

A Special Volume on
Pure Land Buddhism
in
Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary
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1949-1989



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Avadāna-vāda and the Pure Land Faith

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One of the disagreements between American Buddhologists and Japanese Buddhist scholars is how the origin of Mahayana should be dated. This is crucial enough to a number of scholars on opposite sides of the Pacific, because there is still a shared assumption that what is good and true lies in the origin. Mahayanists might not accept that value judgment so long and still being championed by the Pāli scholars. (They usually point to the belatedness of Pāli canonization such that a number of Mahayana sutras might be seen as being contemporaneous with the Pāli materials.) But among Mahayanists, there is still the old concern that one's favorite Mahayana text might not be ancient enough. Buddhas should be ancient (*ku-fo*), so Truth should be old, especially in a climate where innovation might be charged to being a heresy and not the word of the Buddha, *buddhavaṇṇa*.

Since most Western scholars would follow Edward Conze in regarding the *Aṣṭa-sāharikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* to be the first of Mahayana sutras, those of the Pure Land faith, following the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* corpus, are somewhat anxious to date these as old if not even older than the *Aṣṭa*. Thus, it is common practice in Japan to consider the Pure Land sutras to belong to the period of the "Early Mahayana Sutras" — meaning, works from the first century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. or before the time of Nāgārjuna. Diligent Pure Land scholars would go even further. Fujita Kōtatsu would even labor to push the Pure Land faith in some seminal form to the primitive days of Buddhism itself.

But is this the only way or even the proper way to respond to the modernist requirement to date scriptures so exactly in terms of relative priority? Is the time-scale of modern man the infallible standard to measure other temporal

horizons in other times and other faiths? Are there not presumptions about history and ideology that need to be placed in the open for a fairer critique so that we do not unknowingly free ourselves from one dogma only to fall into another? This essay will address some of these issues, especially the issue of the origin of the Pure Land faith and secondarily the issue of the "historicity" — the usual Christian critics will say "ahistoricity" — of Amitābha himself.

A FLAW IN THE WESTERN THESIS

If the Japanese Buddhist scholars can be faulted for always retrojecting their sectarian traditions to the founding days of Mahayana — such that, by a miraculous count of sorts, we have usually as many streams of Mahayana as there are the standard schools (a *Sukhāvatīvyūha* corpus, a *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* corpus, an *Avatamsaka* [*Daśabhūmika*] corpus, alongside the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus) — the Western Buddhologists may err in so single-mindedly focusing only on the last set.

The truth is that Mahayana was never a single or even a homogeneous movement, but a number of cults coexisting at the same time, some of which developed into the Far Eastern schools as we know it now while some never did or simply disappeared from history. It was never a matter of a Four (corpora) or a One (single genesis). Since it is not possible to attend to the Many, I shall fall back out of expediency in this essay to speak of a Pure Land tradition as one stream distinct from the tradition of the *Prajñāpāramitās* in order to make a case for looking to an inspiration which I tentatively call "*avadāna-vāda*." In this way, we may identify a different line of development leading to the rise of Mahayana.

The Conze thesis that Mahayana emerged with the *Aṣṭa* is not incorrect. It is correct in that *Aṣṭa* reveals the origin of the self-conscious *yāna* (vehicle) which knew and called itself Mahayana. This wisdom (*prajñā*) text coined the term "Mahayana" to characterize its *bodhisattvayāna*. (The term "*bodhisattvayāna*" was already known in the sectarian Buddhist circle as one of the three *yānas* or vehicles. The wisdom text actually used a more unique term "*mahāsattva*" [great being] or its compound "*mahāsattva bodhisattva*" to characterize its heroic ideal.) To contrast itself with the two other *yānas* it sought to displace, it called the *śrāvakayāna* and *pratyekabuddhayāna* "Hinayana." If we are interested in the genesis of Mahayana as the genesis of a self-conception called Mahayana, then indeed the *Aṣṭa* is the earliest of Mahayana text.

The problem is whether that criterion, one favored naturally by people who work on texts — philologists who pour over the use of words — is the only criterion we can use. Philologists have the idea that everybody else should be philologists and, even more inappropriately, that the Buddhists whose tradition they study should also be people who have nothing less than a good and consistent sense in their use of words. The latter assumption is simply unreasonable and untrue to human reality. Academics might have to dot every *i* and cross every *t* but only the very credal of religions — and even therein, only those guardians of creeds — would insist that salvation be based on a very exact use of words and concepts.

An analogy might help to clarify this. There were Bostonians in Boston before there was the charter to create the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There were people from the Old World in America who were acting already like a people of a new land before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is textually correct, and in the practice of a History of Ideas, only too proper to date the birth of a self-conscious entity

called the United States of America with that declaration. But there is no reason to presume that a Thomas Jefferson is a different man before and after the ink was dry. Only a very legalistic definition of America — when and where such legality is proper — would be right in insisting on that divide. Otherwise, any responsible history of the United States would have to include all the important goings on since the Pilgrims landed on the Rock.

To date the genesis of Mahayana by the date of the *Aṣṭa* is a legalist's dating, which is doubly questionable. Unlike the Declaration of Independence, we do not have a date on the document, we do not even have the first written manuscript of said text that presumably was just orally transmitted at one point. Nothing is perfect in historiography, so it is perfectly legitimate to do the best with what we have. We can still accept with some leeway (a century or two off if need be) the dating Conze would see for the *Aṣṭa* and see it as the charter of Mahayana independence from the Old Country, the old sectarian Buddhist landscape now called Hinayana.

This does not mean the ideas making up this Mahayanist declaration — concepts like *śūnyatā*, *prapañca*, *bodhisattva*, etc. — did not have a prehistory like "liberty, equality" (if not exactly the legal freedom to pursue happiness) had a prehistory. The prehistory of those concepts have been traced back to the sectarians, especially to their *abhidharmas*, and traced back so well that if there is any fault, it is the fault of excess, i.e., of reducing Mahayana to especially the *Mahāsaṅghika* school as if one is only the natural outgrowth of the other. That is not entirely correct for it would fail to locate the items that account for the discontinuity. It is like nostalgic Englishman seeing America as an extension of its empire, an old colony that "just happened" to get a bit out of hand. But what that catalytic element responsible for the break of Mahayana is something better left for another occasion to ponder. Old assumptions there need to be questioned, too.

Our more immediate problem is this: we do not know who signed the *Aṣṭa*'s declaration of independence. We do not know what particular community supported this break. We still are divided on the geographical location of this tradition — is it better placed in Northwest India, or in South India. What is inferable and educational is that it is recognized by the tradition as a "local" tradition, one that became "para-local" (spreading north/south, east/west) only in time, such that what we now sometimes simplistically called a single Mahayana movement is a result of the slow spread of this *Aṣṭa* gospel and its gradual assimilation of, as well as by, other coexisting cults and "proto-Mahayana" traditions such that in time a certain consensus of people calling themselves Mahayanists did rise. (There is no reason to assume that the message got to everyone or that everyone felt obliged to decide one way or the other.)

To extend our analogy: this declaration of independence came, as it were, not out of some thirteen New England states who decided to call themselves the United States of America. One state, the one with the *Aṣṭa* identity, somewhere decided to call itself the Great Vehicle (Mahayana) and dissociated itself from the Small Vehicle (Hinayana) and the idea caught on in some other states who joined the bandwagon, even though it is entirely possible that many of those communities were not founded on the *Aṣṭa* principle. The end result is a hotch-potch, not really very united, Mahayana front that gives the semblance — especially to the recipients of this mixed bag, i.e., the Chinese — that there is one entity called "Mahayana." The Chinese ended up trying to make sense of the Unity-in-the-Diversity in their *p'an-chiao* (tenet classifying) system. The West just more recently was exposed to this wave of religion, had some hard time figuring out how it can be so diversified, and, blessed (or cursed) by its insistence on a neat objective history, is trying now to find its own way to a not-so-organic classification of the tenets. It is only that the West gen-

erally still often operates on a unilateral model of Mahayana genesis and cannot get away from the idea of dating the rise of a singular Mahayana in the *Aṣṭa*.

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW: A MULTICENTERED GENESIS

To give the *Aṣṭa* such prominence is to tilt the balance of Mahayana in favor of gnosis, *prajñā*, wisdom. Understandable for academics who love to work with ideas, it is not that understandable for the common folk. (Pardon the intentional oversimplification; in a different context, I will as readily correct myself.) To the extent that the *Prajñāpāramitā* is anti-intellectual, it is dependent on the excess intellectualism it perceives in the target of its criticism. Whether this new gnosis is anti-intellectual or anti-intellect — if I may so borrow from Merton White who distinguishes the former from the latter by noting how the anti-intellectual is still an intellectual whereas the other is plainly iconoclastic — it is reacting to the intellectualism in their opponents.

It is true that the early *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus was not as much concerned with critiquing the details of *abhidharma* as the latter ones closer in time to (or possibly even influenced by) Nāgārjuna, an anti-intellectual more than he was anti-intellect, but that increase in anti-*abhidharmic* polemics can simply be credited to a parallel increase in time of *abhidharmic* scholastics in the sectarian circle. In short, light or heavy in dosage, *abhidharma* constitutes the presupposition in the rise of the *Sūnyavāda* critique. Before there was the realism of the former, there would be no need for the negative critique of the latter. To declare as empty the Four Noble Truths when the historical Buddha just finished preaching them is unthinkable, out of place, and serves no purpose. The relative dating of the realist and the negativist traditions here lends support to this thesis.

It is believed that unlike the first schism at the Second Council a hundred years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, the later sub-schisms within the Theravāda and the Mahāsaṅghika wings were along *abhidharmic* lines. Developed out of the *māṭrkā* lists used in memorizing teachings of the Buddhas (by numbers), the *abhidharma* — the third and latest basket in the Pāli canon — is a meta-reflective system developed after King Aśoka. Imperial patronage at endowed temples made such learning possible and indirectly fostered the further schisms among the sectarians. The rise of the *Prajñāpāramitā* has to further postdate this. I would associate this with the resurgence/protest of the forest-dweller tradition, symbolized by Subhūti — the lover of mountain and lakes made the hero in the new corpus — but it will take more time and work to prove this. Minus that sociological correlate (forest-dwelling Subhūti against village-serving Śāriputra) which is my thesis, Ernst Troeltsch's characterization of the "mystic" has already pointed to the same direction. The radical, religious individualist often dialectically lives off the very mainline tradition (the "church" type) he consciously antagonizes. In short, man opts for the irrational only as man becomes overly rational. And conscientious monks escaped to the forest in noticeable numbers only when the village monastery had become too worldly under Aśokan patronage.

How true that is may be open for debate. The point we want to make lies somewhere else. The *Prajñā* tradition belongs to a sub-strand in the development of the Dharma side of the Buddha-Dharma equation. The *bodhisattvayāna* rose consciously out of a definition of the Dharma and prided itself specifically in the new wisdom of Emptiness captured in the key slogan in the new corpus of work as the gift of *anuttapa-dharma-kṣānti*. Although that line of development is very important, because only with a new Dharma could a new set of sutras (one distinct from the sutradharma of the Theravādins) appear, it is not the only line possible. With the mark of a (Mahayana)

Dharma, Mahayana could declare its independence from the old canon or Tripiṭaka. But this in the end is only one of two major lines of development.

SEPARATE DEVELOPMENTS OF TWO SEPARATE JEWELS

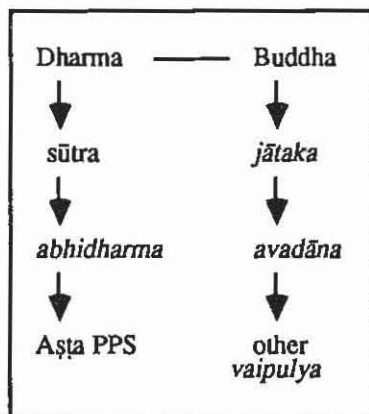
The second line of development is focused on the Buddha. Instead of having sutras taught by the Buddha, it claims at first only non-sutric (paracanonical) teaching about the Buddha — the stories of his past lives or prebirths. More of a folk origin though no doubt edited by some custodian of learning, these stories were attributed to being also words of the Buddha, *buddhavacana*, because in theory only the Buddha could have recalled his past lives and have them told to his following. The *jātakas* still stand in ambivalence to the proper *buddhavacana* of the sutra basket in the Pāli canon.

The term *avadāna* is an extension of the term *jātaka*. *Jātakas* tell of the past lives of the Buddha when he was a wisdom seeker, *bodhisattva*. *Avadānas* tell of other past lives of other Buddhas such as the Six Past Buddhas and the Future Buddha Maitreya already admitted into the Theravāda count of Buddhas. Being focused on the Buddha and not the Dharma, *avadānas* are not known for their philosophical sophistication. All the Buddhas listed above tend to be born son of kings (*cakravartin* for Maitreya), princes among men who left home, sat under a bodhi tree (a number of species are available), and gained enlightenment into the Four Noble Truths, the Eight Noble Paths, and the Twelve Chains of Causation. Early Buddhology has Buddhas virtual clones of one another. The Buddhas also tended to teach men like those who followed Śākyamuni, i.e., *śrāvakas* who would later become arhats. Maitreya's "threefold assembly" under the Nāgā Flower Tree are *śrāvakas*.

Because this *avadāna* tradition centered on the Buddha jewel was developing outside the

Tripiṭaka proper and because it was not enticed at first into new *abhidharmic* reflections or anti-*abhidharmic* polemics, we do not see in the early examples of this genre the mention of the higher teachings of *bodhisattvayāna*, *śūnyatā*, *anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti*. Lying outside of sectarian Buddhism proper, these early texts do not even know themselves as — if they were ever indeed destined to become — part of the eventual Mahayana corpus. Maitreya is one example of a figure that is ambivalent. He barely appears in the Pāli canon; he has a more developed mythology in the Mahāsaṅghika and the northwestern Sarvāstivāda material. He is to be a Hinayana carryover into later Mahayana.

When *bodhisattva-avadānas* are told of Buddhas not admitted in the Theravāda count, Buddhas like Akṣobhya and later Amitābha, we can be sure that they would not make the sectarian



canon, but we should not assume that they belong from the start to the so-called Mahayana school. Neither the *Akṣobhya Sūtra* nor the *Shorter Sukhāvatīvyūha* (Amitābha, Pure Land) *Sūtra* knew or used the term Mahayana to designate itself. Neither bothered with teaching Emptiness. Akṣobhya still teaches basically Hinayana teaching and his Pure Land is still a monastic paradise for ascetics. Its subsequent development will be discussed later.

The picture we see emerging in this discussion is that we have to count at least two strands toward the future Mahayana: the Dharmacentric and the Buddhacentric. The Dharmacentric broke away consciously from the sectarians with the *Aṣṭa*, and coined a new identity called Mahayana. The Buddhacentric, some of which were already nonsectarian, only joined or were recruited into Mahayana later. The indicator of when they came into the Mahayana circle of influence, if I may follow Shizutani Masao's thesis, lies at "what point their *avadāna* literature (now called sutras) include the self-designate 'Mahayana' and the teaching of the *anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti* formula."

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE AMITĀBHA VISION

To be exact, we have to divide the Buddhacentric line into two: that developing out of Śākyamuni and that developing out of Buddhas other than Śākyamuni. The line developing from Śākyamuni relied first on the relic cult for an emblem of the Buddha. The persistence of the Buddha Jewel was seen in the *stūpa* itself. It is from this line that the *Lotus Sūtra* the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* would rise in time.

This sutra glorifies the continual existence of Śākyamuni beyond his *parinirvāṇa* (now declared a charade) and turned the Buddha *stūpa* with its transferable merits or *guṇas* into the hypostatic Buddha known as Prabhūtaratna, the Buddha of Many Jewels or Abundant Treasures. The name describes not just the adornment lavished on the *stūpa* but also the superior status of the Buddha Jewel and the salvific power assigned to its Treasure Store. Though with ancient materials (that predated the *Aṣṭa*), the *Lotus Sūtra* as sutra (claiming now the Buddha as the True Dharma, *saddharma*, for its being a sutra) crystallized only after the *Aṣṭa* had championed Mahayana and stirred up the conflict then between Mahayana and Hinayana. Witnessing the tension

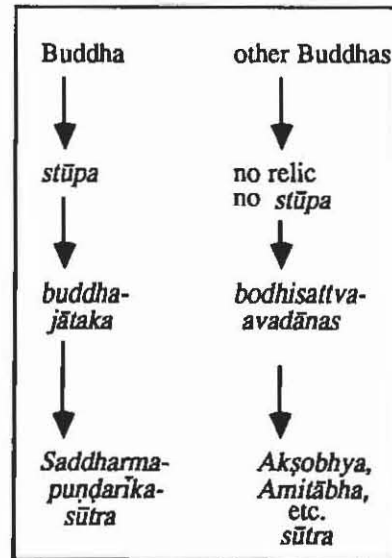
driven into that three *yāna* divide, the *Lotus* called for a compromise — a union of the Three Vehicle under its own Buddhayāna label of a One Vehicle, or Ekayāna. Though cognizant of the Emptiness doctrine, this sutra, like any good mythopoeic *avadāna* scripture, has actually little use of Emptiness.

But contemporaneously there was another line of *avadāna* developing, one that is not dependent on the relic cult and with no particular investment in *stūpas* — because they were not centered on the historical Buddha that passed away. We cannot even be sure of their sectarian or nonsectarian affiliation. The worshippers at the *stūpa* of Śākyamuni could still be counted as the “sons of the Śākya clan.” (From that came the notion, I believe, of the *buddha-gotra* [one belonging to the Buddha clan] later called the Buddha-nature in all sentient beings.) But followers of Buddhas other than Śākyamuni are strictly speaking not even in the Śākya lineage of followers. To the extent that the sectarian canon would not admit of these other Buddhas (than the set they have), it is not even sure how the followers of Akṣobhya and Amitābha and a host of other Buddhas and transmudane bodhisattvas were related to the sectarians.

What is sure, however, is that the Akṣobhya tradition is very early. It has to predate the *Aṣṭa* to the extent that the present *Aṣṭa* already acknowledges the existence of this Buddha. And again, as Shizutani has done, considering the very early date when some of these *avadāna* type of sutras were translated into Chinese, the genre has to predate the rise of the *Aṣṭa*. It is not hard to imagine how these other Buddhas rose. The Theravāda tradition has already accepted the count of six past Buddhas just as the Jain has a similar count of Past Jinas. That seems to be an astrological count. Maitreya symbolizing the virtue of *metta* is the Friendly One to come in the future. Some time after King Aśoka, the category of pratyekabuddha was created to handle, as the old thesis would say, the reality of other enlight-

ened masters in India — men not of the Śākyamuni lineage though. So it is very plausible that the same cognizance was given to other Buddhas (beyond the six) in time past and to other Buddhas, (coexisting in the Present) inhabiting different worlds in the various directions of the universe. Many of these transmudane Buddhas seem to be hypostases of the same core of Enlightenment that visited upon Śākyamuni. Amitābha as Eternal Life (*Amitāyus*) is the concretization of a hope that an enlightened Buddha would live on for great length of time instead of disappearing after forty years as Śākyamuni has done. Amitābha of Eternal Light can well be, Zoroastrian allegations aside, the Light Eternal of the essence of enlightenment itself and so on.

The production of *avadānas*, past life histories, for these Buddhas has already been perfected in the Buddha-jātakas, in which the past lives of other players in the Buddha's drama (such



as Ānanda) has also been worked out. Moggallāna's tragic death requires a retrojection of a karmic cause. Kāśyapa's leadership role in preserving the Dharma till the arrival of Maitreya had to be dramatized. And prophetic literature — the *vyākaraṇa* assurance rendered by the Buddha to men and gods about their future fate — has tutored the imagination of the followers of these other transhistorical Buddhas. It is not likely that these followers were totally separate from the sectarian circles per se. It is more likely that certain sectors of the general body of the people following Śākyamuni had, on the side, perhaps in certain localities, confraternal ties to cults of other Buddhas perceived as teaching the same (Hinayanist) truth as Śākyamuni himself. The cult drew its strength not from relic worship but the spiritual space (land of bliss) they were seen to have created for their own self-enjoyment as well as the enjoyment of those who wish to join them in their domain.

Such cults were already flourishing before the rise of the *Aṣṭa*, and the rise of the new banner called "Mahayana *mahāsattva*" or "*bodhisattvayāna*." The *Aṣṭa* tapped into one such cult, that of Akṣobhya. There is a conflation of the bodhisattva-on-the-way and the accomplished-transmundane-bodhisattva ideals. Though the Dharmacentric and the Buddhacentric lines were ideally separate and structurally distinct, there was as much traffic going back from the latter to the former. In the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* we see the inclusion of the self-label Mahayana and the Emptiness philosophy. (Even so, the blending of Birth in Pure Land as a Non-Birth is something achieved more in the commentary tradition, by Vasubandhu if the work as attributed to him can be seen as an authentic Sanskrit work at one point — but definitely in the writings of T'an-luan in whom wisdom and faith became one.)

There is no reason, therefore, not to consider the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, or Amitābha, tradition as an early tradition. Though the *Aṣṭa* still retains the claim to being the first Mahayana sūtra

(what Shizutani calls the *shoki daijō*, early Mahayana, tradition), there are reasons to postulate an earlier proto-Mahayana phase (*genshi daijō*). The term proto-Mahayana might be misleading, since it could suggest that the seminal elements of Mahayana were already present in this stage. So perhaps it is best to call it "trans- or nonsectarian," movements that were present within the sectarian Buddhist circle and cutting across them all (as in the trans-sectarian *ur-Lotus* tradition), or movements that lie officially outside the sectarian canon and probably were more regionalized (such as the cult of Akṣobhya and Amitābha). These very early movements recruited themselves into or are recruited into the then expanding Mahayana *bodhisattvayāna* circle so that today it is customary to consider them fully Mahayana — despite the fact that some of their earliest texts were pre-Mahayana in both date and ideology.

CONCLUSION

Intellectuals and anti-intellectuals have dominated the understanding and self-understanding of traditions, past and present. But the Dharmic path is not the only path; the Dharma is not the only Jewel. Now, as then, we need as much attention on myths, the poetry of *jātakas* and the imaginativeness of the *avadānas*. Man does not live by bread alone. Man is not liberated simply by gnosis either. The language of faith, the narrative of personalities, is as much, if not in the long run, the more influential of communications. The Pure Land tradition has from the beginning relied on that personalist vocabulary, not the analysis of elements of reality (*dharma*s) nor their destruction (by *śūnya*). Study of Mahayana genesis to date in the West has been biased toward the history of ideas and therefore not enough attention has been paid to the rich vocabulary of the *avadānas*.

The Japanese scholars have paid some attention to this whole tradition of *setsuwa bungaku*, or *avadāna* narrative literature. And even here perhaps more by literary historians and

folklorists than by Buddhologists per se. Yet the line of this tradition cuts through all time, from the early *jātakas*, through the medieval collection of miracle stories of the *Lotus Sutra* or the *Ōjōden* (Birth in Pure Land) tales in the Amitābha tradition, down to the *shōninden* and the *myōkōninden* and the testimonials of faith in our time. Deemed secondary literature, they are seldom put on par with the creeds and the dogmas of the tradition. Perhaps that bias should be reversed, because the *Sukhāvativyūha* corpus — if we put away our intellectual eyeglasses for a while — has less to do with creed and dogma, Emptiness and dialectics, and more with the expression of simple human hope and divine compassion, the soul of the best of the *setsuwa* faith literature in any period of history.

As a last note, in this essay I have followed the modern historian's criterion in trying to set the Pure Land genre in historical time. I will try in the near future to deconstruct the sense of history and attempt a recovery of the sense of the timelessness that is an attribute of Amitābha himself in an article tentatively titled "The Christian Myth of History, the Buddhist History of Myth."

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The Brilliance of Emptiness: T'an-luan as a Mystic of Light

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SAYING NOTHING MEANINGFULLY

The problem in teaching Buddhism is how to speak of reality as it truly is. Reality, simply, is Reality. But, if we knew that, we would not need to be told. We would be Buddhas. If we are not Buddhas, then whatever we see or hear is *about* Reality. It is a model, not Reality itself.

