

# The Management of Woodblock Engraving of Buddhist Canon in China

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## ABSTRACT

*The Chinese started engraving woodblocks of the Buddhist canon in the early Song dynasty (971 – 983). In the past one thousand years, more than thirteen editions have been engraved. They are considered invaluable treasures both in Chinese cultural heritage and Buddhist literature. Although the most popular edition is the Taisho printed in modern style, knowledge of other engraved editions will help us understand how the Imperial Court, Buddhist monks and lay people managed to embark such a huge project of engraving an edition of Buddhist canon.*

*The engraving of any edition of Buddhist canon is a huge project. It usually takes years to raise fund, collect and collate scriptures, select woodblocks, copy and engrave scriptures. For a court edition, it did not have problems of fund-raising because the emperors were rich enough to donate sufficient funds for the project. For the editions initiated by common people, this was no easy job. When the carving of woodblocks was completed, things were not finished. The managers of the printing house had to preserve the blocks, keeping them in a safe place from fire, worms, and humidity.*

*The engraving of Buddhist canon is usually considered a merit-making work. Many Buddhists, monks, nuns and lay people alike, would involve in the project. They showed respect to the scriptures and Buddhist canon and took this respect as merit-making in triple gems worship. Common people and emperors alike would take copying scriptures as a merit. The temple would organize activities involved in making scriptures or edition of the Buddhist canon. These activities included copying, sunning, donating money for fund-raising, engraving and printing of the scriptures. In fact, things are more complicated than we can imagine.*

*The discussion of the management of Buddhist canon offers us understanding of how Chinese Buddhists produced the canon and kept it for a long period of use.*

## I. Introduction

In this essay on the management of engraving woodblocks of the Buddhist canon, I will focus on *Yongle Southern Edition* (《永樂南藏》) constructed after 1408, *Fangce Zang* (《方冊藏》 The Sewn Edition), and *The Qing Edition* (《清藏》). Both *Yongle Southern Edition* and *The Qing Edition* are court editions. *The Sewn Edition* was constructed by common people. Sometimes, I would use other editions to illustrate the points when information is available, such as *Zhaocheng Jinzang* (《趙城金藏》 Zhaocheng Jin Edition), or *YongleBeizang* (《永樂北藏》 Yongle Northern Edition). I believe that a knowledge of the management of a court edition and a commoners' edition would

enhance our understanding of other editions, though information on how they were constructed is scanty.

In this paper I mainly rely on two sources. For the imperial edition, I will frequently quote *Fu Qingjing Tiaoli* (《附請經條例》 Rules for Purchasing a Buddhist Canon), an Appendix to the *Catalogue of Nanzang in Taishō Fabao Zong Mulu* (《昭和法寶總目錄》 Catalogues of Taisho). The other source I quote is *Kezang Yuanqi* (《刻藏緣起》 The Origin of Construction of a Buddhist Canon). This is a rare book my father photocopied for me from Sichuan Provincial Library in 1998.<sup>1</sup> Currently, China has four copies of this rare book. It is incorporated in the *Jiaying Edition of the Buddhist Canon* (《嘉興藏》) as it was printed in Jiaying County in present Zhejiang Province, or called *Fangce Zang* (《方冊藏》 The Sewn Edition) because of its binding style.<sup>2</sup>

This paper is divided into three parts:

1. The Early Stage of Preparation
2. The Management in the Construction
3. Post-engraving managerial work

## II. The Early Stage of Preparation

The first stage of preparation may be divided into three parts:

- (1) Translation
- (2) Fund raising for private editions
- (3) Collating work

Many Buddhist scriptures were introduced into China either by foreign monks or Chinese monks who went to India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere to bring them. When the scriptures were brought, monks with a good knowledge of Sanskrit would get involved in the translation project. Many such projects were sponsored and financially supported by the court. In fact, Master Xuanzang (Hsuan Tsang) and Master Yijing (I-Ching) were good friends of Tang emperors and empress.

### I. Translation.

We have the following record regarding the size and division of work in the Translation Site:

1. The master of the translation department was usually the monk who brought back the scriptures. He possessed good knowledge of both Chinese and Sanskrit languages and Buddhism.
2. The note-taker was responsible for writing down what the master uttered in Chinese. Usually, he understood both Sanskrit and Chinese languages.

3. Transliterating work. It aimed at transliterating the sounds of Sanskrit language into Chinese.
4. Editorial revision. This enabled the translators to check whether the translation of Sanskrit was correct or not.
5. Polishing. When the first version was drafted, the language was probably rough and not idiomatic. The polishing work enabled the language readable and pleasanter.
6. Verifying. This checked the correct comprehension of the Buddhist doctrines after the translation.
7. Fanbei. When the scriptures were translated, monks would sing it by using the methods of reading Sanskrit sounds and tunes. This ensured that the translated scripture was harmonious in temperament and rhythm. This done, the learners could easily learn it by heart.
8. Collation. Translators would collate the translated version.
9. Supervisors. Officials were appointed to supervise the translating project.<sup>3</sup>

Dunhuang manuscripts kept much information on how a scripture was translated and proofread. The end of a manuscript of *Diamond Sutra* in the first year of Yifeng (676) records the name of the calligrapher, date, how many papers were used, the names of persons who proofread the scripture. More than seven people were involved in the final process of proofreading.<sup>4</sup>

Chinese Buddhists established their own sects in the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907). The schools of Tiantai (Tiendai), Three Treatise School, Faxiang (Consciously-Only) School, Huayan (Avatamsaka) School, Vinaya School, Chan, Pure Land, Esoteric and Three Stages School vied with one another in their development. Each school worked out its own literature and annotations according to its own understanding. Many Chinese monks wrote their own works, including commentaries, collations and explanations in both phonetics and semantics, enriching the huge literature of Buddhism.

In the fourth year of Kaibao, Emperor Song Taizu sent his envoy to Yizhou (present Sichuan) to start a big project to construct a Buddhist canon. The whole project was completed in the eighth year of Taiping Xingguo (983). More than 130,000 pieces of woodblocks were transported to Taiping Xingguo Monastery in Kaifeng.

The Imperial Court also organized foreign monks to continue the enterprise of translation. The court set up a translation institution in the west side of Taiping Xingguo Monastery in the seventh year of Taiping Xingguo (982). The newly translated scriptures, vinayas and abhidharma commentaries were incorporated into the Buddhist canon in the court and printed there. The printing house was under the royal control for eighty-eight years until the fourth year of Xining (1071). According to *Fozu Tongji* (《佛祖統紀》 A History of Chinese Buddhism), juan 43, the Emperor “issued a decree to incorporate newly translated scriptures into the Buddhist canon. Then they started to print these new scriptures.

The emperor would visit the translation institution by cart and met monks. He would have conversation with them. . . . . Monks would produce new scriptures on the birthday of the emperor every year. The emperor invited monks to a vegetarian banquet and told them to incorporate the new translations into the Canon. During this period, the printing house was under the administration of Bazuo Si,<sup>5</sup> parallel to the departments making utensils with great skills.

