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Translating History from Tangut Buddhist Texts

The past two decades have brought to print important new resources for scholars in Tangut studies eager to take advantage of Tangut Buddhist materials. Prominent among them are a portion of the Khara-khoto archives by the Shanghai Classics Publishing House (though mostly non-Buddhist texts so far), dictionaries by Li Fanwen 李范文 and E. I. Kychanov, and Kychanov's catalogue of Tangut Buddhist materials in the Khara-khoto archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg, published in Kyoto in 1999.¹ Moreover, in recent years Chinese scholars in Tibetan studies, notably Chen Qingying 陳慶英 and Shen Weirong 沈衛榮, have published relevant material from Tibetan sources, stimulating a series of articles addressing various aspects of the Tangut role in the spread and development of Tibetan Buddhism, or the influence of the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism on Buddhist practices and organizations in the Xia 夏 realm. Shi Jinbo 史金波 and Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音 have also contributed substantially to this effort.

For those unfamiliar with Xia history and materials in the Tibeto-Burman Tangut language, it bears noting that for centuries Western writers have followed the Turko-Mongolian tradition of using "Tangut" (Mong.: Tangghud) to refer to Tangut speakers. Early Chinese sources called them Dangxiang 黨項; they referred to themselves as Mi or Minyag. Occupying present-day Ningxia, Gansu, western Shaanxi, and southern Inner Mongolia, the state was formally inaugurated in the 1030s and fell to the Mongols in 1227. The Tanguts invented their own sinitic-looking graphic script for translating religious texts and composing official documents; Buddhist texts and other genres of literature were written in Tangut, Chinese, or sometimes Tibetan.

The present writer spent several weeks in late 1993 and early 1994, and again in the fall of 1996, examining dozens of Tangut Buddhist

¹ E. I. Kychanov, *Katalog tangutskikh buddiiskikh pamiatnikov Instituta Vostokovedeniia Rossiskoi Akademii Nauk* (Kyoto: University of Kyoto, 1999; hereafter cited as Cat.).

texts and transcribing information about their producers.² Seeking to account for discrepancies between my notes and Kychanov's *Katalog*, and prompted by recently published studies that address that body of material, this article offers a modest contribution to the challenge of interpreting the imprint of individuals left in Tangut texts. In most cases, these imprints are the only remaining traces of their makers, and thus constitute a valuable historical source about Xia history and society. Many of the texts in which we find these traces are of Tibetan origin, droplets in the last wave of Indian tantric transmissions as mediated by their Tibetan inheritors, and did not enter into the Tibetan canons that were published in later centuries. In order to begin placing the individuals associated with them in a meaningful social context, this study draws upon the monographs by Cyrus Stearns and Ronald Davidson on developments in the eleventh- and twelfth-century world of Tibetan Buddhists and their domestication of contemporary Indian tantrism.

The paper opens with a prosopographical sketch of eight prominent Xia monks for many of whom sufficient data exist in the Khara-khoto texts to prompt a reconstruction of their careers and relationships. One could add more names to this group; the lives of those examined here span the mid- and late-twelfth century and into the early-thirteenth century. Their careers thus overlap the emergence of imperial preceptors at the Xia court. In the next section, I review the question of who was or was not a Xia imperial preceptor (*dishi* 帝師) and what that might have meant. Later Tibetan sources identify the first Tibetan lama sent to serve as the Xia imperial preceptor, and also assert that in his incarnation lineage he was preceded by several Chinese monks in that post.³ There is no reason to exclude Tanguts, Uighurs, or Chinese (Sino-Tanguts) from consideration as possible imperial preceptors, though scholars generally assume that they were all Tibetan. Provisionally, by "Tibetan" I mean persons from outside the effective borders of the Xia state, which incorporated native communities of long-term resident Tibetans (at Liangzhou 涼州 or Wuwei 武威, among other places). Below I refer to these persons as visiting or guest Tibetans (or Indians).

Although the distinction between who was Tibetan and who was Tangut is sometimes difficult to draw, the Xia state did try to define

² Short-term travel grants received in 1993 and 1996 from the International Research and Exchanges Board in Washington, D.C., made these visits possible. I would also like to thank Sun Bojun 孫伯君, Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音, and Shen Weirong 沈衛榮 for invaluable assistance in preparing this article.

³ Elliot Sperling, "Lama to the King of Hsia," *The Journal of the Tibet Society* 7 (1987), p. 38.

who was and who was not a foreigner. A classic case of ambiguous identity may be that of the Tibetan monk of Tangut origin, Rtsa-mi lotsawa Sangs-rgyas grags-pa, the early-twelfth-century Minyag translator who studied at Nalanda (in India) and transmitted Kalacakra teachings, about which Elliot Sperling has written.⁴ Although some Tibetan writers have interpreted Minyag as a reference to Khams (northeast Tibet), Sperling concludes that he was not just a Tangut, but a scion of the royal Xia family, though the evidence for that appears slim and late (a fifteenth-century genealogy of the ruling family of Byang La-stod). It may be that the potent reputation of the Tangut kings and the thorough destruction of most evidence concerning them by the early-thirteenth century Mongols made it attractive for later writers to assert doubtful claims or connections to them. Apart from his name, Rtsa-mi's relationship with Xia remains undocumented.

As for Tibet, according to Ronald Davidson in the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries central Tibet (Tsang) was flooded with foreigners, particularly Indian monks fleeing the Turkic and Afghan Muslim invasions of northern India.⁵ Joining them were Nepalese, Kashmirians, Tanguts (Minyaks), Ladakhis, eastern Tibetans (from Khams and Amdo) and others (Uighurs?), perhaps enticed by the opportunity to study directly under Indian masters without undergoing the arduous journey over the Himalayas, and thus acquire the very latest doctrinal transmissions (in tantra and Vinaya). Sa-skya monastery southwest of Lhasa hosted many Indian masters. The 'Khon clan heir, renowned scholar and prolific author Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (third son of Sachen Kun-dga' snying-po, the Sa-skya founder's heir) even started using a Sanskrit version of his name (Kirtidvaja). If taking Sanskrit names became something of a fashion at this time, it seems likely that Tangut monks studying in Tibet were not immune. Sa-skya writings about this era often indicate the foreign origin of the students who requested teachings from Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, and at least two so mentioned were Tanguts, Tsing-nge ston-pa 'Dul-ba 'dzin-pa and Tsing-nge ston-pa Dge-slong shes-rab-grags. Davidson speculates that "'Tsing-e-tönpa,' like 'Tsami,' meant something like 'Tangut teacher.'"⁶

⁴ Sperling, "Rtsa-mi Lo-tsa-ba Sangs-rgyas Grags-pa and the Tangut Background to Early Mongol-Tibetan Relations," *Tibetan Studies*, Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994) 2, pp. 801-24.

⁵ Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia U.P., 2005), pp. 348-49.

⁶ Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, p. 349. He completes the sentence thus, "and twelfth-century Tibetan works might contribute to our understanding of Tangut phonology."

These references to foreign origin, however, are as inconclusive and inconsistently used in Tibetan materials as they are in Tangut ones.

Perhaps “Tibetan” in a twelfth-century context points to an ideological or religious identity rather than an ethnic one, since by the early-thirteenth century Tibet had replaced India as the fountainhead of Buddhism in East Asia and magnet for Buddhists from all over the region.

The reconstructions presented here by no means exhaust the analytical potential in the data, and seek rather to advance the discussion of these materials to the next level, while attending to the nitty-gritty details that makes any fruitful abstraction from them possible. I am unable, for example, to delve into the content, meaning, and interrelationships of the texts themselves, beyond the most superficial remarks, and must rely on other scholars to pursue that endeavor. The effort will surely clarify many of the personal relationships hinted at below. What the evidence does confirm is that the Xia Buddhist establishment and Xia monks played an integral role in the formation and spread of the new tantric teachings that led to the emergence of mature Tibetan Buddhism and its various lineages and schools. Very possibly this involvement in Tibetan Buddhism extended the life of the Tangut written language several centuries beyond the fall of the state that gave birth to it. Our greatest challenge lies in trying to reconstruct the social and political underpinnings of this development in Xia, which Davidson does so admirably for Tibet.

Expediency requires the use Chinese graphs in the body of this article to render semantically many Tangut graphs (for which, often, Chinese versions do exist), although this method has been rightfully lamented by linguist Nie Hongyin. It is useful as long as we do not fall into the trap of believing in the absolute correspondence of one form for another. In every case I also give a citation to the Tangut text: if it is listed in Kychanov’s catalogue, citations appear as a catalogue entry number introduced by “Cat.,” a “Tang.” number (an abbreviation of *tangutskii*), and an inventory, or “inv.,” number. Tangut graphs are also cited by their appearance in Kychanov’s dictionary (an “EIK” number) or in the personal-name index to his catalogue (using the convention “#”). (For all these abbreviations and further descriptions, see the *List of Abbreviations*.)

A PRELIMINARY PROSOPOGRAPHY OF EIGHT XIA MONKS

A significant portion of data recovered from Khara-khoto texts clusters around a number of individuals, prompting the researcher to imagine the social world in which they lived. These sketches assume that most if not all of the individuals described below knew each other by reputation, by religious or social affiliation, or by personal association. Any discrepancies between what a reader may find in Kychanov's catalogue and what is written here result primarily from a decision (perhaps misguided) to follow my own transcription of data for texts I examined (most more than once). The following sketches appear in roughly chronological order, as far as can be determined. Section two of the paper elaborates on some of these persons in connection with their links to Xia imperial preceptors.

1. *Zhou Huihai* 周慧海: *Mid-twelfth Century*

Sramana Zhou Huihai appears along with the Kashmiri monk Jayananda, as the translator into Tangut of two texts from Tibetan, sometimes with and sometimes without his surname (Zhou) or ordination name (Huihai), in the first part of Renxiao's 仁孝 reign (Renzong 仁宗; r. 1139–1193). These notices include his full title and court rank: “Xianmi (Exoteric and Esoteric) Dharma Preceptor, Deputy Director of the Sangha Office... (rank)⁷... *sramana* Zhou Huihai 顯密法師功德司副使...沙門周慧海.”⁸ Court rank appears very seldom in monastic titles; I have seen them only in those associated with Jayananda and translators Zhou Huihai and Xianbei Baoyuan (see below).⁹

For Huihai, in part this may be explained by the prominence of his family. Zhou was a member of a Sino-Tangut clan who were very active in the publishing and printing of Buddhist and other texts. The Zhou family shrine in the Xia capital of Zhongxing (*jingshi Zhoujia si* 京師周家寺) published a xylograph edition in Chinese of “The Vow of Samantabhadra” from the *Avatamsaka-sutra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經) in

⁷ *Yisheng* 益盛 rank, 5th grade (of 7), civil 4th level (末品四列) in Cat. 657, Tang. 109, inv. 7592; and *yiping* 義平 5th grade, civil 2d level 末品二列, in Cat. 375, Tang. 66, inv. 598. See inv. 5192 as analyzed by Shi Jinbo 史金波, “Xixia wen ‘Guan jie feng hao biao’ kaoyi” 西夏文官階封號表考釋, in *Zhongguo minzu guwenzi xue yanjiu hui* 中國民族古文字研究會, comp., *Zhongguo minzu guwenzi xue yanjiu* 中國民族古文字學研究 (Tianjin, 1991), pp. 245–66; and Li Fanwen 李範文, “Xixia guan jie feng hao biao kaoshi” 西夏官階封號表考釋, *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社會科學戰線 3 (1991), pp. 171–79.

⁸ Cat. 657, Tang. 109, inv. 7592; Cat. 375, Tang. 66, inv. 598; Cat. 369, Tang. 83, inv. 6881; Chen Bingying 陳炳應, “Tianti shan shiku Xixia wen fojing yishi” 天梯山石窟西夏文佛經譯釋, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 3 (1983), pp. 45–48.

⁹ Huihai translated [*Sheng*] *Guan zi zai da bei xin* [聖] 觀自在大悲心 from Tibetan into Tangut (Cat. 369, see previous n.), with rank 5th grade, 4th level. See TK-164, inv. 337 in L.

1161.¹⁰ Though Huihai's name does not appear on the extant portions of this production, it is tempting to imagine that he had a hand in it. An undated reference to him appears in a Huayan text translated from Chinese into Tangut: "Miaoxi (?) Monastery *sramana* Huihai translated [into Tangut] 妙喜寺院沙門慧海譯."¹¹ Since translator Huihai bears no title, this may refer to an early stage in his career, or to a private production of his family temple, possibly named Miaoxi (no other occurrence of this name has been identified so far).

Huihai's translation from Tibetan is *Dingzun xiang sheng zong chi gongde yunji* 頂尊相勝總持功德韻集, listed under Cat. 654 as being translated from Chinese, which seems to be an error. Whether or not all six of the inventory numbers for this title under Tang. 109 refer to the translation into Tangut that Jayananda and Zhou Huihai (named in Cat. 654 and 657, inv. 4078 and 7592) made, clearly from a Tibetan text, remains to be determined. Two of the inventory numbers (Cat. 655, inv. 6796 and 6821) are dated to 1149, and do not name the two translators. If the text distributed by Renxiao on this occasion was the one translated by the Zhou-Jayananda team, this would put Jayananda at the Tangut court some ten or fifteen years earlier than I suggested in my 1992 article. As was common for Indo-Tibetan monks of the era, he may have traveled between Zhongxing, Tibet, and Kashmir/Nepal several times over the decades of his association with the Xia Buddhist establishment, trying to parley his success among the Tanguts into better treatment by his peers in the Himalayas.¹²

Zhou is probably better known for his role in translating *Sheng shenghui dao bi'an gongde baoji jie* 聖勝慧到彼岸功德寶集偈 from Tibetan, for it survives in a 1447 bilingual Tibetan-Chinese edition from the Ming era, along with a notation in Chinese containing the names of the

N. Men'shikov, *Opisanie kitaiskoi chasti kollektcii iz Khara-khoto* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), no. 177, pp. 223-25, for Baoyuan's translation of the Chinese version of this text, with his full title and rank (5th grade, 2d level 末品二列). Baoyuan outranked Huihai. In this notation, Jayananda's position is Director of the Sangha Office for Those Residing in the Household 在家功德司正; the Tangut version (Cat. 369, see n. 8, above) has 功德司正 without any modifier; both give him the 善式rank 4th grade, level 9.

