twenty-Five Answers* was probably one of the most popular compilations in Xixia, if not the most popular.

<sup>5</sup> These discrepancies are mentioned in the footnotes to translation.

The person of the State Preceptor Tangchang remains unidentified, and insofar, judging from the general tenor of the text I am inclined to think that the Master was of the Tangut origin.<sup>6</sup> The full version of the *Twenty-Five Answers* apparently did not consider the names of the Master's interlocutors important and replaced them with the generalizing formula "someone asked" (see translation below). The *Zhong* text actually provides a number of personal names and presumably titles of Tangchang's interlocutors. Most of these names and titles cannot be identified as Chinese and are thus considered to be Tangut. Yet again, the *Zhong* text provides a bit of additional information about the persons involved in the encounters with the Master Tangchang, but remains silent about his personality. The date of the composition of the text is also uncertain: the only thing known for sure is the date of publication of one of the versions of the book: the woodblocks for one of the editions were carved during "the fifth additional month of the year of Earth — Chicken, the twentieth year of Tianshou (天授) era" of the Tangut state. This puts the date of publication between the 16<sup>th</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1189.<sup>7</sup> Although the texts contain the "questions and answers 問答" formula in their titles, its actual form is closer not to the "recorded sayings 語錄" of developed Chan Buddhism, but to the compilations of early Chan, which tended to explicate doctrinal issues in the form of lengthy answers to short questions presented by unspecified persons. One of the texts, which I believe, are formally close to *The Twenty-Five Answers* might be the *Treatise on the Essentials of Cultivating the Mind* (修心要論) composed by the Fifth Patriarch Hongren (弘仁, 600–674?).<sup>8</sup> Alternatively, it could have some formal and structural resemblance to the lengthy encounters between Huineng and his disciples in the *Platform Sutra*. However, this type of "question and answer" compilation is found throughout Early Chinese Buddhism: one of the most characteristic examples of the genre is *The Twenty-Two Questions on Mahayana* (大乘二十二問本), composed by Tanguang (曇曠, d. 788) around 774 in order to provide answers to the questions about Chinese Mahayana posed by the Tibetan king Khri sron lde brtsan (742–797). Another example of such work might be the recorded encounter between Zhengguan and the Tang emperor Shun-zong (dated 805) which is preserved as *Answers to Shun-zong about the Most Important of the Teaching of the Mind* (答順宗心要法門).<sup>9</sup> Still another example is the number of encounters, traditionally attributed to Bodhidharma and collected in anthologies such as *Shaoshi Liu men* (*Six Texts From the Little Cave* 少室六門).<sup>10</sup> Among these, *Treatise on the Destruction of Characteristics* (破相論) is closest in form to the Tangut compilation.<sup>11</sup> In general, the structure of the Tangut text is close to those, which have relationship to Dun-

<sup>6</sup> I would not vest too much value into this observation, since new discoveries could change the whole system of the interpretation of the text: once I believed that another Tangut compilation, *the Mirror*, was of native Tangut origin and treated it as such. See: *Solonin K.J.* Tangut Chan Buddhism and Guifeng Zongmi // *Zhonghua foxue xuebao* 中華佛學學報. 11 (1998), p. 365–425; *idem.* Tang Heritage of the Tangut Buddhism Teachings Classification in the Tangut Text "The Mirror" // *Manuscripta Orientalia*, vol. 6, No. 3 (2000). Finally it turned out that this text might very well be a translation of a certain work by Khitan Buddhist master Daochen (b. 1056; see below).

<sup>7</sup> Tang 186, #2822, see the description of the item in: Kychanov E. "The Catalog", #726: 604.

<sup>8</sup> For English translation and collated version of the text, see: *McRae J.* The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism. *Studies in East Asian Buddhism* 3 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p. 1–14 from the end; p. 121–132.

<sup>9</sup> See: *Wanzi xinzuan xu zang jing* 卍字新纂續藏經, vol. 58, #1005. Another title of the text is *Huayan xinyao famen* 華嚴心要法門.

<sup>10</sup> This late Japanese compilation is to be found in: T. 48, #2009.

<sup>11</sup> The fact that this treatise, also known as *觀心論* (*Treatise on the Contemplation of Mind*), was actually composed by Huineng's rival Shenxiu (606–706), and has no relationship to Bodhidharma whatsoever, is irrelevant here, since the Tangut apparently had no idea of Shenxiu and "the Northern school" at all, but revered Bodhidharma, and considered those treatises to have been written by him. For the complete discussion of the nature of the text, see: *McRae J.* The Northern School, p. 148 et passim; p. 325.

huang Chan Buddhism,<sup>12</sup> thus it represents the somewhat isolated Dunhuang Chan tradition, which emerged around the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>13</sup> In most cases such “dialogues” do not imply any sort of real interactivity and such is the case with our Tangut compilation. The text contains a Preface, which, unfortunately, is not valuable in terms of “positive information”, because it does not contain any data on the author or tradition of the text, mentioning no place names or historical details, which could have helped us determine the origin of the text and its author. Therefore, one has to resort to contextual analysis of the text in order to actually locate it within East Asian Buddhism, and come up with a reliable hypothesis of its origin. The above examples allow a suggestion that the *Twenty-Five Answers* comply with the form and structure of early Chan texts, or at least closely imitate it. Therefore, I am inclined to believe that the Tangut compilation belongs to the same circle of Chan literature, which emerged and continued to circulate in the Dunhuang area during the late 9<sup>th</sup> — early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and thus became known in Xixia. Again, the fact the Tangut version of the *Platform Sutra* is also based on the Dunhuang text,<sup>14</sup> seems to validate this point of view.

The only thing, which can be found out from the Preface, is the fact that the Tangut were actually aware in some way of the Taoist classic *Daodejing*, which is indirectly quoted in the opening section of the Preface:<sup>15</sup> “The Way essentially is not the Way; the Way had been temporarily<sup>16</sup> established by the Sages. The name essentially has no name; the Sages had temporarily spoken [about] the names. If there was the Way, it would have been the mundane Way; if there was a name, it would have been the mundane name.” (Chinese rendering: 道本非道, 智人權立道; 名本無名, 智人權說名. 令有道, 則世中[之]道也; 令有名, 則世中[之]名也.) The text contains some other Taoist allusions: the encounter IX is actually devoted to the discussion of distinctions between the Dao of Taoists and Buddhists. This paragraph is quite interesting, so it is worth being reproduced in complete form: “Some immortal<sup>17</sup> asked the Master about learning the Way. The Master said: ‘What is your Way?’ Immortal said: ‘The Way is the *qi*<sup>18</sup> of emptiness and tranquility. [We] drink the dew<sup>19</sup> and eat the medicine,<sup>20</sup> purify and abandon the mud,<sup>21</sup> feed and grow the mind and spirit.<sup>22</sup>’ The master said: ‘[You] do not understand<sup>23</sup> the Way. [6a] Today I will tell [you] about the Way and you listen. According to this, the Way is the essential nature of all the living beings. See the essential nature and attain sovereignty over yourself and tranquil joy.

<sup>12</sup> Among other texts, that bear formal resemblance to the Tangut compilation one should mention a number of texts, published recently under the title *Buddhist Documents Outside of Tripitaka* (e.g.: *Chance Wenda* (禪策問答), see: *Fang Guangchang* 方廣倡 (ed.). *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻 (Beijing Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1995), vol. 1, p. 45–52.

<sup>13</sup> J. Broughton discusses this “Dunhuang Chan Buddhism” in his: *Broughton J. The Bodhidharma Anthology. The Earliest Records of Zen* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2002): 103–104. The text of *Chance Wenda* (Questions on The Chan Plan) is mentioned by J. Broughton in his brief discussion of the latest strata of Dunhuang Chan literature. (*Broughton J. Op. cit.* P. 159–60).

<sup>14</sup> *Shi Jinbo* 史金波. *Xixiawen Liuzu tanjing canye yishi* 西夏文六祖壇經殘頁譯釋 // *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, 1993 No. 3, p. 90–100; *Solonin K.J.* The Fragments of the Tangut Translation of the “Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch” preserved in Fu Ssu-nian Library, Academia Sinica // *BIHP*, 78 (2007).

<sup>15</sup> Before this text was researched, the knowledge of Daoism in Xixia had been limited to the indications in various Law Codes and a number of Taoist texts in Chinese discovered in Khara-Khoto. On Tangut Daoism see: *Han Xiaomang* 韓小忙. *Xixia Daojiao chutan* 西夏道教初探 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> Chinese: 權.

<sup>17</sup> A Taoist practitioner. Chinese: 仙人.

<sup>18</sup> Chinese: 氣.

<sup>19</sup> Chinese: 飲露.

<sup>20</sup> Chinese: 食藥.

<sup>21</sup> Chinese: 脫泥.

<sup>22</sup> Chinese: 養長魂識.

<sup>23</sup> Chinese: 慧.

This Way is profound and miraculous,<sup>24</sup> [you] look at it and do not see, listen to it and do not hear, look for it and never get it. People follow it daily and nobody knows [about it]. It is the most profound among the profound, the door to all the miracles. Those who get it abide in permanence, those who understand it are not cuffed, those who can [follow it] are in permanent joy. Because of that truth it is the Way.’ The immortal said: ‘How outstanding<sup>25</sup> is the Chan master!’<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to mention that the Master Tangchang describes the Buddhist Dao in the Taoist terminology: “This Way is profound and miraculous,<sup>27</sup> [you] look at it and do not see, listen to it and do not hear, look for it and never get it.” (Chinese rendering: 此道深妙, 看時不見, 聽時不聞, 求時不得; cf. *Daodejing*, 14: 視之不見, [名曰夷]; 聽之不聞, [名曰希]; 捕之不得, [名曰微].) Besides being a testimony of some degree of familiarity with Daoism, this paragraph is interesting from the point of view of its composition: its structure is close to Huineng's discourse with Zhicheng and other discourses from the *Platform sutra*.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the closest parallel to the encounter in the Tangut text which I was able to establish in Chinese sources, is seen in the discussion between Baotang Wuzhu (保唐無著, 720–794) and a certain Taoist Master. The encounter between the two Masters deals with the interpretation of the verses of *Daodejing*, and is recorded in *The Treasure of Dharma during the Generations* (歷代法寶記). The encounter in *Lidai Fabao Ji* is longer than the one presented in the Tangut text, but their contents appear to be close, especially in the part declaring the Dao the “initial nature of the living beings”. However, Wuzhu expresses this idea in a more sophisticated manner: “[The words] ‘The Way that may be walked is not the permanent Way’ [represent] the essential nature of the living beings; the words do not reach it. ‘Name that may be named is not permanent name’ also represent the essential nature of the living beings. (道可道非常道。即是眾生本性。言說不及。即是非常道。名可名非常名。亦是眾生本性). The Tangut text puts it in a simpler way: “Dao is the essential nature of the living beings” (Chinese rendering: 道者一切眾生之本性也).<sup>29</sup> However, the general tenor of superiority of Buddhism over Daoism is clear in both texts. At the same time, the presence of Taoist allusions in the Tangut text can also be considered a testimony of its early Chan affiliation: it has been long demonstrated that early Chan engaged itself in various discussions with the Taoists and had incorporated a substantial number of Taoist elements and concepts.<sup>30</sup> Whatever similarities with the Chinese works could be discovered in the Tangut text they are still not enough to suggest any relevant identification of the text or of its author — the Master Tangchang. Judging from his name, reconstructed as Chinese 唐昌 (tang chang) and bearing in mind the Taoist allusions of the Tangut text, one can try to assume that the Master can be identified with Baotang Wuzhu himself, but this identification remains a mere speculation. Then the Tangut name will appear to be made up of two second characters constituting the original name — I find such a compound quite confusing. However, Baotang Wuzhu was known in Dunhuang area and probably throughout Northern China — his sayings under the

<sup>24</sup> Chinese: 玄妙.