Why was the printing house under the administration of the imperial court? It had a special significance at the time. Su Dongpo, the famous poet in the Song, made a memorial to the court in the fourth year of Yuanyou (1089), reporting that a commoner name Xu Jian in Quanzhou, made over 2,900 pieces of woodblocks for Koguryo in Quanzhou, Fujian Province and transported them there without reporting it to the officials. He received 3000 *liang* silver. Su Dongpo held that Koguryo was subjected to Khitan and that Xu Jian openly transported things to an enemy country. He urged the authorities to punish this person so as to warn people in Zhejiang and Fujian.<sup>6</sup>

Liao State (or Khitan), a neighboring state, was an enemy state to China. The communications between Song and Liao broke down. No books were allowed to be traded. Shen Kuo says, "Khitan State made strict rules for those who sold books to Chinese. They must be executed." Similarly, the printing house was under the administration of the imperial court. Even the printing of the *Kaibao Edition* should have been approved by the court. The adjacent states that wished to obtain a set of Buddhist canon must get the approval from the emperor. It was said that when Xixia Tangut received a set of *Kaibao Edition* of the Buddhist canon, in return, Xixia presented horses to the Song.

In the fourth year of Xining (1071), the emperor issued a decree to abolish the printing house. Scholars assumed that the court wanted to reduce its financial burden by handing over the business to monks. According to the chapter regarding the function of official posts in *Song Huiyao* (《宋會要》 Essence of Song Dynasty), the emperor issued a decree to abolish the printing house for Buddhist canon on the nineteenth day of the third month, the fourth year of Xining (1071). Venerable Liaoran had to take over all the woodblocks. When Liaoran declined, the emperor asked Monk Huaijin to take the responsibility for printing in the Xiansheng si Shengshou Yuan (a royal monastery) to continue the printing enterprise.

During the period of Zhiping (1064 – 1067), Huaijin became the abbot of Shengshou Chan Monastery. The monastery was under repair. In the fifth year of Xining (1072), the woodblocks were moved to Xiansheng Monastery in the east of the capital. The printing enterprise of the *Kaibao Edition* lasted there until Jurchens defeated the Song. The Jurchens stole the woodblocks. The monastery was burnt to ruins.

Up to that time, the printing of the Buddhist canon was under strict management of the government. When the woodblocks were shifted to Xiansheng Monastery, the printing was under the monastic administration. Now

monks might print Buddhist canon at the order of the emperor free of charge and also print it if monks from other area paid. We can find seals at the end of the scroll with the words “Feng Chi Diaoyin” (printed at the order of the emperor) in the seal of printers.

When the project of carving a new set of woodblocks of a court edition of Buddhist canon was completed, the emperor usually would issue an order to distribute sets of the Buddhist canon to various grand temples throughout the country free of charge. With the passing of time, the empire declined. The court would handle the printing enterprise to monks of the royal temple. In such contexts, the printing house would print Buddhist canon and give them to temples approved by the emperor free of charge. Monks who came from remote areas might obtain a set of the Buddhist canon by paying the cost.

## (2) Fund-raising

For Court Editions, the emperor usually allocated sufficient funds for the whole project. However, for editions sponsored by common folks, they had to raise funds.

The master copy of *Zhonghua Dazang Jing* (《中華大藏經》 Chinese Buddhist Canon) currently under publication in *Zhonghua Shuju* in Beijing is *Zhaocheng Jinzang* (《趙城金藏》 The Jin Edition of Chinese Buddhist Canon). This *Zhaocheng Jinzang* was initiated by Cui Fazhen, daughter of Cui Jin in Changzi County, Luzhou, Shanxi Province. Seeing the miseries of the people at the time, she decided to raise funds for the construction of a Buddhist canon by cutting her arm at the age of thirteen. Many lay Buddhist believers supported her, selling their property or even selling their children for fund raising. Some firm supporters even burnt their fingers to show their strong Buddhist faith. This Jin Edition was accomplished through a thirty-year effort.

The *Qisha Edition* (《磧砂藏》) was started in the ninth year of Jiading (1216) in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127 – 1279). When the engraving work went on for some years, they set up a department in charge of affairs of the construction of the Buddhist canon (磧砂延聖大藏經局). A number of persons in this department were responsible for the fund-raising, including “quanyuan” (勸緣) and “du quanyuan”(都勸緣). Both titles meant the responsibility for persuading people to donate money for their fund raising project. Usually, people who took these jobs were in high positions.

The same was true in the *Thread Edition* (《方冊大藏》). In the mid-Ming Dynasty, the woodblocks for the existing Buddhist canon were bad in quality. In the first year of Wanli (1573), Yuan Liaofan, a high official in the Ming dynasty, talked with Venerable Huanyu about the possibility of making a whole set of woodblocks for a sewn edition of the Buddhist canon. Since the woodblocks of the *Southern Edition*, after long use, became decayed, the quality of printing was poor with many wrong words. It was not easy to make a request for printing the

*Northern Edition*, which was a court edition. He made a suggestion to change the sutra-binding to sewn-binding in order to reduce the cost. Feng Mengzhen, a high official of the Ming, wrote the following:

Ever since the engraving of the wood-blocks for the Tripitaka, the scriptures have been gradually disseminated far and wide. During the Song and Yuan dynasties (1279-1368), more than eight sets of woodblocks were made besides the one made in the capital. For example, the one made in Qisha Monastery, Pingjiang, Wujiang County, Jiangsu Province, a temple probably in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, etc., kept wood-blocks of the Buddhist canon. We can see the flourishing of Buddhism in those periods.

In the present dynasty of Ming (1368-1644), two editions of wood-blocks were made in the capitals<sup>7</sup> when all the wood-blocks kept at local temples as we discussed above were destroyed. The *Northern Edition* kept in Beijing was much better than that in Nanjing in the south. It has been extremely difficult to ask for a copy to be printed because this *Northern Edition* was kept in the court.<sup>8</sup> We notice that most of the monasteries in southern China have kept this *Northern Edition* of the Buddhist Canon which was donated by the imperial edict during the Jingtai Period (1450-1456) during the reign of Emperor Daizong. It has been comparatively easier to get permission to print the *Southern Edition* of the Buddhist Canon. However, one finds many mistakes in it. Even if he tries to correct them, he probably will make more errors and the words become unreadable due to the difficulty in punctuation. What is more is the price: it costs more than one hundred *liang*<sup>9</sup> of silver for the printing and binding. It is no surprise that people in remote and poor rural areas cannot read the Buddhist Canon all year round. I regret to notice it.