¹⁰ See TK-72, Men'shikov, *Opisanie*, no. 108.

¹¹ Cat. 306, Tang. 395, inv. 942: 注華嚴法界觀門深, a direct translation of the Tangut title by Kychanov.

¹² Ruth Dunnell, "The Hsia Origins of the Yüan Institution of Imperial Preceptor," *AM* 3d ser. 5.1 (1992), pp. 85-111 ("Dangxiang wangchao de Fojiao ji Yuan dai yicun" 党項王朝的佛教及元代遺存, *Ningxia shehui kexue* 寧夏社會科學 5 [1992]); Leonard van der Kuijp, "Jayānanda: A Twelfth Century Guoshi from Kashmir among the Tangut," *CAJ* 37.3-4 (1993), pp. 188-97.

translation team.¹³ The Ming notation does not provide Zhou's name, only his title, because he was the Tangut translator, and for that occasion, apparently, only the Chinese translator's name (Xianbei Baoyuan 鮮卑寶源) was needed. Tangut versions of the text exist in the Khara-khoto collection and have also surfaced at Tianti Shan southwest of Wuwei in Gansu (Cat. 375, Tang. 66, inv. 598; Chen 1983). The Tangut translation project involved the Xianjue Imperial Preceptor, Jayananda, Ananda-kirti, and Zhou Huihai. None of the notations to this translation is dated, but most likely belong to the early years of Renzong's reign, the 1150s or early-1160s.

Zhou Huihai, as far as we know, remained a dharma preceptor (*fashi*), his full title being "Exoteric and Esoteric Dharma Preceptor." A monk could and often did hold more than one preceptor title over a lifetime, but though he could be promoted from dharma preceptor 法師 to state preceptor 國師, in almost all cases the full title attached to the position appears to have been unique to the monk.¹⁴ Thus all references to someone by a preceptor title only (with or without a monastic affiliation) most probably denote one and the same person. According to the Tangut law code, six state preceptors were to be appointed to head each of the two sangha offices.¹⁵ Thus Khara-khoto texts bristle with state preceptors, none of whom sport the same title.

2. *Dehui* 德慧: *Mid- to Late-twelfth Century*

Nie Hongyin has given this figure a Tibetan identity as Yon-tan blo-gros or Yon-tan ye-she, owing to the absence of a surname and perhaps also because of his reputed ability to translate from Sanskrit, as asserted in an imperial preface to an edition of the "Heart Sutra" produced especially for Renzong in 1167.¹⁶ It was common, though, for monks to be identified only by clerical or ordination names or titles. Moreover, *Dehui* lacks all the usual marks of visiting Tibetan or Himalayan status: his titles never include 西天 (referring to India, 天

¹³ Luo Zhao 羅照, "Zang-Han hebi 'Sheng sheng hui dao bi'an gongde bao ji jie' kao lue" 藏漢合璧'聖勝慧到彼岸功德寶集偈'考略, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究 4 (1983), pp. 4-36; Chen, "Tianti shan shiku," pp. 45-48.

¹⁴ As in the case of Xibi Zhihai, the Jingjie Zhenyi State Preceptor, on whom see the end of this paper in the discussion of the Miaoju Imperial Preceptor.

¹⁵ Article 690; see E. I. Kychanov, *Izmenennyi i zanovo utverzhennyyi kodeks deviza tsarstvovaniia nebesnoe protsvetanie (1149-1169)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987-1989) 3, pp. 114-17, 419-31; Shi Jinbo, Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音, Bai Bin 白濱, trans., *Xi Xia Tiansheng luling* 西夏天盛律令 (Beijing, 1994), p. 248.

¹⁶ TK-128; Men'shikov, *Opisanie*, no. 182, pp. 228-30, 495; Nie Hongyin, "Xixia yiben 'Chi song sheng fomu banruoduo xinjing yaomen' shulue" 西夏譯本持誦聖佛母般若多心經要門述略, *Ningxia shehui kexue* 2 (2005), pp. 87-89, and idem, "Xixia wen zangchuan 'Banruo xin jing' yanjiu" 西夏文藏傳般若心經研究, *Minzu yuyan* 民族語言 2 (2005), pp. 22-29.

竺 in Chinese texts); 中國 (referring to Tibet),¹⁷ (西)藏中國 or 藏國,¹⁸ 西番 (also referring to Tibet), or lo-tsha-ba 路贊俄 (*lotsawa*, the Tibetan word for “translator”); the prefixes *bhikṣu* (比丘, or the Tangut semantic equivalent 善行 [EIK 0837/5475]) or *pandita* (鉢彌怛 [EIK 0385-2, or 1021 for the first syllable]), also typically attached to clerics from the Himalayan region, never appear with his name.

In an undated printing of *Foshuo Amituo jing* 佛說阿彌陀經 produced with the Xianjue Imperial Preceptor and Jayananda, Dehui is listed last after Fahui 法慧, Huihu 慧護, and Zhiming 智明 (Cat. 109, Tang. 147, inv. 6761). At this stage in his career, he held the title of Juexing Dharma Preceptor 覺行法師. By 1167 he had been promoted to Lanshan Juexing State Preceptor 國師, and by 1184 he appears with the title of Lanshan Zhizhao State Preceptor 蘭山智昭國師.¹⁹ During these decades Dehui clearly enjoyed a close relationship with the emperor, and participated in ceremonies marking the third anniversary of Renxiao’s mother’s death (1167) and those for Renxiao’s sixtieth birthday held in 1184. In that year he appears in the Tangut and Chinese versions of *Foshuo sheng dacheng san gui yi jing* 佛說聖大乘三歸依經 as the imperially commissioned translator, though it is unclear if he translated the original Tibetan into both Tangut and Chinese. Given Dehui’s prominence in these public proceedings, his absence in the 1189 celebrations marking the emperor’s fiftieth year on the throne strongly suggests that Dehui had died by that year. Three other state preceptors are mentioned by title in Renxiao’s colophon to the massive publication in 1189 of *Guan Mile pusa shang sheng doushuai tian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經 (in Tangut and Chinese editions, according to the colophon).²⁰

Given his later status as a state preceptor and his skills as a translator, the absence of any distinguishing mark of visiting Tibetan status and his involvement in the above activities suggest that Dehui was a Tangut monk. Or a resident Tibetan, from the Liangzhou area (in which case, the Tibetan reconstruction makes sense). During his long association with the presumably Tibetan Xianjue Imperial Preceptor,

¹⁷ As pointed out by Shi Jinbo, “Xixia de zangchuan Fojiao” 西夏的藏傳佛教, *Zhongguo Zangxue* 中國藏學 1 (2002), p. 40, and affirmed by Nie Hongyin, “Xixia dishi kaobian” 西夏帝師考辨, *Wenshi* 文史 3 (2005), pp. 7–8, this 中國 refers to Tibet, not China (or India), but I question their suggestion that it refers to ethnic Tibetans residing in Xia. See also the discussion of Fashizi, below.

¹⁸ For Klu’i rgyal-mtshan so designated (a famous 9th-c. translator) see Cat. 449, inv. 2265; Nie Hongyin, “Tufan jingshi de Xixia yiming kao” 吐蕃經師的西夏譯名考, *Qinghua daxue xuebao* (*zhexue shehui kexueban*) 清華大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 1 (2002), p. 65.

¹⁹ In 1167 he is mentioned by title only (see note 16); Cat. 382, Tang. 141, inv. 4940; Men’shikov, *Opisanie*, pp. 495, 497.

²⁰ Men’shikov, *Opisanie*, TK-58, pp. 195–97, 501.

he assuredly studied under that master and became proficient in Tibetan and Sanskrit. He authored, compiled or translated many Tangut texts. His works include, for example, “The Collection of Basic Notes on the Ultimate Great Seal [Mahamudra]” (Cat. 665, Tang. 345, inv. 2526).²¹

Dehui translated three tantric yoga works associated with the shadowy figure of the Dacheng Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor 大乘玄密帝師 (as author, compiler, or transmitter), around the time when Dehui held the title of Zhizhao State Preceptor 智昭國師 (Cat. 549, 555 and 557; see below for a discussion of this presence).²² Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor has been identified in some recently recovered Sa-skyia teaching lineages, suggesting that Dehui had become involved in the transmission of new tantric teachings emerging from the early Sa-skyia and Bka’-bgyud masters in the 1180s. No specific monastic affiliation occurs in his titles, though the reference to Lanshan in his state preceptor titles indicates that he probably resided at one of the larger complexes in the Alashan foothills, close to the capital. His name appears in more texts than any other clerical figure except Huiming, pointing to a long and prolific career.

3. Demiao 德妙: Mid- to Late-twelfth Century

Dubbed a Tibetan (Yon-tan mchog) by Nie Hongyin for lack of a surname, Demiao turns out to be surnamed Li 李 in one of the two texts with with this name.²³ We also find a Director of the Sangha Office and Zhijue Meditation Preceptor (功德司政至覺定師 *gongde si zheng zhijue dingshi*) with the surname Li translating into Chinese (Cat. 292, Tang. 195, inv. 7165). At first I thought this was the same Demiao, but the evidence suggests otherwise. The foregoing text (inv. 7165) also mentions the Xianjue Imperial Preceptor 賢覺帝師 and Anandakirti as translating from Sanskrit, meaning that this Li’s active career overlapped or followed these high clerics, which places him in the middle to second half of the twelfth century.

²¹ K. J. Solonin, “Mahāmudrā texts in the Tangut Buddhism and the Doctrine of ‘No-thought’,” draft 2007, offers a preliminary translation of Dehui’s text.

²² Shi, “Xixia de zangchuan Fojiao,” p. 40, claims to see Dehui’s name linked with a “Xianjue Pusa” 賢覺菩薩, but I am unable to identify some of the texts he cites or the notations he found there. It seems that he has confused the Tibetan author of Cat 409, Tang. 307, inv. 816, Bodhibhadra, with Xianjue (Imperial Preceptor). Bodhibhadra was a disciple of Naropa, so lived much earlier; his name translates into Tangut as Juexian Pusa 覺賢菩薩. (Personal names sometimes appear in the reverse order, as in Cat. 109, Tang. 147, inv. 6761, where Xianjue Imperial Preceptor’s name, [Polo]Xiansheng, appears as Shengxian.)

²³ Nie, “Tufan jingshi de Xixia yiming kao,” based on Cat. 574, Tang. 252, inv. 3823. Cat. 689, Tang. 88, inv. 822 has Li Demiao.

In the two texts mentioning [Li] Demiao, Demiao appears as a lower-level officer in the Sangha Office (功德司承旨 *gongde si chengzhi*), with no clerical title. His name occurs along with that of Juezhao State Preceptor 覺昭國師 *juezhao guoshi*, Fashizi (see below, inv. 822 and 3823). All references to Fashizi seem to place him in the decades following the career of Xianjue Imperial Preceptor, the 1180s and onward, which would mean that we may have two monks surnamed Li here, the earlier one a Director in the Sangha Office, and the later one a staff official in the same office and possibly a scion of the same Li family.

4. *Xibi [Xianbei] Baoyuan* 西畢[鮮卑]寶源: *Mid- to Late-twelfth Century*

We know this flamboyant figure as the Chinese translator of *Sheng shenghui dao bi'an gongde baoji jie*, as he appears in its 1447 bilingual edition and in its Xia-era Chinese edition. In the Xia-era edition, he carries the title Quanjiao Dharma Preceptor, Tangut-Han Academy and concurrent Superintendent [of the Sangha Office], rank... . Sramana Xianbei Baoyuan 詮教法師番漢三學院兼偏袒提點 [rank] 沙門鮮卑寶源.²⁴ Baoyuan and Zhou Huihai, working with Jayananda, produced the Chinese and Tangut translations of another Tibetan text, *Shengguan zizai dabeixin zongchi gongneng yijing lu, sheng xiang dingzun zongchi gongneng yijing lu* 聖觀自在大悲心總持功能依經錄, 勝相頂尊總持功能依經錄.²⁵ Later he became a state preceptor and redacted a Tangut translation from the Chinese “Diamond Sutra” (*Jingang banruo poluomiduo jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜多經), with a self-promoting variation on the designation for visiting Himalayan monks: Faxian State Preceptor Xibi Baoyuan, of the Dadumin Monastery of the Great White High State 白高大國大渡民寺法顯國師西畢寶源.²⁶ The notation to this text informs us of his ability to read Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tangut commentaries, according to Kychanov’s reading.