After Śākyamuni became a Buddha, it is said, he decided not to teach. It seemed that no-one would understand. "But," said the king of the gods, "there are beings with little dust on their eyes. They will listen, and be able to understand." And so, the Buddha spoke, using skilful means, saying one thing to one audience and another thing to another, like a wise physician adapting his treatment to different diseases.

This attempt to make the Dharma comprehensible to different beings at different times and places is open to misunderstanding. When medicine gets into the wrong hands, it may do more harm than good. When a method of teaching the Dharma which is effective for one being is heard by another it may lead, instead of to liberation, to further entrapment, particularly the entrapment in philosophies, that is, in conceptual models of reality.

Western scholars of Buddhism, who until recently have not themselves been Buddhists, have tended to get trapped in one of two models. The forms of Buddhism which use the skilful means of saying nothing (or very little) have been misunderstood as teaching moral *apatheia* and the philosophical nihilism of "The Void," and the forms of Buddhism which use the skilful means of saying something have been identified either as corrupt (a

necessary concession to human weakness in the face of "The Void") or as quasi-Christian, calling on God by names such as Amitābha.

In this essay I will examine the tension in Buddhism between teaching Dharma by saying nothing and teaching Dharma by saying something, and I will suggest that there are two sorts of Buddhist mysticism which correspond to "saying nothing" and "saying something": a mysticism of darkness or vacuity and a mysticism of light or fullness, and that Dharma Master T'an-luan, the third patriarch of Shin Buddhism, is a mystic of light. I will then argue that Pure Land Buddhism, according to the teachings of T'an-luan, is a way of saying something that incorporates and transforms the tendency of the mind to avoid Reality itself by constructing models of Reality. Sukhāvātī, according to T'an-luan, appears to be a prop for the mind, but, in fact, it transforms rather than supports dualistic mind: it is a "sacrament" of Emptiness. Finally, I will suggest that a study of T'an-luan's mysticism, and its development by Shinran, indicates a way of living vis à vis *samsāric* reality that has implications (which I cannot here elaborate) for the development of a Buddhist ecology.

THE PLACE OF IMAGES IN BUDDHISM

The physical center of any Buddhist practice is the shrine. How it is arranged says a lot about the form of Buddhism which is being followed. In Vajrayāna, there will be many images, and in Zen, there will be few. Why is there

this difference? It appears to stem from the teaching methods of either saying something or saying nothing about the Buddha.

It is now a commonplace to note that early Buddhism, though it had art, did not have human representations of the Buddha. The scenes of the Buddha's life center on an implied presence, illustrated by a symbol such as an empty chair, a pillar of fire, a wheel, or a pair of footprints. All around this symbol we usually see a lively and complex scene in which there is no noticeable restraint on artistic expression. Only the Buddha is "not there" although he is "there." With the rise of the Mahayana, however, the Buddha image (*rūpa*) comes into existence.

The reason for this difference is still not clearly understood, but it is often supposed to be related to doctrinal development. I wish to suggest, however, that it has to do not so much with a difference of *doctrine* but of *skillful means*.¹ For the purposes of my suggestion I shall pretend that early Buddhism was more like modern Theravāda than modern Mahayana. This is, be it noted, an *operational* assumption which passes no judgement on whether early Buddhism can actually be said to be like any modern form of Buddhism.

A Theravādin shrine will contain a Buddha image. It may, indeed, have a number of Buddha images.² There will not be any images of Bodhisattvas and, if there are any images of deities, they will normally be found in parts of the shrine, such as the doorway, that are clearly subordinate to the space reserved for the Buddha. The Buddha image will have been consecrated at a formal liturgy, and practitioners, on entering the shrine, will bow or prostrate before it.

A Theravādin Buddha image, however, is not a Buddha. The standard explanation seems to be in line with Nāgasena's statement that, following his *parinibbāna*, "the Buddha cannot be pointed to as being here or there, but he can be pointed to in his teaching (*dhamma*)."³ That is, when one contacts the *Dhamma* one contacts the other two facets of the Triple Jewel; and then, as Buddhaghosa says, by the

practice of "recollection of the Buddha" (*buddhānussati*) the meditator "comes to feel as if he were living in the Master's presence."⁴

This is a way of "saying nothing" about the present ontological status, nature, and location of the Buddha. It is in harmony with Pāli record of the Buddha's silence, or his response, "It is incoherent" (*nopeti*), when asked "Where does a Tathāgata go after death?" The answers, "He is dead (i.e., annihilated)" or "He still lives (in some heaven or other)" (than which there would seem to be no other options) are, he tells us, equally wrong. Therefore, Theravāda sets up an image of the Buddha (to teach that the Buddha is not dead) but does not regard the image as a Buddha (to teach that the Buddha is not alive).⁵

If, then, it is legitimate to interpret early Buddhism by extrapolation backwards from modern Theravāda, we might guess that it allowed *symbols* of the Buddha in order to teach that the Buddha was not dead, but disallowed *anthropomorphic* symbols in order to teach that the Buddha was not alive.

A Mahayanist shrine, especially a Tibetan one, is so full of images that the untrained eye can make little of it. The central and highest image, however, is usually Śākyamuni Buddha. Around him and beneath him, arranged somewhat in the manner of a royal court, are Bodhisattvas, other Buddhas, Tantric figures and various symbolic objects.

The consecration of a Mahayanist image is, like that of a Theravādin image, a liturgical ceremony, but its effects are somewhat more substantive. After the "enlivening" or "opening of the eyes," the image is regarded as *itself* a Buddha (or whatever other entity it represents) and it is worshipped as such.⁶ This is a way of "saying something" about the present ontological status, nature, and location of the Buddha. It is in harmony with the Mahayana teaching that the Buddhas have not gone into final nirvana for, if they had, they would have shown less than perfect compassion by leaving the rest of us to our own devices. There-

fore, contrary to Nāgasena's statement, the (Mahayana) Buddha can be pointed to.⁷ It is also consonant with Chapter 6 of the 20,000 line Perfection of Wisdom Sutra where Subhūti says "Whatever, Śāriputra, the Lord's Disciples teach, demonstrate, and expound, all that is to be known as the Tathāgata's work,"⁸ that is, for the Mahayana, a teacher of Dharma is the Buddha — for which reason, Tibetan lamas are accorded the respect due to the Buddha himself.

The difference between the Theravādin "saying nothing" through an image that is "not" the Buddha, and the Mahayanist "saying something" through an image that "is" the Buddha is a matter of skilful means. The Theravādin is afraid that the Buddha will be regarded as existing, and so denies that the image is a real Buddha. The Mahayanist is afraid that the Buddha will be regarded as non-existent, and so teaches that the image is a real Buddha.

The difference also indicates, I suggest, how Reality is differentially experienced and expressed (at the dualistic level necessary for teaching) in Buddhist mysticism.

TWO VARIETIES OF BUDDHIST MYSTICISM

As there are two ways of teaching Dharma, one through saying nothing and one through saying something, so there appear to be two ways of experiencing Dharma: a mysticism of darkness and a mysticism of light.

The Buddhist mysticism of darkness I will call "apohic", from the Sanskrit word *apoha*, "taking away." *Apoha* is one of the major dialectical techniques of Mādhyamika, in which a philosophical position (*dṛṣṭi*, viewpoint) is shown to be self-inconsistent and is therefore "taken away" and Reality as it truly is, *śūnyatā*, is exposed. Nothing, however, is said about *śūnyatā*. It is simply allowed to present itself.

This approach is clearly that of Zen, where the techniques of sitting and *kōan* are used to strip the practitioner of philosophical positions, or models of Reality, and allow *śūnyatā* to become manifest. One cannot speak about Reality as it truly is any more than a dumb man can describe the taste of a bitter cucumber he has eaten.⁹ It is also the approach of Theravāda. Although Theravāda does not have such picturesque techniques as Zen, it takes the apohic approach of the "undecided topics"¹⁰ quite seriously and strives, in the practice of "choiceless awareness"¹¹ to allow the mind to observe the mind, and so to see Reality as it truly is, but not to say anything about it.

Tuñh Ajahn Maha Boowa, a highly respected Thai teacher, writes of his practice in a manner resembling Rinzai Zen:

Sometimes I just threw everything I had into it: "Hm! If I die I die, this is the moment of decision." There was no turning back, only either to die or to break through. Like a drill, one has to drill, one has to drill till it breaks through, or like a person who is tangled in the brush, he must break through.¹² And now, he reports "I'm just as I am. What more can I say?"¹³

The Buddhist mysticism of light I will call "alamkaric", from the Sanskrit *alamkāra*, "ornament." Whereas apohic mysticism can be thought of as supported by Mādhyamika, alamkaric mysticism can be thought of as supported by Yogācāra and texts such as the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* and Fa-tang's "Essay on the Golden Lion." In this system, Emptiness is *spoken of* and it is described as full, brilliant, sparkling. This is the universe as seen by Vajrayāna; the

world as a *maṇḍala* of a deity; *saṃsāra*, viewed from what Vajrayāna calls "pure perspective," as nirvana:

Shunyata is ... an experience of bursting into openness which is rich, rather than a sense of throwing everything out until all that is left is a blank kind of nothing. So shunyata includes rather than excludes.¹⁴

The apohic and alamkaric mystical experiences are not indications of different doctrines. Mādhyamika and Yogācāra are, within Mahayana, different skilful means for the demonstration of Emptiness: in Central Asian Mahayana they are balanced, appearing as "wings" on either side of the Refuge Tree,¹⁵ and in Far Eastern Mahayana they are blended so that it is often impossible to say that a teacher is using one or the other system. Theravāda can be regarded, due to its reliance on the *nopeti* of the "undecided topics," as consonant with the Mādhyamika aspect of Mahayana.¹⁶

And, of course, if there is one aspect of Sukhāvātī which is beyond question, it is that it is full of *alamkāra*.¹⁷

THE ALAMKARIC MYSTICISM OF THE PURE LAND

It was fortunate fruiting of karma that, for the exercise known as the Ph.D. dissertation (a *rite de passage* admitting one into the professorial club), I happened upon T'an-luan's *Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse* (*Wang-shêng-lun Chu*).¹⁸ Instead of laboring away at a boring necessity, as do so many aspiring academics, I found myself, every time I wrestled with T'an-luan's not always straightforward Chinese, bathed in light. I was, perhaps, becoming an alamkaric mini-mystic.

T'an-luan's sutric base is what has become known as the "Triple Sutra of Pure Land Buddhism" (*Jōdo sambukyō*), that is, the larger

and smaller *Sukhāvativyūha* and the "Amitābha Visualization Sutra" (*Kuan-ching*), extant only in Chinese and given an invented Sanskrit title. A common element in these three sutras is the description of Sukhāvātī as *vyūha* and/or *alamkāra*, which T'an-luan renders as *chuang-yen*.¹⁹ *Vyūha* is a powerfully suggestive term in Sanskrit. In full, it means the sight of, and feeling of awe at, an army drawn up in battle formation on the horizon, with the sun glinting and sparkling on the weapons. The English word "array" is perhaps fairly close.

Except for the terror that such a scene might evoke, this word excellently described how a Pure Land practitioner begins to visualize Sukhāvātī. It is, as the Pāli texts say of nirvana, *chippassiko*, "come-and-see-ish." Glimpsing it, we want to approach and enter it. Once inside, however (having died here and been reborn there), we find that our wants have disappeared, and we even have no sense of having arrived there from somewhere else: dualistic ideas of "leaving," "travelling" and "arriving" are given up in "that Land of Non-Arising." T'an-luan says that this is like fire (our desires) meeting ice (the array of Sukhāvātī): fire converts the ice to water, the water puts out the fire, and the fire evaporates the water (T.40.839b3-7). From two "somethings" there arises a "nothing." Or, it is like a river flowing into the sea: the river takes on the sea's nature, not vice-versa (T.40.828c5-10).

Most importantly, T'an-luan, in two places, compares the array of Sukhāvātī to a *cintāmaṇi* or "wishing jewel." First, he says that the array of Sukhāvātī is "like a wishing-jewel whose nature resembles and accords with Dharma" (T.40.836b14-c5). That is, a wishing-jewel can grant the owner anything desired, so long as the thing desired is intra-samsaric. Sukhāvātī, however, grants what we truly desire: nirvana. This occurs, he then says (taking his cue from the 8,000 line Perfection of Wisdom Sutra²⁰) because of wishing-jewel thrown into muddy water cleanses it. So, the array of Sukhāvātī, especially the Name of Amitābha, being an extra-

samsaric wishing-jewel, when thrown into the impure mind of a sentient being, purifies it of the passions (*kleśa*) (T.40.839a21-b3).

A wishing-jewel is often pictured as emitting light, and it is, finally, the *light* of Sukhāvātī which does the transforming. It is not like physical light, which stops at the surface of an object. The light of Sukhāvātī penetrates, or suffuses, objects (so that, apparently, they seem to catch fire) and removes ignorance from the mind:

When that brilliance (*kuang-yao*) suffuses objects, it penetrates from the outside to the inside; when that brilliance suffuses the mind, it puts an end to ignorance. (T.40.837a19-20)

What has happened, then, is that our defiled mind's natural tendency to avoid Reality itself by constructing models and images of it has been, as it were, captivated by a skilful means. But instead of the straightforward "bait-and-switch" trick of the Parable of the Burning House in chapter 3 of the *Lotus Sutra* (where the children expect one object and get another) Amitābha gives us an image of an apparently intra-samsaric paradise which has a medicinal effect: rather than increasing our attachment (*rāga*), as an actual paradise (or *deva-loka*) would, it *transforms* our defiled mind and cures it. The object which we desire is the object we get, but its effect is to destroy the dualistic process of wanting it and getting it.

The joy of stroking [the feathers of the delightfully soft *Kācilindikam* bird] leads to craving (*tṛṣṇā*); but in this case [i.e., stroking the "soft jewels" in Sukhāvātī] it is a furtherance of the Way (*adhipati*). (T.40.837a24-5)

APPENDIX:

AN ALLEGORY FOR THE TIMES

While I was preparing this article my attention was directed to *Prairie: Images of Ground and Sky* (University Press of Kansas, 1986), a photo essay by Terry Evans.²¹ Folks back east perceive the prairie as dull and empty, and drive through it rapidly, with tapes playing, in order to get to Denver. Ms Evans, by her magnificent photographs and commentary, shows us that the prairie is actually full of life and diversity. Seen from a distance, the prairie appears barren. Seen close up, in minute detail, it reveals itself as fertile. I thought of T'an-luan saying that although Sukhāvātī is "without that which differentiates, it is not without differentiation" (T.40.829c5-6). That is, the inhabitants of Sukhāvātī are not divided into classes or castes, and the land is "as flat as the palm of a hand" (*ibid.*). Being "without that which differentiates" is an apohic symbol of *śūnyatā*. But, because *śūnyatā* is not "empty" in dualistic opposition to "full," Sukhāvātī can be said to be, alamkarically, "bursting into [an] openness which is rich," as Judith Lief puts it (see note 13): that is, it is not dull or "without differentiation."

As Sukhāvātī is, for T'an-luan, "the brilliance of Emptiness" the prairie is "the richness of spaciousness." When I contemplated the prairie I began to understand T'an-luan's description of Sukhāvātī better.

Further, what happened to the prairie became for me a symbol of what we do when we try to *earn* our liberation through what Shinran called *hakarai*, "calculation," actions which regard liberation from *samsāra* as an end of the same order as, and inevitably achieved by, *samsāric* means.

The prairie as it is, before human intervention, appears empty, but it is actually full. It is

a robust polyculture that produces and sustains itself. It is like Reality as it truly is, "bursting into rich openness" but which appears as "nothing" to cloudy mind. When humans destroy the prairie in order to sow the wheatlands, they appear to have converted a desert into a garden or to have created "something" out of "nothing," as cloudy mind constructs substantive images of Reality. They have, however, created a monoculture which is fragile (impermanent) and dependent upon humans as its slave. So, it would seem, cloudy mind appears to create a utopia (a Pure Land) but in fact creates *samsāra*.

What has happened to the prairie is now happening to the tropical rain forest and to other natural features of our planet. It is a commonplace to say that the devastation is caused by greed. But greed (*rāga*) is, in Buddhism, merely a symptom of confusion (*moha*). The confusion which is causing us to insult our planet is, I would suggest, the assumption that by *hakarai*, by forcing events, by the use of our own (deluded) power (*jiriki*) we can make a utopia, or a Pure Land, here within *samsāra*.

T'an-luan tells us that Sukhāvatī is a gift of Amitābha. Shinran explains that this gift cannot, in the nature of the case, be earned. We cannot use *hakarai* to obtain it.

There are implications here, I think, for a Buddhist ecology. But their examination will have to wait for a subsequent essay.

FOOTNOTES

1. It is suspiciously crypto-Christian to assume that doctrine is the *fundamental*, rather than secondary, or a consequential, issue. In Buddhism, doctrine is of course important, but it is rarely as *primary* as it is in Christianity.

2. These may be images of the Buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni, or they may just be multiple images of Śākyamuni which have been donated from time to time.

3. *Milindapañha* III, 5, 10. (cf. S. B. E. translation, part I, p. 113 ff.)

4. *Visuddhimagga*, VII: 67 (*The Path of Purification by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli [Semage: Colombo, 2nd ed., 1964] p. 230 [italics added]).

5. We should note that this is a *Buddhist* explanation of the status of the image, and that to say (as some non-Buddhists have indeed said) that it is "merely a symbol" or "just a focus for meditation" would be an invalid *translation* of a Buddhist phenomenon into a non-Buddhist worldview such as modern western psychology.

6. This is explicitly taught in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and is commonly accepted by many Far East Asian Mahayana traditions. *Pacific World* readers should note that the teachings of Jōdo Shinshū on this point is closer to that of Theravāda than to that of general Mahayana; that is, Shinshū regards the image as a *symbol* of the Buddha, *not* as *itself* a Buddha.

7. Occasionally a Tibetan teacher will say, "The image is just a projection of our Buddha Nature." This appears to be a skilful means directed at western Buddhists who may regard the Buddha image as a "thing," whereas, according to the teaching of Emptiness, there are no "things" at all, whether Buddha images or violin cases.

8. *The Larger Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, translated by Edward Conze (University of California Press, 1975), p. 89.

9. From the *Zenrin Kushū*: "Asu kuka o kissu." A Zen Forest: Sayings of the Zen Masters, compiled and translated by Sōiku Shigematsu (New York: Weatherhill, 1981), pp. 35 (English) and 125 (Japanese).

10. That the universe is temporally or spatially either unbounded or bounded; that the mind and the body are the same or different; that something can be said about the postmortem condition of an Arhat. *Majjhima-Nikāya* 63 and elsewhere. For an English translation, see *Buddhism in Translations*; selected and translated by

Henry Clarke Warren (New York: Atheneum, 1962 and subsequently. Reprint of the Harvard University Press edition of 1896), pp. 117-128.

11. *Introduction to Insight Meditation* (Great Gaddesden, Hertfordshire, England: Amaravati Buddhist Centre, 1988), p. 13ff.

12. "The Desire that Ends Desire," selected transcripts of talks by Tahn Ajahn Maha Boowa translated into English. *Forest Sangha Newsletter*, no. 7 (Jan. 1989).

13. *Ibid.*

14. Judith Lief, "Shunyata & Linguistics I," *Speaking of Silence: Christians and Buddhists on the Contemplative Way*, edited by Susan Walker (Paulist Press, 1987), p. 134ff.

15. Some lineages, such as Gelugpa, regard Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika as the "final teaching." But, again, the distinction is "upayic" (on the basis of skilful means) not doctrinal.

16. I have examined the similarity between Mahayana and Theravāda, and the confusion which results from identifying Theravāda with Hinayana, in "The Hermeneutics of Polemic: The Creation of 'Hinayana' and 'Old Testament'" (paper read at "Buddhism and Christianity: Towards the Human Future," Berkeley, Aug. 1987, unpublished). Although Theravādins do not explicitly teach that the dharmas are *śūnya*, *Dhammapada* 279 says *sabbe dhammā anattā* 'ti "all the dharmas are without inherent self" which, surely, is the same thing.

17. Some structural similarities between Pure Land Buddhism and Vajrayāna have been examined by me in "Pure Land and Pure Perspective: A Tantric Hermeneutic of *Sukhāvatī*" (paper read at the 4th Biennial Conference on the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, Honolulu, Aug. 1989).

18. *T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse* (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1973). Available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor.

19. For a discussion of the textual problems with this term, and the varying solutions proposed by myself and Professor Hisao Inagaki, see my dissertation (*op. cit.*), p. 111f, note 2.

20. *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Vaidya edition, p. 49, lines 25-30. I am indebted for this reference to Professor Yuichi Kjiyama.

21. I am indebted to Stephen Daney, who lives in Kansas on what remains of the true prairie, for this reference.

Genshin's "Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth" and the Transmission of Pure Land Buddhism to Japan. Part I. The First and Second Phases of Transmission of Pure Land Buddhism to Japan: The Nara Period and the Early Heian Period

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INTRODUCTION

The transmission of Pure Land teachings, texts and practices from continental Asia to Japan was a long and complex process. Simplifying, we may divide that process into three phases: the first phase was the introduction of the basic texts, notions and rituals of Pure Land devotionism during the Asuka [552-646] and Nara periods [646-794]; the second phase was the importation to Japan of T'ien-t'ai forms of *nembutsu* and T'ien-t'ai Pure Land texts by Saichō [767-822] and Ennin [794-864] during the early Heian period [794-1185]; the third phase began with the extensive introduction of teachings of the Chinese populist Pure Land masters by Genshin [942-1017] in his *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* [*Ōjō yōshū*]¹ and concluded with the works of Hōnen [1133-1212] and Shinran [1173-1262] of the early Kamakura Period [1185-1333].

A major dynamic of this transmission of Pure Land devotionism from the Asian continent was the gradual introduction and acceptance of the ideas of these populist Pure Land masters. Let us discuss for a moment the populist Pure Land movement. Pure Land devotionism in China took two primary forms, a clerical form and a populist form. The clerical form utilized Pure Land devotionism in general and *nembutsu* [Ch., *nien-fo*]² in particular as aids to meditation upon absolute reality and truth, the 'realm of dharmas' [*fa-chiai*; *hokkai*].³ Their goal was the immediate realization of complete enlightenment. The populist form despaired of achieving immediate enlightenment by self-exertion and instead relied on the compassion of the

Buddha Amitabha⁴ to save his devotees by transmigratory rebirth into his Pure Land, and to bring about their eventual full enlightenment there. For this populist form, devotional practices in general and *nembutsu* in particular were primarily means of expressing reliance upon and devotion to Amitabha Buddha. We call this later form 'populist' because its message was especially directed to the most populous groups of society — to the laity, especially the lower classes, to women, to those who felt themselves to be morally inadequate or intellectually limited, in other words, to the vast majority of ordinary humankind. On the other hand, because of the abstruseness of its doctrines and difficulty of its practices, the clerical form of Pure Land devotionism was primarily directed to and engaged in by Buddhist clergy.

The major figures in the Chinese populist form of Pure Land devotionism were T'an-luan [Donran, 488-c.554], Tao-ch'ō [Dōshaku, 562-645], Chia-ts'ai [Kazai, d. after 648], Shan-tao [Zendō, 613-681], Huai-kan [Ekan, d. 710], Hui-jih [Enichi, 680-748], and Fa-chao [Hōshō, d. before 805]. They advocated what we may call a radical soteriology. While they did not neglect to strongly encourage ethical conduct and rigorous practices, including the deepest meditations, their primary message was that salvation through Pure Land rebirth is available for even extremely evil and deluded sentient beings [*fan-fu*, *bombu*] by means of the simplest of practices, the utterance of the invocation of reliance upon Amitabha Buddha at the moment of death. As we will relate below, the

writings of the populist masters were introduced to Japan, for the most part, during the first phase of transmission, their style of devotional *nembutsu* during the second phase, and their teachings and radical soteriology during the third phase via Genshin's *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth*.⁵

Our study of the transmission of Pure Land piety to Japan will be divided into three parts. Part One will survey the transmission of Pure Land devotionism to Japan during the Nara and Heian periods, i.e., during phases one and two. Part Two will proceed to the third phase of transmission of Pure Land piety and examine the sources of the teachings of the *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* by means of a quantitative survey of its citations of Chinese and Japanese works. Part Three will demonstrate that the primary teachings of the *Essentials* on the cultivation and efficacy of *nembutsu* were heavily influenced by the ideas and techniques of the continental populist Pure Land masters. Part One is presented here. Parts Two and Three will be published in subsequent issues of this journal.