The plan to construct a sewn edition of the Buddhist canon, however, was not put into action until the twelfth year of Wanli (1584). Venerable Zhenke, Daokai and Huanyu drew a plan to raise fund. Two years later in the fourth year of Wanli (1576), Venerable Mizang Daokai and Fu Guangzhai suggested a plan: they would ask ten influential Buddhist believers each to persuade three more persons to join the group and donate money for the project. Then they changed this plan as gather forty great donators, each donating one hundred *liang* of silver every year. They hoped that each year they could raise more than 4000 *liang* of silver. Twenty people in Hebei, Shanxi and Shandong provinces joined. They asked ten people to join in this enterprise in Jintan (present Zhejiang), Danyang, Wujiang and Songjiang (present Jiangsu) areas. Other ten people from Huizhou and Puzhou (Anhui Province) also joined. This plan, which sounded good, was not easy to implement. Some people delayed their donations and some silver they obtained was in low quality. Master Mizang and lay Buddhists decided to expand the plan from getting twenty people from Northern China and twenty from Southern China to forty people in each part. Each year forty people in north and another forty people in the south tried to meet the quota. When some people disappeared, the organizers should add more to make up the loss. The heads of donors, usually local officials, were firm believers of Buddhism. They donated money for this project regularly and mobilized gentry members, officials and Buddhists in their areas to raise funds. Each year, they sent lists of donors' names

with the amount of money they donated to Venerable Tansheng, abbot of Huacheng Monastery in Jingshan. As Tansheng gathered all the money and other things, he sent these materials and money to Mt. Wutai or purchase goods in the south for the construction. This way of fund-raising was important for the first stage of the engraving the woodblocks of the Buddhist canon.

In the twelfth year of Wanli, Venerable Zibai and Mizang went to Beijing. They paid a visit to Emperor Wanli's mother for support. The empress wanted to give money to support them. She also told them to collect all the commentaries that were not included in the previous Buddhist canon in the new edition.

In addition, the disciples of Chan masters also traveled around to raise funds. The organizers decided in the beginning that they would use the money they earned from the printed scriptures for the expenses in carving. In the thirty-seventh year of Wanli (1609), Wu Yongxian made a suggestion that the printing houses make a joint list of the scriptures with the prices. Those who came to obtain the scriptures should follow the rules to pay so that the printing houses could balance their income and use the profit to carve more scriptures. In the fourth year of Emperor Shunzhi (1667), Zhu Maoshi and Zhu Maojing designed a catalogue of the canon with the prices for the scriptures printed in various temples. They noted that the cost of the Buddhist canon rose because the price for paper went up rapidly, so did the manual labor, the transportation, etc. They believed it to be necessary to set new prices. Checking the inscriptions on the prices, we can find that the prices of Buddhist canon were adjusted accordingly. Part of the reason was that the organizers wanted to use the profit to engrave more scriptures.

### (3) Preparation for Collation

#### a. The collation of private edition

The next year, ten most influential scholar-officials gathered in Yanjing (present Beijing) to discuss the issues concerning the construction of the Buddhist canon in sewn style. Ten participants made a vow to follow the regulations on which they fully agreed.

The ten scholar-officials also agreed to make regulations for the completion of the project of making a sewn edition. Let me summarize the eight rules as follows:

1. They would meet regularly on the 17<sup>th</sup> of each odd month to discuss the issues concerning the project. Those who were absent without asking for leave would be fined.
2. They would cross-examine the collated scriptures on the following day.
3. The participants must finish proofreading of the scripture they choose on time.

4. The proofreader must note down every single word of difference by referring to the sources.
5. Second cross-examination.
6. When encountering difficult and complicated cases, they would gather together to discuss.
7. Take care of the scriptures they borrowed for proofreading. No further lending to others.
8. Monks or lay people supporting the project may donate two *liang* of silver and two *dan* (100 kg) of rice for the meeting.

For the collation work, the ten scholar-officials and monks decided to use *Yongle Northern Edition* as the master copy.

The regulations say:

We shall first collate the Northern and Southern editions and use the Song and Yuan editions for further collation with the Northern and Southern editions. If we cannot find copies of the Song and Yuan editions, then we just collate Northern or Southern editions. If we find any difference in one word, one sentence, even the title of the scripture, between the Southern Song and Yuan editions and Ming Northern Edition, we shall put a movable label on the head of the Northern Edition, irrespective of which edition is correct or wrong. We just note down the difference between the Song or Yuan edition and Northern Edition in this way: certain words were written in such a way in the Song or Yuan editions whereas the Northern edition is written in another way, or the Song or Yuan editions have extra words or some missing words, or sometimes, the emperors' names of the Song and Yuan dynasties have special format.<sup>10</sup> There may be some spaces aimed at showing respect to the emperors.<sup>11</sup> We should note down the differences in formats, spaces, and other problems due to the calligraphers, carvers, etc., for example, it is likely to have some wrong words or substitutes. If we are not sure of the correct usage of the words, we may write down what we have in mind, for instance, we may say that there might be some extra words or missing words. If we are sure of the mistakes in certain words, we may say so straightforward. We should write them down on a piece of movable label. We should copy it in regular script so that other editors may recollate the page. We should paste the movable label a bit in order to prevent it from falling off. We should never scribble on the copies of sutra-binding of the Buddhist canon.

They also made strict rules for proofreading. After second proofreading, they would have cross-proofreading. Anyone who made mistakes in proofreading would be fined. Then the calligrapher would copy down the scriptures. Following would be another round of proofreading. The engraving would not start until there was no error at all.

Even today, when scholars decide to reprint a Buddhist canon, they would use the same methods to compare the master copy with other editions of the Buddhist canon available in order to guarantee the quality of accuracy.



More than one hundred and fifty people participated in the collation work. Among them were eminent monks, lay Buddhists, scholars and officials. The following contains the information about these collators:

Qu Ruji (瞿汝稷) was an official of Left Office in the Inner Court. He was the author of *Zhiyu Lu* (《指月錄》), an important book on Chan.

Wang Kentang (王肯堂) was a famous doctor of medicine. He wrote *Cheng Weishilun Zhengyi* (《成唯識論證義》) Commentary on Consciousness-Only).

Qian Qianyi (錢謙益) was a great scholar. His works include *Muzhai Quanji* (《牧齋全集》) Collection of Works by Qian Qianyi) and *Shou Leng Meng Chao* (《首楞蒙鈔》) Comment on Lengyan Jing). Qian was responsible for proofreading of *Niepan Jing Shu* (《涅槃經疏》) Comment on Nirvana Sutra). He compiled and *Hanshan Dashi Mengyou Quanji* (《憨山大師夢遊全集》) Complete Works by Venerable Hanshan) and wrote a preface to it.

Mao Jin (毛晉), a famous publisher of the time, also collated many scriptures.

These brilliant scholars' involvement in the collation work made this *Sewn Edition* high in quality as regards to contents, classification, engraving and readability.<sup>12</sup>

#### b. The collation work for the Court Edition

The construction of the *Yongle Southern Edition* (《永樂北藏》) was under the guidance of Seng Lu Si (僧錄司 Buddhist Registry Office), an office in the department of Rites. The officers of the Buddhist Registry Office were usually eminent monks. Venerable Daoyan, a famous monk and advisor to Emperor Chengzu, was responsible for the engraving of the *Yongle Southern Edition*. Venerable Daocheng participated in the construction of Buddhist canon three times, including *Hongwu Edition*, *Yongle Southern Edition* and *Yongle Northern Edition*. Venerable Jingjie was responsible for the collation work of *Hongwu Edition* and *Yongle Southern Edition*. Venerable Yiru and Venerable Sikuo were responsible for both *Yongle Southern Edition* and *Yongle Northern Edition*. This was rare in history of China that these scholarly monks were rich in their experience in the construction of a Buddhist canon.