Baoyuan’s ambitious erudition embraced his authorship of a popular Buddhist morality book, *A Compendium of Wisdom and Virtue* (*Xian zhi ji* 賢智集, its title in TRK 33) or *Xibi State Preceptor’s Compendium of Admonitions to the World* (*Xibi guoshi quanshi ji* 西畢國師勸世集, its title in

²⁴ Luo, “Zang-Han hebi”; this clerical title also appears in Men’shikov, *Opisanie*, no. 177, p. 224 (TK-164, *Shengguan zizai dabeixin zongchi gongneng yijing lu, sheng xiang dingzun zongchi gongneng yijing lu*). *Bian dan tidian* is a Chinese transcription of the Tangut official title *bian dao yan guo chu*; six are stipulated as staffing the Sangha Office, according to chapter 10, article 690, of the Tiansheng Code (see note 15).

²⁵ TK-164, Men’shikov, *Opisanie*, no. 177; *E Zang Heishuicheng wenxian* 俄藏黑水城文獻 (*Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*), ed. Shi Jinbo, Wei Tongxian, and E. I. Kychanov (Shanghai: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1996-) 4, p. 30.

²⁶ Cat. 53, Tang. 386, inv. 3834; also see Cat. 58, Tang. 386, inv. 4099, and Cat. 63, Tang. 386, inv. 689. I have only seen this title in connection with Baoyuan.

Cat. 762) published in Tangut in 1188.²⁷ The book was evidently reprinted at least once, and has a preface by the monk Yang Huiguang 楊慧廣 as well as blockprint illustrations of State Preceptor Xibi. Baoyuan, it would seem, did not align himself with the new tantric teachings, and perhaps even adopted a critical attitude towards them. The Dadumin Monastery was located in the capital area. Whether or not Baoyuan was related to Xibi Zhihai, the Zhenyi State Preceptor 真義國師西壁智海 whose portrait appears with this title in Yulin Cave 29 in western Xia, remains unknown (on him see the discussion at the end of this article).²⁸

5. *Fashizi* 法獅子: *Late-twelfth to Early-thirteenth Century*

Also affiliated with the Dadumin Monastery 大度民寺 (Monastery of Great Salvation of the People), and so evidently a colleague of Xibi Baoyuan, Tibetan Fashizi held the title of Juezhao State Preceptor 覺昭國師 (sometimes preceded by the marker 中國 for “Tibet”), and authored, compiled or transmitted many texts translated by other monks into Tangut. Nie Hongyin suggests that because “中國” does not appear at the head of Fashizi’s titles, it differs from the same two graphs preceding the title of Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor, and denotes a resident rather than what I call a guest Tibetan.²⁹ But in Fashizi’s case, as in that of Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor, the two graphs always prefix his title, not his “name” or the phrase “*sramana*” or the name of a monastery. Fashizi’s name (“Lion of the Law”) can be rendered in Tibetan as Chos-kyi seng-ge.

Significantly, Fashizi transmitted two texts compiled or associated with the Tibetan martial-monk Zhang Rinpoche (Shangyurakpa) as well as many yoga tantras.³⁰ As did Baoyuan, he published a religious tract in Tangut, though of a rather different nature. Commonly rendered in Chinese as 魔斷要論 *Moduan yaolun* (“Quintessential Instruction for Eliminating Demons”), it gives his title as “Lanshan 蘭山 (tshwe?) (ngin?) A-lion-si-pa Juezhao State Preceptor Fashizi 覺資昭國師法獅子.”³¹ Citations of this title by modern scholars have omitted a

²⁷ TRK-33 is the same as Cat. 762, Tang. 428, inv. 3706; N A. Nevsky, *Tangutskiaia filologiya* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoi literatury, 1960) 1, pp. 83–84.

²⁸ See Shi Jinbo, *Xixia Fojiao shilue* 西夏佛教史略 (Ningxia: Renmin chubanshe, 1988), p. 302; Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院 (China), *Ansei Yurinkutsu* 安西榆林窟, Chūgoku sekutsu 中國石窟 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990), pp. 275–76, pll. 115–20.

²⁹ Nie, “Xixia dishi kaobian,” pp. 7–8.

³⁰ Cat. 384, Tang. 182, inv. 821; Cat. 613, Tang. 469, inv. 6792, see below for Lama Zhang.

³¹ TRK 47, inv. 815, 4924. This work does not appear in Kychanov’s catalogue.

number of puzzling graphs, among them “[A/ya]-[lion]-[si]-[pa]” and the third and fourth words, above, placed inside parantheses (literally “three-tipped arrow” [see EIK 0645] and “ravine, valley” [EIK 4313]). Could these two graphs refer to a place name in Tibet? Could “A [ya] lion si pa” (found in at least four texts linked to Fashizi, Cat. 542, 547, 684, and TRK 66) yield a Sanskrit epithet? Or, as Nishida Tatsuo 西天龍雄 suggests, “Yar-klungs-pa”?³² Usually Tibetan names and titles are translated, not transliterated, but “A (ya) lion si pa” looks like the transliteration of a Tibetan, not a Sanskrit, phrase. Sgam-po-pa (1079–1153), founder of the Bka’-brgyud school, established his monastery (Dwags-la sGam-po) just east of Yarlung, where Fashizi may have spent some time before traveling to Xia.³³ Yarlung-pa then could be understood as a variation on the other designations for “guest Tibetan.”

The fact that both Dadumin Si and Lanshan appear in his official title of Juezhao State Preceptor suggests that Fashizi had multiple affiliations, or that Lanshan referred to Dadumin Si and that monastery was closer to the Alashan than Nie Hongyin has proposed, or that Lanshan referred to any monastery just outside the capital in the Alashan foothills.³⁴ He was apparently a long-term resident of Xia.

Fashizi had another epithet, 德王中國上師 (*de wang zhong guo shang shi*), which preserves one of the rare instances of *shang shi*, the translation of the Tibetan *blama* as well as the Xia title “Supreme Preceptor,” that I have seen in the Khara-khoto material.³⁵ The binom 德王 appears to be a synonym for 金剛王 (*jin gang wang* “vajra king”), found in the title of another yoga text associated with Fashizi under a variant of the epithet A-lion-si-pa: Tibetan 藏中國 A-lion-sai Preceptor 師.³⁶ On the first leaf of the text appears the notation: “The Supreme Preceptor (lama) transmits these words... .” Kychanov interprets the phrase as a plural reference to “higher preceptors,” whose words are being recorded by another preceptor. Knowing that Fashizi-A-lion-si-pa went by the title of *shangshi* 上師 strengthens the case for interpreting both of these notations as referring to one and the same lama, and to *shangshi* as a title rather than a plural noun. So far I have found only three monks in Tangut textual materials with the title 上師, only one of whom, Fashizi, was of Himalayan (Tibetan-Nepali-Kashmiri) origin.³⁷ Was Fashizi, then, the

³² See Nishida’s essay in Cat., p. xxxix, n. 21.

³³ Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 289.

³⁴ Nie Hongyin, “Daduminsi kao” 大度民寺考, *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究 4 (2003), pp. 94–98, argues that the Dadumin Si was located at the site of the Gaotai Temple in Yinchuan.

³⁵ In Cat. 542, Tang. 266, inv. 2517, this title precedes the epithet “A-lion-si pa.”

³⁶ EIK 2251, 1301, 0218 師; Cat. 585, Tang. 264, inv. 4772 (pp. 555–56).

³⁷ The third was Li Fahai 李法海; see Men’shikov, *Opisanie*, no. 298, A5, inv. 137; *Ezang Heishuicheng wenxian* 5, pp. 134–35.

owner of the handsome portrait in a *thangka* found in the chamber atop the west stupa at Baisikou, the royal temple complex in the Alashan foothills?³⁸ On the chamber walls in red paint are the Tangut graphs for “supreme preceptor.” Below, in the entry on Huiming I return to the question of the “supreme preceptor” title.

The first graph in A-lion-si-pa (as it is written in Cat. 585, Tang. 264, inv. 4772) reappears as the third graph in yet another designation of this Tibetan monk: In a *bardo* text, Fashizi’s title of *Dadumin si zhongguo juezhao guoshi* 大度民寺中國覺昭國師 (Tibetan Juezhao State Preceptor of the Dadumin Monastery) precedes three graphs nowhere else seen linked to him: (lia) (ndu/ldiei/rie) (ia/lhi), which Shi Jinbo renders (somewhat mysteriously) as Renjili 任集立.³⁹ These three graphs have been glossed with a variety of transcriptions and phonetic renderings, but given the context in which they occur, they doubtless refer to Fashizi and not to some other person.⁴⁰

Fashizi transmitted tantric texts on various yogic practices associated with the *bardo* (intermediate state between life and death) in the *Naro chos drug* teachings (the six doctrines of Naropa) of the Bka’-brgyud school. One of these, *Zhong you shen yao men* 中有身腰門 (*Quintessential Instructions on the Body of the Intermediate State*), exists in a Chinese translation.⁴¹ The first page of the Chinese text also has a *shangshi* 上師 as the transmitter, and the three-character name preceding: 糠麻蘘上師 (*lu? kang?*) (*ma*) (*xie*) *shangshi*, may represent a Chinese version of the above-mentioned (lia) (ndu/ldiei/rie) (ia/lhi). In any case, the association of Fashizi with this tradition, which was systematized by Sgam-po-pa, suggests that he had ties to Bka’-brgyud lamas.⁴² He may have

³⁸ See Lei Runze 雷潤澤, Yu Cunhai 於存海, and He Jiyong 何繼英, eds., *Xixia Fota* 西夏佛塔 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1995), pp. 247, 250. The face portrayed was definitely Himalayan or Central Asian.

³⁹ Cat. 689, Tang. 88, inv. 822. Shi Jinbo, “Xixia Fojiao xintan” 西夏佛教新探, *Ningxia shehui kexue* 5 (2001), p. 73. *Bardo* refers to the intermediate state between life and death.

⁴⁰ Nie Hongyin hints to this effect in, “Daduminsi kao,” p. 98. I did not examine the text in Cat. 689.

⁴¹ Cat. 559, inv. 7116; TK327, *Ezang Heishuicheng wenxian* 5, pp. 106–12. Shen Weirong, “Studies on Chinese Texts of the Yogic Practices of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism Found in Khara Khoto of Tangut Xia [I],” *CEA* 15 (2005), pp. 187–230. Shen offers this translation of the title on p. 188.

⁴² See Shen, “Studies on Chinese Texts,” pp. 196–98, and Cyrus Stearns, *Luminous Lives: The Story of the Early Masters of the Lam ‘bras Tradition in Tibet* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), p. 6. Shen, “‘Dacheng yaodao miji’ yu Xixia, Yuanchao suo chuan zangchuan mifa” 大乘要道密集與西夏, 元朝所傳藏傳密法, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 20 (2007), p. 261, points out, however, that some Naropa teachings reached Xia in Sa-skya versions. How close Fashizi’s text is to its presumed original awaits clarification. I am grateful to Shen Weirong for sharing a copy of his now published paper.

studied under Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa, Sgam-po-pa's illustrious disciple and founder of the Karma-pa lineage, at Sgam-po monastery near Yar-lung. According to later Tibetan sources, Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa received a summons to the Xia court in the mid-twelfth century. Perhaps Fashizi accompanied Gtang-po-pa, whom Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa sent instead, north to the Tangut capital.⁴³

In Tangut texts Fashizi is found in association with Demiao (see above), who translated a text transmitted by him (Cat. 574, inv. 3823). The Tibetan lama also compiled a text that *sramana* Huiming (see below) translated from Tibetan (Cat. 684–685, inv. 2734, 6373). We might imagine these projects as taking place at a location close to the translator (say, the capital in Demiao's case, and the Wuming Shengxian Monastery in Huiming's case), and Fashizi as visiting various prominent monastic centers to work with resident monks. Or he could have worked with Huiming during the latter's tenure in the Sangha Office in the capital. He seems to have arrived in Xia by the 1180s, at the latest, but I have found no dated text associated with him. Without doubt, though, he actively promoted the new tantric teachings, as is well represented in the Khara-khoto materials.

6. Fahui 法慧: Mid/Late-twelfth to Early-thirteenth Century

Although dubbed a Tibetan by Nie Hongyin with the name Chos-kyi shes-rab (or ye-shes), Fahui also turns up with a surname, Guo 郭 (Cat. 743, Tang. 203, inv. 2821). The name Fahui occurs in a variety of settings. In all instances, it appears without any of the marks of visiting Tibetan status, nor is he ever designated a *bhikṣu* or *pandita*. In most instances Fahui appears as a translator of Tibetan texts into Tangut. Possibly long-term visiting Tibetans became fluent in spoken and written Tangut, but it seems more likely that this monk was a resident Tibetan or a Sino-Tangut. The evidence also points to the likelihood of more than one monk named Fahui.

As a translator of Tibetan, Fahui rendered a text into Tangut on behalf of an anchorite, O-zwei-zie-ta (inv. 2821, Tang. 203, Cat. 743). Fahui's name appears here with the surname Guo and is prefixed with the title, Monastery of State Support Dharma Preceptor Knowledgeable in the Three Tripitakas and Tibetan-Tangut Language Specialist 國持寺院三藏知解番藏語才法師 沙門郭法慧 (番譯). The monastery is evidently not the Huguo Temple 護國寺 in Liangzhou. Liangzhou had long been a Tibetan area, and one can imagine a Sino-Tangut monk with Tibetan

⁴³ Sperling, "Lama to the King of Hsia."

language skills as having emerged from such an area. Elsewhere the linguist Fahui shows up as a *sramana* affiliated with the Sheng Si 聖寺 (an abbreviated name) and the editor and translator of a Tibetan text associated with Sa-skya teachings, *Jian shun fu wen* 見順伏文.⁴⁴

In two instances Fahui holds state preceptor titles, which should indicate a later chronological date (being a fairly high title). One notation occurs in a reprint of *Foshuo Amituo jing*, where the Xianjue Imperial Preceptor and Jayananda appear, followed by Fahui and four other high-ranking monks, who simply transmitted the sutra (it was translated earlier from Chinese); here Fahui bears the title of Jinjie State Preceptor 金解國師.⁴⁵ The notice probably dates to the early 1160s, because Dehui (see no. 2, above) appears last with the title of Dharma Preceptor, and by 1165 Dehui had been promoted to a state preceptor. No location is mentioned, though likely the publication took place in the capital.