THE FIRST TRANSMISSION THE NARA PERIOD

Exactly when were teachings on Amitabha Buddha [Amida Butsu] and rebirth into his Pure Land, Utter Bliss [*Gokuraku*], brought to Japan? Scholars are in general agreement that the earliest transmission probably occurred together with the transmission of other forms of continental Buddhism during the late sixth and early seventh centuries [Inoue, p. 42; Satō 1956, p. 1051; Shigematsu, pp. 17-20]. It was once thought that Shōtoku Taishi [573-621] sought rebirth in Amitabha's Pure Land, but more recent research has shown that to be unlikely [Inoue, pp. 3-4; Shigematsu, pp. 17-18].

The first documented account of Pure Land devotionism in Japan is that in the *Nihon Shoki* which records lectures upon the *Sutra of Limitless Life* [*Muryōju kyō*]⁶ in 640 C.E. by the

monk Eon at the court of Emperor Jomei [r.629-641] [Inoue, p. 42; Shigematsu, p. 18]. By the end of the Nara Period Pure Land piety had achieved considerable popularity among the aristocracy. Inoue Mitsusada, who has produced the most comprehensive account of the development of Pure Land piety in Japan [1975], relates for example that among just the texts preserved in the Shōsōin Imperial Archives, 320 transcriptions of 32 different Pure Land works were made between the years 731 and 771 [pp. 43-46].⁷ He also points out that while there are no records at all of installation of Amitabha Buddha images at the Fujiwara clan Temple Kōfuku-ji between 707 and 749, there are records of ten such installations between 758 and 806 [pp. 8-9]. Moreover, Satō Tetsuei recounts that on the death of the Empress Kōmyō in 761 it was decreed that in all official Provincial Temples [Kokubun-ji] Pure Land images be made, copies of the *Smaller Pure Land Sutra*⁸ be transcribed, and offerings be made for the repose in the Pure Land of the deceased Empress [1956, p. 1052].

There also developed three vigorous traditions of Pure Land scholarship during the Nara Period — within the Sanron School, the Kegon School and the Hossō School. The monk Chikō [709-c.775] initiated a scholarly tradition in the Sanron School with several Pure Land works: A commentary on the *Vasubandhu Pure Land Treatise* [*Ōjō ron*] influenced by T'an-luan, a commentary on the *Amitabha Contemplation Sutra* [*Kammuryōju kyō*], and an interpretation of the forty-eight vows of the *Sutra of Limitless Light*. These have survived only as citations in later works. There have also survived from the Nara period copies of a Pure Land *maṇḍala* (an iconographic depiction of the Pure Land) influenced by the *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* [*Kammuryōjukyō sho*] of Shan-tao which is said to be based on a dream of Chikō and is called the Chikō Maṇḍala. This tradition of Pure Land scholarship and piety in the Sanron School survived into the late Heian period [Inoue, pp. 48-58].

The Kegon tradition of Pure Land scholarship flourished under the leadership of Chikei [d. ca. 754], who wrote commentaries on the *Sutra of Limitless Light*. This tradition was strongly influenced by Korean Hua-yen scholarship [Inoue, pp. 59-74]. The Hossō School Pure Land tradition was represented by scholar-monks such as Zenju [723-797]. Like Chikei of the Kegon tradition, Zenju authored works on the *Sutra of Limitless Life* and was influenced by the Korean Hua-yen School. The Hossō tradition later absorbed the Kegon School Pure Land tradition. These Nara Period Pure Land traditions persisted and produced important works in the late Heian Period, such as the *Ten Causes of Rebirth* (*Ōjō jūin*) of Yōkan [or Eikan, 1033-1111] and the *Assembled Passages on the Certainty of Rebirth* [*Ketsujō ōjōshū*] by Chinkai [1092-1152] [Inoue, pp. 74-79; Satō 1956, pp. 1053-1054].

An important dimension of this first phase of the transmission of Pure Land piety to Japan was the importation of Chinese Pure Land texts. It is remarkable that almost all the major Pure Land texts then extant in China were brought to Japan during this period. By 753 there had been transmitted not only the principal Pure Land sutras and *śāstras* such as the *Amitabha Sutra* [*Amida kyō*], the *Amitabha Contemplation Sutra*, the *Seeing All Buddha Samadhi Sutra* [*Hanju sammay kyō*], and the *Vasubandhu Pure Land Treatise*, but also populist Pure Land texts such as the works of Tao-ch'ō, Shan-tao, and Huai-kan. The only then extant major populist Pure Land text apparently not transmitted during this first phase of transmission was the *Methods and Merits of Samadhi of Contemplation and Reflection upon the Ocean-like Features of Amitabha Buddha* [*Kannen bomōn*] of Shan-tao [Inoue, pp. 41-48].⁹

What was the character of the Pure Land devotionalism of this period? Inoue and others have shown that the Pure Land Buddhism of the Nara Period was considerably different from that of Tang China and also from that which would develop later in Japan. First of all, the Pure Land piety of the Nara Period was restricted to the

aristocracy and the clergy. The folk had little opportunity to learn of Amitabha's Pure Land. Moreover, among the aristocracy Pure Land devotionalism was chiefly concerned with assuring the peaceful repose of ancestors. In other words, it functioned primarily as a funerary cult. The interest of clergy such as Chikō and Chikei in Pure Land teachings and texts seems to have been mostly intellectual. And, in any case, the priesthood was prohibited from propagating Buddhist teachings among the peasantry. Scholars concur that while Pure Land texts, ceremonies, and scholarship were richly represented, there was during this phase of transmission little cultivation of *nembutsu* and little concern for personal Pure Land salvation at any level of society [Inoue, pp. 80-84; Shigematsu, pp. 13-14].

Thus, the first transmission of Pure Land devotionalism to Japan familiarized Japanese with major Pure Land texts and teachings and made possible the adoption of Pure Land funerary rites and the development of Pure Land scholarship. The roots of this Buddhism were shallow, however, and it was soon replaced in the lives of the aristocracy by forms of esoteric Buddhism [*mikkyō*] introduced in the early ninth century.

THE SECOND PHASE OF TRANSMISSION THE REINTRODUCTION OF PURE LAND DEVOTIONALISM BY SAICHŌ AND ENNIN

The second phase of the transmission of Pure Land piety to Japan also occurred as part of a more comprehensive introduction of Buddhism. The early Heian Period saw the importation of forms of continental Buddhism which soon came largely to replace the Buddhism of the Nara schools in the lives of the aristocracy and nation. One of these forms, T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, known as Tendai in Japan, had for centuries been hospitable to Pure Land piety. The founder of the T'ien-t'ai School, Chih-i [538-597], incorporated Pure Land devotionalism into his school's praxis. By the mid-eighth century Pure Land devotionalism had come to be associated with T'ien-t'ai teachings as a path

for laymen and less capable clergy supplemental to the rigorous path of *bodhisattva* discipline and learning laid down by Chih-i for his disciples.

By the late eighth century two works urging Pure Land devotion and rebirth had come to be considered canonical for the T'ien-t'ai. These were the *T'ien-t'ai Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* [*Bussetsu kammuryōjubutsukyō sho*] and the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land* [*Jōdo jūgi ron*] [Satō 1961, p. 643; Pruden 1973, pp. 129-130]. Both works were considered to be compositions of Chih-i, but Satō Tetsuei has shown they were much later works, probably composed during the first half of the eighth century, the products of a long period of influence of the Pure Land movement upon the T'ien-t'ai School [Satō 1961, pp. 567-601 and pp. 619-643].

The latter of these two texts is of particular interest to us. The *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land* is an apologetic work which defends Pure Land piety against the objections (hypothetical objections probably reflecting actual positions) of detractors and rivals such as the Ch'an School and Maitreya movement. While it purported to be a composition of Chih-i, it is actually influenced strongly by the *Assembled Passages on the Land of Peace and Bliss* of Tao-ch'ō, one of the leading populist Pure Land masters.¹⁰ It defends positions central to the populist Pure Land movement such as the rebirth of ordinary deluded persons [*fan-fu; bombu*] through the power of Amitabha's original vows, and the possibility of rebirth for evil beings by ten invocations of Amitabha's name at death [Pruden 1973, pp. 141-144 and pp. 148-151]. In other words, this is a populist Pure Land text masquerading as a T'ien-t'ai work.

The Tendai School was established in Japan by the monk Saichō. To confirm the legitimacy of his teachings and transmission of the T'ien-t'ai, Saichō made a study tour of China between 804 and 805. This was at a time, as we have seen when the T'ien-t'ai was under strong influence of Pure Land piety. The *T'ien-t'ai Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* and the

T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land were among the many texts which Saichō brought back to Japan with him. We will see below that the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts* became an important component of the second phase of Pure Land transmission.

Saichō also transmitted important Pure Land devotional practices to Japan. Upon his return from China, Saichō specified two courses of study and training for monks of his Tendai School — esoteric studies [*shana gō*], and training and study in T'ien-t'ai concentration and contemplation [*shikan gō*] [Gröner, pp. 70-71; Satō 1956, p. 1058]. The course in concentration and contemplation consisted in the study and implementation of Chih-i's major text on praxis, the *Great Concentration and Contemplation* [*Makashikan*]. The *Great Concentration and Contemplation* is a monumental treatise in twenty scrolls on meditation in the Mahayana fashion. The core of its praxis is four types of elaborate and lengthy exercises called *samadhis* (skt. *samādhi*) — constantly sitting *samadhi*, constantly walking *samadhi*, half-walking half-sitting *samadhi*, and neither walking nor sitting *samadhi*. Two of these, constantly sitting *samadhi* and constantly walking *samadhi*, involve Pure Land devotions.

Constantly sitting *samadhi* is a ninety-day regimen based on the *Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom Spoken by Mañjuśrī* [*Monju setsu han-nya kyō*]. Its goal is meditative apprehension of reality in its absolute form, the Dharma-realm. However, as an alternative for those not able to immediately contemplate the absolute, and as a means to steady the mind, Chih-i advocates invocation of the name of a buddha of one's choice [Stevenson, pp. 54-58; T46.11b]. By the mid-eighth century, the buddha invoked for constantly sitting *samadhi* was usually Amitabha Buddha [Satō 1956, p. 1059].

Constantly walking *samadhi* of the *Great Concentration and Contemplation* is based on the *Seeing All Buddhas Samadhi Sutra* and enjoins ninety days of virtually uninterrupted circumambulation of an image of Amitabha Buddha while

simultaneously contemplating his physical features and calling upon his name [Stevenson, pp. 58-61; T46.12b]. Thus, both the constantly sitting *samadhi* and the constantly walking *samadhi* incorporate invocational *nembutsu*, the primary practice of the populist Pure Land movement. However, the goal of these T'ien-t'ai exercises was not Pure Land rebirth, but insight into the 'realm of dharmas' and the realization of enlightenment itself.

Half-walking half-sitting *samadhi* of the *Great Concentration and Contemplation* has several forms, one of which is called lotus *samadhi*. This is a twenty-seven-day penitential rite consisting of reciting passages of the *Lotus Sutra* and confessing at six intervals of the day and night the transgressions of the six senses [Stevenson, pp. 61-72; T46.14a]. While it did not include Pure Land devotions, this ritual was later linked to Pure Land ceremonies.

Saichō enjoined that the constantly walking *samadhi* was to be cultivated during the spring and autumn, and the constantly sitting *samadhi* during the summer and winter. In 812 he erected a Lotus *Samadhi* Hall for the practice of the half-walking half-sitting *samadhi*. Apparently he intended to establish chapels for the cultivation of constantly sitting *samadhi* and constantly walking *samadhi* as well, but was occupied with more pressing matters and neglected to do so before his death in 822 [Inoue, pp. 85-86; Satō 1956, pp. 1058-1059].

It was Saichō's disciple, Ennin [794-864] who, in 851 soon after his return from eleven years of study in China, actually inaugurated the regular practice of constantly walking *samadhi* within the Tendai School. He probably also erected at this time a Constantly Walking *Samadhi* Chapel [Jōgyō zammai dō]. Other chapels for the cultivation of constantly walking *samadhi* were constructed at the Tendai Mt. Hiei monastery in 865 and 893, and thereafter at many sites elsewhere in Japan as well [Inoue, p. 87; Satō 1956, p. 1060].

All indications are, however, that the practice initiated in 851 by Ennin and called constantly walking *samadhi* was not the exercise originally prescribed in the *Great Concentration and Contemplation*, but rather a considerably modified form influenced by a devotional type of *nembutsu* then popular in T'ang China. Clues to this are, first, the fact that during his stay in China, Ennin came into intimate contact with the very popular five chorus *nembutsu* [wu-hui nien-fo; goe *nembutsu*] of the populist Pure Land master Fa-chao, and secondly, that by Ennin's order there was initiated at the Constantly Walking *Samadhi* Chapel in 865 (the year after Ennin's death) an annual seven-day rite called ceaseless *nembutsu* [*fudan nembutsu*]. This ceaseless *nembutsu* later developed into a melodious *nembutsu* liturgy or psalmody [*inzei nembutsu*] called 'daily services' [*reiji sahō*] or 'mountain *nembutsu*' [*yama no nembutsu*] which was performed by Tendai monks in tandem with an abbreviated form of the lotus *samadhi* exercise called 'lotus penance' [*hokke sambō*]. The lotus penance was held each morning and the mountain *nembutsu* each evening [Inoue, pp. 87-89; Satō 1956, pp. 1061-1062]. These 'daily services' established a devotional style of *nembutsu* within the Tendai School which eventually spread to the aristocracy and the folk.

Fa-chao, the creator of the five chorus *nembutsu*, is a colorful and important figure in the history of the Chinese Pure Land movement. He first surfaced in 765-766 at Mt. Lu, the ancient, sacred site of the founding of Chinese Pure Land devotionism by Hui-yüan [Eon, 334-416]. There he built a hermitage and cultivated *nembutsu* in the style of Hui-yüan, a style based on the teachings of the *Seeing All Buddhas Samadhi Sutra* combining visual contemplation and oral invocation and seeking an ecstatic vision of Amitabha and the myriads of other buddhas. (We may notice some similarity to the constantly walking *samadhi* of Chih-i, who was also influenced by Lu-shan Hui-yüan.) While pursuing these devotions Fa-chao had a vision of

Amitabha Buddha which inspired him to seek out Nan-yo Ch'eng-yüan [Nangaku Shōon, 712-802], a T'ien-t'ai monk who had been a disciple of the populist Pure Land master Hui-jih [Enichi]. Ch'eng-yüan conducted every summer a ninety-day session of 'seeing all buddhas *nembutsu samadhi*' [*pan-chounien-fosan-mei: hanjunembutsu sammai*], an exercise based on the constantly walking *samadhi* of Chih-i but probably directed to attaining Pure Land rebirth rather than immediate enlightenment. While participating in one of these sessions Fa-chao had another vision of Amitabha, and this time the Buddha revealed to him the so-called five chorus *nembutsu*. In 770 Fa-chao went to Mt. Wu-tai, another famous Buddhist site, where he built a chapel for the cultivation of the five chorus *nembutsu*, the Temple of the Bamboo Grove [Chulin-ssu; Chikurin ji]. Ennin spent a night at this temple while touring Mt. Wu-tai in 840 [E. O. Reischauer, pp. 216-217]. Later Fa-chao was invited to lecture at the imperial court, resided and taught in the capitol Chang-an for a time, and was awarded the title National Preceptor [Kuo-shih; Kokushi] by Emperor Tai-tsung [r. 762-779] [Weinstein 1987, pp. 73-74]. Ennin spent several years in Chang-an at a time when Fa-chao's five chorus *nembutsu* was still very popular there [Satō 1956, pp. 1061-1062; Tsukamoto, pp. 332-362].

Fa-chao's five chorus *nembutsu* was a devotional, ceremonialized, musical form of *nembutsu* which gained wide popularity in his time and contributed significantly to the popularization of the Pure Land movement. 'Five choruses' refers to the structure of Fa-chao's *nembutsu* services. In the so-called first chorus, the congregation seems to have sung slowly and at a moderate volume to a now lost melody the six syllables, *nan-wu O-mi-t'o Fo* [*na-mu A-mi-da Butsu*]. Then in each of the second, third and fourth choruses, the pace became faster and the volume louder. Finally at the fifth chorus, just the last four syllables of the invocation were sung at full volume very rapidly [Tsukamoto, pp. 408-409]. This may have then been followed by a period of silence or silent meditation on

Amitabha seeking *nembutsu samadhi* or a vision of the Buddha. The entire performance was also probably accompanied or bracketed by offerings, hymns, genuflections, sutra chanting and sermons in an elaborate congregational worship service.

The transmission by Ennin of all or part of the five chorus *nembutsu* to Japan as a monastic ritual sowed the seeds of a rich Pure Land devotionism on Mt. Hiei. Implicit in Fa-chao's five chorus *nembutsu* was a deep longing for rebirth in Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land by means of the power of the Buddha's compassionate vows in an age of the later Dharma [*mo-fa; mappō*] when all other means of salvation were lost. This faith, Fa-chao had inherited from earlier populist Pure Land masters [Tsukamoto, pp. 488-489]. The teachings of these populist masters would be conveyed to Japan more explicitly in the third phase of transmission, but until then, from the mid-ninth century to the mid-tenth, Fa-chao's devotional style of *nembutsu* nurtured Pure Land faith on Mt. Hiei and gradually disseminated it to the secular world below as well.

MID-HEIAN PERIOD DEVELOPMENTS TENDAI PURE LAND WORKS AND ARISTOCRATIC NEMBUTSU SOCIETIES

By the second half of the tenth century, the monastic cult of Pure Land devotionism on Mt. Hiei had stimulated three parallel developments — one among the folk, one within the Tendai School, and another within aristocratic society. Let us examine these.

The diffusion of Pure Land piety to the common folk in Japan was greatly facilitated by a type of religious practitioner known as 'holy man' [*hijiri*]. These were itinerant preachers and healers in a shamanistic mode who ministered to the needs of the folk and taught them the many Buddhist paths to salvation. The earliest types of holy men were probably pre-Buddhist, and they played a prominent role already in the development of Nara Period Buddhism.¹¹ The first prominent Pure Land holy man [Amida *hijiri*, *nembutsuhijiri*] was Kūya

[903-972]. Kūya was ordained as a Tendai monk and probably participated in 'mountain *nembutsu*' services. Sometime around 938 he descended Mt. Hiei and began preaching and wonder-working among the folk of the capitol district. Known as Holy Man of the Market Place [Ichi no hijiri], he would appear in the villages beating his begging bowl to draw a crowd, dancing ecstatically to the rhythm, and chanting or singing the invocation to Amitabha Buddha. While the *nembutsu* had formerly been associated with a cult of the dead, Kūya taught the villagers to chant the *nembutsu* as a means of winning salvation into a paradisaical Pure Land. Under the tutelage of Kūya and other evangelists, Pure Land piety began a slow but momentous growth in popularity among the Japanese peasantry.¹²

Within the Tendai School the undercurrent of Pure Land piety nurtured by the daily *nembutsu* services eventually produced a number of works on Pure Land topics. The author of the most influential of these was Chief Abbot [Zasu] and middle restorer of the Tendai School, Ryōgen [912-985]. Until about Ryōgen's tenure esoteric teachings had prevailed in the Tendai School. Ryōgen attempted to restore emphasis on the Lotus teachings and practices and to promote Pure Land devotionalism as well [Inoue, pp. 87-88; Satō 1956, pp. 1063-1064]. He rebuilt the chapels for lotus *samadhi* and constantly walking *samadhi* and wrote one of the first works of the Heian Period on a Pure Land theme, the *Meaning of the Nine Grades of Rebirth into the Pure Land Utter Bliss* [Gokuraku Jōdo kuhon ōjō gi]. Written in response to a request from an aristocratic patron, the work is an exegesis of the final section of the *Amitabha Contemplation Sutra*, the section which describes the deeds, transgressions and manner of rebirth of nine types of persons, from the most virtuous to the most depraved, all of whom win Pure Land rebirth. It draws heavily on the apocryphal *T'ien-t'ai Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* and also cites Chikō of the Nara Period. Significantly, it affirms the possibility of rebirth of ordinary beings

by just ten invocations of Amida's name uttered at the moment of death.

Thanks to the researches of Satō Tetsuei, who between 1949 and 1951 published a number of works he discovered in temple archives, we now have available several additional works on Pure Land themes composed about the same time as Ryōgen's *Meaning of the Nine Grades* [Satō 1949, n.d., and 1951]. One of these, the *Ten New Doubts on Amida's Pure Land* [Amidashin jūgi] by Tendai Debate Master [Tandai] Zen'yu [909-990], is modeled on the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land* [Satō 1951]. It explores under ten categories doctrinal problems unresolved by the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts*. And like its namesake, Zen'yu's work also affirms the saveability of ordinary beings by the power of Amida's vows. It goes beyond the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts*, moreover, by asserting that Pure Land practices are more effective for salvation than traditional *T'ien-t'ai* practices because of the advent of the latter age of the Dharma.

As we noted in our discussion of the five chorus *nembutsu* of Fa-chao, the idea of the latter age of the Dharma was an important feature of populist Pure Land devotionalism. Ideas about the three ages of the Dharma and the arrival of the age of latter Dharma had been transmitted to Japan already in the Nara Period. Scholars of the Sanron school propounded theories that placed the beginning of the latter age in 552 C.E. Saichō and later Tendai thinkers, however, calculated that the latter age would not begin until 1052, and this view became generally accepted in Japan from around the beginning of the tenth century [Inoue, pp. 108-112; Marra, p. 40].¹³ Zen'yu's *Ten New Doubts* demonstrates that serious concern about the demise of 'right Dharma' [shōbō] had become a reality already by the mid-tenth century.¹⁴

Another text discovered and edited by Satō is the *Ten Vow Testimonial* [Jūgan hosshin ki] of Court Chaplain Senkan [918-983], a disciple of Holy Man Kūya [Satō n.d.].¹⁵ Characteristic of mid-tenth century Tendai thought, the *Ten Vow Testimonial* expresses faith in many sacralities —

Maitreya [Miroku], Samantabhadra [Fugen], the *Lotus Sutra*, Sakyamuni, etc. Yet it also shows deep interest in the Pure Land way. Among Senkan's ten oaths are vows to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land (number one), from there return to the world of suffering as a *bodhisattva* to save other beings (vow number two), and to emulate Amida Buddha in generating a Pure Land for the salvation of others (vow number eight).

Satō also discovered an interesting Pure Land liturgical text of unknown authorship, the *Western Pure Land Penance* [*Saihō sangebō*] [Satō 1949]. The full title of this work, *Rite of Repentance for a Seven-day Nembutsu Samadhi Session* [*Shugyō nembutsu sammai nanoka dōjō myō sange hōhō*], indicates its purpose and suggests its sources. Satō estimates that this text was composed after Ryōgen's *Meaning of the Nine Grades* but before Genshin's *Essentials*. It draws heavily on Shan-tao's *Methods and Merits of Samadhi* which describes a seven-day *nembutsu samadhi* and emphasizes repentance [T47.24; Inagaki 1966]. The *Western Pure Land Penance* was the first Japanese work we know of to cite Shan-tao's *Methods and Merits of Samadhi*, and it anticipates Genshin's attempt to integrate the populist Pure Land style of *nembutsu* with Tendai modes of practice.