Emperor Chengzu made a thorough study of Buddhist scriptures before the construction of the *Yongle Northern Edition*. He often wrote down what he studied in the scriptures. In fact, he wrote more than thirty prefaces or essays concerning Buddhist literature.

Emperor decided the format of this edition, five lines with seventeen characters in each line. He also decided the style of the cases. They were made of silk. He also sent monks and officials to get old editions of the Buddhist canon from Suzhou in East China. Eighty-nine monks were summoned from various temples for the collation work. Venerable Yiru, Anjin and Fazhu were responsible for the management. More than one hundred and twenty monks and

scholars had collated the scriptures once before Lü Zhen made a memorial to the emperor on the fifteenth day of the sixth month in the seventeenth year of Yongle (1419). When the emperor heard that monks planned to start cross proofreading in the beginning of the seventh month, he dismissed the idea by saying that they could start it at the end of the month. The cross proofreading was completed on the seventh day of the first month of the eighteenth year of Yongle (1420). Venerable Yiru and others made a memorial to the emperor that they made proofreading seven times. From the source, we know that more than one hundred and twenty monks were also involved in proofreading of the scriptures.

The emperor also showed concern for the calligraphers. He ordered them to show the quality by samples. More than sixty-four monks were involved in copying the scriptures.

The previous Buddhist canons contained prefaces written by the emperor. The monks in charge of construction of this *Northern Edition* asked the emperor whether they should include all these prefaces. Emperor Chengzu agreed to include the prefaces written by Emperor Tang Taizong (627 – 649), Song Taizong (976 – 997) and Ming Taizu (1368 – 1398). He even ordered monks to delete some of the scriptures or prefaces relating to the date of his predecessor Emperor Huidi (1399 – 1402), who was his nephew.<sup>13</sup>

Regarding the woodblocks, on the eighteenth of the seventh month in the eighteenth year of Yongle (1420), the emperor asked how much time they needed. The monks responded by saying that it depended upon how many carvers could come to work together. The emperor then asked whether or not 2500 workers could finish the carving in one year. No one could answer this question with affirmative answer. The emperor suggested that one set of woodblocks should be placed in Beijing, one in Nanjing, and a set of stone carving should be kept.

We can find many records of the dialogues between Emperor Chengzu and monks in *Jinling Fancha Zhi* (《金陵梵刹志》 Gazetteers of Buddhist Temples in Nanjing). They provide us important information on how a court edition of the Buddhist canon was made under the constant care of Emperor Chengzu. Never in Chinese history can we find another emperor who made as many suggestions for the construction of a Buddhist canon in detail.

Let us turn to the *Qing Edition of the Buddhist Canon* (《清藏》) or *Dragon Edition* (《龍藏》) as sponsored by Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty (1723 – 1735).

It was in the eleventh year of Yongzheng (1733) that preparation for this *Qing Edition of Buddhist Canon* started. The collation work began at the Xianliang Temple outside Dong'an Men in Beijing in the twelfth year of Yongzheng (1734). Emperor Yongzheng wrote five prefaces in three years for the canon. He ordered the set-up of an institution for the construction of the Buddhist canon in the court named "Zangjing Guan" (藏經館) with officials, monks and lamas, totaling 133 persons.

The office was headed by Heshuozhuang Prince Yunlu and Heshuo He Prince Hongzhou. The two were close relatives of the emperor.

Gongbu Cha and three others were officers responsible for proofreading.  
He De and nine others were supervisors;  
Sixty-four monks were responsible for proofreading of the canon. Many of them were abbots of famous monasteries in China. Abbot Chaosheng of Xianliang Monastery, who was conferred the title of Wuhe Yongjue Chan Master by the emperor, and four monks were responsible for leadership.

Chaoding and three others were responsible for classification of recorded sayings;  
Yuanman and four others were responsible for proofreading the canon;  
Zu'an and six others were in charge of division of proofreading;  
Zhenqian and thirty-eight people participate in proofreading;

Both emperors, Yongzheng (1723 – 1735) and Qianlong (1736 – 1796), made decisions to delete some important literature at their own will. For instance, *Chu Sanzang Ji Ji* (《出三藏記集》 A Collection of Records of Translations of Buddhist Canon), an important collection of biographies of eminent monks and a catalogue, *Wuzhou Kanding Mulu* (《武周刊定目錄》 Catalogue of Buddhist scriptures compiled in the reign of Empress Wu Zetian), *Yiqie Jing Yin Yi* (《一切經音義》 Pronunciations and Meanings to Scriptures), *Guoqing Bailu* (《國清百錄》 Hundred Records of Guoqing Monastery), an important literature of Tiantai School, were deleted in the first place by the decision of Emperor Yongzheng. The emperor, arrogant of his knowledge of Buddhism, believed that monks who constructed the previous editions of the Buddhist canon were wrong to select the works by some eminent monks whom they respected. More than thirty-two works were deleted by Emperor Yongzheng alone.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the emperors' interference in the construction of the Buddhist canon had its side-effect: their deletions greatly decreased the academic value of this *Qing Edition*.<sup>15</sup>

In the thirty-fourth year of Emperor Qianlong (1769), the emperor decided to delete a number of works by Mr. Qian Qianyi, who surrendered himself to the Manchu regime first but remained loyal to the previous dynasty in his heart. Qian wrote his mixed feelings in his works. Angered by Qian's words, the emperor ordered that all woodblocks carved with Qian's works must also be destroyed. Thus 660 pieces of woodblocks were destroyed. Thus, five works disappeared from this *Dragon Edition*, totaling seventy-two fascicules.

The emperors' decision for selection of the scriptures of the Buddhist canon demonstrated the tight control of the Imperial Court over the minor issues of the scriptures of religions. The Manchu regime was particularly notorious for its "literary inquisition" in the heydays of their regime from Emperor Kangxi (1662 – 1722) to Emperor Yongzheng (1723 – 1735) and finally to Emperor Qianlong (1736 – 1796). The same is true in modern China as the mass media and publishers have been monitored.

### **The Managerial Work in the Construction of the Buddhist Canon**

Let us begin this section with the private *Fangce Edition* or *Sewn Edition*.

Usually, people call this edition *Jingshan Edition* or *Jiaxing Edition* for its location. Here I avoid using the proper name *Jiaxing Edition* because this *Sewn Edition* was started in Wutai Mountain, Shanxi Province, in the seventeenth year of Wanli (1589), not in Jiaxing County in Zhejiang Province.

The living and working conditions in Mt. Wutai were poor. It was extremely cold in winter. Carvers could not work for half a year in cold weather. The paper for printing was transported from southern China. Besides, there were fewer donators in the north than those in the south. Then organizers decided to move the working site from Mt. Wutai to Jingshan, Zhejiang Province in the twentieth or twenty-first year of Wanli (1592 or 1593). By this time, monks and lay Buddhists had carved about 1200 fascicles.