A Tibetan text translated by Fahui preserves the title of Huijing State Preceptor of [a cloister or monastery on?] Xiangyun Mountain 祥雲山慧淨國師.⁴⁶ Fahui appears as the sole translator of this text, [*Ji you*] *e qu jing ling benxu gang* [吉有] 惡趣淨令本續綱; the name of the compiler seems to be a Tangut version of the third Sa-skya founder's name, Grags-pa rgyal mtshan 大瑜伽士名稱幢師.⁴⁷ Yet the latter was not born until 1147, so this must be a relatively late effort, even early-thirteenth century, suggesting that this Fahui was not the same as the Jinjie State Preceptor who appears with Xianjue Preceptor and Jayananda in the 1160s. Either we have here two different monks named Fahui, or a very long-lived Fahui who held two different state preceptor titles over roughly forty years.

According to Kychanov's catalogue, Fahui translated *into* Tibetan the text listed under Tang. 307, which Nishida Tatsuo has identified as No. 5319 in the Tibetan canon, *Ting-nge 'dzin-gyi tshogs-kyi le'u zhes-*

⁴⁴ Sheng Si might refer to the Chongsheng Monastery 崇聖寺 near Liangzhou, or the Zhongsheng Puhua Monastery 眾聖普化寺, location uncertain. See Men'shikov, *Opisanie*, no. 149 (TK-21, dated 1210) for the Zhongsheng puhua Monastery. Cat. 430, Tang. 289, inv. 2544 may be a translation of Tib. 5838, *Lta-ba'i rim-pa bshad-pa*. The author of the text appears to be Dombhi-pa (Dombiheruka), disciple of Virupa and teacher of the eleventh century Indian gurus Atisa and Dam-pa sang-rgyas. See George Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1949; rpt. 1988), pp. 243, 869; Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, pp. 42, 196-97.

⁴⁵ Cat. 109, Tang. 147, inv. 6761.

⁴⁶ Cat. 708, Tang. 309, inv. 7907; see Nie, "Tufan jingshi," p. 66; the mountain name could also be rendered as Ruiyun 瑞雲.

⁴⁷ See Chen Qingying, "Xixia ji Yuandai zangchuan Fojiao jingdian de Han yiben" 西夏及元代藏傳佛教經典的漢譯本, *Xizang daxue xuebao* 西藏大學學報 2 (2000), p. 4. Shen Weirong affirms this identification (personal correspondence, 4/30/07); see Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, pp. 343-67, on Grags-pa rgyal mtshan (Drakpa Gyeltsen).

bya-ba (*Deng chi ji pin* 等持集品 in Kychanov's direct translation of the Tangut title).⁴⁸ This is a misleading attribution. Bodhibhadra (Byangchub bzang-po) authored the Sanskrit original; Vinayacandra and Chos-kyi shes-rab translated it into Tibetan. Xia monk Deyuan 德源 produced the Tangut translation.⁴⁹ This Chos-kyi shes-rab ("Fahui") refers to a renowned eleventh-century translator who rendered several texts, received from his Indian masters Vinayacandra and Krsnapada, into Tibetan.⁵⁰ Kychanov's annotation for inv. 2852, which I did not look at, provides the Tangut version of the name of earlier translator Chos-kyi shes-rab, which happens to translate as "Fahui." Our linguist (Guo) Fahui may have been named after his illustrious predecessor but is always attested as translating *into* Tangut *from* Tibetan.

Kychanov also reads Fahui as the Lanshan monk who translated a Tibetan *bardo* text under the name *Jixiang shangle lun sui zhongyou shen ding shun ci* 吉祥上樂輪隨中有身定入順次, but no clerical titles are legible in the notation.⁵¹ This text is related to a series of tantric manuals in Tangut and Chinese found in the Square Pagoda at Baisigou 拜寺溝方塔, in the eastern slopes of the Alashan not far from the capital. The name "Fahui" also appears in Tangut texts from the Square Pagoda, but with the surname Gao 高 (in its Tangut version), not Guo.⁵² Moreover, Gao Fahui is designated "the Shakya monk in charge of printing the sutra 印經勾當爲者沙門釋子高法慧," a rather humbler position than one would expect for Tibetan translator and state preceptor. One of the Square Pagoda fragments is dated to the early 1180s, thus it is possible that all the texts in the series belonged to a translation project of that time. This seems to be a different monk, despite the phonetic similarity in their surnames and identical ordination names. If it is the same Fahui, it testifies to the extraordinary graphic flexibility in rendering non-Tangut names. Guo Fahui, in any case, was involved in the

⁴⁸ Cat. 409-410 (p. 497); Nishida Tatsuo 西天龍雄, *Seika mon kegonkyō* 西夏文華嚴經, *The Hsi-Hsia Avatamsaka Sūtra* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Faculty of Letters, 1977) 3, no. 287, p. 55.

⁴⁹ I did not see the names of Fahui or Deyuan when I looked at the manuscript booklet under inv. 816, although I did see the Tangut *translation* of Bodhibhadra as the compiler.

⁵⁰ Online catalogue of the *bstan'gyur* by Gene Smith at the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center's Digital Library (www.tbrc.org). The relevant texts are from *mdo (ki)* 212 of the *dbu ma* section. See also Roerich, *Blue Annals*, pp. 162-63.

⁵¹ Cat. 672, Tang. 126, inv. 4826. I could not decipher the name with confidence; I saw two names possibly containing the element *hui* 慧, one perhaps a reference to an imperial preceptor, 帝師.

⁵² See Ningxia wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo (Ningxia Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics), *Baisi gou Xixia fangta* 拜寺沟西夏方塔 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), pp. 37-38, 102, 113. The Tangut title of these texts has been translated as *Jixiang bianzhi kou he benxu* and *Jixiang bianzhi kou he benxu zhi jiesheng xi jie bu* 吉祥遍至口和本續之解生喜解補.

production of tantric texts issuing from the Sa-skya and Bka'-brgyud lineage founders.

From these various notices a fragmented picture emerges of the activities of at least one monk-translator named Fahui and his relationships, but much remains uncertain about him, except his interest in the new tantric teachings and his language skills.

7. *Baoshizi* 寶獅子: *Late-twelfth to Early-thirteenth Century*

Like Fashizi, Baoshizi was a Tibetan or Himalayan cleric involved in promoting the new tantric teachings. Most references prefix his name with 西藏中國 and his religious title, confirming his foreign origins: 西藏中國三藏知覺寶獅子 *Xizang zhong guo sanzang zhijue baoshizi*. His Tibetan name can be reconstructed as *Rin-po-che seng-ge or *Dkon-mchog seng-ge, and because of this he might be identified as the first Tibetan to serve as a Xia imperial preceptor, Gtsang-po-pa (or Gtsang-pa) Dkon-mchog seng-ge (Gtsang-pa ti-shri), mentioned in eighteenth-century Karma-pa sources.⁵³ If so, he would have been the disciple of Dus-sgum mkhyen-pa, dispatched to Xia by the latter upon a summons from the Tangut court, and undoubtedly he was acquainted with Fashizi. The date of Gtsang-pa's arrival in Xia is unknown, but he spent some years in Xia, traveled back and forth to and from his home monastery, and died in Liangzhou in 1218 or 1219. His disciple and successor in Xia was a Tangut monk, 'Gro-mgon ti-shri ras-pa, who studied under him and apparently held the title of state preceptor before becoming, according to the Tibetan sources, imperial preceptor. This successor has not yet been identified in Tangut texts.

Baoshizi's name occurs exclusively with that of Huiming (see below), who translated texts that the Tibetan lama edited or compiled (Tang. 119 and 120).⁵⁴ In some notations he appears as Tibetan Dharma Preceptor Master of the Three Vehicles Baoshizi 西藏中國三乘知覺寶獅子法師.⁵⁵ In another instance the epithet 大喜智 (*da xi zhi*) is added in front of his name (Cat. 461, Tang. 120, inv. 888), a tantric version of the epithet bestowed on Tang-era translator of Esoteric texts, Amoghavajra: 大廣智 (*da guang zhi*). The two works that Baoshizi introduced, edited, and saw translated appear to be closely related to the *lam 'bras*

⁵³ Nie Hongyin suggested these reconstructions of the name to me in 2000; Sperling, "Lama to the King of Hsia," p. 33 and note 7.

⁵⁴ Cat. 461, Tang. 120, inv. 888; Cat. 549, Tang. 120, inv. 5129; Cat. 482, Tang. 120, inv. 6375; Cat. 403-404, Tang. 119, inv. 2621. Cat. renders the title of Tang. 120 as 菩提勇失試學所到及果與一順顯釋寶距.

⁵⁵ Cat. 482 and 485, Tang. 120, inv. 6375, 2621. Dkon-mchog seng-ge studied in central Tibet.

or “path and fruit” (or “path with result” 道果) practice that was being developed by Sa-skya and Bka'-brgyud lamas at this time.⁵⁶ Baoshizi's career apparently overlapped that of the mature Huiming, as the two worked together on these texts; Huiming can be dated into the second decade of the thirteenth century (see below), consistent with the time of Gtsang-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge's career in Xia.

One question arises immediately: if Baoshizi *was* Gtsang-pa ti-shri, why does he not appear in Tangut sources with the imperial preceptor title? We can entertain several possible explanations: 1) he did not leave behind many texts with his name, for whatever reason, such as having been destroyed in the Mongol wars; 2) he received the title later than the extant texts bearing his name; and 3) only later Tibetan sources record him with the title, which he perhaps never actually held while he was alive (that is, he received it posthumously, or retrospectively, possibly for reasons to do with the politics of Tibetan lineage formation). The case on Baoshizi, needless to say, remains open!

8. *Huiming* 慧明 [1], *Huizhao* 慧昭 [2] and *Huicong* 慧聪 [3]: *Late-twelfth to Early-thirteenth Century*

Many texts carry these three sets of graphs, which Kychanov lists separately (see #424 [1], 434 [2], and 432 [3] in his name index.⁵⁷ I think that, with two possible exceptions, they denote one and the same monk, probably of Xia origin, working in conjunction with prominent Tibetan translators. Nevertheless, the data relating to this figure present a number of puzzles, which I try to sort out as follows.⁵⁸

My argument proceeds from the conviction that three similar Tangut graphs were used interchangeably to translate the word rendered above in Chinese as *ming*, *zhao*, or *cong* (bright, clear, wise, perspicacious; see EIK 1821, 4670, and 3984). Two of the three Tangut graphs have the same phonetic value, so clearly semantic priority drove graphic flexibility, possibly compounded by scribal carelessness. This flexibility is seen in other phrases (usually names or titles) with the same word or meaning. For example, the above-mentioned Dehui held the title of Zhizhao State Preceptor 蘭山智昭國師; the Tangut version

⁵⁶ Stearns, *Luminous Lives*; Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, chaps. 8–9; Shen Weirong, “Tibetan Tantric Buddhism at the Court of the Great Mongol Khans,” *Quaestiones mongolorum disputatae* 1 (Tokyo 2005), pp. 61–89; and Shen, “Dacheng yaodao miji.”

⁵⁷ Cat., p. 680.

⁵⁸ See my “Portraiture and Patronage in Tangut Buddhism, 12th–13th Centuries,” in *Embodying Wisdom: Art, Text and Interpretation in the History of Esoteric Buddhism*, ed. Rob Linrothe and Henrik H. Sorensen (Copenhagen: The Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 2001), p. 116, note 64, where I first discuss the possibility of Huiming/Huizhao et al. being one person.

of this title uses graph [1] to write the word *zhao* 昭 as it appears in the Chinese version of the title. The Tangut graph per se I render above as *ming* 明. The Tangut version does not use graph [2], which may, however, in other contexts render the Chinese word *zhao*.⁵⁹

In all instances of Huiming's name (as I will refer to him) that I have seen, it never occurs with the marker 西天 or 藏中國. Usually *sramana* prefixes the name, but in at least two cases the two graphs for *bhikṣu* appear instead.⁶⁰ One of these instances entails a title and possibly a surname that remain difficult to decipher (inv. 5923). Twice the name appears with the surname of Li 李 (along with the titles listed in #2 and #3 below). In one case the epithet great *pandita* precedes the name (Cat. 404, Tang. 119, inv. 2621). In another case he appears as a Shakyā *bhikṣu* of the Wuming Xiansheng Monastery, the two graphs denoting Shakyā being rendered phonetically (Chin.: 釋迦; Cat. 391, Tang. 97, inv. 810). I take this to be a religious clan name, as given to Chinese monks in the Buddhist histories produced by Chinese clerics, or as appears in the name of the monk-printer Fahui (see above, no. 6).