These texts all reflect a growing concern for the possibility of Pure Land rebirth, especially for ordinary, 'evil' persons [*aku bombu*]. Aside from the *Western Pure Land Penance*, their main resources for expressing and responding to this concern was the *Amitabha Contemplation Sutra* interpreted by the *T'ien-t'ai Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* and the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land*. The *Meaning of the Nine Grades*, the *Ten New Doubts*, and Senkan's *Ten Vow Testimonial* all affirm the possibility of rebirth for even evil, ordinary beings if they have accumulated good karma in the past [*shuku zen*], and if they are able, under the ideal circumstances described in the *Amitabha Contemplation Sutra*, to call on the Buddha ten times at the hour of death.

And they credit such a salvation ultimately to the saving power of Amida Buddha's vows. This is the fundamental populist Pure Land position conveyed in the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land*. Two of these works — the *Meaning of the Nine Grades* and the *Ten New Doubts* — had recourse also to Nara Period Pure Land scholarship or Korean works influential in the Nara Period.

In other words, these Tendai Pure Land works of the mid-tenth century utilized texts and ideas of the first and second phases of transmission in an attempt to satisfy a developing interest in Pure Land salvation. Moreover, all of these texts, including the *Western Pure Land Penance*, attempted to incorporate their Pure Land interests into the traditional framework of Tendai ideology and praxis: Ryōgen used the *T'ien-t'ai Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* to understand the nine grades of rebirth of the *Amitabha Contemplation Sutra*; Zen'yu asserted that Pure Land practices have priority over T'ien-t'ai practices only because of the decline of the Dharma [Satō 1951, pp. 8-10]; Senkan attempted to utilize Pure Land piety in the pursuit of the traditional T'ien-t'ai *bodhisattva* path of universal salvation through heroic self-exertion; and the *Western Pure Land Penance* was probably intended to replace the penitential rite evolved from the lotus *samadhi*, the 'lotus penance,' which was at that time being performed in tandem with the 'mountain *nembutsu*' rite. Moreover, all of these works value strenuous cultivation of traditional meritorious practices very highly. Ryōgen and Zen'yu cite Huai-kan, but none of these works, except the *Western Pure Land Penance*, cite the primary populist Pure Land masters T'an-luan, Tao-ch'o or Shan-tao. And the scope of the *Western Pure Land Penance*, which cites Shan-tao extensively, was merely that of a liturgical manual, and it apparently did not circulate very widely.

The conclusion we must draw from this examination of mid-tenth century Tendai Pure Land writings is that the transmission of populist practices and doctrines to Japan and the integration of these with traditional Tendai forms awaited the

composition of the *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* at the outset of the third phase of the transmission of Pure Land piety to Japan.¹⁶

We mentioned above that by the second half of the tenth century, the monastic cult of Pure Land devotionism on Mt. Hiei had stimulated three parallel developments. We have looked at the promotion of Pure Land piety among the folk by the Tendai priest and holy man Kūya and at the expressions of Pure Land faith in several mid-tenth century Tendai works. Now let us examine the spread of Pure Land faith to the aristocrats of the period.

Inoue Mitsusada has argued that it was among the lower ranks of Heian aristocracy that Pure Land faith first took hold [pp. 90-108]. He discusses the declining status and insecurity they suffered in the shadow of the upper aristocracy — the house of the Fujiwara regents — and how that situation fostered a critical [*hihan teki*] attitude toward society, belief in the insubstantiality and impermanence of life [*mujō kan*], and a feeling of utter dependency on inscrutable karma [*shukuse*], all of which were magnified by a growing conviction at all levels of society from the early tenth century of the advent of the age of the latter Dharma. In this frame of mind, these lesser aristocrats found appealing the Pure Land devotionism conveyed in the mountain *nembutsu* services and in works like those of Ryōgen and Zen'yu.

Inoue sees the first signs of this budding Pure Land piety in the organization around the middle of the tenth century by lesser aristocrats and Tendai monks of a *nembutsu* society or Pure Land devotional fellowship called the Society for Encouragement of Learning [*Kangaku-e*]. In 965 the young aristocrat and scholar Yoshishige Yasutane [d. 997] gathered some twenty fellow alumni of the National College and twenty clerical acquaintances to form this group. They took vows to assist each other in times of spiritual need and met twice yearly, on the fifteenth day of the third and ninth months. Their agenda at these meetings was to hear a sermon on the *Lotus Sutra* in the morning, and in

the afternoon to compose poems in praise of the *Lotus*, and then to cultivate *nembutsu* through the night (i.e., unceasing *nembutsu* as in the daily *nembutsu* services on Mt. Hiei). By these activities they sought rebirth in Amida's Pure Land [Inoue, pp. 91-93; Ishida 1963-1964, I, pp. 349-352].

The Society for the Encouragement of Learning dissolved in 985 or a little earlier, about the time that Yoshishige Yasutane entered the priesthood. Shortly thereafter, in 986, Genshin and Yasutane, now called Jakushin, formed a new Pure Land devotional society, this one called the Nembutsu-samadhi Society of Twenty-five [*Ni-jū-go sammai e*].¹⁷ This new society met monthly rather than biannually, and like the Society for the Encouragement of Learning it also practiced *nembutsu* through the night. Its members also took vows to come to the assistance of each other when seriously ill or dying by gathering at the bed-side and encouraging the cultivation of the death-bed *nembutsu* [*rinjū nembutsu*] deemed necessary for Pure Land salvation by such texts as the *Amitabha Contemplation Sutra*, the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land*, and Ryōgen's *Meaning of the Nine Grades of Rebirth*. Originally 25 members, the Nembutsu-samadhi Society of Twenty-five later grew to include 163 laymen and clerics, men and women [Inoue, pp. 147-155; Ishida, I, pp. 342-343 and pp. 349-353].¹⁸

The significance of this devotional society is twofold: Not only do we have here a much more intense expression of Pure Land faith among the aristocracy than was represented by the Society for the Encouragement of Learning, but we also have the occasion for the composition of *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* (*ōjō yōshū*), the single most comprehensive text on Pure Land teachings and practices ever produced in Japan. The *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth*, written between the eleventh month of 984 and the fourth month of 985, was probably composed as a manual of *nembutsu* cultivation for the Nembutsu-samadhi Society of Twenty-five.¹⁹ It became the guide to Pure Land faith and practice for the next 200 years to the close of the Heian Period.

As a manual of *nembutsu* cultivation, the *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* gives instructions on methods of *nembutsu* and attempts to verify with scriptural citations the benefits of this practice. In the process of thus describing and verifying *nembutsu* cultivation, Genshin introduced to Japan the populist Pure Land ideas and practices contained in texts which for the most part had been transmitted centuries earlier, but which, as we have noted, were not read or comprehended by earlier generations. Thus, while the *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* was itself an outgrowth of the second phase of the transmission of Pure Land piety, it paradoxically transcended its origins and initiated a distinctly new phase. We will explore that new phase in parts Two and Three of this study.

FOOTNOTES

1. See 'References' for bibliographical details on this and other texts referred to in this study. 'T' in the 'References' and footnotes refers to the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon; the numerals following 'T' indicate the text serial number in the Taishō edition. However, 'T' followed by a numeral, a period, and more numerals and characters (e.g., T46.11b) indicates volume, page, and page section in the Taishō collection (in this example, Vol. 46, p. 11, section b).

2. The practice of meditating upon, invoking, or (in a generic, inclusive sense) 'reflecting upon,' a buddha.

3. When discussing Chinese movements, thinkers, and texts we will sometimes give both the Chinese and Japanese for important terms, the Chinese followed by the Japanese.

4. Sanskrit, Amitābha; we will dispense with diacritical marks for Sanskrit words familiar to readers of English.

5. For a general description and study of this work, see Andrews 1973.

6. See 'References' for Chinese titles.

7. Based upon the research of Ishida Mosaku [Inoue, p. 43, n. 5]. To copy or transcribe

a scripture was considered an act generative of good karma.

8. 'Smaller Pure Land Sutra' and 'Larger Pure Land Sutra' will designate any or all items in the entire corpora of texts and translations of these two sutras respectively.

9. While T'an-luan's *Commentary on the Vasubandhu Pure Land Treatise* [Ōjō ronchū] was apparently not among the texts found in the Shōsōin by Ishida Mosaku [Inoue, pp. 43-47], we know that it had been brought to Japan by 755 because it was consulted by Chikō [d. c.775] for his work on the *Vasubandhu Pure Land Treatise* [Inoue, p. 50]. On the other hand, the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts on the Pure Land* [Jōdo jūgi ron] and *T'ien-t'ai Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* [T'ien-t'ai Bussetsu kammuryōjukyō sho] were probably not composed before the eighth century; see the discussion below.

10. Seven of the ten sections of the *T'ien-t'ai Ten Doubts* were influenced by Tao-ch'o [Satō 1961, p. 642; Pruden 1973, p. 129].

11. Gyōgi Bosatsu [668-748] was the first prominent Buddhist *hijiri*; see Hori 1958.

12. Kūya and other *hijiri* also taught the folk to chant the *nembutsu* to ward off evil spirits [goryō] [Hori 1968, pp. 83-139].

13. It was once thought that Saichō also composed a work entitled *Lamp of the Latter Dharma* [Mappō tōmyōki], but this text has since been demonstrated to be a much later apocryphal work; see Rhodes.

14. Genshin's *Essentials* also contributed to the transmission of this important eschatological view by means of its graphic descriptions of the six transmigration-paths of samsara [Marra, pp. 40-45; Andrews 1973, pp. 45-50; A. K. Reischauer]. But rather than abandon T'ien-t'ai practices in favor of Pure Land ones because of the arrival of the latter age, Genshin attempted to integrate T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land practices [Andrews 1973, pp. 43-120].

15. On Senkan, see also *Konjyaku monogatari shū*, 15.42 [Brower, pp. 441-443].

16. It is also significant, as we will see, that Genshin's *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* cites none of these late second phase works, except Ryōgen's *Meaning of the Nine Grades of Rebirth*.

17. Though the rules of the society [*Ni-jū-go sammai shiki*] were drawn up by Yasutane in 986.5, the group had probably formed somewhat earlier [Ishida, I, p. 342 and p. 350].

18. The former Emperor, Kazan, was also a member of this *nembutsu* society. The number twenty-five in the society's name apparently represents the number of *bodhisattvas* thought to accompany Amitabha Buddha in his descent to welcome believers into his Pure Land. It seems, in fact, that the Nembutsu-samadhi Society of Twenty-five would act out the descent of Amitabha and his twenty-five *bodhisattvas* at the bed-sides of their expiring companions.

19. It is not clear whether the *Essentials* was composed specifically for the use of the Nembutsu-samadhi Society of Twenty-five, or whether it stimulated the formation of this society. In either case, the relation between the composition of the *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* and the formation of the Nembutsu-samadhi Society of Twenty-five was very close [see Ishida 1963-1964; I, pp. 342-343 and pp. 350-351].

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T [abbrev.] See *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*.

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JAPANESE AND CHINESE CHARACTERS

aku bombu 惡凡夫

bombu (fan-fu) 凡夫

fudan nembutsu 不斷念仏

goe nembutsu

(wu-hui nien-fo)

五会念仏

hanju nembutsu sammai

(pan-chou nien-fo san-mei)

般舟念仏三昧

hihan teki 批判的

hijiri 聖

hokkai (fa-chiai) 法界

hokke sambō 法華修法

inzei nembutsu 引声念仏

mappō (mo-fa) 末法

mikkyō 密教

mujō kan 無常觀

na-mu A-mi-da Butsu

(nan-wu O-mi-t'o Fo)

南無阿彌陀仏

nembutsu (nien-fo) 念仏

reiji sahō 例時作法

rinjū nembutsu 臨終念仏

shana gō 遮那業

shikan gō 止觀業

shōbō 正法

shuku zen 宿善

shukuse 宿世

yama no nembutsu 山の念仏

Introduction to Jōdo Shinshū

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INTRODUCTION

As one tradition among the variety of Buddhist traditions, the name *Jōdo Shinshū* is the Japanese reading for the Chinese characters meaning *True Teaching of the Pure Land*. The present organization which sponsors the Institute of Buddhist Studies relates to the *Hongwanji*, *Hongwanji-ha* in Kyoto. Jōdo Shinshū comprised 10 branches (*ha* means branch) of which the Hongwanji, through a long history, became the most dominant. The Hongwanji itself was divided in the 17th century so that in addition to the Hongwanji-ha, there is the *Ōtani-ha*. They are also known respectively as Nishi Hongwanji and Higashi Hongwanji or West and East Hongwanjis. They are located within very short distances from each other in Kyoto, one being west of Horikawa street and the other east.

Ostensibly the sect or school was begun by Shinran (1173-1263) in Japan. However, the term was used by earlier teachers such as Shan-tao (Zendō), a major Pure Land teacher in China, and later Hōnen, Shinran's direct teacher. The origins and roots of the teaching may be traced back to India in the three major Pure Land Sutras which became the basis for interpretation and development of the popular tradition. According to the lineage of teachers developed by Shinran to position his teaching in the history of Buddhism, the stream of teaching extended from Śākyamuni to Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu, two major Buddhist thinkers in India, to T'an luan (Donran), Tao-ch'ō (Dōshaku), and Shan-tao (Zendō) in China, finally with Genshin and Hōnen in Japan. Thus, the tradition covers the three major centers of Buddhist tradition. While this lineage is not one of direct historical transmission, it has spiritual and symbolic meaning in maintaining Pure Land teaching

as authentic Buddhist doctrine and providing the basis of authoritative texts and interpretations to support the religious experience and teaching interpreted by Shinran.

Over the centuries the branches of Shinshū have developed elaborate ecclesiastical systems with their own schools and broad followings among the people. It has had the reputation for being the largest Buddhist tradition in Japan. We should call attention here also to Rennyō, the eighth successor of Shinran in the 16th century, who made Jōdo Shinshū the faith of the masses. He made the more subtle aspects of Shinran's teaching comprehensible to the masses and was also an eloquent preacher and religious organizer.

SHINRAN

As we have indicated, Shinran is the ostensible founder of the teaching, but he never claimed to be a founder. His followers looked upon him as the founder of their particular stream of tradition, though he was an obscure figure in his own time. Hōnen had numerous successors, each claiming the correct interpretation of the teacher. These still exist today and are generally known as the Jōdo-shū. As might be expected, the teachings of all these divisions are very close, varying in some aspects of emphasis.

Shinran himself set a distinctive course for the interpretation of the Pure Land teaching as a result of his 20 years experience of discipline as a monk in the Tendai monastery on Mount Hiei from his 9th to 29th year. From his own testimony and that of his wife, Shinran had great uncertainty and anxiety about his future salvation despite the long years of practice. His confessions scattered

through his writings indicate he had a deep sense of defilement and imperfection, or we might say sin (in Buddhist terms). When his experience became intense enough he rejected the monastery, and went to study with Hōnen. Eventually Hōnen's disciples, including Shinran, were exiled to various parts of Japan. Shinran never saw his teacher again.

During his experience or exile and long teaching career in the relatively undeveloped area of eastern Japan, Shinran married and fathered some six children. A study of Shinran's teachings and his life experience indicates the close interrelation of the two aspects. His interpretation is shaped by his existential grappling with the anomalies of his own life. In the course of his work among the common people and his reflections on the deeper meaning of the teaching, Shinran formulated a teaching which compares well, though on a Buddhist basis, with the doctrine of "faith alone" for which Luther is usually credited, if not Paul himself. Shinran's teaching antedates that of Luther by several centuries. St. Francis Xavier is said to have exclaimed when he heard about that teaching on his arrival in Japan that "that accursed Lutheran heresy has reached Japan!"

Shinran's writings comprise a variety of materials, including a major anthological text called *Kyōgyōshinshō* (*Teaching, Practice, Faith, Realization*), poetry, commentarial works, letters to disciples, and copies of other texts. From these we glean his thought. A latter text compiled by a disciple Yuienbō, the *Tannishō*, has had a major influence in the modern recognition of Shinran. It gives the essence of his religious perspective in a very short compass. There were other texts by later successors.

PURE LAND TEACHING AND BUDDHIST TRADITION

As is well known Buddhism begins with the teaching of Gautama Buddha about the 6th century B.C.E. This teaching is known for the for-

mulation of the Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Noble Path, Doctrine of the Middle Way, and the Twelve-link Chain of Causation, as well as the emphasis on non-soul, impermanence and suffering. The goal was to follow the path of the Buddha to Nirvana as a spiritual condition of liberation from all forms of attachment and conceptions. The teaching became a monastic tradition with highly elaborate rules and meditative practices aimed at purifying passions and the mind in order to "see things as they really are." In addition there were the principles of karma and merit which appealed to the lay person as a means to build spiritual potential for attaining future enlightenment after many rebirths. This tradition continues with little change down to the present time. It is known as the Theravāda (Way of the Elders, presumably the original teaching of the Buddha) tradition.

In the course of time alternative interpretations of the Buddha's teaching emerged, perhaps about the second century B.C.E. It came to be called the Mahayana tradition. Mahayana means Great Vehicle, while they viewed their opponents as Hinayāna, the small or narrow vehicle. (This latter is presently the Theravāda. Hinayāna is pejorative and not generally used outside a historical context.)

The Mahayana stream of Buddhism itself developed monastic and meditative institutions, not altogether dissimilar to the earlier forms. However, the philosophy it developed attained very subtle depths as modes of critique of human thinking. Though the philosophy appears in some ways negative, it opened the way for a wider speculation concerning human destiny and the means to attain enlightenment. Mahayana may be seen as a type of reform movement to break through the elitism and aridity of narrow monastic practice. Mahayana religious and philosophical perspectives offered the elevated philosophy of Voidness, Interdependence, Oneness, and grand mythic and symbolic expressions describing spiritual reality and ideals. A significant feature of Mahayana thought is the effort to coordinate the

various concepts of Buddha that emerged in the evolution of the tradition. The concept of Three Bodies of the Buddha (*Trikāya*) coordinates historical, mythological and metaphysical reflection on Buddhahood. The historical level is the Body of Manifestation or Transformation (*nirmāṇakāya*) and represented by Śākyamuni Buddha in our world. The mythic level describes those Buddhas in the arcane past who have attained enlightenment and reside in their respective Land where they enjoy the fruits of their enlightenment. This is called the Body of Reward or Recompense (*sambhogakāya*). Amida Buddha illustrates this category and is considered in Pure Land teaching as the True Recompensed Buddha, surpassing all other. The highest level is the *Dharmakāya* or Body of Truth. It is the inconceivable, inexpressible ultimate reality from which all forms and mode are manifested and to which all symbols and expressions point. Mahayana Buddhism envisions the presence and reality of Buddha in every pore or fragment of dust on the micro level and throughout the universe on the macro level. Buddhas fill all aspects of time and space. In fact the encompassing ideal of Buddha-nature in all things is the final spiritual goal of all beings. While there may have been numerous streams feeding these developments, they have all come together as the variety of spiritual possibility in the Mahayana stream. One of these streams was the Pure Land teaching. Mahayana tradition provided apophatic and kataphatic means or perspectives in reaching enlightenment.

Initially Pure Land teaching involved high level meditative practices and methods of visualization by which the devotee gained visions of the Pure Land and was assured of his/her eventual enlightenment. It was imported into China and also made its way to Korea and Japan.

Despite the monastic and meditative elements in the teaching, there were openings for a more popular teaching to give hope to the masses which had little prospect of soon enlightenment based on the rigorous monastic routines. From the

Pure Land Meditation Sutra the principle of reciting the name of Amida Buddha (Skt. Amitābha Amitāyus Buddha) was believed to bring purification and merit for continuous recitation of the name. Eighty billions of *kalpas* of sins could be purified by each recitation. Since we come from a beginningless past, indicated by the fact that we are still here and unenlightened, the recitation must be carried on constantly with sincerity and faith. Other forms of worship were also indicated such as offerings and praise. Originally the principle was not restricted to Amida and even today other Buddhas or Bodhisattvas may be appealed to for benefits. In the course of time, the comprehensiveness of the Amida stream of teaching and the efforts of several capable propagators, some of whom we have mentioned, led to the dominance and widespread adherence to this form of Pure Land teaching. It became a subteaching in all schools as a means of aiding the masses.

It was in Japan during the tumultuous Kamakura period in the 13th century that the Pure Land teaching became an independent sect, with its own teachings and eventual organizations. This was largely brought about through Hōnen's teaching of the *Sole Practice of Nembutsu* (recitation of the name). All his followers retained this practice, but dispensed with the rigorous meditation systems. Among the general trend of Pure Land teachers, the practice of recitation had the purpose of attaining merit toward one's future rebirth in the Pure Land or to help others. It is at this point that Shinran significantly differs from other teachers.

THE PURE LAND

A word should be said about the Pure Land itself and the story behind it. According to the *Sūtra*, an ancient king, looking out on his world, saw the mass of human suffering. He resigned his throne and practiced the disciplines to attain enlightenment. In this process, he made 48 Vows which were designed to create the ideal environment for spiritual fulfilment. It is said he practiced

for five kalpas and fulfilled his Vows. It is ten kalpas since that time. The Pure Land has been established in the west, many millions of miles away. Amida resides in that land, as the land is the essence of Amida through his Vows. Yet through his spiritual nature he is present in this world, manifesting himself in any form needed to advance the person's spiritual progress.

While the Vows advocate a range of spiritual activities for rebirth in the Pure Land, they came to be viewed as emphasizing the recitation of the name. This was offered as an easy way for common people to attain the highest realization. Especially the 18, 19, and 20th Vows were central in the development of the popular tradition.

Rebirth in the Pure Land was seen as a step on the way to enlightenment. In the Pure Land the disciplines that could not be practiced suitably in this life would be easily and naturally attained in that land. Finally one would attain Nirvana.

The Vows of Amida Buddha are cast in the form that if a certain condition is not attained for the people through his efforts, then he also will not accept the highest enlightenment. The philosophic principle of interdependence and Oneness are given dramatic expression through the character of the Vows. There can be no salvation if anyone is left out. It is like liberty which is indivisible by its nature. This understanding makes the Pure Land tradition ultimately an altruistic teaching. The goal is not merely to save oneself, but to save all other beings as well. There are several ways to look at this process. Since the Vows have been fulfilled ten kalpas ago, everyone is saved, though they do not know it. On the other hand, the Vows are being fulfilled and Amida is becoming Buddha as the teaching spreads to embrace all beings.

While the opposite of the Pure Land, hells and the like, have been retained in the tradition, they are not eternal, otherwise the Vow would be futile. They have the function to stimulate reflection and desire for the Pure Land. Because of the

absoluteness and unqualified view of Amida's Compassion in Shinran's teaching, these ideas become virtually irrelevant. Amida embraces and never abandons.

SHINRAN'S TEACHING

At most this can only be a brief outline of the basic elements making up his Buddhology. We can perhaps best get at it by using the outline of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

The Kyō is Teaching — For Shinran this meant primarily the *Larger Pure Land Sutra* which relates the story of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara who became Amida Buddha. Shinran's interpretation of this text, particularly the text of the fulfilment of the 18th Vow, provides the basis of his soteriological view. Based on Japanese grammatical structure, as against the Chinese, Shinran makes clear that the faith we engender in the teaching is not of our making but is really the endowment of Amida's Pure Mind within our own. While on the existential level we "believe" or arouse "faith" (*shinjin*, the believing mind), in actuality it is not our working. In the Pure Land tradition up to Shinran there was a strong trend of self-working or self power as the basis of salvation. With Shinran it is absolutely Other Power or Power through Others. For Shinran, involved in egoistic passions as we are, even religious acts are poisoned by the egoism of trying to gain salvation for oneself. This egoism that infects all religious endeavor means that if there is any salvation to be had at all, it cannot be something calculated and devised by the person. It must have its basis elsewhere. The Sutra relates the source and basis of the soteriological process.