<sup>25</sup> Chinese: 殊妙.

<sup>26</sup> In the *Zhong* text this dialogue is taking place between the master and disciple of Xiangshan (相山). The disciple's name in Chinese is 孫勒田(?). Xiangshan is mentioned in another Tangut Buddhist text on the Doctrine of Hongzhou Masters. (See: *Solonin K.J. Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zong-mi: A Tangut Source*). The identification of the two is tempting but requires more solid evidence.

<sup>27</sup> Chinese: 玄妙.

<sup>28</sup> See: *Nanzong dunjiao zuishang dacheng mohe banruo boluomi liuzu Huineng dashi Fabao tanjing* 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜六祖慧能大師法寶坦經, T. 48: 342m.

<sup>29</sup> For a lengthy encounter between Baotang Wuzhu and an anonymous Taoist master see: *Lidai Faobao Ji* 歷代法寶記, T. 51: 186mb.

<sup>30</sup> *Tanaka Ryosho. Tonko zenshu bunken no kenkyu* (Tokyo: Daito shuppansha, 1983): 517–546, esp.: 524–305.

name of Bu-chu were included into the Tibetan collection of Chan sayings — the text of Pelliot 116 and other Tibetan Chan texts.<sup>31</sup> Master Baotang's career had been connected with the Helanshan area, another stronghold of Tangut Buddhism, where he stayed for substantial period from 751–758 and gained certain recognition as a Buddhist master.<sup>32</sup> Still the current degree of research both into Tangut Buddhism and into Baotang Wuzhu does not allow validation of such identification.

The questions, which interested Master Tangchang's interlocutors, are quite simple and present nothing as sophisticated as the questions once posed by Khri sron lde brtsan before Tanguang, or the questions the Master Hongren had to deal with in *Treatise on the Essentials of Cultivating the Mind* or Shenxiu (606–706) in his *Treatise on Contemplating the Mind*. The questions mostly concentrate around usual early Chan agenda. The questions, however, differ between themselves: some are quite easy and relate more to the realm of popular Buddhism, rather than to specific or sophisticated, doctrinal issues. The disciples, some of whose names are provided by the *Zhong* text, are trying to find out the answers to the most relevant issues of Mahayana Buddhism. Their questions are: “What is the meaning of ‘seeing nature and becoming the Buddha’?”; “What are precepts, concentration and wisdom?”<sup>33</sup>; “How should one act<sup>34</sup> to become a Buddha?”; “Are the living beings about to become Buddhas?”; “The Buddha is the living beings, the living beings are the Buddha. What is the meaning of this?”; “What is substance?<sup>35</sup> What is Nature?<sup>36</sup> Are they the same or different?”; “If the living beings commit crimes<sup>37</sup> do they fell into Hell?”<sup>38</sup>; “What is the approach of ‘one thought’?”<sup>39</sup> Thus, the text does not limit itself to purely, or exactly, Chan context and appears to have broader intentions. These questions, mentioned above, are but few examples of the problems discussed in the text and the ones probably most important for Buddhist practitioners in the Tangut State. Providing the answers, Master Tangchang demonstrates knowledge of a number of scriptures, including *Avatamsaka-sutra*, *Vimalakirti-sutra* and *Lankavatara-sutra*, and demonstrates substantial understanding of the Huayan tradition: apparently it is the only scholarly tradition of Chinese Buddhism whose knowledge is admitted by Tangchang. Thus, the Master Tangchang could possibly be connected with the late Tang Huayan-Chan tradition, represented chiefly by Guifeng Zongmi (780–841).<sup>40</sup> This observation should not be surprising, more surprising is the number and amount of Zongmi and general Huayan compilations among both Chinese and Tangut texts, discovered from Khara-Khoto.<sup>41</sup> The State Preceptor Tangchang never mentions any names

<sup>31</sup> See: *Broughton J. Early Ch'an Schools in Tibet // Gimello R., Gregory P. eds. Studies in Chan and Hua-yen* (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii P., 1983): 4–12; also *Broughton J. The Bodhidharma Anthology*, p. 102–103, 158–159.

<sup>32</sup> *Lidai Fabao Ji*: 186–7bt.

<sup>33</sup> Chinese: 戒定慧.

<sup>34</sup> Chinese: 修行. The translation “to act” was chosen here for the sake of smoothness of translation.

<sup>35</sup> Chinese: 體.

<sup>36</sup> Chinese: 性.

<sup>37</sup> Chinese: 罪.

<sup>38</sup> Chinese: 地獄.

<sup>39</sup> Chinese: 一念.

<sup>40</sup> *Yoshizu Yoshihide. Kegon-Zen sisensi no kenkyu* (Tokyo: Daito Shuppansha, 1985): 12–14 (Summary); 249–266; 337–358.

<sup>41</sup> For a brief discussion of Zongmi's compilations in Tangut translations see: *Solonin K.J. Guifeng Zongmi and Tangut Chan Buddhism; Inventory of Zongmi's Works in Chinese Discovered from Khara-Khoto: Lin Shitian* 林世田 ed., *Xixia wenxianzhong hanwen wenxian shilu* 西夏文獻中漢文文獻釋錄 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2005) lists a woodblock edition of the *Chart of Transition of the Chan Doctrine of the Mind-ground from Master to Disciple in China* (禪門心地法門師資承襲 further: *Chan Chart*) and number of copies of the *Sutra of Complete Enlightenment* — a work treasured by Zongmi (#067, 068, 069). *L.N. Men'shikov* in *Opisanije kitaiskoj chasti kollekcii P.K. Kozlova iz Khara-Khoto* (Moscow: Nauka, 1985) lists *Chan Chart* (TK-254), a

and he does not mention Zongmi either, but, as will be seen from below, he actually demonstrated a certain degree of familiarity with some of the most profound of Zongmi's doctrines.

The knowledge of *Avatamsaka* demonstrated by the Master is quite impressive: he is actually using the theory of "six characteristics"<sup>42</sup> in a discourse concerning the relationship between the living beings and the Buddha-nature. The Master's discourse indicates that, although there are no substantial differences between Buddha and living beings, their abilities and environment are different; therefore they cannot be wholly identified. The Tangut text reads as follows: "Someone asked: 'The living beings and the Buddha nature do not have differences. Thus when any person becomes Buddha through his actions, all the living beings must attain liberation. Now it is not like that. What is the reason for that?' The master said: 'It looks like you have never seen the principle of six characteristics of Huayan. In similarity there is discrimination, in discrimination there is similarity, in creation there is destruction, in destruction there is creation, in common there is specific, and in specific there is common. The living beings and the Buddha possess the same nature, and are no obstacles to each other. [Their] powers<sup>43</sup> are not equal, and they get what [each of them] had attained'" (Encounter XXIII).

Apparently, the core of the teaching of the Master Tangchang is constituted by the concepts of Buddha-nature and "no-thought", on the basis of which he develops his understanding of attaining enlightenment. According to the Master, the "essential nature can see", but there is neither seer nor the seen. That is when the self-nature becomes self-luminous, Buddhahood is attained as the merit of the Dao. Apparently, from the Tangut text one might conclude that the Master discriminates between "substance" and "nature" (Chinese rendering: 見體, 性也; 性者, 道也). I am inclined to believe that "nature" is thus "function" of the "substance" and is thus a dynamic characteristic of functioning of the omni-present nature. However, our knowledge of Tangut scholarly terminology is far from perfect, so the relationship between various concepts mentioned in the texts is not always definite. Still, idea of a triad of substance, nature and merit (function) can actually be derived from the Master's sayings thus connecting his doctrine to the complicated "substance, virtue, merit" relationship as presented by another Tangut Buddhist writer Fayong in *The Essence of the Doctrine of the Hongzhou Lineage*.<sup>44</sup> This point of view is confirmed by the master in his discourse on the similarity and difference between substance and nature: the master is using a parable of a bronze mirror to elucidate the difference between substance and nature. While mirror is made of bronze (substance) it can fulfill its function only when it is polished (nature). Thus "reflecting" (照) is considered "nature" (性) of the Buddha-nature, which is otherwise latent and does not manifest itself. From this point one might conclude that what was meant here is some analog of Shenhui's "awareness" (知), a responding function of the nature through which the true reality is realized. However, all of this is just a suggestion, since the Master Tangchang never admits his knowledge of Shenhui or Zongmi theories. This is however, irrelevant since the whole discourse presented by the Master Tangchang is dependent on Zongmi's discourse of functioning of nature from the *Chart of Transition of the Chan Doctrine of the Mind-ground from Master to Disciple in China* (中原禪門心地法門師資承襲, further: *Chan Chart*) using the same parable of bronze

short text with a long title: *Guifeng Lanruo shamen Zongmi zhu Shunzong huangdi suowen xinyao famen* (圭峰蘭若沙門宗密注順宗皇帝所問心要法門, TK-186).

<sup>42</sup> Chinese: 華嚴六相. These are: the characteristic of identity (Chinese: 同), difference (Chinese: 異), creation (Chinese: 成), destruction (Chinese: 壞), similarity (Chinese: 總) and discrimination (Chinese: 別).

<sup>43</sup> Chinese: 力才.

<sup>44</sup> See: *Solonin K.J.* Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi, p. 69–76.