This *sramana* or *bhikṣu* was a translator of Tibetan texts into Tangut (including a number of texts by the eleventh-century Indian master Naropa), affiliated with the Wuming Xiansheng Monastery 五明現生寺院 (perhaps located around Edzina or Khara-khoto), worked with Baoshizi Fashi 寶獅子法師,⁶¹ and also translated texts compiled by A-lion-si-pa or Fashizi 法獅子.⁶² The nomenclature associated with this name includes the following (the number 1, 2, or 3 in square brackets indicates the version of the name, as it appears above, in each title):

1. Huiming [2] Meditation Preceptor 慧照禪師 in a notation dated 1194 (Cat. 66, Tang. 104, inv. 683); in the context of the colophon in which it occurs, this must be a title and not a name, and thus does not refer to Li Huiming.
2. Deputy Director of the Sangha, Superintendent of the Three Studies Academy *sramana* Huiming [2] Li translated into Tangut 功德司正副使三學院提點沙門慧昭李番譯 (Cat. 711, Tang. 241, inv. 2543; the full title given here comes from my transcription, not Kychanov's *Katalog*.)
3. Wuming Xiansheng Monastery, Expounder of Dharma, Abhidharma and Vinaya, Tangut-Tibetan Language Specialist *bhikṣu* Li

⁵⁹ And by other translators, as in Cat. 555, 549, 557, 383.

⁶⁰ Cat. 393, Tang. 101, inv., and Cat. 422, Tang. 168, inv. 5923.

⁶¹ See above and inv. 5129, 2903, 888, and 6375; Tang. 120, Cat. 459, 461, 485; 482 [1 and 3].

⁶² See above and inv. 2734, Tang. 354, Cat. 684 and inv. 6373, Cat. 685 [2].

Huiming [1] 五明現生寺院法論律講番藏語才比丘李慧明, in a notation dated 1216;⁶³

4. Knowledgeable in Three Vehicles the [...] [...] Supreme Preceptor [...] *bhikṣu* Huiming [1] translated into Tangut 三乘知解 [ʔsu 須] [ʔmba 彌] 上師 [ʔ] 比丘慧明番譯 (Cat. 422, Tang. 168, inv. 5923).

Interpretation of the title in the fourth item of the list is tentative. The first part of this long line of cursive script may refer to two separate persons: “Knowledgeable in Three Vehicles... Supreme Preceptor [X, another name?],” and translator *bhikṣu* Huiming. On the other hand, versions of the epithet (rather than title?) “Knowledgeable in the Three Vehicles/ Tripitakas” were held by three other figures: Baoshizi, Guo Fahui (see above for both) and Yang Zhizhuang 楊智幢. Such functional epithets (along with those about translation competency) may be different from other kinds of titles, or else this would contradict a rule that titles were unique to the holder. Both Li Huiming and Yang Zhizhuang appear in a lengthy notation to the 1216 text mentioned in the third item, above, as the Tangut translators of the Tibetan treatise. Listed first, *bhikṣu* Li presumably outranked Yang, a *sramana* with the title “Wutaishan State Preceptor Knowledgeable in Three Vehicles” (lit. *Wutaishan san zhi zang jie guoshi* 五臺山三知藏解國師; note the unusual graphic order and a possible reference to the Tanguts’ re-creation of Wutaishan in the Alashan).

In item four, above, Li possibly held the title “Knowledgeable in the Three Vehicles” in tandem with that of “Supreme Preceptor,” and whether or not the supreme preceptor title was the crowning achievement of a monk’s career, or a stepping stone on the way to other positions (such as deputy director of the Sangha Office), remains unclear. The two graphs preceding and the graph following 上師 are glossed over in Kychanov’s translation (Cat. 422). The former might be the epithet “Sumeru” (the mountain at the center of the Buddhist world) enhancing the prestige of this Supreme Preceptor.⁶⁴ If the latter were a surname, we would expect to find it after or between the graphs for *bhikṣu*.

In regards to the title “supreme preceptor,” can we distinguish Tibetan monks (lamas) from imperially designated supreme preceptors 上師, or were they the same? The title 上師 (or 尚師) is registered in the

⁶³ Cat. 393, Tang. 101, inv. 5130; the surname Li appears here, interrupting the two graphs for *bhikṣu*; Nie Hongyin, “Ezang 5130 hao Xixia wen forjing tiji yanjiu” 俄藏 5130 號西夏文佛經題記研究, *Zhongguo Zangxue* 1 (2002), pp. 50–54.

⁶⁴ Shi Jinbo supposes so in “Xixia Fojiao zhidu tankao” 西夏佛教制度探考, *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 13.1 (June, 1995), or see his *Shi Jinbo wenji* 史金波文集 (Shanghai: Cishu chubanshe, 2005), p. 357.

Tiansheng code under article 686, as the first of the emperor's preceptors.⁶⁵ Perhaps by the late 1140s, the presumed date of compilation of the law code, the Tangut translation of Tibetan *blama* was elided with this title and officially adopted as a high honor bestowed upon a Buddhist monk (though not necessarily a Tibetan one). Xie Jisheng 謝繼勝 uses the term 上師 as an apparent equivalent to *blama*, in labeling the images of Tibetan monks in his 2001 study, *Xixia zangchuan huihua* 西夏藏傳繪畫.⁶⁶ Yet if the Tibetan word for lama was automatically rendered as 上師 in Tangut, one would expect to see those two graphs attached to more names. When imperial preceptors began to show up, shortly after the law code was issued, that new title may have superseded the older one. As mentioned above under Fashizi, so far I have found it affixed to only two other persons mentioned in Tangut texts, the Tibetan Fashizi (Alionsipa/Alionsai), and Li Fahai 李法海, a Chinese translator.⁶⁷ Huiming and Fashizi, evidently, were acquainted; about Li Fahai we have only one brief notice. Li Huiming, on the other hand, left behind a large corpus of work.

Huiming helped to translate a *sadhana* or ritual guide dedicated to the Medicine Buddha, Bhaisajyaguru (Cat. 711, inv. 2543, 藥佛海生金剛王文), whose popularity in the Tangut realm must account for the five *thangkas* dedicated to him in the Khara-khoto collection.⁶⁸ The Sanskrit title of the *sadhana* is transliterated into Tangut on the first page of this text, followed by the Tangut title, along with the (transliterated) name of the author ("A mbie xa riu ka Preceptor"), presumably Indian; at the end of the text, following a title that differs from the one above, appear some other names not listed in Cat. 711, "a great Indian *pandita* [pi] [ra] [?] [pa] [ri] [ma?]" and the lama who translated the text into Tibetan (if the first name indicates a separate person from what follows): 御前善行寶賢藏譯, "imperial *bhikṣu*, Baoxian, translated the Tibetan."⁶⁹ Finally, we read that Li Huiming, Deputy Director of the Sangha, produced the Tangut version. This translation project took place at the capital, judging by the titles of the two translators.

⁶⁵ Kychanov, *Izmenennyyi i zanovo utverzhdennyyi kodeks* 3, p. 417. Dunnell, "Hsia Origins," p. 90, used the Chinese graph 尙 to render this title.

⁶⁶ Xie, *Xixia zangchuan huihua: Heishuicheng chutu Xixia tangka yanjiu* 西夏藏傳繪畫, 黑水城出土西夏唐卡研究 (Hebei: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002).

⁶⁷ Men'shikov, *Opisanie*, A5, pp. 323-24.

⁶⁸ K. F. Samosiuk, *Buddiiskaia zhivopis' iz Khara-khoto, XII-XIV vekov: Mezhdru Kitaem i Tibetom (Buddhist Paintings from Khara-Khoto, XII-XIV Centuries: Between China and Tibet)* (St. Petersburg: The State Hermitage, 2006).

⁶⁹ This may represent a Tibetan name; could it be another appellation for Baoshizi (Dkon-mchog seng-ge), whose name appears consistently in connection with Li Huiming?

Perhaps not coincidentally, Li Fahai, the other known supreme preceptor 上師, translated into Chinese (from Tibetan or Sanskrit?) a text whose remaining fragments Men'shikov labeled a "Buddhist medical treatise," possibly related to the above text.⁷⁰ An Indian authored or transmitted this text as well (whose title is translated as *Xitian jingangzuo da wuming* 西天金剛座大五明), though evidently not the same author as for the Tangut text in Cat. 711. It should not surprise us that the court and throne evinced a lively interest in healing cults (or treatises) of whatever provenance, Chinese, Tibetan, or Sanskrit. A natural concern with such matters would be further heightened by the ominous political and military developments in the Tangut lands and throughout eastern Eurasia early in the thirteenth century.

Overall, Li Huiming appears to us as a prominent Xia monk, a Buddhist expert and linguist, someone who made a career in religious education, translation, Sangha administration, and royal service in the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries. If we accept Kychanov's hypothesis that the Wuming Xiansheng Monastery was located in or near Edzina, then his career focused on this border location and the capital, for presumably the post of Deputy Director of the Sangha Office and rank of Supreme Preceptor meant working at the court in Zhongxing. In the capital he would have had ample opportunity to meet and mingle with other high-ranking monks, including the Tibetans discussed here, and doubtless the imperial preceptor. It is possible to imagine his retiring to his home monastery (if it was his home) before the final Mongol conquest, taking an ample collection of religious books and images with him, some of which perhaps ended up in the cache uncovered by Kozlov. Indeed, the "famous *suburgan*" may have been near or on the site of the Wuming Xiansheng Monastery. It would explain why so many works associated with Huiming, more than are associated with any other single name, turned up there.

Li is a common enough surname. Having been bestowed in the ninth century by the Tang court on the Tuoba clan that eventually founded the Weiming dynasty, though, its use may have been restricted. It might point to an imperial bestowal, or a distant relative of the Weiming royal house. Other monks surnamed Li include Li Fahai, Li Demiao, Li Zhibao 智寶 (TK-21, Men'shikov #149), and the otherwise nameless Li with the titles Director of the Sangha Office for Monks (literally, "those who have left the household") 出家功德司正 and Zhijue Meditation Preceptor 至覺禪師 (Cat 292, Tang. 195, inv. 7165), dis-

⁷⁰ Men'shikov, *Opisanie*, no. 298. Perhaps this Fahai was the Chinese translator and transmitter of inv. 819 (Tang. 405, Cat. 349), translated into Tangut by Mbia nin.

cussed above, under Demiao. In the latter text this Li appears last in a notation headed by the Xianjue Imperial Preceptor, the Lecturer on Meaning and Dharma Preceptor 演義法師 and *lotsawa* [Anandakirti] who translated from Sanskrit, and Esoteric and Exoteric Dharma Preceptor 密顯法師 Deputy Director of the Sangha Office Zhou 周 [Huihai] who translated into Tangut. Sangha Office Director Li translated into Chinese, indicating that there ought to be a Chinese version of this text. One is tempted to speculate on the existence of an extensive Li clan actively involved in royal Buddhist affairs.

Lastly, I found two apparently unrelated references to a person named Huiming:

1. Owner of this book, [ti] [ngu] Huiming [2] (Cat. 619, Tang. 198, inv. 833); dated 1178. I have not found the graphs for Ti-ngu as a surname, and wonder if it may be a Tibetan or Buddhist moniker.
2. A monk who has left the household, and has dedicated and printed this text, Minpu Huiming [1] (Cat. 596, Tang. 333, inv. 7589); dated 1185.

The dates of these notations are consistent with Li Huiming's career (the early phase), and the fact that both texts are translations from Tibetan. Kychanov found numerous references to the surname Minpu attached to chapters of the massive *Prajnaparamita sutra* (translated from Chinese) that comprises a large portion of the Khara-khoto archive.

Two instances of the surname Minpu (Kychanov name-index #221 and #219) occur under titles of texts translated from Tibetan: the one mentioned above under Cat. 596, and another under Cat. 473, Tang. 120, inv. 4724. The work in Tang. 120 (described under Cat. numbers 458–486 in several different manuscript copies) was compiled by Baoshizi and translated by Sramana Huiming.⁷¹ Inv. 4724 is a complete version of the manuscript text, without the opening notice containing Baoshizi's and Huiming's names as found in inv. 5129 (Cat. 459). According to Kychanov's description of inv. 4727, "Min pu ie" and "Lion śian ndie" were owners of this copy of the text.⁷²

In the first instance (Cat. 596, Tang. 333, inv. 7589), Minpu Huiming occurs twice in a very long postface appended to an illustrated xylograph of 1185 (the postface is not reproduced in Kychanov's catalogue.) Minpu Huiming's name appears at the end, after the date, as

⁷¹ Cat., p. 513, reproduces variant [2] of the name but I copied variant [3] in two instances when I examined Tang. 120, inv. 5129, 2903, 888, and 6375.

⁷² A member of the numerous Liang 梁 clan who were devout Buddhists, judging by the frequency with which their name shows up in Khara-khoto texts, possibly related to the 11th-c. Xia empress Liang.

the “monk who has departed the home, who has vowed to print (the text).” The person who assisted in the production of this xylograph was surnamed Li. In these instances, the proximity of the surname Minpu with that of Li seems to be more than mere coincidence, but the precise nature of the connection remains to be illuminated. Did Li Huiming belong to the Tangut Minpu clan or family? A Sino-Tangut Li clan? A distant branch of the Weiming royal clan?

WAS HE OR WASN'T HE?