The teaching has two major aspects. On the one hand there is the process leading to rebirth, called the aspect of going (*ōsō*), it is in this context that the Teaching Practice Faith and Realization text is to be viewed. It shows the process of going

(to the Pure Land). On the other hand, there is the aspect of return, which is actually taken up in the volume on Realization. This is *gensō*, the aspect of returning from the Pure Land to save others. The terms *ōsō-ekō* and *gensō-ekō* in which the term *ekō* means turning over or transfer of merit refer to the working of Amida whose Vows underlay the total spiritual process by which we are saved and then work to save others. In Shinran's view no spiritual action can be credited as human virtue. Whether consciously known or not, whatever good is done is done through Amida's compassionate intention and wisdom.

The spiritual foundation of this understanding of religion can be found in the principles of interdependence, voidness and nonduality of Mahayana philosophy and given symbolization in the story and interpretation of Amida's Vows. Though we live our lives activated by a sense of individual self and ego-centeredness, there is nothing we are able to achieve or become in this world that is done in total isolation and independence of others. From our very childhood we live through Other Power of those who care and nurture. The concept of the self-made man is self-contradictory by definition. Amida Buddha symbolizes that larger world of nature and social relations that make our life and growth and creativity possible. Flashed on the screen of ultimate destiny, whatever we are to become in any future life or world is based on this same principle.

The abstract philosophical dimension is given a religious character through symbols to arouse our awareness of this reality in our lives. From strict Mahayana thinking Amida is an *Upāya*, a tactful means to guide spiritual development to higher levels. It is void or empty. Amida is not a being in some world off to the west except for religious conception at a certain level of understanding. It is more a metaphor or poetic expression of the nature of our lives. As we indicated in the discussion of the Three Bodies of the Buddha, the highest level, *Dharmakāya*, is beyond conception and expression.

Amida in Shinran's thought was influenced by Tendai philosophy as well. Amida became for him not a Buddha of ten *kalpas* but the eternal Buddha whose life is incalculable, based on the imagery of the *Lotus Sūtra*. He emphasized the Vow in which the Buddha pledged his eternity. Amida is not an ordinary name but means Eternal Life, in essence the very reality of all beings. He is also Infinite Light which signifies the eternal wisdom in things. For Shinran, Amida is really the Buddha-nature in all things, not as something to be realized through meditation and monastic existence, but through the compassion we feel in the life around us and the awareness that our salvation lies in the embracing reality of nature.

The Gyō is Practice— In the context in which Shinran placed this concept, it refers to the Great Practice of the Bodhisattva as he strove to lay the basis for the enlightenment of all beings. The virtue or essence of this practice done for five kalpas was embodied in the Name, *Namu Amida Butsu* (I take refuge in Amida Buddha) which has been recited for centuries with faith and hope by masses to the present day. Sometimes the conception of the power of the name was quite magical. However with Shinran it became spiritual as the symbol of the reality of a salvation already granted.

According to Shinran's understanding the name became available in human history through Śākyamuni Buddha in fulfilment of the 17th Vow which declared that all the Buddhas in the universe would praise that name and offer it to the people of their worlds. Thus the Pure Land Sutras are all taught as though they were preached by Śākyamuni Buddha. Historically this cannot be determined and is improbable. However, in faith many accept this attribution. Nevertheless, we can say that the original intention of Śākyamuni to relieve the sufferings of humanity has evolved into this form, carrying his original intention forward to new expressions required by different times and places. This might be viewed as in a way a *heilsgeschichte* within the very fabric of history.

The Shin is the Faith— In this volume we have the central issue of Shinran's teaching. The concept of faith can be identified in this text as a spontaneous, inner awareness that one has encountered the very truth of one's life. That is why Shinran defines it as singleminded, though having three aspects of sincerity, joyful believing and desire for birth in the Pure Land. These all become a unity in the strong assurance that one receives in hearing the name and what it signifies. Endowed trust, as we may call it, is an existential experience to which Shinran testifies himself. All three minds are bound together in undoubting unity. This undoubting unity is not the enforced undoubting of dogmatic assertion in some group, but the undoubting of a self-evident experience. We may question many things about our existence, but we cannot question our existence itself.

One of the distinctive ideas of Shinran appears in the principle of the Company of the Truly Assured. With the reception of faith one is already destined for rebirth. It compares in some measure with the idea of eternal security or once saved always saved in some Christian circles. This concept was transferred from the future in the Pure Land to the experience of faith in this life. It makes Shinran's teaching this-worldly in character as against the traditional other-worldly character of Pure Land teaching. With no anxiety toward future existence in the afterlife, Shinshū people could turn their attention to life in this world. Further, since all was assured, they did not need to spend great sums of money out of fear to take care of the destiny of their loved ones and ancestors. They may do it out of gratitude of family obligation, but not with superstitious belief in retribution for non-observance that afflicts some traditions.

In the structure of faith there are also two aspects called two types of deep faith. On the one hand the faith experience reveals to us our desperate evil and egocentricity that renders us incapable of attaining any salvation on our own, while the second aspect is the awareness that Amida has deigned to save just such people through his Vows.

Shinran, in view of his monastic experience, came to the conclusion that if there were no such way as given by Amida, he must necessarily go to hell; there is no other way given the person that he is.

In the light of his understanding of faith as the gift of Amida's true mind, the nature of religious life and practice changed completely. For Shinran one is not religious in order to be saved, but because one is already saved and through religious existence expresses one's gratitude for the compassion received. Thus the recitation of the name has no merit attached to it. It is neither a good deed nor a practice, as stated in the *Tannishō*. Similarly, Shinran rejected the magical and ancestral emphasis that dominates Japanese religious tradition, claiming that he never said Nembutsu once out of filial piety. He rejected the authoritarian approaches to religion when he stated that he did not have even one disciple and regarded all his associates as companions on the way.

The Shō is the Realization — Realization normally means birth in the Pure Land or attainment of Nirvana. In Shinran there are several aspects that require comment. In the volume on Realization he makes it clear that the ultimate end of religion is to work for the salvation of others. Here he employs the imagery of the Bodhisattva of Buddhist tradition who rejects Nirvana to return and work in the garden of sufferings. He also uses the image in several places that we become Buddha and in union with the Buddha-nature qua Amida we strive for the salvation of all. He also makes it clear, based on the teaching of Donran, that to desire to go to the Pure Land merely to escape suffering means one does not go, because one is still activated by self-serving ego, the basis of all suffering.

Together with the Realization volume there is the volume on the True Buddha Land in which he shows that the ultimate attainment is Nirvana. In this context his intention is to show that the Pure Land is not merely a temporary interval or staging platform for some higher attainment but

is itself Nirvana. Though it may appear there is a contradiction between the altruism of the Realization volume and the True Buddha Land, it is not really so. The Buddha in his nirvanic state is freed from all conceptions of what might ordinarily be thought in our unenlightened condition. As ultimate freedom, he is able to bring all beings to enlightenment, assuming whatever forms may be necessary to achieve it. To be nirvanic does not necessarily mean to be nonexistent, as that would be annihilationism which Buddhism consistently rejects, but that one is inconceivable.

The last volume of the book is called the *Transformed Buddha Land* and takes up the problem of competing religious views. Here Shinran applies his critical insight to the question of other religions, particularly Japanese native religion and Taoism which are viewed as magical and forms of Buddhism which strive through their own virtue to attain enlightenment, such as Zen or Shingon. According to Shinran, no one is ultimately condemned as such, but based on Pure Land mythic symbolism, they attain lower levels of rebirth based on the karma they accumulate. Eventually they will come to final realization.

SUMMARY

In the traditional formulations of Shinshū, not all members may understand the details, as is true in other traditions. However, Shinshū has avoided being swallowed up in Japanese folk religious tradition and has been the freest to modernize. However, there is a traditionalism that is common to Japanese culture and a communalism that sometimes inhibits creative development. Nevertheless it is very much alive. In summary there are three major points (triadic) which give the essence of the teaching:

1. *Shinjin shōin*: The true cause of rebirth (salvation, etc.) is faith.
2. *Heizei gōjō*: Faith and assurance are attained in this life.
3. *Hōon kansha*: The essence of life and faith are gratitude.

Nien-Fo (Buddha-Anusmṛti): The Shifting Structure of Remembrance

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In the doctrinal development of the practice of the remembrance of Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti*; *nien-fo*; *nembutsu*) a distinct hiatus can be observed in the development from meditative *nien-fo* to invocational *nien-fo*, a development that began with Shan-tao in China and reached its apogee with Shinran in Japan. There is evident a movement from 1) the practice of remembering and visualizing a Buddha while chanting his name (*nien-fo san-mei*) as an aid to meditative concentration to 2) the independent tradition of Shan-tao and Shinran in which invocational *nien-fo* alone is sufficient. This paper attempts to sketch the shift in the understanding of remembrance (*nien*; *smṛti*) within that development.

Before the assertion by Chinese Pure Land masters T'an-luan, Tao-ch'ao, and Shan-tao that the invocational *nien-fo* alone is sufficient, the *nien-fo* was adopted both in India and in China as meditation aid in several different doctrinal lineages.¹ But in the later thought of Shan-tao, as represented by his last and definitive work, the *Kuan-ching-shu*, the *nien-fo* became the single practice required for salvation. The single-hearted practice of such *nien-fo* was all that is needed for salvation.² It could be effectively practiced even though one's mind is distracted,³ for its efficacy does not depend upon one's own effort. In this Pure Land development, which at the time was revolutionary, the *nien-fo* is understood to be much more than an aid to meditation. It is rather a calling to mind of the primal sacrament: the vow of Amida Buddha to save all beings.

As this tradition developed from Shan-tao to Shinran, the emphasis shifted away from the meditative *nien-fo* that one cultivates with self-effort and earnest endeavor to the *nien-fo* of other-

power. This evolution in Pure Land doctrine entailed a new understanding of memory, for while the meditative *nien-fo* functions within a context of conventional remembering as an aid to practice, the invocational *nien-fo* restructures one's awareness of time in the experience of a primal sacrament. It is the thesis of this paper that with the development toward single-hearted *nien-fo*, the meaning of memory moves from an initial tension between remembrance of the past and prolepsis into the future in the meditative *nien-fo* to a collapsing of the conventional framework of linear time into the existential instant of *shinjin* (true entrusting) in Shinran's understanding of invocational *nembutsu*.

We will first direct our attention to the meditative *nien-fo* and sketch the meaning of remembrance as a dialectic tension between a recollection of what is past and a prolepsis into the future along a linear time line accepted as conventionally valid. The focus will then move to China to depict briefly the shifting understanding of remembrance within the development from the meditative *nien-fo* to the invocational *nien-fo*. Finally, a section will be devoted to Shinran's understanding of the "sacramental" structure of time-simultaneity in the very utterance of the *nembutsu*: *namu-amida-butsu*.

THE INDIAN PRACTICE OF MEDITATIVE BUDDHĀNUSMṚTI

The practice of *buddhānusmṛti* (i.e., meditative *nien-fo*) was widespread both in India and in China, but evidently was prone to misuse, for a number of scholarly exegetical endeavors were written to guard against misinterpretations of the practice. The devotion to Pure Land Buddhas

was apt to neglect the Mahayana doctrines of emptiness and dependent co-arising by substituting a proleptic, i.e., future oriented, hope for an empirical encounter with actual Buddhas in their Pure Lands, either in meditation or after death, in the place of insight into the essence-free reality of Buddha. Buddhist doctrinal thinking on the Pure Land practice of *buddhānusmṛti* (*nien-fo*) was not purely academic; it was clearly directed toward maintaining the integrity of the tradition in its polymorphous devotional and monastic forms. There was a need to assure that Pure Land practices were understood doctrinally within the circle of traditional Mahayana teaching and that practitioners were fully committed to the path (*mārga*) of practice and effort. A broad spectrum of doctrinally sophisticated authors present *buddhānusmṛti* as a remembrance of the Buddha and the Buddha qualities (*guṇa*), a remembrance intended as a support for states of concentration (*samādhi*). For many unlettered practitioners, the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* (*nien-fo*) was no doubt a remembrance of past promises relating to a future realization. But the Mahayana pundits interpreted it as an aid to present meditation practice, with the obvious intent of deliteralizing the idea of empirically encountering a Pure Land somewhere. The tension between these two approaches is evidently that between the popular practices of Buddhist lay devotees and the scholarly, monastic practice of the lettered.⁴

Engagement in *buddhānusmṛti* as a meditative aid is seen from the earliest layers of the tradition. The very formation of the canonical texts of the Amitābha cult, the first of which was the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*, reveals a developing practice of recollecting Buddha, not the inception of the practice. Nishio Kyōo has recently traced the practice back to the earliest layers of the Āgamas and the Nikāyas, where it formed the central focus of the practice of the four recollections.⁵ *Buddhānusmṛti* was understood to be a visual evocation of a Buddha image through a structured meditative procedure. In the *Ekottarāgama* (3.1) it

is taught that this single practice leads to the attainment of immortality (*amṛta*).⁶

A central source text (later regarded as the locus classicus by Shinran) for the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* is the eighteenth vow of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*:

If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings throughout the ten quarters, realizing sincerity, entrusting faith (*shinjin*), and aspiration to be born in my land and saying my name up to ten times, do not attain birth, may I not attain unequalled, supreme enlightenment.⁷

The same promise, to welcome devoted beings into the Pure Land at their moment of death, is made in *The Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha*,⁸ and in the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra*.⁹

But the Triple Pure Land scripture does not offer *buddhānusmṛti* as a replacement for more arduous practice. The nineteenth vow of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha* says that sentient beings must "bring their stock of merit to maturity" in order to be born in the Pure Land.¹⁰ The *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha* notes that "beings are born in that Buddha land of the Tathāgata Amitāyus as a reward and result of good works performed in this present life."¹¹ And the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* insists that one must practice the threefold goodness, which includes belief in the causal process of good karma and commitment to the reading and study of the Mahayana scriptures, for these are "the efficient cause of the pure actions taught by all the Buddhas."¹² Indeed, *samādhi* is judged to be authentic by its agreement with the sūtras and is not a path that differs from their insistence on engagement and effort.¹³

The procedure for *buddhānusmṛti*, outlined in the *Pratyutpannabuddha-saṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra* (The Scripture on the Concentration wherein One Stands Face to Face with

Buddhas in the Present), describes how one should withdraw into a secluded place, call to mind (*smṛti*) the Buddha in accord with the doctrine one has heard, and enter into meditative concentration.¹⁴ This scripture, however, is clearly concerned that the practice be interpreted within the context of emptiness as it is presented in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, i.e., that it not be misconstrued as somehow different from the path of Mahayana practice. *Buddhānusmṛti* is explained as a concentration on emptiness, for it involves no empirical apprehension of a "real" Buddha and demands no supernormal ability (*abhijñā*) to bring such about. Rather, it is a seeing of Buddha as in a dream, because *cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukam*, i.e., all things appear as sentient beings construct (*vikalpayati*) them. Thus the *Pratyutpannasūtra* rejects any concept that would attribute a real existence (*bhavaśaṃjñā*) to the Buddha seen in concentration. *Buddhānusmṛti* is here a remembrance of the Buddha and his teachings and a visualization elicited from that memory as an aid to meditation on emptiness.

The above theme, that all the three realms are mind-only, echoes the basic thesis of Yogācāra thinking and indeed it is in the context of this tradition of doctrinal interpretation — a tradition that held undisputed hegemony in India from ca. 300 to ca. 500¹⁵ — that most of the doctrinal thinking on Indian Pure Land movements took place. Although the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* does not explicitly mention Pure Land devotion, it contains a passage on the question of whether the images seen in concentration are identical with or different from the mind that reflects upon them:

The Buddha answered: Good son, they must be identical with thinking. This is so because they are nothing but ideas. Good son, I have taught that the object of consciousness is nothing but a

manifestation of conscious construction only.¹⁶

The process of meditating on images as described in this Yogācāra text moves from the hearing (and holding in mind) of doctrine to the formation of appropriate images, wherein meanings are understood and calm (*śamatha*) induced, which in turn leads to vision (*vipaśyanā*). The entire process is based on recollecting doctrine and practicing in accordance with the meaning of doctrine.

There was a concern that devotees not misconstrue the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*, taking it for an actual seeing of a Buddha. In the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita is depicted as having achieved a state of deep concentration in which he sees many Buddhas in their golden bodies. After emerging from that state, he begins to feel dejected because these bodies are no longer present to him and he wonders whence they came and where they have gone. His mentor, Dharmodgata, has to explain that they are "only the results caused by the former practices" of those Buddhas in their former lives.¹⁷ The *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* comments on this case:

Although the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita knew that all things are empty, neither coming nor going, he had not yet been able to understand all of the Dharma teaching, for, having a deep reverence for all the Buddha bodies, he was unable to understand their emptiness.¹⁸

In his commentary on *Prajñāpāramitā*, *Trīṣatikāyaḥ Prajñāpāramitāḥ Kārikāsaptaiḥ*, Asaṅga, the principal Yogācāra thinker, explains in a similar vein that:

[Buddha] lands cannot be grasped because they are nothing other than conscious constructs flowing from wisdom (*jñānaniṣyanda-vijñapti-mātratvāt*).¹⁹

Likewise, Aśvabhāva in his *Mahāyāna-saṃgrahopaniṣadbandhana* discusses Asaṅga's recommendation of the recollection of Buddha qualities. He identifies the Enjoyment Bodies that are seen in concentration with the Pure Land Buddhas, and maintains that, since the Enjoyment Body is supported upon the Dharma Body, Pure Land Buddhas are empty of any essence of their own.²⁰

The *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka* witnesses to the fact that practices of *buddhānusmṛti* were widespread, for the purpose of this text was to bolster weakened devotion of the Buddha Śākyamuni in the face of the burgeoning cults of devotion to various Pure Land Buddhas.²¹ The fact that these Mahayana writers took pains to interpret *buddhānusmṛti* indicates both their own devotion to meditation on Buddhas (otherwise they would have rejected the practice) and points up the perceived danger that the meaning of such devotional visualization practice might easily be misconstrued. The *Buddhabhūmisūtra* interprets Pure Land as the mind of wisdom and sees practice as a method for the realization of that wisdom.²² As I have argued elsewhere,²³ this text was most likely composed within a Pure Land tradition with the intent of deliteralizing the notion of Pure Land. The *Buddhabhūmisūtra* was soon subsumed into the Yogācāra doctrinal circle and a commentary, the *Buddhabhūmivivākhyāna*, was written by Śīlabhadra to explicate its meaning from the Yogācāra perspective. This commentary treats of "the attainment of great recollection and wisdom (*smṛtimatyadhigama*) as wisdom perfected by hearing [doctrine] because it articulates the unfailing meaning of what has been heard."²⁴ It is mirror wisdom that elicits the wisdom images of Pure

Land Buddhas and that remains forgetful in concentrated meditation upon those images.²⁵

One can sense a tension in these interpretations between accepted Yogācāra doctrinal understanding and the widespread practice of *buddhānusmṛti* with its devotional intensity. Since the monk scholars were the guardians of doctrine, they acted as theoreticians of Pure Land devotion, and the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* in India evolved under their oversight and aegis.

Yet the Indian Mahayanists did not devote a great deal of attention to examining the structure of memory. The *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*, which if not actually composed in India at least reflects Indian Yogācāra thinking, identifies memory as an activity of the *manovijñāna* in perceiving past experiences or events. In its treatment, it first excludes memory from either the container consciousness (*ālaya*) or thinking consciousness (*manas*):

Memory (*smṛti*) is the clear remembrance of things that have been practiced or experienced. The container consciousness is obscure, feeble, and incapable of clear remembrance.²⁶

Memory is the remembrance or recollection of a thing experienced in the past. Thinking (*manas*) perceives and perpetually takes as its object a thing actually felt and experienced at the present moment, which is not a thing to be remembered. It has nothing to remember and thus has no memory.²⁷

Memory is then defined as an associated mental state of the perceptive consciousness (*manovijñāna*):

What is memory? It is the state which makes the mind remember clearly and not forget a thing, an event, or a situation that has been experienced. Its special activity consists in serving as the supporting basis for meditation, because it incessantly recalls and retains the thing experienced in such a way that there is no failure of recollection, and thereby it induces concentration.²⁸

These definitions all regard memory as directed to the past and tacitly assume the conventional validity of a temporal continuum from past through present to future, for "time is a conventionally established conditioned reality."²⁹ As a conditioned state of mind, memory itself serves only as an aid to concentration and, discriminating between past and present, falls away upon the attainment of non-discriminative wisdom — to reappear after the conversion of support as one of the functions of discernment wisdom.³⁰

THE CHINESE SHIFT IN UNDERSTANDING NIEN-FO

In China a drastic change in the understanding and practice of *nien-fo* (i.e., *buddhānusmṛti*) took place. The introduction of Buddhist doctrine and practice from India into China at first proceeded without benefit of an established scholarly sangha. Even when the sangha so developed and the Indian practice of *buddhānusmṛti* as an aid to meditation was adopted, the sense of living at the end of times of the doctrine (*mappō*) — of being somehow beyond normal time — tended to relegate scholastic niceties to the periphery. Instead, attention was focused upon the efficacy of practice to find deliverance (*mokṣa*).

Pivotal to the Chinese understanding of *nien-fo* are two texts which are attributed to Indian masters but which apparently had little impact in India. In his *Daśabhūmivibhāṣaśāstra* Nāgārjuna is importuned to teach an "easy way" to awakening and, although scolding those who make the request, he acquiesces and recommends the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*:

If a man thinks of me and utters
my name, submitting himself to
me, he will enter the Certainly
Assured Rank and attain unex-
celled, supreme awakening.³¹

Vasubandhu's *Sukhāvatīvyūhopadeśa*, a text which presents "instructions to enable all sentient beings to be born in the Pure Land of Buddha Amitāyus,"³² recommends that such birth be realized through faith. This faith comprises five aspects of recollection (*smṛti*): worship, praise, vow, meditation, and transferral of merits. The first four aspects describe the process whereby one attains birth. Worship signifies mindfulness of the power of Amitāyus. Praise consists in the chanting of his name: *nien-fo*. Vow is the firm commitment to be born there. Meditation is the visualization of the merits of Buddha Land. The fifth aspect is the final practice of compassion that flows from attainment, the leading of all beings to the Buddha Land. But for Vasubandhu practice does not refer to the graded *mārga* system of the Indian scholars, Abhidharma or Yogācāra. Rather, faith itself encompasses all practices.³³

These two texts direct attention away from the arduous path practices of the Indian masters, to focus on the practice of faith. They constitute a "swing" away from the "difficult" path of the holy sages, felt inappropriate in the actual conditions of China, to the "easy" path of faith in Buddha. They also denote a shift in the understanding of *nien-fo* from a remembrance of the

Buddha to an anticipation of salvation by the Pure Land Buddhas. This is not to say that these two texts reject the karmic path of effort. They do not, as witnessed by Nāgārjuna's insistence that that path is the best. But, in their focus on the value of *nien-fo*, they do point the way toward the later development of "single-practice *nien-fo*," the complete reliance on the practice of calling on the name of the Buddha Amitāyus (Amitābha) as the single way to salvation.