(nature), which is bright (function of self-nature) and can reflect myriad things (responsive function). The Tangut text reads as follows: “Someone asked: ‘Substance,<sup>45</sup> what is it? Nature,<sup>46</sup> what is it? Are they the same? Or different?’ The Master said: ‘Looking from substance they are one, looking from nature they are different.’ [8a] [Another question]: ‘How is that?’ The Master said: ‘The substance is like bronze, the nature is like a mirror, and this is why [they] are different.’ [Another question]: ‘Mirrors are made out of bronze, why they are different?’ The master said: ‘A mirror, although it is made out of bronze, [the bronze] cannot reflect things. When [the bronze] is polished into becoming a mirror, then it is able to reflect things. That is why [substance and nature] are different. All the living beings possess Buddha nature; using the directions from the great benevolent friends [the living beings] see their essential mind. After they see the essential mind, industrious perfection emerges by itself, and [the mind of the living beings] reflects the purity and sees clearly right and wrong’.”<sup>47</sup> (Encounter XV) The relevant paragraph from Zongmi’s Chan Chart reads: “The substance of the true mind has two functions: the self-function of nature and the responsive function. That is like the bronze mirror: the original substance of bronze is the essence of self-nature; and the brightness of the bronze is the function of self-nature”.<sup>48</sup> These two paragraphs are close to each other, especially if one overlooks the polemic content, encompassed by Zongmi’s treatise. Thus it is not surprising that this paragraph partially reminds of the relevant part in Fayong’s discourse on the nature of dharmas in *The Essence* (see above), wherein dharmas are treated as “immutable principle”, “emptiness of form” is present as the “function of following the causes” and “being bright or dark” as “responsive function of self-nature”.<sup>49</sup> Of course, Fayong’s presentation has stronger and more transparent Huayan-Zongmi association, but I suspect that master Tangchang is explicating the similar idea.

Another aspect of Buddhist theory which the Tangut were inclined to ask their Master about, was the nature of precepts, concentration and wisdom. The Master Tangchang is no exclusion and devoted a lengthy discourse to clarification of the matter: “Someone asked: ‘What are precepts, concentration and wisdom?’<sup>50</sup> The Master said: ‘Seeing that the nature is pure and tranquil is precepts. Seeing that nature is tranquil and pure, and its substance has no limit,<sup>51</sup> it transforms in the world and does not leave [it], [that it is] truly unmovable is concentration. [When] substance and nature have no limits, when light [penetrates] inside and outside like through the glass—that is wisdom’.” (Chinese rendering: 見性清靜者, 戒也; 見性清靜, 體無邊界, 傳世不往, 真真不動者, 定也; 體性無邊, 譬玻璃如, 內外起光明, 各無礙者, 慧也.) Another important issue is the relationship between “precepts, concentration and wisdom”. Tangchang apparently refutes the idea of any sort of gradual or hierarchical relationship between the three. On the contrary, he seems to advocate the concept of their ultimate equality and mutual correspondence, which in turn creates

<sup>45</sup> Chinese: 體, Tangut: 0455.

<sup>46</sup> Chinese: 性, Tangut: 1262.

<sup>47</sup> Chinese: 宣示是非, Tangut: 5607, 3819, 0197, 1348.

<sup>48</sup> Zongmi 宗密 *Chanmen shizi chengxi tu* 禪門師資承襲圖 with explanations by Zhang Chunbo (Gaoxiang: Foguang, 1996): 93–94. The use of the bronze mirror as a metaphor (metonymy) of mind is by no means an invention of Zongmi. The first cast of use of the “bronze mirror” metaphor is found in *The Notes on Masters and Disciples of Lankavatara* (楞迦師資記 in the first entry on Gunabhadra, see: T. 85 #2837), but in a rather Northern Chan context: making of a bronze mirror is used as a metaphor for polishing the mirror of the mind. It appears that Zongmi was probably the first to actually discriminate between the bronze as a material substance and brightness (quality of reflection) as its manifestation.

<sup>49</sup> *Solonin K.J.* Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the heritage of Zongmi, p. 84–85.

<sup>50</sup> Chinese: 戒定慧.

<sup>51</sup> Chinese: 邊界.



a coherent body of the Buddhist practice. In this regard his Encounter XIV is especially relevant: “Someone asked: ‘Enter the wisdom following the concentration, is that right?’<sup>52</sup> The Master said: ‘No, it is not.’ [7b] [Another question]: ‘Entering the concentration following the wisdom, will that be right?’ The Master said: ‘No, it will not be.’ [Another question]: ‘Why is that?’ The Master said: ‘To enter concentration following the wisdom is the Dharma of the Listeners to the Voice. To enter wisdom following the concentration is the Dharma of those, Enlightened by themselves.<sup>53</sup> Concentration and wisdom are equal and this is the Dharma of Bodhisattvas. The true concentration does not have [the characteristic] of concentration, the true wisdom does not have the characteristic of wisdom. This is the Dharma of the Buddha’.”<sup>54</sup> Here again one might notice that wisdom is achieved through harmony between “precepts and concentration”, which in turn are a variation of the relationship between nature and substance, and thus between nature and two types of functioning as explicated by Zongmi. Thus the Tangut definition of precepts, concentration and wisdom is different from the ones given by Huineng or Shenhui, being actually quite unique. One might suggest that the relationship between “precepts, concentration and wisdom” is again explained through the scheme of “two-fold functioning of nature”.

A curious answer is given by the Master to the question about the prospects of becoming Buddhas for the living beings: according to the Master the living beings will not become Buddhas — what becomes Buddha is the essential nature of the living beings, which does not look like anything and cannot be described through any analogy. Final issue to be considered in the present study is the problem of “no-thought” (無念)<sup>55</sup> and “one-thought” (一念) as it is presented by the Master Tangchang. Strangely for the Chan Master (if he was one), he does not deliver a special lengthy discourse on the “no-thought” as was done by almost every Chinese teacher before him. Yet a special entry is devoted to “one-thought”, which is apparently more Tiantai, rather than Chan concept. However, the Master did understand the importance of “no-thought”: in his encounters he actually says that “no-thought” is “becoming Buddha” (Encounter V)<sup>56</sup> and warns the disciples that they should “see nature and become Buddha and those who do not see the nature are living beings” (Encounter XIII).<sup>57</sup> This encounter indicates the similarity between Master Tangchang’s thought and the approach of the *Platform Sutra* with its direct identification of “seeing nature and becoming Buddha”, but as it happens in Huayan-Chan tradition of Zongmi, the Tangut text mentions neither Huineng, nor the *Platform Scripture*.<sup>58</sup> At the same time any other traces of Tangchang’s familiarity with Tiantai teaching are absent. His short discourse on the “one-thought” reads as follows: “Someone asked: ‘What is the approach of “one thought”?’<sup>59</sup> The Master said: ‘When object and wisdom are both absent, this approach emerges naturally.’ A question: ‘When wisdom and object are both absent, who is then to see the Buddha nature?’ The Master said: ‘When object and wisdom are absent then the

<sup>52</sup> Tentative translation: original Tangut expression is rendered as Chinese: 則一也. Tangut character translated here as “one” is not a numeral, so literary translation “will be one” hardly fits here. My translation is based on the context.

<sup>53</sup> I.e. the *pratyekabuddhas*. Chinese: 獨覺, Tangut: 2507, 3766.

<sup>54</sup> This dialogue is attributed to someone called 0650, 5559. Chinese: 宮香. Unidentified person.

<sup>55</sup> Interesting to mention, that exactly the same term 無念 was used by the Tangut Buddhist translators to render the concept of *mahamudra* (大手印).

<sup>56</sup> 如何修行則得成佛也? 師謂: 無念見體, 則自成佛也. 又問: 如何無念也? 師謂: 成佛無念.

<sup>57</sup> 見性佛也, 不見眾生也.

<sup>58</sup> *McRae J. The Northern School*, p. 5; 272.

<sup>59</sup> Chinese: 一念.

substance shines by itself, and you do not see yourself”.<sup>60</sup> In this context “the one-thought” represents the ultimate unity of the seer and his object and the overcoming of all the characteristics of the discriminative thought. Important here is the fact that Master Tangchang seems to treat “one-thought” in the same way the Huineng used to understand the “no-thought”: i.e. it plays the same role of transcending both “objects and mundane wisdom” in the same way “no-thought” in the *Platform Sutra* transcends objects and attachment to them.<sup>61</sup> What is even more relevant here is that “one-thought” is not treated as an ultimate goal of perfection, but as a method, one the expedient means (方便) of contemplation, somehow preparing the ultimate stage of “no-thought”, which is in fact attaining the Buddhahood. Therefore I am inclined to think that, in the specific Tangut context, “one-thought” could have been entitled to a part of the semantic field of “no-thought”, while the later gained a certain “soteriological implication”. More interesting in this respect is to find out, what sort of relationship exists between “no-thought” and “one-thought” in the Tangut text. Above observations are mere hints, which require further elaboration, or maybe even reconsideration.

Finally, there is the problem of the scholarly affiliation of *The Twenty-Five Answers*. In his final encounters, the State Preceptor Tangchang states quite unequivocally, that the doctrine he tries to preach belongs to the “Southern School” of Chan Buddhism. If one looks carefully through discussions the Master is conducting with his disciples, he will find out that for Tangchang the contradiction between “sudden and gradual” was limited to practice: as he puts it, using the parable from *Lankavatara-sutra*: “one can travel through the places (i.e. stages of perfection), or one can not travel through the places”. Yet again, the nature of the doctrine and practice is explained by Tangchang in a Huayan style: “Really, things do not hinder the principle,<sup>62</sup> and principle does not hinder the things.<sup>63</sup> Thus [one] practices every day and it does not contradict with the absence of practice — is there any practice which is not [fulfilled]?” (Encounter XXV). The mentioning of “things and principle” brings along Shenhui and Zongmi’s concepts again, together with possible Huayan affiliations of Master Tangchang’s thought. Of course, this brief discourse, alongside with his mentioning of “the six characteristics Huayan” (華嚴六相) elsewhere in the text, does not mean that Tangchang was a Huayan thinker, but rather implies his familiarity with Huayan concepts as is mentioned above. Yet again, I have tried to demonstrate that this “Southern School” is, on the one hand, affiliated with some of Zongmi’s concepts, and shows parallels, vague as they might seem, with the tradition represented by the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra*. Thus, “Southern affiliation” does not seem unfair. This affiliation embeds the State Preceptor Tangchang within the general framework of the Tangut Buddhism, which was dominated by Huayan paradigm in its Zongmi’s rendering.<sup>64</sup> In his last discourse the State Preceptor supports the superiority of his “Southern School”, though he tends to discuss it not in terms of “Northern-Southern” controversy, but rather identifies it through the opposition between the “Vehicles” of Sravaka and Pratyekabuddha. The Tangut were aware of “Northern-Southern” conflict through the writings of Zongmi, but apparently, the original meaning of the polemics had already been irrelevant to them. Both Shenhui and

<sup>60</sup> 或問：一念隨順者，何也？師謂：智境具無，自成隨順。問：境智具無，則誰見佛性？師謂：無境智則獨立照體，以自不見自也。

<sup>61</sup> For relevant fragments of the “*Platform Sutra*” see: *Nanzong dunjiao zuishang dacheng mohe banruo boluomi liuzu huinengdashi Fabao tanjing*: 351t et passim.

<sup>62</sup> Chinese: 事無礙理。

<sup>63</sup> Chinese: 理無礙事。

<sup>64</sup> Most of the Tangut texts, researched insofar (*The Essence of Hongzhou Lineage* (洪州宗趣要記), *The Mirror* (鏡), *The Meaning of the Complete Luminous Mind of the One Vehicle* (究竟一乘圓明心義), etc. actually demonstrated the Huayan-influenced mode of thinking.