Regulations were designed for the construction of the Sewn Edition.

1. The woodblocks must be wood of pear trees one *cun* or 3.333 cm thick. Wet wood or blocks thinner than this measurement were not accepted because wood would shrink when they are dry. Blocks that have knots and blocks that are inlaid were not accepted.
2. Qualified calligraphers would be paid for ink, paper, brush pen, and expenses for food.
3. Carvers would be paid for their work by a hundred characters.
4. One honest carver coming from a decent family would be chosen as a leader.
5. New carvers must show two verses in praise of the Buddha which they carve as a sample.
6. The newly carved sample woodblocks must be examined word by word and page by page. If it is of superior quality, the carver will be rewarded with two fen of silver for each page. If the quality is good, one fen of silver is awarded. If so-so, the woodblock might be accepted but carver is urged to improve his work. If the carver fails to produce the woodblocks in the quality as he showed at the beginning, he is not paid but fined the pieces of the woodblocks and written characters.
7. The carver should send his samples after carving thirty pages and show them to persons responsible for the team. Then he is paid for work and food. There should be no borrowing of money. He is paid after carving a scripture. If a scripture has less thirty pages, he is paid by how many pages he has carved.
8. The carvers should carve their names at the left side of the center. The number of words he has carved on this page should be at the right side of the center so that things can easily be checked.
9. When carvers have quarrels or fights or engaged in illegal activities, the leader must report it to the organizers of the Buddhist canon. Governmental office will be informed of what had happened if

serious. The persons involved must be fired. If the head carvers try to conceal the misconducts and cause more serious incidents, all persons involved will be sent to governmental office for punishment.

10. Two *fen* of silver would be paid when ten woodblocks are published.

With these regulations, the quality of this *Sewn Edition* was guaranteed. Professor Lü Cheng praised the quality of the work done at the first stage by saying that before the death of Venerable Zibai in the thirty-first year of Wanli (1603), the rules were strictly followed in each carving shop.<sup>16</sup>

It took more than one hundred and twenty years for these people to construct this *Sewn Edition* from 1579. Construction could be divided into two stages. The first stage took place in Mt Wutai. Though living and working conditions were poor, the participants were in high spirits to take their responsibilities in the work. The actual carving started in the seventeenth year of Wanli (1589) at Miao De An Monastery. Fu Guangzhai, the first donor, was a native of Liaocheng, Shandong Province and Itinerary Censorate of Shanxi Province. The first book to be engraved was *Huayan Jing He Lun* (《華嚴經合論》 Collection of Treatises on Avatamsaka Sutra), totaling 120 fascicules. It was not until the nineteenth year of Wanli (1591) that this treatise was accomplished. More than seventy workers were involved in the carving of this scripture alone, not counting calligraphers, proofreaders, carpenters for the woodblocks, porters and others.<sup>17</sup> In the next year, *Avatamsaka Sutra* and other huge scriptures were under carving. The donors for these huge scriptures were ten major Buddhist officials and a large number of Buddhists whom they helped to connect.

Four years after the actual construction in Miao De An Monastery in Mt. Wutai, the sponsors decided to move the workshop to Jizhao An Monastery in Jingshan Temple, Jiaxing County, Zhejiang Province. The reasons were obvious: most of the sponsors, donors, and carvers were from East China. The papers were transported from Southern China. The political situation in Northern China was not stable as peasant rebellions broke out in North China frequently. These factors made moving the site necessary to ensure the construction work. The action took place in the twentieth year of Wanli (1592).

From the time of moving the site to the following forty years, (twenty-first year of Wanli to the early years of Emperor Chongzhen 1628 – 1644), the organizers, donors and carvers generally followed the format and rules that started in Mt. Wutai.

Venerable Zibai died in Beijing in the thirty-first year of Wanli (1603). At the time, the once powerful and rich donors were no longer so influential. The project had to be proceeded with decentralizing it to various temples. The organizers just let local temples print scriptures with the money donated by rich patrons. The center of construction of the Buddhist canon was no longer at Jingshan Monastery, but scattered in Jiaxing, Wujiang, Jintan and elsewhere. In the thirty-seventy year of Wanli (1609), Lengyan Monastery again worked out

*Zangban Jing Zhi Hua Yi Mulu* (《藏版經直劃一目錄》 Catalogue of Prices for Current Scriptures).<sup>18</sup> This marked the end of a phase of engraving woodblocks.

In the fifteenth year of Emperor Chongzhen (1642), Venerable Ligan, seeing that the project had proceeded for over half a century and that the woodblocks already covered eighty to ninety percent of the whole Buddhist canon, decided to make final effort to gather all these woodblocks that were scattered in various places to Jingshan Monastery. He traveled around and raised funds for the continuation of the canon. He appealed to the local government for help, urging various temples to send woodblocks to Jingshan. It was not until the sixth year of Emperor Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty (1667) that both *Zhengzang* (《正藏》 The Main Part of the Buddhist Canon) and *Xuzang* (《續藏》 Continuation of the Buddhist Canon, mainly Chinese Buddhists' works) were accomplished. The last book was entitled *Shanyi Chun Chanshi Yulu* (《善一純禪師語錄》 Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Shan Yichun) engraved in 1707.<sup>19</sup>

The time period of construction of this *Sewn Edition* spanned one hundred and twenty years from the seventeenth year of Wanli (1589) in the Ming Dynasty to the forty-sixth year of Kangxi (1709). The cost was over 30,000 *liang* of silver. Six generations of monks and lay Buddhists were involved in the project.<sup>20</sup>

### Preparation Work for the Qing Edition

In the second month of the thirteenth year of Yongzheng (1735), Zhuang Prince Yunlu and He Prince Yunzhou were appointed officials in charge of the construction of the Buddhist canon. After discussing with a group of people, they estimated that they needed 73,100 pieces of woodblocks made of pear trees.

The size for a piece of woodblock was 2.4 *chi* (0.8 m) long, 0.9 *chi* (0.3 m) wide, and 0.11 *chi* (3.6 cm) thick. It was difficult to gather 73,100 pieces of woodblocks at once. The two princes sent three officials of Inner Court to places where pear trees were available in Zhili (present Hebei) and Shandong provinces with 7,000 *liang* of silver. They spent one year purchasing about 10,000 pieces of woodblocks, which was far smaller than the quota to meet the requirement.