THE IMPERIAL PRECEPTOR CONUNDRUM

The appearance in Xia sources of the title “imperial preceptor 帝師” has elicited interest and speculation on the part of scholars over what exactly it meant, when it emerged, who bore the title, and what legacy that left to posterity. Inspired by Elliot Sperling’s 1987 “Lama to the King of Hsia,” I contributed to this speculation in a 1992 article in *Asia Major*, a Chinese version of which appeared the same year in *Ningxia shehui kexue* 寧夏社會科學, and most recently Nie Hongyin entered the discussion with a critical examination of the Tangut, Chinese, and Tibetan evidence as presented in articles published by Chen Qingying and Shi Jinbo.⁷³ Nie’s aim is to assess the criteria by which diverse imperial preceptors have been identified, to reject some of the candidates, and to point out that the Xia use of this title in no way implied a system or institution (*zhidu* 制度, coherent structure and related practices) resembling the Yuan-dynasty imperial preceptor, a line famously launched by ‘Phags-pa Lama. In this effort he is mostly right on target. I propose to push his analysis and speculations further.

Nie takes particular pains to point out the difference between a title (Xia) and an influential political office (Yuan). I will not comment here on his characterization of the Yuan system that operated through ‘Phags-pa and his successors, as that is a complicated issue still being researched and debated by Yuan historians. One cannot draw any conclusions, of course, about the nature of Xia practice compared to Yuan practice (or institutions), based on a shared title, though the existence of a link between them cannot be denied. The link is less the Tangut practices than the Tibetan intermediaries who interpreted and applied them in the setting of the Mongol empire, which of course presented quite a different landscape and host of opportunities from its predecessor.

⁷³ Nie, “Xixia dishi kaobian”; Chen, “Xixia ji Yuandai,” and idem, “Xixia Dacheng Xuanmi Dishu de shengping” 西夏大乘玄密帝師的生平, *Xizang daxue xuebao* 西藏大學學報 3 (2000), pp. 5-13; Shi, “Xixia Fojiao xintan” and “Xixia de zangchuan Fojiao.”

Many questions raised in Nie's "Xi Xia dishi kaobian 西夏帝師考辨" merit further discussion, if only because the new material that he reviews – the Chinese translations of Tibetan tantric texts and the Chinese notations in a late-Ming version of the Buddhist canon – is both tantalizing and inconclusive. Four main kinds of documentation supply evidence about Xia imperial preceptors:

1. Xia texts in Tangut and Chinese, largely from the Khara-khoto collection, and other texts found in Ningxia, Gansu, and so forth, produced presumably before 1227;
2. A collection of tantric texts in Chinese, a number of which were first translated from Tibetan (into Tangut and Chinese) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Xia monasteries, and compiled together probably in the late-fourteenth century under the name they are known by today, *Dacheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集. This material was published only in the twentieth century (discussed below).
3. Ming editions of Buddhist texts in Chinese (1447, 1641);
4. Later Tibetan chronicles, mainly of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

Most of this material is not readily accessible to scholars, which magnifies the difficulty of making sense of it. Later Chinese sources are not free of problems, and Tibetan materials present their own difficulties, language and dating being only the two most obvious. For example, Nie Hongyin asks why Tibetan sources preserve the imperial preceptor title in its Chinese rather than Tangut phonetic form, taking the "ti-shri" of Ti-shri ras-pa's name as equivalent to Chin. *dishi* (as Sperling and others read it). Given the fact that all Tibetan histories of the period were written from the vantage point of the Yuan empire and later, Yuan Buddhist practice and official nomenclature inevitably became the filters through which the past was interpreted, and Yuan politics inevitably colored the construction of Tibetan histories about the formation of their teaching lineages.

Because both imperial Tanguts and Mongols also used Chinese along with their own native scripts, because Chinese script carried great historical weight and prestige in the world in which it circulated, and because the Tibetans also made use of the homophonic Sanskrit honorific, *shri* (magnificent, grand) interchangeably with their own translation of the latter, *dpal*, it is not too much of a stretch to imagine an assimilation of the Sanskrit honorific *shri* to the Chinese title *dishi* 帝師 (familiar from Chinese *guoshi* 國師), to produce Tibetan *ti shri*. In the dynamic and competitive world of Tibetan monastic lineage formation of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, the loftier one's claims

the better, and certainly a Sino-Sanskrit form of a title would prevail over a relatively obscure Tangut phonetic form. Moreover, this was the form used by the Yuan establishment as well. From this perspective, what would require explanation would be the preservation and circulation of the Tangut form of the title. Nevertheless, another question that puzzles me is why do we have Ming sources, but none from the Yuan (none that I am aware of), referring to Xia imperial preceptors? Did it have something to do with the politics of the Yuan imperial Buddhist establishment? Perhaps the fact that some non-Tibetans (or non Sa-skya Tibetans) had held the title under Xia, which might have vitiated the legitimacy of the Sa-skya dominance during the Yuan period?

Of the various candidates scrutinized as Xia-era imperial preceptors in Nie Hongyin's study, two are relatively well documented in Xia-era materials: Xianjue Imperial Preceptor Poloxiansheng 賢覺帝師波羅顯勝 and Dacheng Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor Huicheng 大乘玄密帝師慧稱. Another figure bearing the title emerges from a late Ming source in Chinese, Miaojué Imperial Preceptor 妙覺帝師. Several Tibetan candidates have already been discussed at length in earlier publications.⁷⁴ Only one appears in Tangut texts with the designations for Tibetan origin: 中國, (西)藏(番)中國 or 藏國, although what is meant here by Tibet remains unclear: central Tibet? western Tibet? Khams? Amdo? All of these? And this candidate is the one that Nie Hongyin expels from the ranks of "real" imperial preceptors: Dacheng Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor 大乘玄密帝師. The evidence needs to be reexamined.

References to Dacheng Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor have surfaced in various twentieth-century Chinese republications of a fourteenth-century compilation of Tibetan Buddhist texts found in Qing palace collections, called *Dacheng yaodao miji*, and in Nishida Tatsuo's 西天龍雄 1977 catalogue of Tangut Buddhist texts, in a three-line notation along with the names of two other monks.⁷⁵ Studies of Tangut Buddhist texts in the Khara-khoto collection have yielded several occurrences of the name, with 中國, with 大師 (*dashi* "great preceptor"), and in Cat. 555 Xuanmi appears with a personal name Huicheng or Huizan 慧稱/贊.⁷⁶ Nie Hongyin reconstructs the name in Tibetan as Shes-rab

⁷⁴ See Sperling, "Lama to the King of Hsia;" idem, "Rtsa-mi Lo-tsâ-ba Sangs-rgyas Grags-pa," pp. 801–24; idem, "Further Remarks apropos of the 'Ba'-rom-pa and the Tanguts," *AOASH* 57.1 (2004), pp. 1–26; and Dunnell, "Hsia Origins."

⁷⁵ Lü Cheng 呂澂, *Han-Zang Fojiao guanxi shiliao ji* 漢藏佛教關係史料集 (*Documenta Buddhismi Sino-Tibetici*) (Chengdu: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu suo zhuan kan 中國文化研究所專刊 [Chinese Cultural Studies Research Institute], Huaxi xiehe daxue 華西協和大學 [West China Union University], 1942), p. iii; Nishida, *Seika mon Kegonkyô* 西夏文華嚴經, *The Hsi-Hsia Avatamsaka Sûtra* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Faculty of Letters, 1977) 3, p. 24, #076.

⁷⁶ Cat. 549, Tang. 425, inv. 3708; Cat. 550, Tang. 425, inv. 3808; Cat. 555, Tang. 126,

grags-pa (Prajnakirti), though neither he nor Shen Weirong can match it with any historical Tibetan figure of the era. A name with the prefix 大師 (“great preceptor”) normally predates the time in which the text was produced and usually refers to Tibetan authors of the tenth and eleventh centuries; the concurrence of this honorific with 帝師 in one evidently abbreviated reference (Cat. 549, inv. 3708) prompts the question: why call someone both *dashi* and *dishi*? Is it a scribal error? Should it have been Dacheng instead of *dashi*? Was it only, as Nie Hongyin proposes, a posthumous honorary title bestowed on a highly respected tantric teacher?

I share Nie Hongyin’s unease with this figure and with the company he keeps. The *Dacheng yaodao miji* material from the Qing collections represents, as Chen Qingying argues, a very early window onto Sa-skya lineage formation and teaching transmissions, and is associated with ‘Phags-pa Lama, the Yuan national and imperial preceptor, although (rival) Bka’-brgyud lamas were also involved in passing on the same teachings. All the names of authors and translators rendered in this early Chinese transcription (and presumably in their Tangut versions in the Tangut translations of these texts, a few of which Shen Weirong is able to identify), vary from their “spellings” in later Chinese and Tibetan sources and presumably reflect some of the earliest forms of these transcriptions. But that does not mean that they have not been tweaked by the editors or compilers of this material down the years for other purposes. Of immediate concern here is the most recent tweaking.⁷⁷

In Lü Cheng’s and Nishida’s twentieth-century reproductions, the persons listed in the three-line notation with the reference to Xuanmi Dishi, appended to a text in the anthology called *Jieshi daoguo yulu jingang juji* 解釋道果語錄句記 (*Vajra Verses on the Path with the Result*), appear in the “proper” Xia order of precedence (from compiler to translator).⁷⁸ In Chen Qingying’s article, which Nie cites, that order is reversed. Here is the notation as reproduced by Lü Cheng and Nishida:⁷⁹

inv. 2521; Cat. 557, Tang. 128, inv. 2838. Chen Qingying, “Xixia ji Yuandai,” p. 3; “Xixia Dacheng Xuanmi Dishi de shengping,” p. 6.

⁷⁷ See Shen, “Dacheng yaodao miji,” p. 269, for the notation in question and for a more detailed analysis of the texts.

⁷⁸ Nie, “Xixia dishi kaobian,” p. 4. See Cat. 386–387, Tang. 251, inv. 913, 914, 4528, for the Tangut version, without notations. The translated title paraphrases Cyrus Stearns in his *Luminous Lives*, p. 6, *passim*.

⁷⁹ See n. 75, above. While Nishida might have understood what the customary Xia order was supposed to be and rearranged the lines, Lü Cheng is hardly likely to have made such an adjustment.

西番中國法師禪巴集 (Xifan Central Country [Tibet] Dharma Preceptor Chanba compiled)
中國大乘玄密帝師傳 (Central Country [Tibet] Dacheng Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor transmitted)
北山大清涼寺沙門慧忠譯 (Northern [Wutai]shan Qingliang Monastery *sramana* Huizhong translated)

And here is the notation that Chen provides (reproduced in Nie's article):

北山大清涼寺沙門慧忠譯 (... Huizhong translated)
中國大乘玄密帝師傳 (... Xuanmi transmitted)
西番中國法師禪巴集 (... Chanba compiled)

No wonder Nie Hongyin found this out of order, testifying to a later (post-1227) compilation. Perhaps the Taiwan publication, upon which Chen seems to have relied, initiated the rearrangement, for reasons unexplained. (I have not been able to look at the Taiwan versions.) Since a Tangut translation of the *Jieshi daoguo yulu jingang juji* survives in the Khara-khoto collection, the Chinese version should have been produced around the same time, so the notation to it would be in the proper Xia order.

In fact, the contents of the collection as presented in Lü Cheng's 呂澂 1942 compendium *Han-Zang Fojiao guanxi shiliao ji* 漢藏佛教關係史料集 reappear in a completely different order in the Taiwan edition that Chen Qingying discusses.⁸⁰ Chen makes no reference to the earlier Chinese edition or to these discrepancies. The main goal of Taiwan editor Chen Jianmin 陳健民, himself a Sa-skyia master, probably did not lie in reconstructing the history of twelfth- and thirteenth-century translation efforts. What seems certain, in any case, is that the material as we have it today did not acquire its final form (in content if not in arrangement) before the end of the fourteenth century, because, as Lü Cheng explains, the anthology contains texts written by the Tibetan historian Bu-ston (1290–1364) and the famous Yuan translator, Bsodnam grags (1312–1375).

On this basis, Shen Weirong argues that work on tantric texts like these continued in Beijing, on into the early-Ming period and through to the end of the Qing dynasty, testifying to uninterrupted interest in Tibetan Buddhism in Chinese court circles.⁸¹ This means that all references in Chinese to Tangut translators, translations, or monks of the Xia period cannot be taken at face value, and must be analyzed very

⁸⁰ On Lü, see n. 75, above; see Chen, "Xixia ji Yuandai."

⁸¹ See n. 77, above.

carefully in the immediate temporal context of their production, to the extent possible. For it is clear now that Tanguts played more than a peripheral or passive role in the formation and transmission of Tibetan Buddhism and its teaching lineages. We can shed some light on Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor by examining the references to him and to persons associated with him in both the *Dacheng yaodao miji* and Khara-khoto materials.⁸²

The Tangut version of the *Fieshi daoguo yulu jingang juji* from Khara-khoto has a different notation, five lines of text following the title. Kychanov does not transcribe all of it in his catalogue (it is difficult to decipher), but provides a brief excerpt in translation (“checked once, the text tallies”).⁸³ The last part of a name, evidently an author or compiler, seems to be 智照 (thus may refer to Dehui, the Zhizhao State Preceptor). There is also reference to the Vajrayana 金剛乘. In no fashion, however, could I reconstruct the three line-notation found in the Chinese translation of this text that mentions Xuanmi Dishì, Chanba, or Huizhong.