Heze Shenhui were not the figures of primary importance for the Tangut: in the Tangut texts researched so far, Shenhui is mentioned once as the “founding Master Heze (荷澤宗師)”<sup>65</sup> and several times as “the Seventh Patriarch (第七祖)”<sup>66</sup> while Shenxiu is not mentioned anywhere outside of the Tangut translations of Zongmi’s *Preface to the Collection of the Sources of the Chan Truths*. I am inclined to think that the term “Southern School” in most of the Tangut Buddhist compilations does not bear any “sectarian” implications, but is rather a denomination of the “supreme teaching of Mahayana”. However, this point requires further investigation.

From the above, several tentative conclusions could be made. The researched texts demonstrate that Tangut Buddhism had preserved to a very substantial degree the Buddhist heritage of the Tang dynasty. At the same time, Buddhism in Xixia was isolated from the developments occurring in the mainland China, thus adhering to the trend set up by Dunhuang. This observation is vague, since at present there is no textual evidence allowing drawing a direct connection between Dunhuang and Xixia, aside from the Tangut translation of the *Platform Sutra*. However, one might still notice that late Tang Huayan-Chan tradition was probably dominant in Xixia, as it is confirmed both by the contents of several researched Buddhist treatises and by the general inventory of the extant texts from Khara-Khoto both in Chinese and in Tangut.<sup>67</sup> If one has to draw parallels to the Tangut texts that were briefly presented in this study, he should turn to such Chinese authors as Zongmi, Daochen, Baotang Wuzhu, Zhengguan and others, representing the late Tang and early Song Buddhism. Tangut texts demonstrated little or no familiarity with the contemporary Song Buddhist traditions<sup>68</sup> and might be considered anachronisms. These anachronisms are easily explained through a hypothesis of an independent Buddhist tradition in Northern China, where the elements of Tang Buddhism were preserved and developed.<sup>69</sup> Probably, a similar type of Mahayana tradition uniting various elements into a sort of amalgamation could have existed in early Tibet.<sup>70</sup> The doctrine of Heshang Mahayana as presented by Tibetan sources appears to be different from what was found in the Tangut texts: specifically, the polemics between sudden and gradual teachings in the Tangut texts are resorted to in a metaphorical, rather than literal sense. But the high degree of recognition of Bodhidharma’s treatise

<sup>65</sup> See: *Solonin K.J.* Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi, p. 96.

<sup>66</sup> See: *Solonin K.J.* Guifeng Zongmi and Tangut Chan Buddhism, translation of *The Mirror*.

<sup>67</sup> See: *Solonin K.J.* Po povodu tangutskikh chan-buddijskikh tekstov iz sobraniya SPbF IV RAN (Concerning the Tangut Chan Buddhist Texts from the Collection of St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences) // *Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie* (1995). No. 7; *Men'shikov L.N.* Opisanije kitaiskoj chasti kollekcii P.K. Kozlova iz Khara-Khoto.

<sup>68</sup> Most of the works of Song Buddhist literature (histories, genealogies, collections of *gongan*, revived Tiantai compilations) — all the genres believed to be representative of Song Buddhism (*Gregory P.* The Vitality of Buddhism in the Song // *Gregory P. and Getz D.* (eds.). *Buddhism in the Sung. Studies in East Asian Buddhism* 13 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), p. 4–6, are neither found in Tangut translations, nor mentioned in the presently researched texts.

<sup>69</sup> This suggestion is applicable to Huayan tradition, which was preserved in Wutaishan during the Song and even enjoyed some short revival due to the works of Chengqian (承遷) and Jinshui Jingyuan (晉水淨 1011–1088), who authored a commentary on the *Golden Lion of Huayan* (註華嚴金獅子章, T. 45, #1881), which is available in Tangut translation as well. (See: *Solonin K.J.* Tangut Chan Buddhism and Guifeng Zongmi; *Gimello R.* The Glimpses of Wutai-shan at Early Ch’in Dynasty: The Testimony of Ch’u Pien // *Zhonghua foxue xuebao* 中華佛學學報. Vol. 11 (1998), p. 509–510.

<sup>70</sup> For the review of the study of the Tibetan Chan tradition, see: *Daishun Ueyama.* The Study of Tibetan Chan Manuscripts, Recovered from Dunhuang. The Prospects of the Field // *Lancaster L. and Lai W.* (eds.). *Early Chan in China and Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Some suggestions about the existence of a specific Tibetan Chan connected with Heshang Mahayana were made by Shen Weirong: *Shen Weirong* 沈衛榮. Xizangwen wenxianzhongde heshang Moheyan jiqi jiaofa — yige chuanguo chulaide chuantong 西藏文獻中的和尙摩訶衍及其教法: 一個創造出來的傳統 // *Xin shixue* 新史學. 16. 1 (2005), p. 140–149.

within Heshang Mahayana's<sup>71</sup> tradition and Tangut Buddhism<sup>72</sup> allow suggestion that the emergence of the two traditions employed similar mechanism of amalgamation of several Chan traditions into a more or less coherent whole.

Another research has once demonstrated proximity and direct connections between Tangut and Khitan Buddhism: Tangut Buddhist text *The Mirror*, which also widely employs Chan-Huayan paradigm, is extremely close to the writings Khitan Buddhist master Daochen.<sup>73</sup> I do not think, however, that we are dealing with direct borrowings, this is rather a common tradition of Northern Chinese Buddhism<sup>74</sup> in the time prior to Mongol invasion. One of the characteristics of this alleged tradition of Buddhism was the persistent influence of Zongmi's doctrines, the domination of Huayan-Chan thought which developed its own classification of teachings scheme and provided new interpretations for a number of Buddhist traditions that were becoming dominant in the late Tang period (i.e. Hongzhou School).<sup>75</sup> Still new theoretical developments were made, probably involving a new understanding of the "substance-function paradigm" (體用) in Zongmi's threefold rendering, in an attempt to achieve a certain type of reconciliation between Zongmi Heze Chan lineage and Mazu traditions.<sup>76</sup>

The conservative nature of the Buddhist tradition in the Northern China might partially be explained through political reasons: almost permanent warfare in the region of the Great Loop of Yellow River, engaging Song, Xixia, Liao and later Jin probably hindered "cultural exchange", although the relationships never completely ceased. More important, though, is the fact that Buddhism in Northern China, basing itself on profound Huayan philosophy and adopting elements of Chan and Buddhist Esoteric Buddhism was becoming more and more self-sufficient, evolving into the national faith of Khitan, Tangut and later Jurchen peoples. Thus, Huayan thought constituted the backbone, on which various Buddhist practices, including Chan and esoteric schools were resting. Judging from textual examples partially presented in this study, the Tangut thinkers were able to produce sophisticated discourses on various Buddhist topics remaining within the domain of Tang Buddhist thought, adapting to the realities of preaching Dharma among their people. Therefore, as far as Chan Buddhism can be represented separately from other Buddhist traditions current in Xixia, I am inclined to think that the Tangut text analyzed here could be considered a testimony to the emergence of a separate "lineage" (宗)<sup>77</sup> with its own authenticity and source of author-

<sup>71</sup> Shen Weirong, *ibid.*, p. 146–148.

<sup>72</sup> This problem is briefly discussed in: Solonin K.J. Tangut Chan Buddhism and Guifeng Zongmi. One of the Tangut texts (*The Mirror*) fully incorporates the Bodhidharma's treatise of "Two Entrances and Four Practices" into the body of the text. Also a number of separate editions of the texts were located within the Tangut holdings in St. Petersburg.

<sup>73</sup> Daochen is an enigmatic person — everything, starting from his life dates up to the correct form of his monastic name appears mysterious. In the postface to his only surviving work, *The Collection of the Most Important Notes concerning the Attaining of the Buddha-mind according to Round and Penetrating Teachings of Esoteric and Exoteric Buddhism* (顯密圓通成佛心要集), his life dates remain undetermined insofar and various sources and accounts place him within a large span from Tang to Yuan dynasties. Most likely, however, is that the master lived somewhere between 1056 and 1114.

<sup>74</sup> I think that Korea, probably, belonged to the same Buddhist realm, at least partially, due to the role the works of Zongmi had played in the formation of Korean Son tradition (see: Broughton J. Tsung-mi's *Zen Prolegomenon*: Introduction to an Exemplary Zen Canon // Heine S., Wright D. (eds.). *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 38–39).

<sup>75</sup> This type of constructing tradition might be seen as characteristic of Tang approach with its quest for unity, rather than of Song time attempt to present Chan as a single tradition with many offsprings.

<sup>76</sup> Solonin K.J. Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi, p. 93–99 et passim.

<sup>77</sup> Here I use the term *zong* 宗 in a broad sense of a complex set of Buddhist beliefs and ideas, shared by devotees and thinkers in a certain area during a certain period of time. For other variants of interpretation of the term

ity. This, however, should be corroborated with other textual evidence both from Chinese and Tangut sources. Therefore, there is hardly a possibility to discourse about Chan Buddhism in Xixia in a generalizing way, as one might do about Chan Buddhism of the Song. One should rather suspect the existence of a specific Chan-Huayan tradition which was current in the Northern China, including Xixia and constituted part of a bigger integrated whole of various Buddhist practices on the stem of Huayan thought. Talking about the supposed “separate Chan lineage” in Xixia, one is not able to reconstruct the actual order of succession with all its possible implications due to the lack of textual material, but figures of Huineng, Shenhui and Zongmi can be determined as the founding teachers for the tradition.<sup>78</sup>

The type of reconstruction of Tangut texts presented here remains a tentative construct, both due to linguistic and historical reasons: our current level of knowledge of Tangut language, including Buddhist terminology, does not allow any definite conclusions based solidly on linguistic material: every translation remains to a certain degree tentative. The present study is a part of a broader project, but still the number of texts involved and my Tangut ability remain limited; therefore the conclusions presented here can change overnight. Thus results of the present study are by no means final; in fact they only indicate the problem rather than solve it. The perspective of the research of Tangut Buddhism, as I see it, has to concentrate on the further clarification of the actual contents of the Buddhist faith in the Northern China prior to the Mongol times, especially in its “esoteric dimension”. Textual material preserved within the Khara-Khoto collection both in Chinese and Tangut languages provides sufficient basis for this type of research.

### Chinese rendering

#### *of The Twenty-Five Answers to the Questions on the Buddhist Principles, Posed by the Monks before the State Preceptor Tangchang While [He] was Staying in the Palace of Light Monastery*

The text presented below is a not exactly a translation of the Tangut original into Chinese, but rather an attempt to reconstruct a Chinese version. I tried to follow both Tangut grammar and Chinese sentence structure, but not always successfully. Therefore one should deal with this text with care and resort to the attached English translation.