The court then asked the governors of Zhili and Shandong to purchase the woodblocks and promised to pay the cost when all woodblocks were gathered. Then the local governors apportioned the amount of woodblocks to prefectures and counties. Some officials used inlaid woodblocks but were rejected by the officials of the Inner Court. It was a situation that both local people and officials were exhausted. A censorate official in Sichuan suggested that it would be much easier to collect so many woodblocks if the Court accepted the assembled blocks. Emperor Qianlong (1735 – 1795), who just ascended the throne after his father Emperor Yongzheng's sudden death, immediately ordered the two princes to take action. The two princes, however, disagreed. Prince Yunlu explained to the emperor in his memorial that in order to guarantee the quality of the construction of the Buddhist canon, he visited many carvers and asked their experience. The carvers told him, "The woodblocks would expand. For high quality purposes,

blocks that are wet or have knots are not usable. The assembled blocks are certainly not acceptable. You may only care for the present need to finish the job perfunctorily. In the future, the woodblock is likely to change or break. At that moment, you simply waste money and time. Nothing can last long.” On hearing the words, the prince examined woodblocks that were stored in the warehouse. They were engraved in the Yongle period (1403 – 1424). All blocks were made of one whole piece. Due to long time use, some of them had become decayed. In the forty-second year of Kangxi (1703), people started to repair the decayed ones. Assembled blocks were used. The prince found characters on these assembled blocks were damaged. He then told the emperor that if they used the assembled blocks for convenience this time, these blocks would be broken in two or three years. Thus, he declined the use of assembled blocks, wet ones or one with knots. He told local governors to collect pear woodblocks in the fall instead of other seasons.

Upon the explanation of Prince Yunlu, the emperor changed his previous decision. He told officials to accept the blocks that were qualified for the construction of the Buddhist canon. For those blocks that did not meet the requirements, the officials simply accepted them for other printing purposes. The Inner Court received 37,400 pieces of good blocks sent from 117 counties in Zhili Province (present Hebei Province) and from 107 counties from Shandong Province. In addition, it also received 16,000 pieces of blocks that did not meet the requirements.

For the construction of this *Qing Edition*, the Inner Court gathered over a thousand people for the project. They were engaged as follows:

First of all, seven officials in charge of printing were from Wuyingdian (Hall for Printing Imperial Documents).

Eighty-five people were supervisors responsible for copying the scriptures, carving, printing, folding and binding jobs.

More than eight hundred and sixty-nine workers, including carvers, printers, carpenters, folders, painters, etc., were involved in the work. Among them were six hundred and ninety-one carvers, seventy-one printers, thirty-six painters, and twelve folders.

Most of the carvers were recruited from East China where printing was far more flourishing.

The whole project for this edition of Buddhist canon cost 24,290 *liang* of silver for woodblocks; 56,900 *liang* silver for manpower, totaling 82,000 *liang* silver. For carving one woodblock, the carver received 7.2 *qian* of silver.

The cost for this edition was 625 *liang* silver and the price for it was 668 *liang*. The Inner Court made a profit of 42.4 *liang*.

The purpose of construction of this edition of Buddhist canon was more political. The Manchu rulers wanted to show that the nation was enjoying

prosperity under their rule. They sponsored the construction of the Buddhist canon in Manchu, Mongolian and Tibetan languages.

It should be pointed out that Prince Yunlu was right to decline the use of assembled and wet blocks, and blocks with knots to ensure the quality. The woodblocks of this *Qing Edition* of Buddhist canon have been, generally speaking, well kept for over 250 years after its construction.

In 1988, the publisher in China reprinted this *Qing Edition*. Now the woodblocks are stored in Yunju Temple in the outskirts of Beijing.

### III. Post-engraving Managerial Work

When the construction of a Buddhist canon was accomplished, people involved in the project might celebrate its great success. This, however, was not an end. There were so many things that had yet to be taken care of.

First of all, it was necessary to house the woodblocks in a dry place with good ventilation. Fire prevention was an important job for all.

The manager of the house had to check that termites would not damage the woodblocks.

A document entitled *Fu Qing Jing Tiaoli* (《附請經條例》 Appendix to the Catalogue of Nanzang (《南藏》 the Southern Ming Edition): Rules for Asking a Buddhist Canon) is found in Ge Yanliang's *Jinling Fancha Zhi* (《金陵梵刹志》 Gazetteers of Buddhist Temples in Nanjing) written in the seventh year of Tianqi (1607) in the Ming Dynasty. This document was an attachment to the catalogue of the *Yongle Southern Edition of the Buddhist Canon*. It was designated by the Department of Rite and gave us a lot of information on how to obtain a Buddhist canon and how to maintain the printing house of the Buddhist canon.

*Yongle Southern Edition of the Buddhist Canon* was designed after the woodblocks of *Hongwu Edition* were destroyed in a fire at Tianxi Temple in the sixth year of Yongle (1408). Sponsored by the court, this *Yongle Southern Edition* was probably accomplished around the seventeenth year of Yongle (1419). The woodblocks were kept in Chan Hall, Baoen Monastery, previously called Tianxi Temple.

The woodblocks of *Yongle Southern Edition* were kept in the Baoen Monastery until the early years of Manchus. But the management was very poor. Many blocks were destroyed. According to *Jiangning Fuzhi* (《江寧府志》 Gazetteers of Jiangning Prefecture published in the reign of Emperor Kangxi 1662 - 1712) written by Chen Kaiyu, who was a magistrate of Jiangning, Venerable Juelang told Songying and others to make up the woodblocks that were damaged. Since it was an arduous task and costly, they decided to set up an



institution to repair the Buddhist canon. We do not have detailed information on what monks had done with the woodblocks.

“The Rules for Asking a Buddhist Canon” was designed by the Department of Rites in Nanjing in the thirty-fourth year of Wanli (1606). As a governmental office, the officers were responsible for the request for a set of Buddhist canon and issues concerning temples and monks.

According to records, it was easier to obtain a set of *Yongle Southern Edition of Buddhist Canon* in Nanjing. Many printing houses were involved in the printing of this canon. It seemed that printing the *Yongle Edition* became a commercial activity. The ink, paper and binding were supplied by printing houses. Those who came to Nanjing for a set of Buddhist canon should pay for the materials and labor fees to the printing houses and pay the monks in Baoen Monastery for “bantou qian”(板頭錢) - a kind of fee of 20 *liang* silver for the maintenance for the woodblocks. We can figure out that the income of this monastery each year was substantial.

As time passed by, the temple probably raised the fee for maintenance of the woodblocks and printing houses the fees for printing. Some printing houses even cheated monks from outside. They used low quality paper but charged the buyer with high prices for high quality paper.

“The Rules for Purchasing a Buddhist Canon” recorded that three monks from Hubei, Guangdong and Sichuan complained about malpractices of printers. One shop used low quality paper and silk for the Buddhist canon, but charged extra 40 *liang* of silver. One printing shop delayed two months. One shop even used paper covering instead of silk covering as they should have done. On hearing the complaint, the Department of Rites ordered the shops to pay back the extra fees. Monks in charge of the woodblocks were criticized. Then it elaborated the rules for making the Buddhist canon.

According to the regulations for requesting the Buddhist canon, Chan Hall should be used as a storehouse for woodblocks. The Department of Rites would allocate money for living expenses of the temple. The Department also designated prices for three different papers for printing the Buddhist canon. The monks who came to obtain the Buddhist canon should first get a registration number. They could examine what they need and select the printing houses as they preferred. Any private contact with the printing houses was forbidden. Once the printing house was chosen, the monks wanting to get the Buddhist canon might choose the paper and other materials. Then the officer in the Department of Rites would produce a registration ticket for the monk, Chan Hall and printing house. Now the printing house got the permit to print it.