As long as the practice of *nien-fo* was understood as an aid to meditation, it occasioned little concern among the more monastic schools, for meditative *nien-fo* had long been so practiced. But when *nien-fo* began to be preached as an exclusive path, as the best path in the days of the degenerate doctrine (*mappō*), then it ran directly counter to the path system as expressed in the *śāstra* texts. Indeed, the Pure Land masters Tao-ch'o, Chai-ts'ai, and Shan-tao all felt the need to refute criticisms made by the adherents of the She-lun sect, the initial version of Yogācāra thought in China, which took as its basic authority Paramārtha's translation of Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgraha* (*She-lun*) and Vasubandhu's *Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya*. Asaṅga's text does warn against the neglect of effort and insists that in order to attain awakening one must exert effort and engage in practice. The very last section of his *śāstra* treats the effort required to attain Buddhahood. Paramārtha, as is often his custom, interpolates his own ideas into Vasubandhu's commentary, ideas that directly relate to Pure Land practices. These were probably added in direct reference to the Chinese argumentation over the import of *nien-fo*. Paramārtha's text says:

The line [in Asaṅga's basic text] states "[if sentient beings discard effort], realization would be forever without cause." All Buddhas realize Dharma body and it exists everywhere. But, if without one's own effort it

could be realized, then such a realization would be without cause. Why? If [Dharma body alone] were the cause [for awakening], then there would never have been any worldings at all, since in virtue of another's [effort], all would have been delivered. Indeed [effort as causative] would not have any meaning. Therefore, there would be realization without any personal cause.³⁴

The criticism implicit in this passage seems to have often been leveled against the exclusive reliance on *nien-fo* as an independent practice. Huai-kan, a disciple of Shan-tao, in his *Shih ching-t'u ch'un-i lun* [Treatise Clarifying Doubts about Pure Land] decries the impact of his criticism:

It is more than one hundred years since the *Mahāyānasamgraha* was introduced into this country. Many teachers, upon reading this treatise, have discontinued the practice of the Western Pure Land.³⁵

It seems probable that Huai-kan is alluding to Paramārtha's She-lun version of the *Mahāyānasamgraha* and its stricture against reliance on other-power.³⁶

Shan-tao in his *Kuan-ching-shu* defends *nien-fo* practice against the She-lun critics. In the last section of that work, he recommends faith in the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* which was taught by Buddha over that in the *Mahāyānasamgraha* which was taught by *bodhisattvas*, i.e., Asaṅga and Vasubandhu.³⁷ His defence is precisely that it is incorrect to accuse *nien-fo* practitioners of lacking practice, because practice is embodied in the name itself, i.e., the merits engendered by the practice of Amitābha himself.

This dispute is significant beyond the confines of the issue being argued, for it signals both the emergence of Pure Land as an increasingly independent form of doctrinal thinking and also marks a shift from *nien-fo* as an auxiliary to meditation to *nien-fo* as an exclusive and effective path in itself. Here *nien*, i.e., *anusmṛti*, takes on a proleptic meaning as an anticipatory, future-oriented practice which, by placing total reliance on the primal vow of Buddha Amitābha, directs attention away from this degenerate world to future salvation after death. The function of memory in *nien-fo* is held in doctrinal tension between a remembering of the past vow of Amitābha and a prolepsis of future birth in Pure Land.

The import of the shift in meaning is that Pure Land thinkers, dissatisfied with the classical path interpretation of the She-lun thinkers, have now to develop their own Mahayana understanding of *nien-fo* in contrast to that holy path of finely graded and seemingly endless stages. It is only with these Chinese Pure Land masters, T'an-luan, Tao-ch'ao, and Shan-tao especially, that Pure Land takes on a recognizable identity as a discrete doctrinal option.

Yet, as the simple recitation of *nien-fo* came increasingly to the fore as a total negation of self-reliance, the danger increased that Pure Land practice and thought would diverge from the overall Mahayana doctrine of emptiness. In the absence of the previous Yogācāra doctrinal guidance, Pure Land thinkers had to evolve an alternate Mahayana understanding within the context of single-practice *nien-fo*. Not ready to take this step, Chinese doctrinal thinkers after Shan-tao, who had focused on the validity of an exclusive recitation of the name, tried to soften the impact of *nien-fo* and to regard it once more as one valid practice among many for inculcating *samādhi*.³⁸ The further development of a doctrinal understanding of single-practice *nien-fo* took place not in China but in Japan, in the thought of Shinran.

JAPAN: NEMBUTSU AS THE PRIMAL SACRAMENT

Shinran's interpretation, although frequently quoting both Indian scriptures and Chinese treatises, is innovative in the extreme. In effect, he reclaims the entirety of the Mahayana tradition around the central practice of *nembutsu* (*nien-fo*). But for him *nembutsu* is not a memory aid to meditation, nor simply a proleptic hope for a future Buddha encounter. Rather, *nembutsu* becomes a sacrament which embodies an immediately present experience of salvation effected by Amitābha and elicits a profound movement of gratitude and commitment to the tasks of compassion.

The term sacrament is of course not usually employed in Pure Land thought. It is here borrowed from the Christian tradition, because its original meaning can perhaps serve as an appropriate vehicle for an enunciation of *nembutsu*. The etymological meaning of the Latin term *sacramentum* is a vow, such as that made by a soldier (from which its Christian usage as baptismal commitment derives).³⁹ By attending to this basic meaning of the term, one can perhaps understand Shinran's notion of *nembutsu* as a recollection of the primal vow or sacrament. The practice of *nembutsu* can then be understood as a ritual sign, i.e., a sacrament in its more ordinary sense, signifying the remembrance of the present here-and-now efficacy of Amida's vow, realized through *shinjin* (faith and entrusting) and expressed by the recitation of *nembutsu* in gratitude for being so encompassed. The *nembutsu* is a sacramental sign indicating the already accomplished, i.e., primal, salvation brought about by Amida in the present instant, eliciting from the mind of the practitioner the deepest sense of entrusting (*shinjin*) and gratitude for having been saved by virtue of his compassionate vow.

In this understanding the prior significance of *smṛti* as memory of things past, i.e., of the career of Dharmākara, is superseded by a recollection focused on the instant of *shinjin* and its enunciation in *nembutsu*. Indeed, as outside of history, the account of Dharmākara-Amitābha becomes a paradigmatic myth relating not something merely remembered in the past. It is rather an account of what took/takes place apart from time-history. To paraphrase Mircea Eliade, we might suggest:

The myth of Dharmākara relates a sacred history, that is, a primordial event that took place at the beginning of time, *ab initio*. But to relate a sacred history is equivalent to revealing a mystery. For the person of that myth is not an ordinary sentient being; he is an awakened *bodhisattva*, and for this reason his *gesta* constitute a mystery; man could not know his acts if they were not revealed to him. The myth then is the "history" of what took place *in illo tempore*, the recital of what Amitābha did at the beginning of historical time. To tell a myth is to proclaim what happened *ab origine*. Once told, that is, revealed, the myth becomes apodictic truth; it establishes a truth that is absolute ... The myth proclaims the appearance of ... a primordial event.⁴⁰

Shinran does not simply negate the notion of memory. Rather he collapses the temporal framework in which conventional time is experienced and telescopes it all into the present moment when one utters *nembutsu* in true entrusting and faith (*shinjin*). In a context of a total negation of self-

effort, Shinran empties the notion of time and employs the *nembutsu* as the bearer of the deepest Mahayana doctrine. This collapsing of time derives from Shinran's attending to the present efficacy of Amida's primal vow of other-power, not from his philosophical ruminations on the nature of time itself. He is not giving an account of something past nor depicting something future, but attempting to enunciate a present experience of *shinjin*. He is grasped in the present moment by the power of that vow and graced by receiving the merits of Amida. Shinran's understanding of *nembutsu* is a remembrance of what is present this very instant in the realization of entrusting oneself to Amitābha's primal vow. That vow is not a past occurrence that has continuing efficacy in the repeatable present. The Buddha's vow power is not an event which occurred in history. Shinran in his *Kyōgyōshinshō* quotes Chih-chüeh (904-975) to this effect:

How wonderful is the power of Buddha! It is altogether beyond comprehensibility. Nothing like it has ever taken place in history.⁴¹

Amida's vow is primal because it is the primal source before any past time in virtue of which one experiences *shinjin* and enters the state of the definitely assured. Shinran has collapsed the conventional notion of time as a continuum from the past through present to future into the existential present instant. As Nishitani Keiji understands it:

It is the characteristic of *shinjin* that within the time of "now," in the true instant, the past which is further back in the past than any point in the past — that is, the past before any past whatsoever — becomes simultaneous with the present and is transformed

into the present In the turning over of the power of the Primal Vow, the past, without ceasing to be past, becomes present within the present *shinjin* of Shinran; and in his *shinjin*, Shinran's present, without ceasing to be present, becomes present in the past. The power of the Primal Vow is this power to make simultaneous.⁴²

Just as the primal vow is not an event of the past, so birth into Pure Land does not occur in the future. Shinran quotes the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra*:

As all beings hear his name, faith (*shinjin*) is awakened in them and they are gladdened down to one thought. This comes to them from having been turned over from Amida's pure mind. When they desire to be born in the Pure Land, they are born there *at that moment* and abide in the stage of non-retrogression⁴³

In his *Yuishinshō-mon'i* Shinran comments that the phrase:

"attains birth immediately" (i.e., at that moment) means that when a person realizes *shinjin*, he is born immediately.⁴⁴

The reception of *shinjin* and birth in Pure Land are not a future event to take place in some subsequent time. The time of the primal vow is a mythic primal source of time itself, not a point, however distant, within that continuum. The fulfillment of that vow in the reception of *shinjin* occurs in an existential

instant of the utmost present, apart from any past memory or future prolepsis. The *nembutsu* then is a sacrament of the existential here-and-now simultaneity of present participation in that primal source. *Shinjin* arrests conventional time and establishes a simultaneity between the actual present and both the primal vow and its fulfillment in birth in Pure Land. Pure Land then is the emergence of a future beyond any point in the future.

CONCLUSION

Remembrance within the Indian practice of *buddhānussmṛti* and for the most part Chinese *nien-fo*, functioned as an aid to concentration within a conventional time continuum wherein the tension in recollecting Buddha was between a recollection of the past deeds of Buddha and a prolepsis of the future. Remembrance here functions as a remembering of past doctrine and its content with the expectancy of future birth in Pure Land.

But in Shinran's understanding of invocational *nembutsu* as a sacrament operative in an existential simultaneity of time, both remembrance and prolepsis collapse in the realization of *shinjin*. *Nembutsu* becomes much more than a simple aid to meditative practice. It is the primal sacrament, the performance of which acknowledges in gratitude Amida's efficacious vow as source and enables one to entrust oneself to the merits of Amida in total abandonment of all self-power. For Shinran, then, the *nembutsu* is a remembrance of the primal vow-time before time and a prolepsis beyond any future anticipation, for in the realization of *shinjin* one's mind is focused upon the existential present acceptance of the mind of Amida. Memory here is telescoped into sacramentally present instant and bears little resemblance to conventional assumptions about recalling past events.

FOOTNOTES

1. In India Asaṅga and Śīlabhadra treated Pure Land themes, while in China Hui-yūan, Chih-i, Chi-tsang, and Shan-tao wrote commentaries on *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* (*Kuan-ching*). For the parallel tradition of visualizing Maitreya, see Alan Sponberg, "Wonhyo on Visualization: Maitreya Cult Practice in Early China and Korea," forthcoming in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre, eds. (Cambridge University Press); and "Meditation in Fa-hsiang Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).

2. On the chronology of Shan-tao's works, see Ryosetsu Fujiwara, *The Way to Nirvana: Concept of the Nembutsu in Shan-tao's Pure Land Buddhism* (Tokyo: Kyoiku Shincho Sha, 1974), pp. 79-122. For the notion of *nien-fo* as an adequate practice, see p. 37 and p. 62. The translation "single-hearted nembutsu" (*senju-nembutsu*) is from Taitetsu Unno, *The Tannisho: A Shin Buddhist Classic* (Honolulu: The Buddhist Study Center Press, 1984), p. 11 et passim.

3. Fujiwara, *The Way to Nirvana*, p. 100 and p. 104. Sponberg shows a parallel structure in Wonhyo's understanding of Maitreya visualization, for there also the effectiveness of the practice occurs in the absence of that serenity (*praśrabdhi*) required for entry into advanced samādhi; see "Wonhyo on Visualization."

4. Such a tension appears to lie behind the concerns of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, a text intended to counter the popularity of devotion to a host of Pure Land Buddhas and a neglect of Śākyamuni. See Yamada, Isshi, *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka, Edited with Introduction and Notes* (London: University of London, 1968).

5. Nishio, Kyōo, *Genshi jōdo kyōten* (Tokyo: Shishin Gakusha, 1982), pp. 1-24.

6. Nishio, *Genshi jōdo kyōten*, pp. 50-55; Paul M. Harrison, "Buddhānusmṛti in the Pratyut-

panna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra," in *The Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 6 (1978), p. 35-39.

7. Fujiwara, *The Way to Nirvana*, p. 27; see *Letters of Shinran*, trans. Yoshifumi Ueda (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1978), p. 87.

8. *Buddhist Mahayana Texts*, ed. E. B. Cowell, vol. 49 of "The Sacred Books of the East," reprinted New York: Dover, 1969. "The Smaller Sukhāvāṭṭyūha," trans., F. Max Muller, p. 99.

9. *Buddhist Mahayana Texts*. "Amitāyurdhyānasūtra," trans. J. Takakusu, p. 101.

10. *Buddhist Mahayana Texts*, p. 15 and p. 45.

11. *Buddhist Mahayana Texts*, p. 98.

12. *Buddhist Mahayana Texts*, p. 168.

13. *Buddhist Mahayana Texts*, p. 179.

14. Harrison, "Buddhānusmṛti," p. 43.

15. Christian Lindtner, "A Treatise on Buddhist Idealism: Kambala's Ālokaṃālā," *Indiske Studier 5: Miscellanea Buddhica* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1985), pp. 111-112, speaks of: "... the achievements of the great systematic and creative thinkers of Yogācāra, the most flourishing branch of Mahayana — almost, indeed, synonymous with Mahayana — in this period (i.e., the time of the *Ālokaṃālā*, identified as the first half of the sixth century)." The notion of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra as the two major competing schools of Mahayana is in need of revision, for that evaluation reflects more the picture derived from the Chinese pilgrims who traveled to India in the sixth century than the development of earlier Indian doctrinal history. The first doctrinal divergence between Mādhyamika and Yogācāra appears to be Dharmapāla's *Śataśāstravaipulyatikā* (T. 30, pp. 246a-249c), where he responds to a criticism of the Yogācāra notion of ultimate meaning by counterposing the Yogācāra interpretation of emptiness to the Mādhyamika understanding. It is, so it appears,

this passage of Dharmapāla that elicited Bhavivaveka's attack on the Yogācāra position in his *Tarkajvāla*. In point of fact, until this divergence, the task of interpreting the philosophy of emptiness was evidently performed by the Yogācāra thinkers.

16. *Scripture on the Explication of Underlying Mysteries*, trans. John Keenan, forthcoming from the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Series. Confer Étienne Lamotte, *Samdhinirmocanasūtra, L'Explication des Mystères* (Louvain and Paris, 1935), VIII, 7, pp. 90-91 and p. 211.

17. T. 8, p. 421b. Also reported in *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*. See *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary*, trans. Edward Conze (San Francisco: Four Seasons, 1973), pp. 291-294.

18. T. 25, p. 746b.

19. Tucci, Guiseppe, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, Part I (Roma: Serie Orientale Roma IX, Part I, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1956; Kyoto: Rinsen 1, 1978 Reprint), p. 63.

20. Paul Griffiths; Noriaki Hakamaya; John Keenan; and Paul Swanson, *The Realm of Awakening: Chapter Ten of Asaṅga's Mahāyānasamgraha* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1989), Introduction, pp. 26-33, and Section O, pp. 235-239.

21. *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, ed. Yamada, p. 3.

22. The same intent is evident in its commentary, see John P. Keenan, *A Study of the Buddhābhūmyupadeśa: The Doctrinal Development of the Notion of Wisdom in Yogācāra Thought*, Ph.D. disser., University of Wisconsin, Madison, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1980), pp. 445-446.

23. Keenan, "Pure Land Systematics in India: The Buddhābhūmisūtra and the Trikāya Doctrine," *Pacific World*, New Series 3 (Fall 1987) pp. 29-35.

24. Keenan, *A Study of the Buddhābhūmyupadeśa*, p. 462.

25. Keenan, *A Study of the Buddhābhūmyupadeśa*, p. 668 and p. 672.

26. *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi: La Siddhi de Huien-Tsang*, trans. Louis de la Vallée Poussin (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1928), p. 151; *Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun: Doctrine of Mere Consciousness*, trans. Wei Tat (Hong Kong: The Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun Publishing Committee, 1973), p. 163.

27. de la Vallée Poussin, pp. 257-258; Wei Tat, p. 293.

28. de la Vallée Poussin, pp. 311-312; Wei Tat, p. 377.

29. Keenan, *A Study of the Buddhābhūmyupadeśa*, p. 411.

30. Keenan, *A Study of the Buddhābhūmyupadeśa*, p. 547, pp. 559-562 (where discernment wisdom, i.e., intellectual mastery wisdom, is the conversion of manovijñāna; see also *Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun*, Poussin, p. 684 and Avabhāva's *Mahāyāna-saṃgrahopaniṣandhāna*, T. 31, p. 438a.

31. *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, p. 258; in Fujiwara, *The Way to Nirvana*, p. 30.

32. Minoru Kiyota, "Buddhist Devotional Meditation: A Study of the *Sukhāvalīvyūhopadeśa*," in *Mahayana Buddhist Meditation: Theory and Practice* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978), pp. 249-250.

33. Kiyota, "Buddhist Devotional Meditation," p. 257.

34. T. 31, p. 269c; Griffiths, *The Realm of Awakening: Chapter Ten of Asaṅga's Mahāyānasamgraha*, p. 257. The addition of Paramārtha stands out clearly when compared to the other translations. Hsüan-tsang's Chinese has:

If sentient beings discard their effort, then such a realization [of Buddhahood] would be without cause [and would not occur]. To discard the cause is not correct ... (T. 379c; Griffiths, *op. cit.*, p. 256)

Dharmagupta's Chinese has:

The error consists in the absence of a cause [for Buddhahood], as if one realized [it] always. To discard the cause [for Buddhahood] is unreasonable ... (T. 31, p. 320c)

The Tibetan translation of Dīpaṃkara-śrījñāna has:

This [mistaken view that no effort is needed] results from the faulty conclusion that all [Buddhas] arise without cause and therefore says that the cause [for Buddhahood] is not interrupted ... (D. 190a; P. 232a)

Since none of these translations mention realizing Buddhahood "through another," it seems that Paramārtha has added the passage when he translated the basic text of Asaṅga in China to reflect the doctrinal context then present, namely, the argumentation over Pure Land practice.

35. T. 47, p. 39. Passage translated in Fujiwara, *The Way to Nirvana*, p. 127. Fujiwara gives the date of Huai-kan's death as between 695 and 701 c.e. (p. 123).

36. Huai-kan himself belonged to the Fa-hsiang school and both accepted Hsüan-tsang's new translations and remained devoted to the Pure Land practice. His work is an attempt to interpret Pure Land within a Fa-hsiang framework.

37. Fujiwara, *The Way to Nirvana*, p. 105.

38. Fujiwara, *The Way to Nirvana*, pp. 123-176.

39. Van Roo, Gulielmo, *De Sacramentis in Genere* (Roma: Apud aedes Universitatis Gregoriannae, 1960), pp. 19-20. Van Roo writes: "In regard to the etymology, *sacramentum* comes from *sacrare*, 'to constitute (either a person or a thing) by divine right,' which can only be done through a public authority ... There are two classical uses:

military and civil. A military sacrament was the vow whereby soldiers called upon the gods and bound themselves in faith and obedience. He who vows in truth, prays for the favor and aid of the gods. He who knowingly dissimulates, brings down the wrath of the gods on himself and his family. Here sacrament retains the notion of an initiation or a religious devotion. In civil procedures, a sacrament was a sum of money which was deposited in a sacred place by a litigant. The victor in the lawsuit retrieved his monies. The loser however relinquished his monies for sacred use. Even this usage of sacrament seems to have had a religious origin: calling upon the gods in giving testimony of the truth of what is said in litigation and from the devotion or consecration of the oath itself." Without entering into the Christian usage of the term after its adoption by Tertullian, the classical Latin usage offers analogues for translating the *nembutsu* thought of Shinran into Western idioms. To wit: 1) its basic meaning refers to a vow, just as *nembutsu* is an entrusting of oneself to the vow of Amida, 2) a sacramental vow must be done in faith, just as *nembutsu* must be enunciated in *shinjin*, 3) properly performed, the military vow or sacrament brings about the aid of the gods; while the utterance of *nembutsu* brings about the transference of merits (*ekō*) from Amida, and 4) in its civil use the vow was a calling upon the divine, parallel to calling upon Amida in *nembutsu*. One has, of course, to be careful in adopting terms across traditions, lest meanings from one be read into the other. But, it would appear, the use of the term "sacrament" has the distinct advantage of stressing in a particularly obvious manner the deepening of *nembutsu* in Shinran and its centrality as the primal act that elicits *shinjin* by other-power and points to the source the faith so elicited in the primal vow of Amida. Also see *The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12 "Sacrament: An Overview," by Theodore W. Jennings Jr., p. 501.

40. Micrea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Harcourt Brace, 1959; 1961 Harper Torchbook reprint), p. 95. The Eliade text reads: "The myth relates a sacred history, that is, a primordial event that took place at the beginning of time, *ab initio*. But to relate a sacred history is equivalent to revealing a mystery. For the persons of the myth are not human beings; they are gods or culture heroes, and for this reason their *gesta* constitute mysteries; man could not know their acts if they were not revealed to him. The myth, then, is the history of what took place *in illo tempore*, the recital of what the gods or the semidivine beings did at the beginning of time. To tell a myth is to proclaim what happened *ab initio*. Once told, that is, revealed, the myth becomes apodictic truth ... The myth proclaims the appearance of a new cosmic situation or of a primordial event."

41. Gutoku Shaku Shinran, *The Kyōgyōshinshō, The Collection of Passages Expounding the True Teaching, Living, Faith, and Realizing of the Pure Land*, trans. D. T. Suzuki (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha, 1973), p. 139.

42. Nishitani, Keiji, "The Problem of Time in Shinran," in *The Eastern Buddhist* 11/1 (May 1978), 20-21. The basic insight for the above section on Shinran's understanding of memory as simultaneity comes from this article.

43. *Kyōgyōshinshō*, trans. Suzuki, p. 89.

44. *Letters of Shinran*, trans. Ueda, p. 11.

Shin Buddhism, the *Nembutsu* Experience, and Faith

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Anyone who knows a little about Shin Buddhism, or more particularly about the teachings of its founder Shinran (1173-1262), will know that the essence of the *nembutsu* experience is *shinjin*, or faith. That is, the *nembutsu* — the outward practice of invoking the name of Amida Buddha — is inextricably tied to the inner state of mind of the person, specifically the mind of faith. The name of Amida may be invoked outside of the state of faith, but in that case it is not the true *nembutsu* but rather a self-contrived *nembutsu*. Faith in fact is the active ingredient giving the *nembutsu* its potency. Without faith, the *nembutsu* becomes merely words imitated but not understood. In short, faith is the crux of the *nembutsu* experience. It is this basic premise that makes Shin Buddhism a highly psychological religion, one in which the inner state of mind becomes an overriding concern.

This inner state of mind known as faith is not a personally generated condition, for it is not a product of one's own internal activity. Inward striving and effort only obstruct faith, so it is only when they come to an end that faith itself can appear. When it appears, it comes on almost miraculously, or perhaps unexpectedly, or maybe even imperceptibly. The reason is that faith is an utterly unpremeditated (*wa ga hakarawazu*) condition. But when it is in place, faith exists as an indestructible state of mind (*kongōshin*), and hence it endures the moral and personal vicissitudes of one's life. Faith, then, is the true cause of birth in Pure Land (*shinjin shōin*), or to use Shinran's words it is the "immediate cause" (*naiin*). It is unfailing not because it is the creation of human beings, for they are subject to repeated failings, but rather because it is a state of mind generated by the Buddha and implanted in humans.

What is the connection between this special state of mind and the *nembutsu* itself? The *nembutsu*, or invoking Amida's name, is a concrete external event to which faith is directly linked. Saying the *nembutsu* may be the starting point for faith, i.e., the event that causes faith to arise in a person in the first place. Or, it may be a continuing practice in a person's life of faith, i.e., the most poignant outward expression of one's inner state of faith. The *nembutsu* has the power to evoke faith from a person, and it also offers a palpable form for faith to be expressed outwardly from the person. It provides concretion to a religious state which is in essence personal and private. The *nembutsu* is, in short, a public symbol used interactively between individuals. It has the capacity to transform the experience of any one individual, but at the same time it gives individuals a commonly recognized vocabulary for conveying to the world what that transformative experience is like. The *nembutsu* and faith thus breathe life into each other. They bestow meaning on one another. The *nembutsu* without faith is a hallow symbol, preserved in society by historical happenstance. Faith without the *nembutsu* is religiously "solitary confinement" — the state of being locked into one's own mind with no religious link to the outside world. Only in connection with each other do faith and the *nembutsu* constitute a complete religious life.