[1a] 唐昌國師住光殿眾舍中時眾人問佛理二十五問答後序

道本非道，智人權立道；名本無名，智人權說名。令有道，則世中[之]道也；令有名，則世中[之]名也。有道則相也，[而]相非究竟；有名則沉也，[而]沉非自主。聖人謂：“我道非道，我名無名。我名不起，我道不滅，不集 [1b] 不散。無是[亦]無非。便此故道也。”道者，以思無所量，以念無所求。精者不能見，廣學者自不識。如何也？道者，眾生之本心也故也。本心滅相，便得自主。聖者隨夢識設立道名。道者，不修而自成，不學而自妙，觀而不能獲，知而無所解，世中法不有所譬。隨此聖者引以虛空譬量，[2a] 而無所平等，謂多[而]道遠。

I 或問：佛謂：“見性成佛”者，其理如何？師謂：本性能照者，見也。本性能見[而]當無有見者，照也。此順，立功無盡者，性也。如此“見性成佛”也。又問：生住異滅四相，理者何也？師謂：能見一念則生理是也。永見乃至成佛者，住理也

see: Welter A. The Problem of Orthodoxy in Zen: Yongming Yanshou's Notion of *zong* in *Zinging lu* (Records of the Source Mirror) // *Studies in Religion* 31/1 (2002), p. 3–18.

<sup>78</sup> Huayan methodological affiliation of Tangut Buddhist compilation I now take for granted. See: *Solonin K.J.* Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi; *idem.* Tang Heritage of Tangut Buddhism; *idem.* Guifeng Zongmi and Tangut Chan Buddhism.

2b 見體性也，性者道也。道者功也，功者佛也。此者異理也。見性本來虛寂，當不有見，見自無見，便滅理也。問者承受此[而]求學。

II 或問：弟子起心時不得常照，間間續斷，當何理也？師謂：續斷知呼？子謂：知。師謂：知則此也。住知不做意爲。住知意爲，則此知自成妄。見本性清真實 3a 道源也。知見本性則此自斷。往性譬水如起浪：何罪，水之濕？不知性本來不動斷，則未及學也。問者斷疑歡喜而去。

III 或問：維摩經謂：“住調伏心則聲聞法也，不住調伏心則愚人法也。住調伏不調伏心則菩薩法也”。諸佛法者何也？師謂：能見此三調伏者，隨妄知起 3b 也。自見體本來無妄者，則佛法也。問者謂：“甚，不可思議也”。

IV 或問：戒定慧者，何也？師謂：見性寂靜者，戒也。見性寂靜，體無邊界，流世[而]不往，真真不動者，定也。體性無邊，譬如玻璃，內外光明，行互無礙者，慧也。問者謂：千萬眾生無一解此。自古苦勞，豈有所說？

V 或問：4a 如何修行則得成佛也？師謂：無念見體，則自成佛也。又問：如何無念也？師謂：成佛無念。又問：不成佛念者，何也？師謂：佛說：“當無得至少法念則阿鞞菩提也。”問者歡喜而去。

VI 或問：經典中說：“以割身節，出血，救俗[之]爲供養”，則得成佛？師謂：不得。[又問]：何以不得？師謂：成佛者，心也。4b 解節者，身也。身者，地水火風也，何得成佛？又問：非此謂，則如何得？師謂：見性自得。又問：性像與何物？師謂：無像[之]物也。又問：當何理？師謂：見則便見，不見則又以知思不有所得。

VII 或問：三大阿僧伽劫者何也？師謂：貪真癡也。又問：如何滅斷？師謂：斷者，妄也。多劫三毒本來自 5a 空。知此理，則此順自斷。悟此斷者唯得天生。欲成佛，則隨知行心。佛說：“以不斷煩惱入於涅槃。”諸弟子等不見性本無生，欲以起心斷煩惱，不知起斷[煩惱之]心者自煩惱心也。此故成纏，[而]不得解脫。今修者唯不起心，無動念則此順解脫也。

VIII 或問：眾生得成佛？師謂：不得。又問：眾 5b 生不得，則成佛者誰？師謂：眾生妄也。住四相而得成佛乎？成佛者者，眾生之本性也。又問：眾生本性似與何物也？師謂：本性無似物，世中無所譬，豈有所量似？

IX 或仙人問師學道。師謂：汝道如何？仙謂：道者空寂之氣也。飲露食藥，清○脫泥，養長魂識也。師謂：不慧道耶。6a 今我說道，汝聽耶。此順道者，一切眾生之本性也。見本性，則自主寂樂。此道玄妙，看時不見，聽時不聞，求時不得，諸人日日行，一切不知，玄中最玄，眾妙門也。得者常住，識者不纏，能者常樂，因此理則便道也。仙謂：禪師何殊妙耶也。

X 或問師：汝觀清耶？師謂：清觀 6b 妄也。又問：如何成佛？師謂：自體本清，清觀豈用？若觀清則心起也。心起成纏。纏則墮也。當無起心，知本清則便成佛也。

XI 或問：八解脫者何也？師謂：八識者，八解脫心也。又問：佛有八識？師謂：佛有。又問：眾生有？師謂：有。又問：雖然一樣有八識，爲何佛得解脫，[而]眾生不解脫 7a 也？師謂：眾生隨境流轉，佛不轉隨境，故便體理如此也。

XII 或問：如何得出三界？師謂：見心與三世不拘繫則出三界也。不念過去，未來無念，渡現在[之]念，[而]出三界也。

XIII 或問：“眾生佛也，佛眾生也”者，其理如何？師謂：見性佛也，不見眾生也。其理此如。

XIV 或問：隨定入慧，則一也？師謂：不 7b 也。[又問]隨慧入定一也？師謂：不也。[又問]：此者如何？師謂：隨定入慧，則聲聞法也；隨慧入定，則獨覺法也。定慧平等，則菩薩法也。正定不有定，正慧無慧[之]相。此者佛法也。

XV 或問：體者何也？性者如何也？一也耶？異也？師謂：隨體一也；隨性異也。8a [又問]：此者如何？師謂：體如銅，性如鏡，此故異也。又問：鏡以銅[所]爲，何爲異也？師謂：鏡者，雖然銅也，[其]不能照物，磨成鏡時，便[其]能照物也。

此隨異也。一切眾生皆有佛性，用大善知識定指示，便見本心。見本心後，自起精修，便得照明清，宣示是非，無分別[之]心，不受小塵。萬相令顯而非來彼，鏡體常照而非往此。萬相亂亂，鏡體 [8b] 寂寂，不有往來，亦無彼此。修者起心，當和隨此，諸佛性亦與此一樣。

XVI 或問：弟子實起心時，此順成空寂者一也？師謂：見空寂則唯意[之]爲也。又問：當何理？師謂：修者，汝實起心時當無見見。何見空寂？當得佛謂：無少法則阿鞞菩提也。

XVII 或問：覺起[之]妄，得解脫？師謂：不 [9a] 得。又問：滅妄，滅覺則得？師謂：不得。[又問]：如何得也？師謂：隨妄知[而]成妄，隨覺知[而]成覺。自心空寂[而]不住知，則實空寂佛心也。其理亦如此也。

XVIII 或問：眾生爲罪，則地獄一墮？師謂：墮。又問：佛性一墮？師謂：墮。又問：眾生墮則受苦，佛性墮者，受不受苦？師謂：佛性不受苦。又問：何因也，受也，不 [9b] 受也？師謂：譬如金器融於火爐[之]內，器相損壞，金性此順本來不變。不變則本定也。本定則成常[之]名。金常則亦無損壞，當豈有受[苦]？

XIX 或問：定慧平等理者何也？師謂：性不動則定也。能見不動者，慧也。行行此順無跡則平等也。此隨能照本性，則見佛性也。

XX 或問：凡佛如何成？師 [10a] 謂：佛外眾生也，時不念。此所解脫。問：如何隨順得？師謂一切善惡皆不思，則自見佛性，得隨順也。

XXI 或問：本來出家，欲成佛故也。如何以心行得成佛？師謂：當行無心，自得成佛。問：若無心，則誰成佛也？師謂：無心自成佛，成佛亦無心。問：佛大慈大悲有不可思議[之]力，能渡眾生。 [10b] 若無心，則誰渡眾生？師謂：得無心則真渡眾生也。若當渡，見眾生，則成有心。若心實有，則死生也。問：若無心，則斷見或成？師謂：本無妄心，魂知不斷，邪見何成？

XXII 或問：一念隨順者，何也？師謂：智境具無，自成隨順。問：境智具無，則誰見佛性？師謂：無境智則獨立照體，以自不見自也。 [11a]

XXIII 或問：眾生與佛性無差別，則一人修行成佛時，一切眾生等等時皆應解脫。今不如此者，其理如何？師謂：汝不如見華嚴六相[之]理耶。同中有異，異中有同，成中有壞，壞中有成，共中有別，別中有共。眾生與佛同一性，而相互不共礙，力才不等，自修自得。光或？鏡，自永 [11b] 不滿。譬一切禽類等共一空界，隨[其]才不等當證[其]異[與]空。無翼翅？者，雖住空界，不離與地。集翅？亦有高低，故證空順別。鳳凰禽才至空邊，則假如是外禽等與此比，豈所有？便一切眾生共一佛性，知才不等，亦與此一樣。

XXIV 或問：修禪滅心罪如何？師謂：汝身心中稍稍觀耶。五 [12a] 蘊，十二處，十八界，也也，根本小物一有所得？答爲：今身心稍稍觀，見當得一物，不如有。師謂：汝已成身心相[之]壞？答謂：當滅壞身心自相，何有？師謂：汝身心以外有異事？答謂：身心自無中，豈有外事？師謂：汝已成世中相[之]壞？答謂：世中相無自相，豈用壞？師謂：如此 [12b] 汝今滅罪也。問者隨此照悟，贊謂：不可思議，[乃]承教學。

XXV 或問：如此悟見後，以游住修行[有]用耶？師謂：以游住修亦有可，以不游住修亦有可。楞伽經謂：“起於一地，雖非及一地，真實寂滅豈有住次？”思益經謂：“若人聞正性，則不起於一地至於一地也。此人不依生死，不住 [13a] 涅槃。”又楞伽經偈謂：“初入一，不還阿羅漢，此如諸天聖人，皆隨妄心有。”若隨上才理諦也，則當無實相之理，清靜覺心實行住。若隨世俗方便門，則遊住亦不有障礙。凡以事不礙理，以理不礙事，理事無礙，則日日以行不逆與無行，豈有所不修？若凝事迷理，凝理迷事， [13b] 則何得隨順？非此謂也。問：此法門者，有名相？師謂：此法門本來不有名相。無名相中，立虛名相。此法門名者金剛三昧，[其]無壞也。又名首楞嚴三昧，無勝度也。又名法性三昧，[其]無轉變也。又名解脫三昧，[其]無纏縛也。能解此理，則金剛大人，無能伏[其之]人。問：金剛 [14a] 大人有何功力？師謂：其之功德唯佛能知，隨一念順時，能離恒沙煩惱，當不有遺，能