Three other Khara-khoto texts name Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor 中國大乘玄密帝師慧稱(贊) as the transmitter; Lanshan Zhizhao State Preceptor *sramana* Dehui (Xia monk no. 2, above) translated all three into Tangut.⁸⁴ Dehui’s career spanned the years of Renzong’s reign and he held the title of Zhizhao State Preceptor in the 1180s, meaning that Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor must have been active in Tibet by the middle decades of the twelfth century, at the latest, precisely the time when works of this nature were first being committed to writing.⁸⁵

Chen Qingying has speculated that Xuanmi Dishì may have risen from the position of state preceptor, on the basis of references to a Dacheng Xuanmi State Preceptor 大乘玄密國師 in Renzong’s preface to an 1189 Chinese edition of the *Guan mile pusa shangsheng doushuaitian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, and in a colophon by Empress Dowager Luo, his widow, to an 1194 Tangut edition of the “Humane King Sutra” issued in his memory (Renzong died in 1193).⁸⁶ That hypothesis would

⁸² I concur with Shen (“Dacheng yaodao miji,” pp. 275–76) that Chen Qingying’s identification of Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor as the biographical subject of a long verse composition in the *Dacheng yaodao miji* (in Chen, “Xixia Dacheng Xuanmi Dishì de shengping”) is difficult to accept. For example, Chen assumes that 西番中國 refers to Xia, rather than to Tibet.

⁸³ Cat. 386, Tang. 251, inv. 913.

⁸⁴ Cat. 549, Tang. 425, inv. 3708; Cat. 555, Tang. 126, inv. 2521; Cat. 557, Tang. 128, inv. 2838.

⁸⁵ See Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, chaps. 1 and 2.

⁸⁶ Chen, “Xixia ji Yuandai,” p. 8; Men’shikov, *Opisanie*, pp. 195–197 and illus. 25, TK-58; Cat. 66, Tang. 104, inv. 683.

reflect a practice in which titles or epithets traveled with the holder (the epithet here being Xuanmi); it would put a Tibetan teacher, who had been active in Tibet earlier in the century, at the Xia court toward the end of his life, in the final decade or so of the twelfth century. In 1189, Xuanmi State Preceptor does not head the list of lamas invited to perform sacrifices and ceremonies at the Dadumin Monastery: he follows third after the Zonglü 宗律 and Jingjie State 净戒 Preceptors.⁸⁷ By 1194, however, he precedes Zonglü State Preceptor and the other “dharma and meditation preceptors” invited to conduct the week-long ceremonies commemorating the deceased monarch.⁸⁸ It would mean, further, that the references to Xuanmi Dishu in Tangut tantric texts should date to the period after 1194, at the earliest, which is consistent with efforts to date texts in the *Dacheng yaodao miji*.

In the *Dacheng yaodao miji* material, Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor appears in transmission lineages for two “Great Seal” (*mahamudra*; Chin.: *da shou yin* 大手印) teachings. In one case,⁸⁹ Xuanmi received them from Lama Lazheng 辣麻辣征, a disciple of Mila ras-pa (1028–1111), and passed them on to his disciple, Dabao Supreme Preceptor (or Lama?) 大寶上師, who in turn passed them on to Xuanzhao State Preceptor 玄照國師. Here we see a phonetic transcription of the Tibetan for Lama Lazheng, and a translation of the name and title of Dabao (whether Supreme Preceptor or Lama). In the other case,⁹⁰ Xuanmi received the transmission from Vajra-guru 末則[羅二合] 孤嚕 and passed it on to Zhi Jingang Preceptor 智金剛師, who in turn gave the teachings to the same Xuanzhao State Preceptor 玄照國師. We see a similar mix of phonetic transcription (for Tibetan names primarily?) and translation (for Xia titles?). In these lineages, Xuanmi Dishu emerges as a disciple of Lama Lazheng and Vajra-guru (if they were in fact two different lamas; transmission lineages not infrequently refer to the same lama with different names). Shen Weirong suggests that “Lazheng” may transcribe Dwags (Dags)-po lha-rje, another name for Sgam-po-pa (1079–1153), a Kadam-pa lama who received Naropa’s “Six Teachings” from Mila ras-pa and founded the Bka’-brgyud school.⁹¹ Such an identification

⁸⁷ See below for Jingjie State Preceptor’s identification as the Zhenyi State Preceptor Xibi Zhihai.

⁸⁸ In 1194, Zonglü State Preceptor appears in the Tangut form 律本國師.

⁸⁹ Chen, “Xixia ji Yuandai,” p. 4, #66; Shen, “Dacheng yaodao miji,” p. 282, discusses this lineage under the title numbered as #64 in Chen.

⁹⁰ Lü, *Han-Zang fojiao guanxi shiliao ji*, p. xiii; Chen, “Xixia ji Yuandai,” p. 4, #68; Shen, “Dacheng yaodao miji,” p. 285.

⁹¹ Shen, “Dacheng yaodao miji,” p. 282.

would make Xuanmi Dishu a peer of Dus-gsum mkhyen-ba, Sgam-po-pa's most famous disciple. Vajra-guru's identity remains unclear.

According to the above transmission lineages, two lamas received teachings from Xuanmi Dishu (directly or indirectly): Dabao Supreme Preceptor (Lama?) 大寶上師 and Zhi Jingang Preceptor 智金剛師. The name (or title?) Zhi Jingang appears in a Chinese text found in the Square Pagoda at Baisigou, with the title of state preceptor (*guoshi* 國師).⁹² Shen tentatively identifies Zhi Jingang 智金剛 as *Jnanavajra or *Ye-shes rdo-rje, an early- to mid-twelfth-century figure, and if the name denotes the same figure from the Baisigou text, then this Tibetan also moved north to take up a position in the Xia court-sponsored Buddhist hierarchy. But if his title is not of Tibetan but of Tangut-Xia origin, then Shen's identification may not hold. In any case, whether Tangut or Tibetan, he seems to have been roughly contemporary with Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor.

Shen is silent about the possible identity of Lama Dabao (if we take *shangshi* 上師 to translate "lama" and not to mean "supreme preceptor"). Dabao, "great treasure," seems to translate (the usual Xia practice, rather than transliterate) a Tibetan honorific title such as *rinpoche*, *rdo-rje*, *dpal*, and the like, and thus is difficult to pin down. It could, for example, refer to Lama Zhang, or Zhang Rin-po-che (1122–1193), whose full name was Zhang Gyu-brag-pa (Brts'on-'grus-grags-pa), founder of the Mtshal-pa subsect of the Bka'-brgyud school. Lama Zhang's name appears in Tangut texts as Shang-gyu-drak-pa, author or transmitter of several compositions in the Khara-khoto collection.⁹³ He was a famously pugnacious and controversial figure in late-twelfth-century Tibet; one of his disciples, Ti-shri ras-pa, spent thirty years in Xia (from ca. 1198 to 1226), and became the successor to Gstang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge (died 1218–19), the Xia imperial preceptor dispatched from Tibet by Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa.⁹⁴

⁹² Lei et al., *Xixia foto*, p. 48; Ningxia wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo, *Baisigou Xixia fangta*, pp. 235, 243, in the text, *Jixiang shangle lun lue wen deng xukong benxu* 吉祥上樂輪略文等虛空本續.

⁹³ Cat. 384, Tang. 182, inv. 821, and Cat. 613, Tang. 469, inv. 6792, in association with Fashizi and Huiming, respectively. Inv. 821 contains 5 compositions, located, according to Kychanov (p. 487), under Tang. 90 (Cat. 534), Tang. 180 (Cat. 563), Tang. 308 (Cat. 547) and Tang. 319, which I am unable to find (but see the title as rendered in TRK #308, pp. 114 [Chinese], 152 [Tangut]). On Lama Zhang, see Sperling, "Further Remarks Apropos of the 'Ba'-rom-pa and the Tanguts" and Dan Martin, "A Twelfth-century Tibetan Classic of Mahāmudrā, *The Path of Ultimate Profundity: The Great Seal Instructions of Zhang*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15.2 (1993), 243–319, for a translation of Lama Zhang's teaching.

⁹⁴ Sperling, "Further Remarks apropos of the 'Ba'-rom-pa and the Tanguts," p. 6.

Lama Zhang could thus plausibly furnish a link between two Xia imperial preceptors of Tibetan origin, one his teacher (Xuanmi) and the other his student (Ti-shri ras-pa). According to Sperling, Zhang transmitted to Ti-shri ras-pa “the complete cycle of Mahākāla teachings” that Zhang had received, through his teacher Rgwa lo-tsa-ba (Rnam-rgyal rdo-rje), from Rtsa-mi lo-tsa-ba, the alleged Tangut or Minyag translator of the early-twelfth century.⁹⁵ In Zhang’s teacher, Rgwa lo-tsa-ba, however, we find another possible identity for Dabao Lama. *The Blue Annals* refer to Rgwa as “dPal-chen rGwa-lo” or Great Treasure Rgwa lo-tsa-ba, in reference to a meeting between Zhang’s teacher and another major lama of this era, Phag-mo gru-pa (1110–1170).⁹⁶ Because Tibetan lamas studied with many teachers (other lamas), who may have been older or younger than themselves, and because of the Tangut evidence discussed above, we probably lack grounds for speculating that Xuanmi Imperial Preceptor was an honorary title for Rtsa-mi lo-tsa-ba, or Rgwa lo-tsa-ba. But almost certainly he was acquainted with Baoshizi, or Gstang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge (if they are the same person). A closer examination of the extant Tangut texts associated with all of these figures may shed light on their relationships, as well as on the spread of the Mahakala cult and Kalacakra teachings from India to Tibet and Xia.⁹⁷ If Xuanmi Dishu indeed spent his final years at the Xia court, he must have lived to a very ripe old age!

The final recipient of the teachings in the putative lineages of Xuanmi Dishu was Xuanzhao State Preceptor, presumably a Xia monk. He transmitted two other “Great Seal” texts in the collection, under the name Sramana Huixian of the Guohai miyan Monastery 果海密嚴寺沙門惠賢. The monk who translated those texts into Chinese, Huichuang 惠幢, of the same monastery, was likely his disciple.⁹⁸ Sramana Huixian thus appears as a disciple of Dabao Supreme Preceptor (or Great Treasure Lama) and Zhi Jingang (possibly the Tibetan *Jnanavajra or *Ye-shes rdo-rje), who perhaps sojourned in Xia (Zhi Jingang as a state preceptor) or received Huixian as a student at Tibet (Lama Dabao). Huixian may have been a Tibetan or a Tangut; translator Huichuang probably was a Tangut (or Sino-Tangut).

⁹⁵ See n. 94, above, and Sperling, “Rtsa-mi Lo-tsa-ba Sangs-rgyas Grags-pa.” On Rgwa-lo Gzhon-nu-dpal (1110–1198) see Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, pp. 281, 333–34.

⁹⁶ Roerich, *Blue Annals*, p. 555.

⁹⁷ Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, p. 281 *passim*.

⁹⁸ Lü, *Han-Zang fojiao guanxi shiliao ji*, p. IV, #X1 and X4. Chen, “Xixia ji Yuandai,” #63–64; Shen, “Dacheng yaodao miji,” pp. 281–82.

Both lineages situate Xuanmi Dishi in mid-twelfth century, making him contemporary to the Sa-skya founder, Sachen Kun-dga' snying-po (1092–1158) and Bka'-brgyud founder Sgam-po-pa. Among the former's disciples figured Chanba, who compiled the teaching transmitted by Xuanmi Dishi, according to the notation “西番中國法師禪巴,” as written in *Jieshi daoguo yulu jingang juji*.⁹⁹ In other words, Chanba transmitted to Xuanmi a teaching that presumably he obtained from either from Sachen at Sa-skya or from one of Sachen's early disciples.

Stearns and Davidson analyze the history of Sachen's commentaries on the “Path with Result” teachings, and those by his disciples. Stearns argues that Phag-mo grus-pa (1110–1170) played a key role as Sa-chen's “most learned disciple,” studied with Sa-chen at Sa-skya from ca. 1138 to 1150, was the first to write down Sa-chen's instructions on the teaching (or, in Davidson's understanding, copied them and used them in his own teaching) and subsequently passed them on as a Bka'-brgyud tradition after studying with Sgam-po-pa from ca. 1151 to 1153, when Sgam-po-pa died. Shortly after 1153, Phag-mo grus-pa returned to Sa-skya, and acknowledged his debt to Sa-chen by making him a gift of scriptures and momentos of Sgam-po-pa's funeral rites. For the last twelve or more years of his life Phag-mo grus-pa (d. 1170) meditated in a grass hut that he built (at Gdan-sa-mthil) north of Yarlung.¹⁰⁰

Earlier, before going to Sa-skya, Phag-mo grus-pa had befriended Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa, Sgam-po-pa's eventual successor, while both were studying with great Kadam-pa masters west of Lhasa. Soon after Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa finally met Sgam-po-pa, in ca. 1140, the master sent him away to meditate again in the southern Himalayan wilds, from which he apparently returned not long before the master's death. Subsequently Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa presided over the annual celebrations of Sgam-po-pa's nirvana (much as Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan did for Sa-chen Kun-dga' snying-po), ritual observances which linked the various monasteries he founded in Central Tibet (Mtshur-phu) and in Khams, where despite Phag-mo grus-pa's warnings of danger, he spent over ten years.¹⁰¹ Bka'-brgyud missionary activity, encouraged by the practice of masters sending charismatic disciples out to meditate and establish new centers of study, thus facilitated “international exchanges” and the spread of new ritual systems to Tangut territories. Indeed, it

⁹⁹ On Chanba see *ibid.*, pp. 269–70. Nie Hongyin, “Xixia dishi kaobian,” p. 5, inconclusively suggests a Tibetan ‘Jam-dpal but there are many other possibilities.

¹⁰⁰ Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, pp. 16–32, 27; Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, pp. 289–90, 303–15, 332–38, esp. 308, 337.

¹⁰¹ Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, p. 333; Davidson does not elaborate on the “danger”,

may have been from his Kham monastery that Dus-sgum mkhyen-pa dispatched Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge to the Tangut court.