The printing house had to keep to the prices fixed by the Department of Rites and work out the schedule for printing dates. When the monks coming to obtain the Buddhist canon would leave, they had to return the registration number they had obtained when they first came.

The monks who came to Nanjing for the Buddhist canon should stay in the Chan Hall. Seven rooms were built especially for them to live. Their food provided by Chan Hall should be paid at fixed prices and there should be no raise.

As regards miscellaneous fees, the regulation states:

The daily expenses of the monk purchasing the Buddhist canon, including food and accommodations, should be counted on the daily basis. Thus, there should be no single penny of extra expenses if the registration book does not state any requirement. Demanding a single penny more is considered a crime of dishonesty.<sup>21</sup> The monks purchasing the Buddhist canon is allowed to report to the office for further examination and punishment.

Regarding the formats of the Buddhist canon, the regulations further state:

The format of the scripture is 1 chi (0.3 m) in length and 3 cun and 3 fen (10.1 cm) in width. All materials are measured by official standards. The prices should be estimated in accordance with the time period in a liberal way.<sup>22</sup> At a time, some materials may be more expensive or cheaper. The prices should be set in a complimentary way. There is no way to increase the prices due to the high price of certain materials, thus causing confusion in prices. Although the price for the Buddhist canon is set, the price of paper and silk may increase. The quality of binding done by workers varies from time to time. Some workers may use substandard materials in the high grade canon. The variety of tricks cannot be cited here. Monks who come to purchase the Buddhist canon have to examine the inferior products carefully and report to the officials.

The regulations determined the time schedule for the construction of the Buddhist canon as three months. When work is done, the monk and printer should double check all items and hand in the registration ticket. If the purchasing monk expressed his dissatisfaction on the work, he might write a word denoting failure to meet the standards and send his note to the office with a case of scriptures, sample papers and silk. The printer would be punished with a large wooden yoke fastened about the neck as a punishment for crimes. He had to return the extra money to the monk purchasing the canon. If the time was over three months, the managers and workers would be scolded. If the papers and silk were used inappropriately, the monk in charge of the Buddhist canon would be responsible for the misconduct if he did not report.

Earlier the monks purchasing the Buddhist canon usually sent back a questionnaire on the evaluation of the qualities of the canon they bought. When the questionnaires were handed in, they could return home. Worried about the long waiting period, they did not dare to submit any report. Now, they were able to submit their report on the day when they handed in the registration number, and asked this office to issue a permit without delay. If any gate guards demanded money and made troubles to monks, the monk could at once report it to this office. The guards would receive severe punishment.

Some monks just wanted to get the Four Sections, including Prajnaparamita, Ratnakuta, Avatamsaka and Nirvana. They totaled 84 *han* with 843 *juan*. The

cost of each *han* is determined in accordance with the regulations on the 9 grades of Buddhist canon. Just add 1 *liang* and 8 *qian* for the profit of printing. Some monks wanted to print the miscellaneous sections. The fees were more or less determined accordingly just charge the profit of printing.

Talking about the binding, the office in charge of printing Buddhist canon further regulated:

Some monks prefer to use a special binding named Taishi Lianyin (continuing printing in the style of Taishi). It is up to them to decide the style of binding. They should pay the money for the labor for the printing in accordance with the regulations previously mentioned. As for the profit made from the printing and other expenses, they just pay half of them. If someone forcibly wants to get exemption, the office would demand the workers who take the job to compensate the losses.

The engraving of the woodblocks did not stop even when the canon was already constructed. Forty-one *han* (case) were missing in the *Xuzang* (《續藏》 Continuation of Buddhist Canon). For this work, each block cost 3 *qian* and 6 *fen*. When monks came to purchase one set of the Buddhist canon, they were asked to pay 8 *liang* more silver for the profit made from printing for the work of 22 pieces of woodblocks. If the work is to engrave 25 woodblocks, the following words are engraved on each block: Monk so-and-so offered such profit money for engraving the blocks,<sup>23</sup> thus ready for further examination. The time for engraving is ten days. On the day of issuing the registration number for the Buddhist canon, the monk in charge of the canon will come to this office with the carvers to obtain the registration number. The workers will have to accomplish the job on the deadline. They will bring the woodblocks and printing materials for further examination with the registration number. On the first day of the month, the flow of money, including income and outcome, should be reported.

This official document made the following regulations for the payment of the carving:

The woodblocks should be made of pear tree wood, well polished, eight *fen* (2.7 cm) in thickness. The price for each block is four *fen* of silver. Both sides of the block are used, with 60 lines, on which 1020 words can be carved. The end page may not be full of words. If ten lines are carved, the carver would get a pay for a half page. Twenty lines are paid for one page. If the last page is less than ten pages, the work will not be counted.

The characters will be carved in the Song typeface. The calligrapher and papers are paid with two *fen*. If one word is missing, his pay will be reduced by one *li*. With regard to the pay for the monk responsible for proofreading, carvers and woodblocks that are well polished, each block is paid at three *qian* of silver. The carvers should engrave three *fen* (1 cm) in depth in the woodblock. Those who write and engrave characters in a hasty and careless way will be punished – they must rewrite or re-carve the characters.

Each set of the canon earns a profit of eight *liang* silver. When a carver has engraved twenty-two blocks, eight *fen* of silver is given to the purchase of papers,

smoky ink, water glue, printing samples and labor. On the day when the *Xuzang* (《續藏》 Continuation of the Buddhist Works) is finished, the workers should replace the indistinct woodblocks. They should also settle the accounts of the profit made from the printing and give what is left to the monks for their daily necessities.

The profit made from printing the Buddhist canon should be given to monks in the Meditation Hall. Each year, about twenty sets of Buddhist canon are produced.<sup>24</sup> The total sum of this profit is 240 *liang* silver. Approximately, 20 sets of Four Sections of Buddhist Canon are printed each year.. The profit is about thirty-six *liang* of silver.

Each monk uses one fen of silver for his daily food, bean curds, and vegetable daily. 76 monks need such donations for daily needs. Now eight *liang* of silver is deducted for them. Each year they collect about 116 *liang* silver. The thirty-one *liang* of silver dedicated to monks remains effective.

The warehouses storing the woodblocks have been renovated. They include three rooms in the Front Hall, five rooms in the Main Hall and forty-two rooms for storage on both left and right sides. A two-story building with seven rooms for the monks purchasing the Buddhist canon was started in the seventh month of the thirty-fourth year of Wanli Period (1606) and completed in the twelfth month of this year. Two superintendents for the construction and renovation were nominated as Zhang Wenxue and Zhang Yingwen.