集恒沙功德，[而]不有不全。[其]成諸天八部龍神等之守護。往處無礙。[其]如獅子王智慧，如光明大日。又，生所憂，本自無生，滅所優，本自不滅。華嚴經謂：“一切法不生，一切法不滅，若能悟此，則諸 **[14b]** 佛實現前。”此南宗心地法門以外，有異一少小法言，則此者未滅無明障礙之人也。又有種種法。心以外難論人者，大迷也在。何在？如此人與語當不二，諸修者當增當增。  
唐昌國師住光殿眾舍中時眾人問佛理二十五問答 竟。

**(1a) *Twenty-Five Answers to the Questions on the Buddhist Principles, Posed by the Monks before the State Preceptor Tangchang While He Was Staying in the Palace of Light Monastery***<sup>79</sup>

Foreword<sup>80</sup>

The Way essentially is not the Way; the Way had been temporarily<sup>81</sup> established by the Sages. The name essentially has no name; the Sages had temporarily spoken [about] the names. If there was the Way, it would have been the mundane Way; if there was a name, it would have been the mundane name. If there is the Way, then there is characteristic; [and] characteristics are not ultimate. If there is a name, there is submerging<sup>82</sup> [into the world]; [and submerging] is not self-governing.<sup>83</sup> The Sages say: “My Way is not the Way. My name has no name. My name does not emerge, my Way is not extinguished. [The Way] does not assemble (1b) or disintegrate, does not have yes and no.<sup>84</sup> That is why it is the Way.” The Way cannot be measured by thinking, or sought by thought. Industrious<sup>85</sup> cannot see it; those with broad learning themselves do not know it. Why? Because the Way is the essential mind<sup>86</sup> of the living beings. The essential mind transcends the characteristics and reaches sovereignty.<sup>87</sup> The sages established the Way and its name following [the requirements] of the mind which abides in a dream.<sup>88</sup> The Way, [you] do not practice it and it is established by itself; do not learn it and it becomes miraculous by itself; [you] contemplate<sup>89</sup> it, but cannot get<sup>90</sup> it; [you] know it but do not understand it, among the things in the world, nothing can be compared to it. Following this the Sages used “the Void” to compare with it; (2a) [but still] there is nothing to be equal to it. The words are many and the Way is far away.

I. Someone<sup>91</sup> asked: “What is the meaning of ‘seeing nature and becoming the Buddha?’ The Master said: “Essential nature can reflect<sup>92</sup> — that is seeing. The essential nature can see, and there must be no views — that is the reflection. According to this, inexhaustible merits are established — that is the nature. That is ‘seeing nature and becoming Buddha.’” [Someone] asked again: “What is the meaning of the four characteristics<sup>93</sup> of living, abiding,

<sup>79</sup> Chinese: 唐昌國師住光殿眾舍中時眾人問佛理二十五問答.

<sup>80</sup> Chinese: 後序.

<sup>81</sup> Chinese: 權.

<sup>82</sup> Chinese: 沉.

<sup>83</sup> Chinese: 自主.

<sup>84</sup> Chinese: 無是無非.

<sup>85</sup> Chinese: 精者.

<sup>86</sup> Chinese: 本心.

<sup>87</sup> Chinese: 自主.

<sup>88</sup> Chinese: 夢識.

<sup>89</sup> Chinese: 觀.

<sup>90</sup> Chinese: 獲.

<sup>91</sup> Tangut text features here, which is closer to Chinese: 他 (different person).

<sup>92</sup> Chinese: 照.

<sup>93</sup> Chinese: 四相.



difference and extinction?”<sup>94</sup> The Master said: “Being able to see the ‘one-thought’<sup>95</sup> is the meaning of living. From eternal views<sup>96</sup> to becoming the Buddha is the meaning of abiding. (2b) Seeing the substance is the nature, the nature is the Way, the Way is merit and merit is Buddha — this is the meaning of difference. Seeing that the nature is essentially tranquil and empty, absence of views and not seeing oneself are the meaning of extinction.” The asker accepted this and asked for instruction.<sup>97</sup>

II. Someone asked: “When disciples establish the intentions,<sup>98</sup> [their concentration] is interrupted<sup>99</sup> every now and then.<sup>100</sup> What is the meaning of this?” The Master said: “[You] know about the interruption?” The disciple said: “[I] know”. The Master said: “If [you] know, then it is like that: Abide in the knowledge and do not create the actions of mind.<sup>101</sup> If [you] abide in the knowledge and [your] minds [continues] actions, then the knowledge will be itself turned into delusion.<sup>102</sup> Seeing the purity of the essential nature is the (3a) source of the True Way. If [you] know the essential nature, it (delusion — K.S.) will be extinguished naturally. The nature of leaving<sup>103</sup> may be compared with the water which produces the waves: what crime is in the humidity of water? [You] do not know that the nature essentially does not move and cannot be interrupted, that is why [you] have not learned anything.” The asker had his doubts extinguished, and left with joy.

III. Someone asked: “*Vimalakirti-sutra*<sup>104</sup> says: ‘Abiding in the regulated and suppressed<sup>105</sup> mind is the Dharma of the Listeners to the Voice.<sup>106</sup> Not abiding in the regulated and suppressed mind is the Dharma of the stupid.<sup>107</sup> Abiding in regulated and suppressed mind and not in regulated and suppressed mind is the Dharma of bodhisattvas.’<sup>108</sup> What is the Dharma of Buddhas?” The Master said: “Being able to see that the three regulations and suppressions arise from the deluded mind. (3b) If [you] see by yourself that the substance originally does not have delusions that will be the Dharma of Buddha.” The asker said: “How extremely profound<sup>109</sup> this is.”<sup>110</sup>

IV. Someone asked: “What are precepts, concentration and wisdom?”<sup>111</sup> The Master said: “Seeing that the nature is pure and tranquil is precepts. Seeing that nature is tranquil and

<sup>94</sup> Chinese: 生, 住, 異, 滅.

<sup>95</sup> Chinese: 一念.

<sup>96</sup> Chinese: 永見.

<sup>97</sup> Tangut text 唐中?國師住光殿眾舍中時眾人問佛理二十五問答 is used for reference here. Strangely enough, this text features a different reading for the name of the main person. The mentioned text (further referred to as *Zhong*) connects a longer version of this encounter. The Chinese for that compound must be: 開?郡國王. Thus that might be translated as: “The king of the Kaikhiwan Kingdom” or, considering the semantics of the text, “the king of Kai area”. This reconstruction is rather tentative and the place-name is unidentified.

<sup>98</sup> Chinese: 起心, 發心.

<sup>99</sup> Chinese: 續斷.

<sup>100</sup> Chinese: 間間.

<sup>101</sup> Chinese: 意爲.

<sup>102</sup> Chinese: 妄.

<sup>103</sup> Chinese: 往性.

<sup>104</sup> Chinese: 維摩經. The Tangut quotation is close to the Chinese original: 若不住調伏心是愚人法, 若住調伏心是聲聞法, 事故菩薩不當住調伏步調伏心. (cf. 維摩詰所說經, j. 2, ch. 5. T.). Chinese reconstruction of the Tangut texts reads as follows: 住調伏心則聲聞法也, 不住調伏心則愚人法也. 住調伏不調伏心則菩薩法也.

<sup>105</sup> Chinese: 調伏.

<sup>106</sup> Chinese: 聲聞.

<sup>107</sup> Chinese: 愚.

<sup>108</sup> Chinese: 菩薩.

<sup>109</sup> Chinese: 不可思議.

<sup>110</sup> Not found in the *Zhong* text.

<sup>111</sup> Chinese: 戒定慧.

pure, and the substance has no limit,<sup>112</sup> it transforms in the world and does not leave [it], [that it is] truly unmovable is concentration. [When] substance and nature have no limits, when light [penetrates] inside and outside like through the glass — that is wisdom.” The asker said: “Among the myriad of the living beings there is not one who understands this. From ancient times [the living beings] are exhausted in futility.<sup>113</sup> What is there left to say?”<sup>114</sup>

V. Somebody asked: “How should one act<sup>115</sup> (4a) to become a Buddha?” The Master said: “No thought<sup>116</sup> and seeing substance — then [you] will become Buddha.” [Practitioner] asked again: “What is no thought?” The Master said: “Become Buddha and there will be no thought.” Another question: “What are the thoughts of those who had not yet become Buddhas?” The Master said: “Buddha said: ‘There should not be the thoughts even about the smallest and most scarce dharmas.’ That is anubodhi.”<sup>117</sup> The asker left with joy.<sup>118</sup>

VI. Someone asked: “The sutra says: ‘Dismember<sup>119</sup> the limbs and joints of the body,<sup>120</sup> let out the blood<sup>121</sup> and save the people<sup>122</sup> as worship.’<sup>123</sup> Will [one] become Buddha [if he does so]?” The Master said: “No.” [He was asked again]: “Why not?” The master said: “What becomes Buddha is mind. Limbs and joints (4b) are the body. The body is earth, water, fire and wind, how can it become Buddha?” Another question: “If not according to these words, then how [can one become Buddha]?” The Master said: “See the nature and it will come naturally.” Another question: “What thing does the nature look like?” The master said: “There is nothing for it to look like.” Another question: “What does this mean?” The Master said: “You see it when you see it. You do not see it, [you still] cannot conceive it through the thought.”<sup>124</sup>

VII. Someone asked: “What are the three great *asangheyas*?”<sup>125</sup> The master said: “[They] are greed, wrath and stupidity.” [Practitioner] asked again: “How to eliminate them?” The Master said: “Elimination is a delusion. During many *kalpas* the three poisons were essentially (5a) empty. [If you] understand this principle, [they] will disappear by themselves according to this. Those who understand this extinction [of the three poisons] will only receive the birth in Heaven [as retribution]. [Those who] desire Buddhahood might awaken their mind to follow the wisdom. Buddha said: ‘Not eliminate the delusions and enter nirvana.’ The disciples do not see that the nature initially is not born and wish to awaken their minds to eliminate delusions. [They] do not know that the mind which is awakened to eliminate [delusions] is a delusion itself. That is how the cuffs emerge and there is no lib-

<sup>112</sup> Chinese: 邊界.

<sup>113</sup> Chinese: 自古勞苦.

<sup>114</sup> *Zhong* text connects this encounter with the name of 田張魚. Interesting enough is that Tangut constitute the Tangut version of “Khotan” (Chinese: 於闐). A commentary for the *Zhong* text also calls him 孫張昌. The reconstructions are necessarily tentative and the persons remain unidentified.

<sup>115</sup> Chinese: 修行. The translation “to act” was chosen here for the sake of smoothness.

<sup>116</sup> Chinese: 無念.

<sup>117</sup> Chinese: 阿弩菩提.

<sup>118</sup> According to *Zhong* text, this encounter is connected with 圓威(?) also called 田成(?).

<sup>119</sup> Chinese: 割.

<sup>120</sup> Chinese: 身枝節.

<sup>121</sup> Chinese: 出血.

<sup>122</sup> Chinese: 救俗.

<sup>123</sup> Chinese: 供養.

<sup>124</sup> *Zhong* text connects this encounter with the name of 中尙苟支(?). The character remains unidentified.