Chanba may well have met Phag-mo grus-pa at Sa-skya, where he may also have compiled the original text of *Jieshi daoguo zhu nan ji* 解釋道果逐難記.¹⁰² This text was transmitted and translated by the Xia monk Baochang (titled *Ganquan dajueyuanji shamen Baochang chuan yi* 甘泉大覺園寂寺沙門寶昌傳譯), suggesting that Baochang, based at the Monastery of Great Enlightenment and Serenity in Ganzhou (Ganquan), may have been a disciple of Chanba.¹⁰³ Chanba perhaps sojourned in Ganzhou at that monastery, as likely did other Tibetan lamas of the time, or Baochang traveled and studied in Tibet.

In the third line of the Chinese notation that mentions Xuanmi Dishi, in its “proper” order, we find the translator of *Jieshi daoguo yulu jingang juji* 解釋道果語錄金剛句記, namely, the Xia monk Huizhong 沙門慧忠, who rendered the text from Tibetan into Chinese. Huizhong’s title is *Beishan Daqingliangsi shamen* 北山大清涼寺, referring to the Northern Wutaishan Qingliang Monastery, established by the Tanguts in the Alashan.¹⁰⁴ No other Xia-era texts have so far yielded a Huizhong. A mid-Yuan (1312) reference to a Huizhong in a Tangut Buddhist text is possible only if we reject the entire argument related to *Jieshi daoguo yulu jingang juji* offered by Chen and Shen, or if we hypothesize that a Chinese translation was made only in the early-fourteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Ordination names beginning with “Hui” seem to have been quite popular among Tanguts in the late-twelfth and thirteenth centuries. One could hypothesize a Tangut ordination family devoted to tantric teachings, to which this Huizhong belonged, along with Huixian, Huizhang (also mentioned in the *Dacheng yaodao miji*), and many others. In sum, it is too early to reject Xuanmi as a legitimate Xia-era imperial preceptor.

Let us briefly consider the testimony regarding the Xianjue Imperial Preceptor 賢覺帝師 Poloxiansheng 波羅顯勝 and two other late-

which was likely related to disturbances caused by the Jurchen conquest of north China and ensuing frontier wars among the Chinese, Tanguts, and Jurchens in the region adjacent to Khams and Amdo, home to the Tibetan monastic center at Tsongkha.

¹⁰² Chen, “Xixia ji Yuandai,” title #7, p. 3; Shen, “Dacheng yaodao miji,” pp. 269–70.

¹⁰³ Shi, *Xixia Fojiao shilue*, pp. 120–21, for other Ganzhou monasteries, including the Ganquan Shizi feng xiusheng si 甘泉師子峰秀生寺 mentioned in the preface to Taisho no. 1956 (*Mizhou yuan yin wangsheng ji* 密咒圓因往生集), in which a monk affiliated with this monastery, Huizhen 慧真, is named as compiler).

¹⁰⁴ Shi, *Xixia Fojiao shilue*, pp. 118–19, for reference to a Northern Wutaishan Qingliang Monastery in an inscription at the Yulin caves in Anxi, as well as in a preface to Taisho 1956 (see previous n.).

¹⁰⁵ On the Yuan era Huizhong, see Shi, *Xixia Fojiao shilue*, p. 322.

appearing candidates to the imperial preceptor position, Xinyuan Zhenzheng Imperial Preceptor 新園真證帝師 and Zhenguo Miaoju Jizhao Imperial Preceptor 真國妙覺寂照帝師.

Xianjue Dishu ([Polo]xiansheng) is amply documented in Xia materials in both Tangut and Chinese of the mid-twelfth century, often in company with Jayananda. These sources put him at the Xia court no later than the early 1160s (if not earlier, see the discussion of Zhou Huihai, Xia monk no. 1, above). The most complete notation, providing his name, monastic title, court rank, and position as Director of the Sangha Office, occurs in the well-known Tangut and Chinese editions of *Sheng sheng hui dao bi'an gongde baoji jie* 聖勝慧到彼岸功德寶集偈; the notation includes reference to the Kashmiri *pandita* Jayananda, his Tibetan translator Anandakirti, and Tangut translator Zhou Huihai.¹⁰⁶ This level of detail is unique, for an imperial preceptor at any rate. In subsequent references to Xianjue, we may find the Indian *pandita* Jayananda and translator Anandakirti (Cat. 109, 292, 566), or Xianjue's name (Cat. 109), or just his title Xianjue Dishu (Cat. 507). So far he appears to be the first person to hold the title of Imperial Preceptor.

Shi Jinbo identifies Xianjue Imperial Preceptor with the Xianjue Pusa (Bodhisattva) who figures in the 1176 Chinese-Tibetan stele inscription to the renovated bridge over the Heishui 黑水 (Black River) in Zhenyi commandery 鎮夷郡, Gansu.¹⁰⁷ Xianjue may have been dead by the 1170s, and it is possible that Renzong chose to honor his former imperial preceptor for performing the meritorious deed of sponsoring the repair of a flooded bridge out in Gansu. It would certainly suggest something about the scope of activity of this particular imperial preceptor.

As I point out, above, in the discussion of Dehui,¹⁰⁸ Shi may have confused Xianjue Imperial Preceptor with the Tibetan author Bodhibhadra, a disciple of Naropa. One might also argue that the “Bodhisattva” invoked by Renzong, namely, 賢覺聖光菩薩 (*xianjue shengguang pusa*; “Enlightened Worthy Holy Luminous Bodhisattva”) in his address to the spirits of the unruly river was his own father, the previous emperor Chongzong 崇宗 (r. 1086–1139). For what other deceased person in a position of responsibility for the bridge would he have invoked with

¹⁰⁶ Cat. 375, inv. 598, and Luo, “Zang-Han hebi,” for the 1447 Ming edition.

¹⁰⁷ Shi, “Xixia de zangchuan Fojiao,” p. 40; Wang Yao 王堯, “Xixia Heishui qiao bei kao-bu” 西夏黑水橋碑考補, *Zhongyang minzu xueyuan xuebao* 中央民族學院學報 1 (1978), pp. 51–63.

¹⁰⁸ See n. 22, above.

such an honorific? It was the “Enlightened Worthy’s merit of construction” 賢覺興造之功 that Renzong had earlier come to witness, perhaps as a crown prince. Two spaces (honorific) separate reference to the former “Worthy,” the phrase beginning 賢覺興造之功, from the preceding text. While this could demonstrate Renzong’s reverence for his former imperial preceptor, it could also demonstrate the Tangut emperors’ appropriation of Buddhist epithets for themselves, or as filial allusions to their forefathers, a practice known by their neighbors, the Mongols and Uygurs, by the early thirteenth century.¹⁰⁹

At some later date, Nie Hongyin argues, Xianjue’s name Poloxian-sheng acquired a new Chinese translation, Xinyuan 新圓. This identification also raises questions. Nie Hongyin found Xinyuan in a notation observed (but never published) by the now deceased Huang Zhenhua 黃振華 to a 1641 edition of a Huayan text in 42 chapters that was titled *Da fang guang fo huayan jing haiyin dao chang shizhong xingyuan chang bianti chanyi* 大方廣佛華嚴經海印道場十種行願常遍禮懺儀, published in Lijiang 麗江, Yunnan. The material seems to reflect the passage of time and loss (or suppression) of memory: Xia 夏 becomes Tang 唐 in the title of a late-Xia or early-Yuan monk, Huijue 慧覺, whom Nie Hongyin convincingly identifies with Shes-rab byang-chub, the successor of Ti-shri ras-pa who helped to reprint a Tangut edition of *Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* 金光明最勝王經 in 1247. A colophon appended to the last chapter of the 1641 text lists five Xia “Huayan” state preceptors and two imperial preceptors, Xinyuan Zhenzheng Imperial Preceptor 新圓真証帝師 and Zhenguo Miaojué Jizhao Imperial Preceptor 真國妙覺寂照帝師. In the Miaojué’s title, I suspect that 中國, intolerable or inexplicable under the Ming (or the Yuan) dynasty as a reference to Tibet, has been transfigured into 真國.

The colophon’s list is headed by Xianbi [Xibi] Zhenyi State Preceptor. In the colophon he appears as 講經律論重議諸經正趣淨戒鮮卑真義國師 (*jiang jing lu lun chong yi zhujing zheng qu jingjie Xianbei zhenyi guoshi*), his surname (Xianbi or Xibi) preceding the title of Zhenyi State Preceptor. “Jingjie” (“pure in precept”) shows up in a Xia source as an unnamed state preceptor mentioned above in an 1189 imperial preface, with Xuanmi State Preceptor (“jingjie” appears to be part of his state preceptor title, along with “zhenyi”). A Xia-era portrait with the inscription, Zhenyi State Preceptor Xibi Zhihai 真義國師西壁智海,

¹⁰⁹ Thus the Mongols refer to the Tangut king as “Burqan” or “Buddha-king” in *The Secret History of the Mongols*; see the translation by Igor de Rachewiltz (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 1, para. 249 and 265, pp. 177, 197.

appears painted on the walls of Yulin Cave 29.¹¹⁰ His name has not come up in any other Xia materials, to date. This Jingjie we can now identify as Xianbi Zhihai, the Zhenyi State Preceptor.

In the case of the two new imperial preceptors, the elements Xinyuan and Miaojué, apparently names or surnames (if they follow the same pattern as for state preceptor Xibi), likewise precede the imperial preceptor title rather than follow it, as they do in Xia-era texts (the 1447 reprint of *Sheng shenghui dao bi'an gongde baoji jie* also lists Xianjué Imperial Preceptor's full title and clerical name after his preceptor title). Nie proceeds to reconstruct Xinyuan as a Chinese translation of Tibetan Gsal-rgyal (literally, “new” “realm”), and identifies it with the third and fourth graphs in Poloxiansheng (namely, 顯勝), a name which combines a transliteration of Sanskrit Pala with another Chinese rendering of Gsal-rgyal (literally, “fresh” “victorious”).¹¹¹

Although a brilliant linguistic feat, such a reconstruction seems unnecessarily convoluted. Xianjué does not appear to be associated with any Huayan texts in the extant Xia-era evidence relating to him. We are left wondering why two very different Chinese versions of his ordination name would be used, when we do not see different Chinese versions of other ordination names. The other element in his title, *zhengzheng*, remains puzzling. It seems likelier that a simpler solution awaits discovery.

As for Zhenguo Miaojué Jizhao Imperial Preceptor 真國妙覺寂照帝師, Nie reconstructs the Tibetan Legs-pa'i byang-chub for Miaojué. The apparent deformation of 中國 (*zhong guo*) into 真國 (*zhen guo*) supports a Tibetan identity for this figure. So far as I know, this is the first citing of Miaojué Imperial Preceptor, and his status as an authentic Xia imperial preceptor, like that of Xinyuan, cannot be taken for granted.

The slippery nature of names and titles confounds attempts at reconstruction. Written Tangut was dynamic and flexible (not to say rapidly changing) throughout most of its history, adapting to the need to render foreign terms, names, and texts. This was especially true in the arena of Buddhist translation, most pertinently so from the latter half of twelfth century on. In writing religious names (of persons or places), different Tangut graphs with the same meaning, on the one hand, or the same sound, on the other, might be used to render the same name. Nie

¹¹⁰ See Shi, *Xixia Fojiao shilue*, p. 302; Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, *Ansei Yurinkutsu*, pp. 275–76, pll. 115–20. Huang Zhenhua never published on the topic before his death in ca. 2005.

¹¹¹ Nie, “Xixia dishi kaobian,” pp. 6–7.

Hongyin has pointed out that a combination of translation and transliteration strategies was employed.¹¹² But not all names, or even entire names, were consistently translated rather than transliterated. This dynamism continued into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Whether Xia imperial preceptors had any kind of political influence, or influence like that attributed (perhaps mistakenly) to Yuan imperial preceptors, remains to be determined, though the vast power and reach of the Mongolian empire naturally dwarfs anything the Tanguts had to work with. Our understanding of Tibetan and Tangut Buddhists, their doctrines and associated practices, their resource bases, social networks, relationships with secular authorities (local and state), and the spread and reception of their teaching lineages, is still insufficient. We can, though, put Xia squarely into the picture of the spread of Vajrayana Buddhism from India and Kashmir, through Tibet to China and the Mongols. That history of that transmission comes right up to the twentieth century.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Cat.	Kychanov's entries in his <i>Katalog tangutskikh buddiskikh pamiatnikov</i> ; under each numbered entry (Cat.) are listed the Tang. and inventory numbers (explained below).
EIK	E. I. Kychanov, <i>Slovar' Tangutskogo (Si Sia) iazyka: Tangutsko-russko-anglo-kitaiskii slovar' (Tangut Dictionary: Tangut-Russian-English-Chinese Dictionary)</i> (Kyoto: Faculty of Letters, Kyoto University, 2006).
Tang. and inv.	The numbering system used in Gorbacheva's and Kychanov's work cited, below. Each Khara-khoto fragment under a numbered title (Tang.) in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg was originally assigned an inventory number (inv).
TK	Denotes Chinese texts in the Khara-khoto collection of the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences.
TRK	Z. I. Gorbacheva and E. I. Kychanov, <i>Tangutskie rukopisi i ksilografy</i> (Moscow: Izdatatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1963).

¹¹² Nie, "Xixia de Fojiao shuyu" 西夏的佛教術語, *Ningxia shehui kexue* 6 (2005), pp. 90-92.