RELIGIOUS TRADITION AND PERSONAL CONFIRMATION

The profile of Shin teachings just presented is, needless to say, an interpretation. It is a patchwork of ideas drawn from the Shin tradition on the one hand and from my own conceptual structuring on the other. Virtually any attempt to

deal with religious questions will inevitably involve a combination of these two elements. When we pose questions like "What is Shin Buddhism?" or "What is the *nembutsu*?" or, perhaps hardest of all, "What is faith?" we are forced into a quandary. We are forced to ask: What is going to be the basis of authority for providing a correct answer to these questions? In searching for sources of authority, we are ultimately led back to tradition on the one hand and personal affirmation on the other.

In addressing questions of faith, we must first come to terms with what people have said in the past. We have inherited a body of religious writings which speak directly to these issues. Shinran, Kakunyo (1270-1352), Rennyo (1415-1499), and subsequent Shin Buddhists right down to the present have all given their own explanations of the significance and meaning of faith. Are their writings the basis of our authority? And if so, should we give more weight to some — such as Shinran's — and less to others — such as Rennyo's? Certainly, Shinran has emerged as the towering figure in the Shin tradition, and he is even regarded as a manifest form of Amida Buddha. Such aggrandizement adds special weight and authority to his teachings. The religious tradition built around Shinran's words offers one means of answering these fundamental religious questions. Specifically, the tradition has provided a variety of doctrinal formulas for explaining what faith is.

Over and against tradition we have another basis for religious authority: what might be described as "personal confirmation." The source of personal confirmation is individual experience. At every moment in the history of a religious tradition there is a personal assessment of its message. Individual members are constantly "trying-on-for-size" the sacred teachings and doctrines that their tradition presents to them. The things that "fit best" in a person's religious psyche are the things that the person tends to identify as the essence of the tradition. Things that do not "fit" well tend to fall into the background of that

person's perception of the tradition. Though we might look upon such perceptions as subjective and idiosyncratic, they are in fact the life-blood of the tradition. It is only when the inherited elements of a religion are internalized on a personal basis that the religion continues to be a living tradition. Without such individual "trying-on-for-size" it merely becomes a curiosity of the past.

The principal elements of any religious tradition originally began as the subjective and idiosyncratic views of particular individuals. For instance, the great religious insights propounded by Shinran and Rennyo represent their own rendition of what religious truth is. In the beginning these insights were personal religious views arrived at individually. What has made them foundational doctrines of Shin Buddhism is repeated confirmation of them by individual Shin believers over the centuries. Hence, when we inquire into the nature of faith, we cannot ignore the personal inspirations and insights of individuals.

ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

Before returning to the question of faith, I would like to extend this analysis of religious tradition one step further — to touch on the concepts of orthodoxy and heresy. In the abstract, orthodoxy may be defined as diametrical opposites. If orthodoxy is synonymous with religious truth, then heresy is that which opposes or obstructs this truth. Heresy does not indicate just anything outside of orthodoxy, for there are many things that may not be orthodox and yet not heretical. Heresy must diverge from orthodoxy in such a way that religious truth is distorted and salvation subverted. In this respect, heresy is not merely a mistake but rather a profound religious failing that has dire consequences for one's life.

Orthodoxy and heresy can be approached from two different standpoints. One is the personal point of view emerging out of the believer's inner religious experience, and the other is the public point of view defined by an

organized body of believers. The two levels are inextricably linked to each other. Public designations of orthodoxy and heresy are informed by private views, and therefore constantly depend on the religious experiences of individuals for confirmation. Theoretically, what undergirds the public conception of orthodoxy and heresy is the assent of a body of believers guided by their own inner experiences. Nonetheless, the public and the private views are not always identical. What is heretical from the public standpoint may be orthodox in the eyes of the individual, and vice versa. Whenever people propound a heresy, they do not conceive of it in their own mind as heresy but rather as religious truth. It would take a profoundly cynical and devious individual to propound as religious truth what he or she knew to be false. Hence, when conflicts arise between an individual and a body of believers over matters of orthodoxy and heresy, it is almost always a case of conflicting views of religious truth, not of clear-cut choices between orthodoxy and heresy. In these conflicts, the personal beliefs of the individual cannot be ignored, since they are the milieu from which public designations of orthodoxy and heresy arise. Likewise, the public view cannot be disregarded, for it represents a consensus of individual believers, which often shapes and influences private religious experiences. Consequently, any definition of orthodoxy and heresy must take into account both personal and public points of view, or in other words both tradition and personal confirmation. Where conflict exists between the two, new formulations of orthodoxy and heresy are in the making.

Orthodoxy and heresy, as public concepts, are most commonly associated with formal religious organizations. During their early stages of development, religious organizations frequently revolve around a charismatic leader. In succeeding generations the teachings of that person act as a kind of tether for orthodoxy, constraining it within the limits of consistency and plausible interpretation. Orthodoxy may develop in a

variety of directions, but it may not controvert the founder's teachings in any blatant way as long as they stand as the basis for the religious heritage. That is the reason that Shinran's teachings tend to be viewed as sacrosanct and inviolable in the Shin tradition. From the point of view of the believer, orthodoxy is fixed, absolute, and eternal, for it is none other than religious truth. From a historical perspective orthodoxy is constantly evolving, primarily as a result of the interpretations and re-interpretations presented by believers in the perennial process of personal confirmation of tradition. Hence, orthodoxy in Shin Buddhism today contains many elements that were never spelled out by Shinran, and some that were hardly intimated by him. Examples of them are the idea that the *nembutsu* is a response of indebtedness or gratitude to the Buddha (*shōmyō hōon*), the idea that the believer of limited capacity and the Buddha of absolute truth are of one substance (*kihō ittai*), and the idea of relying on the Buddha to please save me (*tasuke tamae to tanomu*). Throughout Shin history a host of propositions have been put forward as the definition of faith or the essence of Shin Buddhism. Some of them, such as the particular items I have just mentioned, have been accepted as true, and hence have emerged as the basic axioms of Shin orthodoxy. Others have been rejected, and therefore are branded as Shin heresy. We must keep in mind, however, that whether viewed today as orthodox or heretical, each of these propositions began as an attempt to explicate the meaning of Shin faith in the light of personal experience, and thus to get at the nature of religious truth.

SHIN ORTHODOXY

At this point we should return to our original topic of Shin faith, its meaning and significance. Questions of orthodoxy and heresy are particularly problematic in Shin Buddhism simply because faith is such a crucial component. In systems of religion where practice is the

essential element — examples are Vedic Hinduism, Orthodox Judaism, and perhaps even Shin-gon Buddhism — questions of right and wrong are tied in part to externally observable forms: sacred chants, defined rituals, ethic codes, dietary practices, and so forth. Hence, the correctness of one's religious condition can be verified to a certain extent by outside observers. This is not to say that there is no internal or psychological dimension to those religions, but simply that orthodoxy is defined as much by what one does outwardly as by what one is inwardly. Shin Buddhism, by contrast, gives far more weight to the inner state. Because this is not a publicly observable realm, it is much more difficult to assess the correctness or incorrectness of a person's religious experience. This means that statements of orthodoxy and heresy in Shin Buddhism tend to deal with one's frame of mind or religious outlook rather than with one's performance or practices. This psychological dimension of Shin Buddhism is observable in the classical statements of orthodoxy and heresy which will be taken up below. In analyzing them, we should look upon both as attempts to get at that inward and very elusive experience of faith.

1. Shin Faith

The first example of Shin orthodoxy to be examined is the widely invoked doctrinal formula *shinjin shōin shōmyō hōon*: faith is the prime cause of birth in Pure Land, and the *nembutsu* is an expression of indebtedness or gratitude to the Buddha. This doctrinal equation is often presented as the crux of Shinran's teachings, and yet Shinran himself very rarely stated his ideas in precisely these terms. The first part of the formula — that faith is the primary cause of birth in Pure Land — does not appear frequently in his writings, for it was assumed to be true every time Shinran mentioned faith. Shinran inherited from his teacher Hōnen (1133-1212) the proposition that the *nembutsu* is the primary cause of birth in Pure Land. But what Shinran conceived of as the

nembutsu was the *nembutsu* of faith. Hence, for Shinran Honen's proposition really meant that faith, as embodied in the *nembutsu*, is the true cause of salvation.

What is interesting about this doctrinal formula is that on the surface it really does not attempt to define the rare and enigmatic state of mind known as faith which is the crucial element for salvation. We can look in some of Shinran's many writings for that. Sometimes this pristine state of mind is defined in terms of the repudiation of *jiriki* (self-effort) and the reliance on *tariki* (the Buddha's power). Sometimes it is defined in terms of *jinen* (naturalness) and *hōni* (Dharma-quality). Sometimes it is defined in terms of relinquishing *hakarai* (human contrivances). What is interesting is that Shinran's most extensive expositor of faith, that found in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*, is usually limited to doctrinal analyses of faith, and therefore seldom appears in popular explanations. In his *Kyōgyōshinshō* exposition, Shinran explicates faith in terms of three elements appearing in the eighteenth vow: *shishin* (sincerity), *shingyō* (trust or reliance, for lack of a better translation), and *ganshō* (aspiration to be born in Pure Land). Here we have an interesting psychological profile of the person of faith. Sincerity: all human pretenses fall away when confronting Amida Buddha face to face in one's state of frailty and inadequacy. Trust or reliance: there is little recourse for humans outside of entrusting themselves to whatever saving powers might exist. Aspiration for birth in Pure Land: it is one's realization of the futility of the present life and one's hope for something greater that gives urgency to trust or reliance. The psychological frame of mind defined compositely by these three is, according to our doctrinal formula, the true cause of salvation.

The second part of the doctrinal formula — that the *nembutsu* is an expression of gratitude — is often given less emphasis compared to the first. It is frequently cited to show that the *nembutsu* is not an imploring invocation on the part of humans, nor a potent magical invocation that one

utters to gain certain desired ends. Rather, it simply expresses gratitude for blessings already bestowed. This particular interpretation of the *nembutsu* is certainly present in Shinran's letters, but it is not the dominant interpretation presented in his heavily doctrinal writings. If anything, the more prominent interpretation of the *nembutsu* presented by Shinran, especially in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*, is that the *nembutsu* is the "beckoning command of the principal vow" (*hongan shōkan no chokumei*). That is, the *nembutsu* "calls" the person, rather than the person "calling" the *nembutsu*. In effect, the *nembutsu* has a magnetic power inherent in it which engages or commands the attention of the person. This interpretation links the *nembutsu* not so much to gratitude but rather to *tariki*, the power of Amida, and hence to the state of faith. My own view is that when we take this more prominent interpretation of the *nembutsu* from Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* and combine it with the less prominent idea that the *nembutsu* is an expression of gratitude, we get a new equation that links the two parts of the *shinjin shōin shōmyō hōon* formula together more meaningfully. If the *nembutsu* (in the form of the "beckoning command of the principal vow") equals faith and if the *nembutsu* also equals gratitude, then faith itself equals gratitude. That is, the life of faith is none other than the life of gratitude. Here we see a profounder significance to the idea of gratitude than simply the inner meaning of saying the *nembutsu*. Gratitude becomes synonymous with the religious state that is the root cause of salvation. This doctrinal formula, then, is one attempt to explicate what the outer visible expression is of the inner private state of faith.

2. Kihō Ittai

The second classical statement of Shin orthodoxy to be examined is the idea that the believer of limited capacity and the Buddha of absolute truth are of one substance (*kihō ittai*). This is one formulation of Shin orthodoxy that

cannot be found in Shinran's writings, and thus represents the efforts of later Shin thinkers — specially, Kakunyo and Rennyo — to explore and unpack the meaning of faith. Traditionally this doctrine has been used to analyze the words contained in the *nembutsu*. The two characters *Namu* mean "I take refuge in ..." (*kimyō*), and in the *nembutsu* they stand for the *ki*, the sentient being of limited capacity. The four characters *Amida Butsu* are of course the Buddha's name, and they signify the *hō*, the absolute truth or *Dharma* that Amida embodies. Just as the *Namu* and the *Amida Butsu* are joined together in a single religious affirmation in the *nembutsu*, likewise the believer of limited capacity (*ki*) and the Buddha of absolute truth (*hō*) are united as one substance (*ittai*).

This doctrinal proposition, though it has been a part of Shin Buddhism from Kakunyo's time on, presents certain conceptual problems for the Shin understanding of faith. As a doctrinal formulation, it is meant to show another dimension to the idea of faith. That is, faith is none other than the state in which the believer is united with absolute truth. The problem is that the absolute truth of the Buddha can be none other than complete enlightenment itself. Hence, the danger of this particular doctrine is that it may give the impression that faith is simply a cloaked form of enlightenment. Needless to say, there have been many *ianjin* or heresies in Shin history that have made this primary assumption. It seems clear from Shinran's writings that he never went as far as to say that faith equals enlightenment. Nonetheless, we do see several instances in his writings in which he idealized the state of faith to a profound degree. Specifically, he declared the person of faith to be "equal to all the Buddhas" (*tōdō shobutsu*). The ultimate significance of this idea and of the *kihō ittai* doctrine as well is that faith is profound, rare, and precious — just as absolute truth and all the Buddhas are — and hence it should not be taken for granted or made light of. It is the pristine state of salvation in the Shin

Buddhist tradition, and it should be treasured as a special endowment. This understanding of faith underlies the Shinshu's adoption and articulation of the *kihō ittai* doctrine.

3. Relying on Buddha for Salvation

The last formulation of Shin orthodoxy to be examined is the idea of "relying on the Buddha to please save me" (*tasuke tamae to tanomu*). This is a doctrinal theme that became very important in the Shin tradition from Rennyo's time, but was gradually pushed into the background in the late nineteenth century. Hence, for almost four hundred years it was seen as perhaps the most profound explanation of faith in the Shinshū. I personally think it deserves more attention in present-day Shin thought than it is actually given. One of the reasons I say that is because I am convinced that this doctrinal formula, unlike others, arose from among the common people and only gradually gained the recognition of the Shinshū's ecclesiastical elite. In essence, it gained prominence as a doctrine from the bottom up rather than being propounded from the top down.

The earliest analysis of "relying on the Buddha to please save me" is presented in Rennyo's teachings. It cannot be found in Shinran's or Kakunyo's writings. Rennyo, however, came to place considerable emphasis on it, and to consider it the most important idea for leading the ordinary person to faith. He is quoted as saying:

When we speak of *shinjin* or *anjin*, uneducated people do not understand. In speaking of *shinjin* and *anjin*, they take them to be different things. All they need to know is that ordinary beings can achieve Buddhahood and they should rely on Amida to please save them in their next life. No matter how uneducated

sentient beings may be, if they hear this they will attain faith. In our tradition there is no other teachings besides this. (*Rennyo Shōnin gyōjitsu*, p. 99)

Here Rennyo raised this concept to the level of being the one and only idea that people need to understand. If they comprehend this, faith will arise in them. No other teaching is necessary.

The idea of "relying on the Buddha to please save me" has a complex and somewhat shadowy history. Many Shinshu scholars attribute the phrase to the Jōdoshū, Hōnen's Pure Land school, or more particularly to the Chinzei branch of that school, especially as found in the writings of Ryōchū (1199-1287), and Shōgei (1341-1420). I myself believe the idea was popularized by an obscure group of Pure Land believers known as the Ikkōshū — or, the "single-minded adherents." Most people think that the word Ikkōshū was simply an alternative name for the Shinshū, but that use of the name occurred only after Rennyo's time. Prior to that the Ikkōshū was more or less an independent group which, evidence suggests, Rennyo absorbed and integrated into the Shinshū. It was this group, I think, that popularized the expression "Buddha, please save me" (*tasuke tamae*). It seems clear that this expression was invoked by people in times of distress or danger, and that it eventually became a chant repeated over and over again to beseech Amida to please save them. Needless to say, the pleading and importunate tone of this chant was in direct conflict with the sense of true assurance (*shōjō*) and peace of mind (*anjin*) that Rennyo and earlier Shin leaders had ascribed to faith. Hence, Rennyo had to formulate a way of linking this desperate plea to the Shin concept of faith. He did this through the idea of *tanomu*, "relying on the Buddha." That is, the desperation that one feels in the cry, "Please save me, please save me!" is a prime condition for experiencing "reliance on the Buddha." And this state of reliance is tantamount to faith. In the face

of hopelessness, hope arises. Faith encompasses both dimensions. What we see here is a profound innovation of Rennyo's. Not only did he propound a new facet of faith or a new significance to faith, but he took a common religious emotion widespread in people — i.e., the desperate desire to be saved — and made it a vehicle to, or a point of entry into, the experience of faith. This dialectical explanation of faith — made up of the seeming contradictory components of desperation and assurance — provides new insights into the nature and meaning of faith. Hence, he inserted a new wrinkle into the fabric of Shin orthodoxy.

The important point about all three of these orthodox formulas is that none is presented in depth in Shinran's teachings and yet each is an attempt to get at what Shinran was talking about: that elusive and hard-to-nail-down experience of faith. Orthodoxy is therefore a gradually evolving entity in Shinshū history. It develops as a result of individuals' taking tradition — specifically, the premises that Shinran laid down — and internalizing them in a process of personal confirmation. Because the traditional ideal that they inherited was the highly psychological notion of faith, their own explanations have also been couched in psychological terms — gratitude, oneness with the absolute, reliance on the Buddha. These experiences are just as difficult to verify in a person as faith itself. But they are still revealing, for they show us experiential facets and dimensions of faith that may not be readily apparent in Shinran's teachings alone. Hence, they have become axioms of Shin orthodoxy, as found in the school's *anjin rondai*, or "articles of faith."

SHIN HERESIES

Let us turn our attention next to some of the so-called heresies, or *ianjin*, in the history of the Shinshū. The particular ideas that have come to be regarded as heresy are too many to enumerate and too diverse to sum up with a simple generalization. Therefore, it is necessary to single out

a few examples which have a direct bearing on the concept of faith and which also reveal facets and dimensions of faith, just as the orthodox tenets do. In exploring these heresies there is one thing we need to keep in mind: they, too, were attempts at some point in time to explicate the inner meaning of faith. They were not attempts to twist or distort faith but to get at its true significance. If we are going to understand them in the context in which they were intended, we should not treat them in a stereotypical way, dismissing them without trying to comprehend the rationale behind them. We have to search out the motivations and impulses that led people to postulate them. Hence, it is essential to keep an open mind and to suspend the condemnatory attitude typically adopted in dealing with them. Heresies, like orthodoxy, can be instructive. They can indicate complexities and pitfalls in trying to understand faith.

1. Licensed Evil

The first heresy for examination is what has come to be known in English as "licensed evil" (*zōaku muge*). It is the idea that faith is an inner state of liberation that frees one from all ethical and moral obligations. One may do anything that one pleases; one may indulge in any capricious or self-serving act, for there is nothing that would nullify salvation. Expressed even more radically, immoral action is not simply one of the freedoms of faith; it is an obligation of faith. Not to commit immoral acts is to reveal some uncertainty on one's part over whether faith truly liberates one. Hence, acting in a socially reprehensible way is a sign of faith. Such action derives from the profound trust one has in Amida and in his infinite capacity to save.

This heresy is an attempt to translate the highly private and personal experience of faith into public and external forms. This, needless to say, is the impulse that stands behind many formulations of both heresy and orthodoxy. The "licensed evil" heresy, in particular, seems to be an

attempt to explain one dimension of Shinran's concept of faith, the dimension that focuses on the evil person as the primary object of Amida's vow of salvation (*akunin shōki*). If it is the evil person that Amida is determined to deliver into Pure Land, then the evil that a person does must not be an obstacle to salvation. Even the orthodox tradition acknowledges that to be true. It is at this point, however, that the "licensed evil" heresy diverges from Shinran's teachings, as indicated in Shinran's own writings where he criticized licensed evil adherents. When evil is willfully and intentionally committed, using Amida's vow as a pretext for doing it, then it is not a matter of displaying one's true reliance on Amida but rather of manipulating Amida's vow to serve one's own desires. Thus, licensed evil is not an expression of faith but an expression of contrivance (*hakarai*) which actually stands in the way of faith. It is only when evil acts erupt in one's life as a part of one's inherited karmic tendencies and when one laments the evil done even in the midst of doing it, that one can talk about evil as being no obstruction to Amida's vow.

Concerning evil action, one other point should be made. There is a tendency in the Shinshū to interpret the *akunin shōki* doctrine — the idea that the evil person is the primary object of Amida's vow — in a very noncontroversial way. The meaning often ascribed to it is that all people are evil and hence all are the object of salvation. Thus, people should recognize the evil in themselves and in the midst of that recognition faith will arise. There is no doubt that this interpretation has a basis in Shinran's teachings. But I cannot help but wonder if Shinran also meant something more literal when he talked about the *akunin* or evil person. That is, can Shin Buddhism become a faith for people who are actually recognized as evil? Can it have an impact on the obnoxious and maladjusted in society? Were it to do so, I think the *akunin shōki* doctrine would stand out not simply as a doctrinal platitude but also as a truth confirmed in social experience.

2. Single Reward Teaching

The second Shin heresy for examination is the so-called "single reward teaching" (*ichiyaku bōmon*). It received its greatest attention not during Shinran's time but in Kakunyo's and Rennyo's period. The idea inherent in this heresy is that the experience of faith is none other than the experience of enlightenment. There are not two rewards — faith in this life and enlightenment in the next — but just one in the here and now. This notion shows certain affinities to the Shingon idea of "achieving Buddhahood in this very body" (*sokushin jōbutsu*) and the Zen idea that the Buddha-nature (*bushō*) exists fully developed in all people if only they would simply realize it. There have been many interpretations of Pure Land connected with this idea — e.g., the belief that the Pure Land is not different from this corrupt world and that Amida is none other than a transformation of one's own consciousness. All of these are attempts to define the Shin concept of faith in terms of the Shingon, Zen, or perhaps Tendai experience of enlightenment. The Shin tradition has never been willing to do that. Hence, the "single reward teaching" is deemed a heresy.

If there is anything that this particular heresy can teach us, it is that there is a tension or ambivalence in the Shin tradition concerning the nature of faith — an ambivalence that goes back not only to Rennyo and Kakunyo but also to Shinran himself. On the one hand, there is an attempt to aggrandize faith as a special transformative experience that totally changes one's life. This undoubtedly is the intent behind Shinran's "equal to all Buddhas" teaching (*tōdō shobutsu*) and Rennyo's "unity of believer and absolute" doctrine (*kihō ittai*). That same impulse exists in the "single reward teaching" and in another heresy which demands that believers pinpoint the exact moment — day and time — when faith arose in them, when that great transformation took place. All of these teachings, both orthodox and heretical, lie at the "Zen" end of the spectrum in explain-

ing what faith is. At the other end of the spectrum are interpretations of faith that do not depict it as such a sudden and jarring event. They present faith as a subtle and perhaps gradually evolving outlook. It does not transform one overnight, but slowly and steadily. Which of these two ends of the spectrum is the correct way of portraying faith? There are valid arguments, I believe, for both sides, but also misrepresentations can occur on both sides.