<sup>125</sup> The three great *asangheya kalpas*. Chinese: 阿僧伽劫.

eration. Now the practitioners [should] not awaken their minds and through non active thought<sup>126</sup> [will] the liberation [be achieved.]”<sup>127</sup>

VIII. Someone asked: “Are the living beings about to become Buddhas?” The Master said: “No.” Another question: “If the living (5b) beings are not, then who is going to become Buddha?” The master said: “The living beings are an illusion. [They] abide in the four characteristics, how is that that they become Buddhas? What is going to become Buddha is the essential nature of the living beings.” Another question: “What thing does the essential nature of the living beings look like?” The Master said: “It does not look like anything, there is nothing in the world to compare to it, and how can we measure it through resemblance?”<sup>128</sup>

IX. Some immortal<sup>129</sup> asked the Master about learning the Way. The Master said: “What is your Way?” Immortal said: “The Way is the *qi*<sup>130</sup> of emptiness and tranquility. [We] drink the dew<sup>131</sup> and eat the medicine,<sup>132</sup> purify and abandon the mud,<sup>133</sup> feed and grow the mind and spirit.”<sup>134</sup> The master said: “[You] do not understand<sup>135</sup> the Way. (6a) Today I will tell [you] about the Way and you will listen. According to this, the Way is the essential nature of all the living beings. See the essential nature and attain sovereignty over yourself and tranquil joy. This Way is profound and miraculous,<sup>136</sup> [you] look at it and do not see, listen to it and do not hear, look for it and never get it. People follow it daily and nobody knows [about it]. It is the most profound among the profound, the door to all the miracles. Those who get it abide in permanence, those who understand it are not cuffed, those who can [follow it] are in permanent joy. Because of that truth it is the Way.” The immortal said: “How outstanding<sup>137</sup> is the Chan master!”<sup>138</sup>

X. Someone asked the Master: “Do you contemplate the purity?”<sup>139</sup> The Master said: “Contemplation of the purity (6b) is illusion.” Another question: “How to become Buddha?” The master said: “The self-substance is essentially pure, what is the use of contemplating purity? If one contemplates purity, the mind will rise [to action]. The mind rises and cuffs appear. Cuffs are the fall (to the Hell). One should not arise mind, understand the original purity and then [you] will become Buddha.”<sup>140</sup>

XI. Someone asked: “What are the eight liberations?”<sup>141</sup> The Master said: “The eight consciousnesses are the mind of eight liberations.” Another question: “Does Buddha have

<sup>126</sup> Chinese: 無動念.

<sup>127</sup> In this encounter the Master talks to someone mentioned as 富. The texts further mentions his name as 平尙(?).

<sup>128</sup> According to the “Zhong” texts this part is the continuation of the previous encounter.

<sup>129</sup> A Taoist practitioner. Chinese: 仙人.

<sup>130</sup> Chinese: 氣.

<sup>131</sup> Chinese: 飲露.

<sup>132</sup> Chinese: 食藥.

<sup>133</sup> Chinese: 脫泥.

<sup>134</sup> Chinese: 養長魂識.

<sup>135</sup> Chinese: 慧.

<sup>136</sup> Chinese: 玄妙.

<sup>137</sup> Chinese: 殊妙.

<sup>138</sup> In the *Zhong* text this dialogue is taking place between the master and disciple of Xiangshan 相山(?). The disciple’s name is 孫勒田(?). Xiangshan is mentioned in another Tangut Buddhist text on the Doctrine of Hongzhou Masters (see: *Solonin K.J.* Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zong-mi (780–841): A Tangut Source // *Asia Major*. 3 series, 16. 2 (2003), p. 57–103). The identification of the two is tempting but requires more solid evidence.

<sup>139</sup> Chinese: 清觀.

<sup>140</sup> The *Zhong* texts attributes this encounter to 穎布(?). Actually, the second character in the compound is semantic rather than phonetic and means “victory”.

<sup>141</sup> Chinese: 八解脫.

eight consciousnesses?” The Master said: “The Buddha has [them].” Another question: “Do the living beings have [them]?” The Master said: “[They] have [it].” Another question: “Although [the Buddha and the living beings] similarly have eight consciousnesses, why is that that the Buddha attained the liberation, and the living beings are not liberated?” (7a) The Master said: “The living beings flow and transform following the objects<sup>142</sup> and the Buddha does not flow and transform following the objects. That is the essential meaning.”<sup>143</sup>

XII. Someone asked: “How to leave the three realms?”<sup>144</sup> The Master said: “See that the mind is not attached<sup>145</sup> to the three realms, and then you will leave the three realms. Do not think about the past, no thoughts about the future, transcend the thoughts of the present, and then [you will] leave the three realms.”<sup>146</sup>

XIII. Someone asked: “The Buddha is the living beings, the living beings are the Buddha. What is the meaning of this?” The Master said: “[If you] see the nature, then [you are] the Buddha, [if you] do not see the nature, [then you belong to] the living beings. That is what it means.”<sup>147</sup>

XIV. Someone asked: “Enter the wisdom following the concentration, is that right?”<sup>148</sup> The Master said: “No, it is not.” (7b) [Another question]: “Entering the concentration following the wisdom, will that be right?” The Master said: “No, it will not be.” [Another question]: “Why is that?” The Master said: “To enter concentration following the wisdom is the Dharma of the Listeners to the Voice. To enter wisdom following the concentration is the Dharma of the Enlightened by themselves.<sup>149</sup> Concentration and wisdom are equal and this is the Dharma of Bodhisattvas. The true concentration does not have [the characteristic] of concentration, the true wisdom does not have the characteristic of wisdom. This is the Dharma of the Buddha.”<sup>150</sup>

XV. Someone asked: “Substance,<sup>151</sup> what is it? Nature,<sup>152</sup> what is it? Are they the same? Or different?” The Master said: “Looking from substance they are one, looking from nature they are different.” (8a) [Another question]: “How is that?” The Master said: “The substance is like bronze, the nature is like a mirror, and this is why [they] are different.” [Another question]: “Mirrors are made out of bronze, why are they different?” The master said: “A mirror, although it is made out of bronze, [the bronze] cannot reflect things. When [the bronze] is polished into becoming a mirror, then it is able to reflect things. That is why [substance and nature] are different. All the living beings possess Buddha nature; using the directions from the great benevolent friends [the living beings] see their essential mind. After they see the essential mind, industrious perfection emerges by itself, and [the mind of the living beings] reflects the purity and sees clearly right and wrong.<sup>153</sup> [Then] there is no mind of discrimination, [the living beings] are not influenced even by the finest dust. The ten thousand characteristics become clear and there is no ‘coming there’. The substance of the mirror shines permanently and there is no ‘leaving here’. The ten thousand characteristics are in disorder, but the substance of the mirror is (8b) tranquil, there is no coming and

<sup>142</sup> Chinese: 境.

<sup>143</sup> In this section the Master talks to someone whose family name is 彦(?). His name is featured as 清華.

<sup>144</sup> Chinese: 三界.

<sup>145</sup> Chinese: 拘繫.

<sup>146</sup> The *Zhong* text attributes the encounter to 須彥(?).

<sup>147</sup> The *Zhong* text connects this dialogue with someone known as 天女.

<sup>148</sup> See Note 52.

<sup>149</sup> I.e. the *pratyekabuddhas* 獨覺.

<sup>150</sup> This dialogue is attributed to someone called 宮香. Unidentified character.

<sup>151</sup> Chinese: 體.

<sup>152</sup> Chinese: 性.

<sup>153</sup> Chinese: 宣示是非.

leaving, no here and there. When the practitioners awaken their minds, they should proceed in accordance with this. The nature of the Buddhas is the same with that.”<sup>154</sup>

XVI. Someone asked: “When the disciples truly awaken their minds, will there be tranquility and emptiness?” The Master said: “Seeing tranquility and emptiness is solely the act of mind.”<sup>155</sup> Another question: “What does that mean?” The Master said: “Practitioners, when you truly awaken the mind, [you] must have no views. How to see tranquility and emptiness? Understand the words of Buddha: ‘[If there is not a smallest dharma, then it is *anubodhi*’.”<sup>156</sup>

XVII. Someone asked: “When [one] realizes the emergence of delusions, will there be liberation?” The Master said: (9a) “There will be none.” Another question: “When delusions are removed, awakening is removed, and then will there be [liberation]?” The Master said: “There will be none.” [Another question]: “How to attain [it]?” The Master said: “The wisdom of delusions produces delusion, the wisdom of awakening produces awakening. If the mind is empty and tranquil and does not abide in knowledge, then the true empty and tranquil mind of Buddha will be attained. That is what it means.”<sup>157</sup>

XVIII. Someone asked: “If the living beings commit crimes<sup>158</sup> do they fall into Hell<sup>159</sup>?” The Master said: “[They] fall.” Another question: “When the living beings fall [into Hell] they receive suffering in retribution. When [their] Buddha nature falls [into Hell] does it suffer or does it not?” The Master said: “The Buddha nature does not suffer.” Another question: “For what reason [some] receive [suffering] and [some] do not (9b) receive [it]?” The Master said: “Compare it to a metal vessel melted in a stove. The form of the vessel is destroyed, but the nature of metal does not change here. Being unchanged is the original concentration.<sup>160</sup> Original concentration is called permanence. The metal is permanent, and cannot be destroyed. What [kind of suffering] can it receive?”<sup>161</sup>

XIX. Someone asked: “What is the meaning of equality of concentration and wisdom?” The Master said: “The nature does not move — that is concentration. Being able to see that it does not move is wisdom. If [you] carry this out without leaving the traces — that is equality. If [you] can illuminate essential nature this way then [you will] see the Buddha nature.”<sup>162</sup>

XX. Someone asked: “How to become a Buddha?” The Master (10a) said: “Never think of the living beings outside Buddha. That is how [you] attain liberation.” Another question: “How to get the approach?”<sup>163</sup> The master said: “Do not think of all good and evil, and see Buddha nature for yourself. That is the approach.”<sup>164</sup>

XXI. Someone asked: “Initially leaving the family<sup>165</sup> was because of the desire to become Buddha. Through which practices of mind [can one] achieve Buddhahood?” The Master said: “[One] must follow the no-mind,<sup>166</sup> then [one] will attain Buddhahood for oneself.” A question: “If there is no mind, then who will become Buddha?” The Master said: “The no-mind will become Buddha. Becoming Buddha is also no-mind.” A question: “The great compassion and benevolence of the Buddha possess the powers which are hard to

<sup>154</sup> According to the *Zhong* text the questions are posed by some “sage” or “wizard” 賢者, 賢人.

<sup>155</sup> Chinese: 意.

<sup>156</sup> Here the master is again talking to “the wizard.” According to the *Zhong* text his name is 仙李(?).

<sup>157</sup> Here the Master talks to still another wizard 鄒泉.

<sup>158</sup> Chinese: 罪.

<sup>159</sup> Chinese: 地獄.

<sup>160</sup> Chinese: 本定.

<sup>161</sup> Encounter with 宮香 (Note 72).