Registration books and a wooden cupboard are placed in the hall. When monks bring silver here, they send it to the office and register the amount. Then they leave the silver in the cupboard. In the end of the month, the officer opens the cupboard with them. They use the money to purchase rice and firewood for monks. The master of the hall should not use it privately.<sup>25</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

The construction of the Buddhist canon was an arduous task that needed many resources, manpower, and capable people. The above-mentioned records demonstrate how Chinese monks managed the huge projects in fund-raising, compilation and construction for the Buddhist canon. Their efforts to preserve Buddhist literature marked their contribution to a great tradition – a great Buddhist tradition which has exerted a great impact on the East Asian civilization.

#### References

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This *Ke Zang Yuan Qi* (《刻藏緣起》The Origin of Construction of a Buddhist Canon) engraved in the reign of Emperor Wanli (1573 - 1620) is classified as a rare Chinese book. Four libraries in China keep this book: Beijing National Library, Fujian Provincial Library, Hunan Provincial Library and Sichuan Provincial library. There are some reprinted editions. For instance, in 1932, Jinling Kejing Chu in Nanjing (金陵刻經處 Jinling Buddhist Scripture Printing House) re-engraved this book with the donation from General Liu Xiang from Sichuan. It includes and attached a chronology of the construction of this canon.

<sup>2</sup> This *Sewn Edition* has three names: *Jiaxing Edition* for the location of its construction in Jiaxing County, Zhejiang Province, or *Jingshan Edition* for the name of a temple where woodblocks were housed and *Fangce* or *Sewn Edition* for its style of binding as it is different from other editions of the Buddhist canon. Their binding style is called “sutra binding.”

<sup>3</sup> *Fozu Tongji* (《佛祖統紀》A History of Chinese Buddhism), juan 43, *Taishō*, Volume 49.

<sup>4</sup> Li Jining, *Fojing Banben* (《佛經版本》Editions of Buddhist Scriptures). Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 2002, p.13.

<sup>5</sup> Bazuo Department was responsible for constructions done by eight kinds of workmen, including plasterers, painters for red and white colors, painters with tung oil, bricklayers, tillers, masons, bamboo workers, and well diggers.

<sup>6</sup> Li Jining, *Fojing Banben* (《佛經版本》Editions of Buddhist Scriptures). Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 2002, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> There were two capitals in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644): one was Beijing, established by Emperor Chengzu (1403-1424). The first capital was established in Nanjing by the first emperor Taizu (1368-1398). This system of two capitals was kept during the Ming dynasty.

<sup>8</sup> For those who requested the court edition of the Buddhist canon, they must get the permission from the Emperor. When they obtained the court edition, they must build a library to house the Buddhist canon and a monument in memory of the event.

<sup>9</sup> *Liang* is translated as tael, a unit of weight for silver in ancient China and Eastern Asian countries.

<sup>10</sup> Whenever the name of emperor of the current dynasty was mentioned, the writers had to give special prominence to the emperor's name in the format. But they did not have to show this particular respect to the emperors of former dynasties. That is a way to identify the differences between different editions published in different dynasties. Now it was in the Ming dynasty. The editors were not obliged to put the emperors of the Song and Yuan dynasties in prominent position.

<sup>11</sup> This is also the way to give special prominence to the title of the emperors' names. It is called “bihui”(避諱) in Chinese, meaning to avoid a taboo. Without this space, the emperor's name or title could not be prominent. This would be considered a dangerous crime of showing no respect to the emperor and the dynasty.

<sup>12</sup> Yang Yuliang, “Gugong Bowuyuan cang *Jiaxing Zang* chutan,” ( “故宮博物院藏嘉興藏初探” in *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* (《故宮博物院院刊》), no.3, 1997, pp.13 – 23.

<sup>13</sup> Li Fuhua and He Mei, *Hanwen Fojiao Dazangjing Yanjiu* (《漢文佛教大藏經研究》Research on the Chinese Tripitaka). Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 2003, p.441. Emperor Huidi was overthrown by his uncle Zhu Di who ascended the throne as Emperor Ming Chengzu (1403 – 1424). However, I disagree with their calling *Jianwen Nanzang* (《建文南藏》The Jianwen Edition of Buddhist Canon).

<sup>14</sup> Li Fuhua and He Mei, *Hanwen Fojiao Dazangjing Yanjiu* (《漢文佛教大藏經研究》 Research on the Chinese Tripitaka). Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 2003, p.524.

<sup>15</sup> Lü Cheng, *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji* (《呂澂佛學論著選集》 Selected Works on Buddhism by Lü. Cheng ). Ji'nan: Qilu Shushe, 1996, p.1492.

<sup>16</sup> Lü Cheng, *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji* (《呂澂佛學論著選集》 Selected Works on Buddhism by Lü Cheng ). Ji'nan: Qilu Shushe, 1996, p.p.1484 -1489.

<sup>17</sup> Li Fuhua and He Mei, *Hanwen Fojiao Dazangjing Yanjiu* (《漢文佛教大藏經研究》 ). Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 2003, p.481.

<sup>18</sup> According to *Zhongguo Fojiao Baike Quanshu* (《中國佛教百科全書·經典卷》 Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism, volume on Classic Literature), “Zhi Hua Yi” (直劃一) refers to the different prices of the scriptures of this *Jiaying Edition of Buddhist Canon* engraved and sold in various temples at different prices. In order to set fixed prices, the compilers compiled three catalogues. Each scripture was given a price. When people reprinted this edition of the Buddhist canon, they just deleted the information of prices as they considered it having no practical significance. See Lai Yonghai, *Zhongguo Fojiao Baike Quanshu* (《中國佛教百科全書·經典卷》 Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism, volume on Classic Literature), Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2000, p.430.

<sup>19</sup> Yang Yuliang, “Gugong Bowuyuan cang *Jiaying Zang chutan*,” (“故宮博物院藏嘉興藏初探” in *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* (《故宮博物院院刊》), no.3, 1997, pp.16 – 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>21</sup> The *Zhaohe Fabao Zong Mulu* (《昭和法寶總目錄》 Taishō Fabao Catalogues) has one printing mistake and two missing words here. It wrongly prints 分 as 八, causing confusion. Two missing words are 毫者. See this catalogue, volume 2, p.358.

<sup>22</sup> Again, the *Zhaohe Fabao Zong Mulu* (《昭和法寶總目錄》 Taishō Fabao Catalogues) misprints the word 估 as 佑, causing grave misunderstanding. It is untranslatable. 估 means to estimate while 佑 means to support. See the catalogue, volume 2, p.358.

<sup>23</sup> The *Zhaohe Fabao Zong Mulu* (《昭和法寶總目錄》 Taishō Catalogues) misprints the word “ban”板 as “zhi”枝. “Ban”板 means blocks while “zhi”枝 means branch. See p.359

<sup>24</sup> This information is important for us because it tells us that twenty sets of this *Yongle Southern Edition* was printed each year. Currently, many libraries keep this edition the Buddhist canon.

<sup>25</sup> The *Zhaohe Fabao Zong Mulu* (《昭和法寶總目錄》 Taishō Fabao Catalogues) has a grave mistake in the last sentence. It misprints the word “wu” 毋 meaning “no” as “mu” 母 which means “mother.”