



Buddhism in the Sung

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Reviewed by

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Buddhism in the Sung is a collection of essays from well-known scholars in the field of Buddhist studies. There are a total of thirteen essays presented as thirteen chapters. The end of the volume includes useful glossaries of names, terms, and texts. These essays are based on papers delivered at a conference on Buddhism in the Song held at the University of Illinois in April 1996. It is fair to say, as the editors of this fine text are at pains to point out, that the impact of Buddhism on Song dynasty China is seriously understudied. We have little research in any Western language that can help us better understand Buddhism's impact on local society and culture during the tenth to thirteenth centuries.

This book does much to redress this imbalance. As Peter Gregory in the first essay explains, there exists in China studies today a stereotype of the Tang dynasty being the cultural height of Chinese Buddhist development, whereas the Song period saw Buddhism's decline. This is simply not the case, and each contributor to this volume demonstrates the falseness of this stereotype. Buddhism flourished during the Song dynasties, and it did so in a number of creative ways. Generally speaking, *Chan* and *Tiantai* were the two dominant Buddhist traditions during the Song period, although several of the essays point out the difficulty in clearly articulating sectarian identities. What follows is a brief summary of each essay, with two points of mine at the end of the review.

First, Albert Welters's essay looks at Zanning (919-1001), whose voice joined in the early Song debates over what constituted *wen*, "culture." Zanning argued that Buddhism ought to be a component of the *wen* revival. Zanning's proposals were ultimately rejected by *wen* officials, but Welter's focus on Zanning's arguments highlights the complex relations between officials and Buddhist elite at the time. In chapter three, Ari Borrell draws our attention to the relationship between Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism by focusing on the works of Zhang Jiucheng (1092-1159), a lay disciple of the *Chan* Master Dahui (1089-

1163) and an advocate of *daoxue* (learning of the way). Zhu Xi (1130-1200) strongly criticized Zhang, thereby acknowledging the impact Zhang was having on *daoxue*. Morten Schlütter's essay in chapter four raises questions about the supposed debates between Dahui (*Linji* sect) and Hongzhi (1091-1157) of the *Caodong* sect. Dahui strongly advocated *gong'an* investigations and criticized Hongzhi's "Silent Illumination of Chan." Schlütter clearly demonstrates that we must understand the conflict between these two major Buddhist figures in the context of their respective schools competing for lay patronage. By the Southern Song (1127-1279), the imperium had withdrawn much support from *Chan* monasteries, thus forcing these institutions to look for other patrons. Schlütter moves us away from a strict soteriological framework and places more emphasis on the importance of local context.

In chapter five, Ding-Hua E. Hsieh looks at the images of women in *Chan* literature (such as genealogical histories, public case anthologies, and discourse records). The issue at hand is women's supposed lack of spirituality because of the nature of the female body. *Chan*, to some extent, offered a way around this old Buddhist problem by arguing that all persons have Buddha-mind. Hsieh shows just how far this argument can be taken and highlights the limitations of such a context for women in the *Chan* tradition. Miriam Levering, in chapter six, follows up on Hsieh's arguments by focusing attention on one of Dahui's female students, Miaodao (1095-1170). T. Griffith Foulk's essay, in keeping with his earlier research, shows the ideology, indeed mythology, of *Chan* as a "separate transmission." Claims to lineage were a crucial component of Song dynasty *Chan*, and debates raged over what constituted legitimate transmission and lineage. Foulk looks at an array of doctrinal arguments and clearly makes his case.

Chapter eight, by Chi-Chiang Huang, focuses on the impact of prefects commissioned to Hangzhou during the Northern Song period. Huang shows how these prefects played an important role in creating climates for Buddhist centers in the eleventh century. Prefects enlisted the help of eminent monks in their efforts to maintain social control. Daniel B. Stevenson, in chapter nine, looks at Cun Shi (914-1032), a personality crucial to the revival of the *Tiantai* school of Buddhism. Stevenson highlights Cun Shi as a ritual specialist. He furthermore demonstrates the importance of ritual in understanding the relationship of Buddhist groups and local popular religious practices. In chapter ten, Chi-Wah Chan continues the focus on *Tiantai* Buddhism by looking at the *shanjia/shanwai* (home mountain/off mountain) debates and arguing that, by the end of the Southern Song, Zhili's (960-1028) *Tiantai* teachings constituted the dominant paradigm. Brook Ziporyn's essay provides further exploration of Zhili's *Tiantai* teachings and suggests the concept of "intersubjectivity" to better contextualize Zhili's arguments. *Intersubjectivity* here refers to "the imprint of the existence of other consciousness on the structure of any given consciousness." (p. 442) Daniel A. Getz Jr., in chapter twelve, draws our attention to the creation of a Pure Land patriarchy during the Song periods. Getz makes the case that such creations influenced Southern Song lay organizations by offering models of social organization. Finally, in chapter thirteen, Koichi Shinohara provides us with a study of *Tiantai* lineage construction and the emphasis placed on a *Dharma* heir. The author clearly demonstrates how, in part, this was a response of *Tiantai* sects to Chan's prioritization and construction of lineage.

It is difficult to point out any weaknesses in this volume, as this is the first such study in English that we have of Song dynasty Buddhism as a social force. There are, however, two small points that can be made: First, future research might want to address the lack of focus on material culture in the history of Chinese Buddhism. The contributors' focus is still on elite traditions, principally because much of our

textual evidence comes from these traditions. However, there is much to be said for a more focused study of Buddhist material culture and the tremendous influence this had on Song society. For instance, scholars might want to look at land acquisition strategies by Buddhist monasteries, or the tax status of monastic institutions. More attention might be paid to the tremendous variety of economic processes Buddhist monasteries during the Song period were engaged in, such as operating mills, auctioning the robes of a deceased famous abbot, the production and sale of paper ink sticks and ink stones. Certain monasteries sold medicines. Other monasteries produced silk and sold it at a profit. Yet still others engaged in embroidery practices, produced lead powder, operated hostels, or made and sold food. It was quite common for larger Chinese Buddhist monasteries to establish oil presses to add to their overall income. To be fair to the authors of this volume, however, their primary focus is on doctrinal affairs and, as such, they are true to their aims. In short, the contribution of these collected essays opens wide avenues for further investigation. Perhaps then Buddhism's role in the shaping of Song dynasty Chinese society will be better appreciated.

Second, more work ought to be done with the research of scholars writing in Chinese such as Zhang Mantao, Xie Zhongguang, Quan Hansheng, and Huang Min-Chih. These are only a few of the Chinese scholars who have done first-rate work on the more-mundane, material side of Buddhist economic activities during the Song period. Drawing more attention to material Buddhist culture would balance out the strict focus on doctrinal, philological, and philosophical concerns. However, the above two points are hardly serious criticisms, as the editors make it clear their focus is on doctrinal matters. In this respect, the editors and contributing scholars have done a remarkable job. No longer can Buddhism be said to "be in decline" during the Song periods.