<sup>162</sup> This encounter is also connected with 宮香 (Note 72).

<sup>163</sup> Chinese: 隨順. One of the expedient means (方便).

<sup>164</sup> In this paragraph the Master talks to a “Chan guest” (禪客).

<sup>165</sup> Chinese: 出家.

<sup>166</sup> Chinese: 無心.

know or to express. [These powers] can save the living beings. (10b) If there is no mind, then who is saving the living beings?” The Master said: “Attaining the no-mind is the true saving of the living beings. If [one] must save [the living beings], there is seeing of the living beings,<sup>167</sup> and it becomes the ‘existing mind’.<sup>168</sup> If the mind truly exists, then life and death.” A question: “If there is no mind, then how is the termination of views<sup>169</sup> achieved?” The Master said: “Originally there is no mind of delusion. The knowledge of the soul<sup>170</sup> does not terminate, so how the evil views<sup>171</sup> can emerge?”<sup>172</sup>

XXII. Someone asked: “What is the approach of ‘one thought’?”<sup>173</sup> The Master said: “When object and wisdom are both absent, the approach comes naturally.” A question: “When wisdom and object are both absent, who is to see the Buddha nature?” The Master said: “When object and wisdom are absent then the substance shines by itself, and you do not see yourself.”<sup>174</sup> (11a)

XXIII. Someone asked: “The living beings and the Buddha nature do not have differences. Thus when any person becomes Buddha through his actions, all the living beings must attain liberation. Now it is not like that. What is the reason for that?” The master said: “It looks like you have never seen the principle of six characteristics of Huayan.<sup>175</sup> In similarity<sup>176</sup> there is discrimination,<sup>177</sup> in discrimination there is similarity, in creation<sup>178</sup> there is destruction,<sup>179</sup> in destruction there is creation, in common<sup>180</sup> there is specific,<sup>181</sup> and in specific there is common. The living beings and the Buddha possess the same nature, and are no obstacles to each other. [Their] powers<sup>182</sup> are not equal, and they get what [each of them] had attained. The light to the mirror (11b) is never complete. Compare it with the birds, which all belong to the same realm of space — and [you will] realize according to inequality of their powers that [the birds] are different from air. Those who do not have wings,<sup>183</sup> although they belong to the realm of air, [they never] abandon the earth. Those who collect the wings<sup>184</sup> also [fly] high and low, therefore it is realized [that they are] different according [to their position] in the space. The bird qualities of phoenix [allow him] to reach the limits of space. If other birds are compared with him — what is there about them? Therefore [the idea] that all living beings possess the same Buddha nature, but are different in knowledge and abilities, is the same [as the above].”<sup>185</sup>

XXIV. Someone asked: “If [one] is practicing chan, what is the way to eliminate the crimes of mind?”<sup>186</sup> The Master said: “You should take a little look into your body and

<sup>167</sup> Chinese: 見, i.e. “concept” of the living beings.

<sup>168</sup> Chinese: 有心.

<sup>169</sup> Chinese: 斷見.

<sup>170</sup> Chinese: 魂知. Tentative translation.

<sup>171</sup> Chinese: 邪見.

<sup>172</sup> In this encounter the Master talks to a monk named “Wise Enlightenment” 賢覺.

<sup>173</sup> Chinese: 一念.

<sup>174</sup> Continuation of the encounter with “Wise Enlightenment”.

<sup>175</sup> Chinese: 華嚴六相.

<sup>176</sup> Chinese: 同.

<sup>177</sup> Chinese: 異.

<sup>178</sup> Chinese: 成.

<sup>179</sup> Chinese: 壞.

<sup>180</sup> Chinese: 共.

<sup>181</sup> Chinese: 別.

<sup>182</sup> Chinese: 力才.

<sup>183</sup> Tentative translation.

<sup>184</sup> Tentative translation.

<sup>185</sup> Not found in the *Zhong* text.

<sup>186</sup> Chinese: 心罪.

mind. Five (12a) *skandhas*,<sup>187</sup> twelve *nidanas*<sup>188</sup> and eighteen *dhatu*<sup>189</sup> — is there a smallest thing in them to be obtained?” The answer was: “Now I have taken a small look into mind and body and saw that it does not look like there is something to be obtained.”<sup>190</sup> The Master said: “Have you achieved the destruction of the characteristic of the mind and body?” The answer was: “As soon as the characteristics of the mind and body are destroyed, what is left?” The Master said: “Are there other things outside your mind and body?” The answer was: “While there is no mind and body themselves, what other things can there be?” The Master said: “Have you achieved the destruction of the worldly characteristic?”<sup>191</sup> The answer was: “The world does not have its own characteristic, what is the use of destruction?” The Master said: “Thus (12b) you have extinguished the crimes.” The asker got enlightened after that and exclaimed: “How profound!”, and received the teaching.<sup>192</sup>

XXV. Someone asked: “After one understood that, is there any use in a attaining perfection traveling through places?”<sup>193</sup> The Master said: “You may travel through the places, and also can avoid traveling through places.” *Lankavatara-sutra* says: ‘Starting from one ground, although [you] do not reach another ground, but does the true extinction and tranquility [really] have order of places?’<sup>194</sup> *Vicasacintabrahma-sutra*<sup>195</sup> says: ‘If a man heard about the true nature, he is not traveling from one ground to another. This man does not follow life and death, does not abide (13a) in nirvana.’ Again, a *gatha* from *Lankavatara-sutra* says: ‘In the beginning [you enter the first [ground] — the non-returning *arhat*. That is why the sages from all the Heavens follow the presence of the deluded mind.’<sup>196</sup> If [you] follow the truth [for those] supreme abilities, then there should not be the principle of the true characteristic. [One should thus] abide in the true practice of pure awakened mind. If [you] follow the mundane expedient means,<sup>197</sup> there is no harm in traveling through places. Really, things do not hinder the principle,<sup>198</sup> and principle does not hinder the things.<sup>199</sup> Thus [one] practices every day and it does not contradict the absence of practice — is there any practice which is not [fulfilled]? If [we] cling to the things and misunderstand the principle, or cling to the principle and misunderstand the things, (13b) what kind of approach will that be? These words will be not true.” A question: “Does this Dharma gate have a name and characteristic?” The master said: “This Dharma gate originally had no name or characteristic. In the absence of the name and characteristic, empty name and characteristic were established. The name of this Dharma Gate is Diamond Samadhi,<sup>200</sup> because it is inde-

<sup>187</sup> Chinese: 五蘊.

<sup>188</sup> Chinese: 十二處.

<sup>189</sup> Chinese: 十八界.

<sup>190</sup> Tentative translation.

<sup>191</sup> Chinese: 世中相.

<sup>192</sup> Not found in the *Zhong* text.

<sup>193</sup> Chinese: 遊住. As it is clear from the context, this composite means advancing through the ten stages of perfection as described in *Vimalakirti-nirdesa*.

<sup>194</sup> Chinese: 住次. Although the Tangut quotation fits into the general content of certain parts of *Lankavatara-sutra*, I failed to locate the quotation in its exact form.

<sup>195</sup> Chinese: 思益經. The Chinese original version reads as follows: 若不從一地至一地, 是人不在生死, 不住涅槃 (cf. 思益梵天所問經, j. 1).

<sup>196</sup> Chinese original of *Lankavatara-sutra* reads as follows: 預流一來果, 不還阿羅漢, 如是諸聖人悉依心安有. (see: *Lankavatara-sutra*, j. 3, 3–2).

<sup>197</sup> Chinese: 方便.

<sup>198</sup> Chinese: 事無礙理.

<sup>199</sup> Chinese: 理無礙事.

<sup>200</sup> Chinese: 金剛三昧.

structible. Again, it is called Surangama Samadhi,<sup>201</sup> because it cannot be exceeded. Again it is called the Samadhi of Dharma nature, because it does not change. Again it is called the Samadhi of Liberation, because there are no cuffs in it. The one who understands it is the Great Diamond Man;<sup>202</sup> there is no one who can suppress him.” A question: (14a) “What are the powers of the Great Diamond Man?” The master said: “Only the Buddha knows his powers and merits. In one moment of thought he can abandon the delusions as numerous as are the sands of the Ganges and nothing will be left. [He] can collect merits as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and nothing will be incomplete. [He] is the protection of the eight categories of dragons and spirits in all Heavens, and goes everywhere without obstacles. His wisdom is like that of the Lion King,<sup>203</sup> he is like the great shining sun. Again, for what worries in life he is not born; for what worries in extinction he does not [know] extinction. *Avatamsaka-sutra* says: ‘All the dharmas are not born and do not disappear.’ If you understand this, all the Buddhas will appear before you.”<sup>204</sup> (14b) Outside this Dharma gate of the mind ground of the Southern school,<sup>205</sup> other different small Dharmas thus are of those who have not eliminated the obstacle of *avidya*. Again there are all sorts of Dharmas speaking of [something] outside of mind and posing difficulties.<sup>206</sup> These are in great delusion. Where the speeches must be?<sup>207</sup> According to this, people and speeches are not dual,<sup>208</sup> and practitioners must do more, must do more.<sup>209</sup>

Twenty-five answers to the questions on the Buddhist Principles, posed by the monks before the State Preceptor Tangchang while he was staying in the Palace of Light Monastery. End.

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**«Двадцать пять ответов на вопросы  
по поводу буддийского учения»:  
тангутский памятник из собрания ИВР РАН**

Данная работа представляет собой предварительный анализ одного из тангутских буддийских текстов собрания ИВР РАН — «Двадцать пять ответов на вопросы по поводу буддийского учения, поставленных перед государственным наставником Танчаном, когда он пребывал в монастыре Дворец Света». В работе сделано предположение, что текст является оригинальным тангутским сочинением, связанным тем не менее с традицией Хуаянь-Чань конца периода Тан. В частности, усматривается определенное сходство учений, представленных в тангутском тексте, с направлением Гуйфэн Цзун-ми (780–841). В статье содержится реконструкция китайского текста, а также дан английский перевод сочинения. Вместе с тем сделана попытка выявить особенности содержания и текста и отнести его к какой-либо определенной буддийской традиции. По мнению автора, текст может принадлежать к южной школе чань-буддизма, а именно к ее дуньхуанскому варианту, развивавшемуся изолированно от остальных буддийских традиций собственно Китая сунского или юаньского времени.

<sup>201</sup> Chinese: 首楞嚴三昧.

<sup>202</sup> Chinese: 金剛大人.

<sup>203</sup> Chinese: 獅子王.

<sup>204</sup> Chinese: 一切諸法無生, 一切諸法無滅, 如能如是解, 諸佛常現在前. (see: 華嚴經, j. 7).

<sup>205</sup> Chinese: 南宗.

<sup>206</sup> Tentative translation.

<sup>207</sup> Tentative translation.

<sup>208</sup> Tentative translation.

<sup>209</sup> The *Zhong* text does not provide the name of the Master’s interlocutor; it must be one more Chan guest, mentioned elsewhere in the text.