3. *Sangō Wakuran* Controversy

The last of the Shin heresies to be discussed concerns the concepts that were at issue in the great *Sangō wakuran* controversy at the end of the eighteenth century. Specifically, they are the ideas that the crucial element in the religious make-up of the believer is the aspiration or desire to be born in Pure Land (*ganshō kimyō*) and that in the life of faith there necessarily arises a response to Amida in the three spheres of human activity (*sangō kimyō*). In the sphere of physical activity one worships the Buddha (*raihai*); in the sphere of verbal activity one beseeches the Buddha to "please save me" (*tasuke tamae*); and in the sphere of mental activity one earnestly thinks "please save me." The crux of the argument in this controversy was whether *ganshō* (the aspiration to be born in Pure Land) was the essence of faith or whether trust and reliance (*shingyō*) were. In a sense, the issue boils down to is whether the believer takes an active role in the salvation process or whether it is all accomplished unilaterally by Amida. An analogy from the doctrinal treatise *Ganshō kimyōben* best exemplifies the position of the *ganshō* faction. According to it, salvation occurs in the same way that a baby chick is born from an egg. The mother hen pecks at the egg and breaks the shell to liberate the chick, but at the same time the baby chick is exerting itself from inside the shell, for it is motivated by the "desire to be born." Hence, there is a bilateral movement — inside and out — that leads to birth. Needless to

say, the internal desire to be born is ultimately traceable to the mother hen also, in the sense that the hen conceived the chick and laid the egg in the first place, but in function the activity is occurring on both sides. Those who opposed this view believed that *shingyō* (trust or reliance) is the active element in a person's religious make-up, and in that state the person relinquishes to Amida the entire process by which salvation occurs.

It is impossible to go into all the details of the *Sangō wakuran* controversy, but suffice it to say that the *ganshō* position was accepted as orthodox in the beginning, but was eventually overturned in favor of the *shingyō* position. This is an important event in Shinshū history, for it is a clear-cut instance of the changing status of orthodoxy. What should be pointed out about the *ganshō* position is that it was built heavily on ideas drawn from Rennyo's teachings, especially the concept of "relying on the Buddha to please save me." The *Ganshō kimyōben* quotes extensively from Rennyo's letters and cites such passages as the following one which strongly suggests the kind of desire to be born in Pure Land that the *ganshō* faction advocated:

If one realizes that Amida Tathāgata is the only Buddha that can save even someone of limited capacity such as this, and if, without any ado whatsoever, one thinks intently of clinging to the sleeve of Amida Buddha tightly, and if one relies on the Buddha to "please save me" in the next life, then Amida Tathāgata rejoices profoundly over this. (*Rennyo Shōnin ibun*, p. 200)

One other point which should be stressed is that the idea of *ganshō*, or aspiring to be born in Pure Land, was part of Shinran's original exposition of faith in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The *shingyō* position,

which emerged as orthodox in the controversy, likewise had a solid basis in Shinran's teachings. With the triumph of the *shingyō* faction, emphasis on *shingyō* came to dominate doctrinal studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The ideas of *ganshō* and *tasuke tamae to tanomu* faded into the background in explaining the faith experience. Despite their eclipse, these two ideas are rich, revealing, and valid concepts from Shin doctrinal history. The adherents of the *ganshō* faction used them in that spirit in their attempts to get at the essence of faith.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this analysis of Shin orthodoxy and heresy, the overriding premise has been that both are motivated by a desire to arrive at religious truth. That is, both are products of the attempt to take religious tradition and make it meaningful for the individual through a process of personal confirmation. A body of believers puts any religious proposition to a personal and internal test. Confirmation of it makes it orthodoxy, and denial makes it heresy. This is the process by which a collection of religious tenets comes to be recognized as the orthodox teachings of the school, and other tenets are branded as heretical. Whatever the outcome of this process, all religious propositions begin as genuine attempts to unpack the meaning of religious truth. Furthermore, no body of orthodox teachings is ever fixed once and for all. They are constantly changing and evolving, even though they lay claim to absolute and unchanging truth.

What does all of this mean in the context of the believer? On the surface, it would appear that we live in a world of relativism. Heretics are just as much in search of religious truth as orthodox believers. Moreover, orthodoxy is not a fixed entity, for there always seems to be some important addition or reinterpretation that needs to be made. The shifting sands of this religious search could easily discourage one, or make one

think that there is no truth to arrive at, since all is relative. That, however, is not the conclusion to draw. Rather, one should conclude that there is no final truth to arrive at, for religious truth is an ever unfolding drama in the life of the believer. Hence, the religious search must not be abandoned, even though the categories of orthodoxy and heresy are not as simple as they may have seemed. The reason is that the religious search is the life-blood of any religion. It is what it means to internalize tradition and add one's personal confirmation to it. Without this search the religion is dead and the tradition a fossil.

If there is anything to be learned from this examination of the dynamics of orthodoxy and heresy, it is the lessons of toleration and religious diversity. There is just reason to give others the benefit of the doubt, even if their image of religious truth is not the same as our own. Their image arises from the same internalizing or "trying-on-for-size" process that our own does. We do not give up our image of truth simply because it does not match theirs, but we accept the fact that truth is an infinitely faceted reality, which we are unable to fathom in full from our particular vantage point in history. Perhaps that is what Shinran meant when he described the wisdom of Amida, and by extension the faith that Amida awakens in the believer, as incomprehensible (*fukashigi*).

Jōdo Shinshū: A Total Life Process

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INTRODUCTION

The message of Jōdo Shinshū in the 21st century will touch the minds and hearts of countless persons in all walks of life. Jōdo Shinshū, the life of *shinjin-nembutsu* [serene faith and oral recitation of Amida's Name in gratitude] endowed by Amida Buddha, will be a religious force which will change the course and influence the various religious movements in the English-speaking world.

The reason is simple. Jōdo Shinshū teaches the equality of all sentient beings within the Great Compassion.¹ The Great Compassion is the Buddha of infinite light-life, wisdom-compassion, enlightenment-truth itself, or as we know it, Amida. This Great Compassion prevades all life regardless of their circumstances.

The 21st century, as it is even today, will be a time of complexity and change in which many will feel the frustration and dehumanization of the human mind and spirit. The vast majority of humanity, caught in the secular problems and issues of everyday living and bound to the ties of their self-imposed responsibilities, will not have the energy, will, and circumstances to follow strict religious practices and precepts, or to deal with religious traditions that fragment their lives. They will seek meaning for their lives in a teaching that gives them a sense of individuality-universalism within their daily lay-oriented life setting. If they turn to Buddhism, they will find Jōdo Shinshū, which is a lay-oriented Buddhist tradition within the concept of "Oneness of Buddha and the Person" (*butsubon ittai*).

THE PROBLEM

To assure the future of Jōdo Shinshū in the English speaking world, it is critical to formulate an educational process of discovery, and to clarify how the Great Compassion works within the life process of the individual's everyday life experience.

Within the Western context, how is the doctrine of "Oneness of Buddha and the Person" possible? To clarify the inter-relationship of the two, we have in the past approached the issue from the Buddha's side, mainly the doctrinal view of how the Buddha's mind expands the person's mind. The virtues of the Buddha were emphasized and doctrinally explained.

Here we need to make sure that the doctrinal explanation does not minimize the serious study from the person's side.

What we must do, within the Western context, is to clearly show how the person's mind is expanded by the Buddha's mind through its everyday lay-oriented life process. In the past, we have been reluctant to consider how the life process of the person and the Primal Vow interacts. Persons live in a world of constant process, Buddhistically speaking as a world of "change."

We must come to the realization that Truth does not diminish because it works within the life process of an individual. Rather, Truth's ultimate virtue is affirmed within the life process of the human condition.

It is critical that we establish a process of study from the above perspective. We would call it Jōdo Shinshū Religious Education Studies. The

task of the study is to see how the Primal Vow through the endowed *shinjin* inter-relates with a person in his/her process.

Can Jōdo Shinshū be taught by showing the relationship of the Buddha and a person by taking into account the life process of the human experience and have one become awakened to one's true inter-relationship? The task is to find a point of reference within the call of Amida, through the endowed *shinjin*, and the life experience of the person. The point of reference or common ground must come forth from the meaning of *shinjin*, yet, that meaning must inter-relate with the life process of the individual's varied life experiences and give it meaning.

In this paper, it is my intent to show that relationship with the introduction of the Six Aspects.²

The Six Aspects is a basic description of the content or characteristics of the one-mind of *shinjin* originating from Amida Buddha—enlightenment-truth, wisdom-compassion, and infinite light-infinite life. These aspects are: Expanding, Self-reflection, Great Compassion, Great Joy, Gratitude, and Life of Meaning and Growth. These six aspects provide a process whereby the focus is neither exclusively on the Buddha's mind, nor solely on the mind of the individual. It thereby is a process by which one is able to overcome the limitations of the traditional study of Jōdo Shinshū doctrine, as well as the person-centered disciplines.

The Six Aspects clarifies the inter-relationship of the Buddha's Mind and the life of the individual. That inter-relationship is expressed as the embrace of Great Compassion and is manifested as *shinjin*. Again, it may be used as an educational device for aiding one's understanding of the central teaching of Jōdo Shinshū as it relates to the human life process. It gives a person a point of reference for one's own experiences to see how one inter-relates with the Buddha.

SUPPORTING TEXT

The Six Aspects was developed as a result of seeing the religious growth of cancer patients faced with the hopelessness of death. From these patients, a process of discovery was clearly evident as they began from despair and progressed to realize their Oneness with Amida. In searching for documentation to support the Six Aspects, we discovered countless statements which supported each aspect from the point of Shinran. One text clearly articulated the Six Aspects as a discovery or educational process. The text is the twentieth letter of the *Mattōshō*. The focus of my presentation will be on this particular text.

In the text³ we can identify each of the aspects as follows:

Expanding: "When people first begin to hear the Buddha's Vow, they wonder,

Self-reflection: having become thoroughly aware of the karmic evil in their hearts and minds, how they will ever attain birth [in the Pure Land] as they are.

Great Compassion: To such people we teach that since we are possessed of blind passion, the Buddha receives us without judging whether our hearts are good or bad. When upon hearing this, a person's trust in the Buddha has grown deep, he comes to truly abhor such a self and to lament his continued existence in birth-and-death;" and he entrusts himself to the Vow,

Great Joy: "and he then joyfully

Gratitude: says the name of Amida Buddha."

Life of Meaning and Growth:

"That he seeks to stop doing wrong as his heart moves him, although earlier he gave thought to such things and committed them as his mind dictated, is surely a sign of rejecting this world. Moreover, since *shinjin* which aspires for attainment of birth [in Pure Land] arises through the encouragement of Śākyamuni and Amida, once the true and real mind is made to arise in us, how can we remain with our hearts and minds as they are?"

In the above text, we can see two perspectives which help us to understand how Shinran understood the nature of *shinjin* and its development:

- (a) the two aspects of expanding and self-reflection as being a process of doubt and contrivance (*hakarai*).
- (b) the aspects of expanding and self-reflection within the Great Compassion.

In the aspect of Great Compassion, we see true expanding in the words "upon hearing this" and true self-reflection in the words "he comes to truly abhor such a self." Realizing the meaning of the True Great Compassion, there is joy, gratitude and life of meaning and growth. In other words, expansion and self-reflection arise when our lamentable condition is finally discovered in Amida's compassion. Amida's embrace is consequently experienced, with deep trust in and joyous acceptance of the compassionate Vow, all of which opens a life of gratitude, of firm understanding, and of spiritual growth.

We can see that the Six Aspects can become a practical, educational approach to the

critical problem of relating our lives to an authentic understanding of the activity of the Buddha. The Six Aspects transcends the limitations of person-centered approaches. It focuses on the inter-relationship of the individual's mind contrivance and the Buddha's Mind of universal compassion.

Let us see, then, how the Six Aspects, in relation to a person-centered discipline, can provide a better understanding of that discipline.

SIX ASPECTS AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

With the *Mattōshō*, and the Six Aspects as the point of reference let us consider other disciplines to see how Shinran's teaching actually clarifies and expands those disciplines to give greater meaning to the life process of the individual.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, in her work *On Death and Dying*, lists five stages that a dying patient experiences.⁴ They are denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The process focuses around the development of hope. From the standpoint of the Six Aspects, Kubler-Ross's process falls within the aspects of expanding and self-reflection of doubt and contrivance. She does not explicitly deal with the potential life of "hopelessness" which can be found within the stage of acceptance. Kubler-Ross does not develop or articulate the potential of the other aspects which can lead to a greater understanding of the death and dying event.

Viktor E. Frankl, who developed Logotherapy, stresses the importance of the "striving to find meaning in one's own life as the primary motivational force in life."⁵ The greatest limitation of his therapy is the matter of "existential vacuum."⁶ From the standpoint of the Six Aspects, Frankl's process falls within the initial aspects of expanding and self-reflection of doubt and contrivance. Frankl does not develop or articulate the potential of the other aspects, which can lead to a greater understanding.

Jean Piaget, in discussion of the processes of intellectual organization and adaptation, sets forth four basic concepts. They are schema, assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium.⁷ Schemata refers to cognitive structures where individuals adapt to organize their environment. In assimilation the individual attempts to fit stimuli to the cognitive structures, and accommodation is where the individual is forced to change the schema to fit the new stimuli. The balance between assimilation and accommodation is equilibrium. The problem area is "disequilibrium." From the standpoint of the Six Aspects, Piaget's process falls within the initial aspects of expanding and self-reflection of doubt and contrivance. He does not deal with the potential for the individual's need for equilibrium beyond the temporary nature of that balance. Piaget does not develop the other aspects which can give the individual a broader sense of balance in life.

John Dewey, in discussing educational concepts says: "Education has been traditionally thought as preparation, as learning and acquiring certain things because they will be useful later."⁸ Then, he refutes this traditional premise by stating, "Getting from the present the degree and kind of growth there is in it is education."⁹ How to achieve that growth in the "present" is difficult to define. Dewey falls within the initial aspects of expanding and self-reflection aspects of doubt and contrivance. Dewey does not deal with the other aspects which can open the door to potential "growth in the present."

The four disciplines above are unique in themselves, but are limited in that they explain the process from two aspects, expanding and self-reflection only. However, we find points of contact. I will use the *Mattōshō's* Six Aspects as a point of reference to show how the four disciplines relate as they developed within the cancer patients.

The aspect of expanding is found in the person having to face the reality of death. In reflecting that reality, we can see Kubler-Ross's five stages and Piaget's four concepts at work, but

the result was one of "hopelessness" and "disequilibrium." The struggle to find "growth within the present" as Dewey states was beyond the means of the patients. The patients found themselves, as Frankl states, in an "existential vacuum." In that vacuum the Great Compassion was heard and from the Buddha's mind *shinjin* was assured. The patient's experience is wholeness, joy, gratitude, and meaning. Entrusting themselves to the Buddha's Compassion, they continue to grow with each relationship and experience shared with others. In the above, we have taken the application of the four disciplines through the traumatic process of dealing with death. We must not forget that the call of the Great Compassion can be heard in the everyday application of the four disciplines.

As we study Kubler-Ross, Frankl, Piaget, and Dewey, we find the emphasis is primarily in the areas of the initial aspects of expanding and self-reflection. As to the question, of why and what before and after self-reflection much is not stated. Perhaps Frankl points to this area in describing medical ministry. He states "it lies between two realms. It, therefore is in a border area, and as such a no-man's land. And yet - what a land of promise."¹⁰

The Six Aspects gives expression to the content of *shinjin*, which is the realization and way of life that can come about in a sphere which cannot be reached by solely person-centered disciplines. It encompasses the individual's self-centered contrivance and doubt, and yet at the point of the individual's hopelessness, it clarifies the interpenetration of Great Compassion. The two spheres are shown to be inseparable. The point of their inter-relationship is *shinjin* and the life which arises from this embrace of Great Compassion is one of great joy, gratitude, and life of meaning and growth.

THE 21ST CENTURY

The 21st century will be filled with countless ethical and moral crises. Jōdo Shinshū will be

asked to define its role in each by responding to these crises.

Viewed from the *Mattōshō's* Six Aspects, questions of morals and ethics fall into the category of doubt and contrivance within the initial aspect of expanding and self-reflection. Dewey says, "The need in morals is for the specific methods on inquiry and contrivance."¹¹ The Jōdo Shinshū position is beyond the question of ethics and morals at this point because the critical issue is one of hearing the Dharma and being awakened to *shinjin*. Within the wisdom and compassion, we are awakened to the depth of our self-centered ignorance and actions, and at the same time to the truth of the Buddhist life of interdependence.

The everyday life within *shinjin* is one of reflection and gratitude. Reflection makes us aware of the vastness of our interdependence and in that relationship we are able to live despite our limitations. At the same time there arises in us a grateful sense of responsibility to the Great Compassion within that interdependence despite our limitations.

In reflection and gratitude, we live a life in the known and unknown harmony of all life and its interdependency within the Great Compassion.

We share this teaching so that people can come to hear the call of Amida to be assured and to participate in the flow process of life which brings peace and harmony within themselves and within the world in which they live. The life of *shinjin* broadens the meaning of ethics and morals as we know it today. Shinran, in the aspect of meaning and growth in the *Mattōshō* says, "How can we remain with our minds and hearts as they were?" The task becomes one of dynamic participation in "Let there be peace in the world. Let the Buddha Dharma spread."¹²

CONCLUSION

A study of *shinjin* through the use of the Six Aspects may illuminate the essence of the

Eighteenth Vow and show how the one-mind of serene faith relates to human existence. With this understanding of the very heart of Jōdo Shinshū we can firmly establish the dynamic educational program called the Six Aspects. With it, the sincere seeker can hope to experience the *shinjin* of Amida Buddha and, with a firm understanding of the doctrine, live a meaningful life.

This natural process we experience each moment. It is real and it is personal. The experience of the Six Aspects is universal to all persons, yet personal to each person's experience. Shinran says: "When I carefully consider the Vow ... it was solely for me, Shinran, alone!"¹³ Also, any one of the six aspects can be the gate to realization; however, it will naturally embody the other five. The Six Aspects aids recognition of movement from narrow limitations to wholeness and endless growth into the infinite. The Six Aspects can be a process of education that brings individuals to the reality of "Oneness of Buddha and the Person" in the 21st century because it clarifies the meaning of "equality of all sentient beings within the Great Compassion."

FOOTNOTES

1. *Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho*, I, "Jozengi," p. 522.

2. Articles on Six Aspects. Seigen Yamaoka, *The Six Aspects of Jōdo Shinshū* (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America, 1982) and Hisao Inagaki, *The Six Aspects of the Shin Educational Process* (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America, 1987). Textual support can be found in the two publications for each aspect.

3. Yoshifumi Ueda, ed., *Letters of Shinran: A Translation of Mattōshō* (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1978), pp. 61-62. SSZ, II, pp. 691-692.

4. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), pp. 38-156.

5. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), p. 154.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 167-179.

7. Barry J. Wadsworth, *Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1971), pp. 10-19.

8. John Dewey, *Reconstruction of Philosophy* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1948), p. 183.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

10. Viktor E. Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul* (New York: Bantam Press, 1967), p. 230.

11. John Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

12. SSZ II. "Gozokushō," p. 697.

13. SSZ II. "Tannishō," p. 792.

Upāya and Idols

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In his book, Professor Gordon Kaufman says, "The fundamental theological task, as well as our most profound and difficult human task, is to distinguish between God and idols."¹ This statement even illuminates a Buddhist "theology." Although the term "God" here refers to the God in the Western culture, the idea of God can plausibly be applied to the "monotheistic" Buddha called Amida of the Pure Land tradition. In its long history, the "Amida cult" in Indian Buddhism has been developed in various ways. Ultimately, it was transmitted as far as Japan. Many Japanese Buddhists monks have made efforts to construct a theology of Amida. Above all, Shinran (1173-1263) refined the traditional "theology" of Amida Buddha into a radical "monotheistic" soteriology.² The characteristic of his soteriology lies in his philosophical clarification of the relationship between the truth, i.e., Amida Buddha, and its revelation, in which he found the important roles of revelatory mediums and idols.

Although applying the idea of God to Amida Buddha is a plausible and interesting task, I will focus my attention on the roles of *upāya* and idols to understand the Christian theological thinking. These terms will be defined in the course of my discussion on Shinran's thought. By means of these notions of *upāya* and idols, the discussion will move on to the several stances of Christian theologians such as Paul Tillich,³ Gordon Kaufman,⁴ and Sallie McFague.⁵ In so doing the significant roles of *upāya* and idols in their relations to ultimate reality, God or Amida Buddha, will become clear for not only Buddhists but also Christian theologians.

In Buddhist history, the Sanskrit term "*upāya*" has been interpreted in multifarious ways. Its original meaning is "coming near," "approaching," and later it came to be understood

as "means," "expediency."⁶ Among many interpretations of the term, Shinran's interpretation, as it appears in his *nembutsu* teachings, is the most suggestive for understanding the relationship between God and idols.

I. UPĀYA AND IDOLS IN NEMBUTSU AND JESUS CHRIST

Nembutsu is a traditional Buddhist practice where devotees utter the name of Amida Buddha in order to be born in the Pure Land, the realm of Amida Buddha. But Shinran's characteristic interpretation of the *nembutsu* is to attribute it completely to Amida Buddha's practice. In other words, he insists that it is impossible for humans to be born in the Pure Land by means of uttering it. Humans are so perverted that they have no ability or possibility to be born in the Pure Land by themselves. Shinran, however, admits the important significance of human utterance of the *nembutsu* when he calls it *upāya*. When Amida Buddha uses *upāya*, it refers to Amida Buddha's "means" of saving humans. Utterance of the *nembutsu* is not a device for humans to rely upon in order to enter into the realm of the truth. It is, rather, the medium for Amida Buddha to reveal him/herself in order to save all sentient beings, including humans. In addition, Shinran has insight into the devotees' inextricable attachment to the *nembutsu* as their own means to be born in the Pure Land. The attachment to the *nembutsu* is an outcome of the self-striving understanding of it. Human utterance of the *nembutsu*, without an exception, is none other than human effort. Although it is futile for humans to consummate their volition for birth in the Pure Land by the *nembutsu* as their own means, still they cannot but utter the *nembutsu* because the name of Amida Buddha is the only way for them

to have contact with the Buddha. Thus, the *nembutsu* utterance itself turns into an end as well as the means for humans. When the *nembutsu* as the *upāya* for Amida is mistaken as the devotees' divine end, we can call it an "idol."

Here it cannot be emphasized enough that, in Shinran's position, *upāya* and idols are all in one and the same *nembutsu*. It is impossible for humans to discern whether the very sound, "*Namo-Amida-butsu* (I take refuge in Amida Buddha)" uttered by humans, is an *upāya* or an idol. That is to say, it is neutral. However, to those uttering the *nembutsu*, it is always an idol. Yet, the *nembutsu*, at the same time, is an *upāya* for Amida Buddha. In actuality, Amida Buddha reveals him/herself to humans through idols as *upāya*. But it is impossible for humans to transform idols into *upāya*. Only Amida Buddha can utilize idols as revelatory *upāya*. In this sense, idols can approach the *upāya* endlessly but cannot reach it.

The revelation of the truth is necessarily mediated by *upāya*. It is quite possible, in my opinion, that idols cannot be the truth but that they can be absorbed by the revelatory *upāya*. The reason for this is that the truth presupposes something finite through which the truth reveals itself. Idols and the *upāya* are identical in that both of them belong to the finite order. However, we must pay careful attention to the fact that the mediums, which can be either idols or *upāya*, on the contrary, do not necessarily presuppose the truth.

It is interesting to see in Tillich a similar structure of *upāya* and idols in this sense.

Every revelation is mediated by one or several of the mediums of revelation. None of these mediums possesses revelatory power in itself; but under the conditions of existence these mediums claim to have it. This claim makes them idols.⁷

What Tillich calls mediums refers to the locus of revelation, that is, *upāya*, and the mediums turn to be idols when they are elevated to "the dignity of the revelation itself."⁸ The similarity between Shinran and Tillich also lies in that both of them deal with idols always along with revelatory mediums or *upāya*, not with God.

Although Tillich presents the idea of idols in relation to mediums of revelation in general, he discusses Jesus the Christ as the final revelation: "the decisive, fulfilling, unsurpassable revelation."⁹ Next, let us see how Tillich distinguishes Jesus as the Christ from idols.

According to Tillich, every revelation is conditioned by the mediums in and through which it appears, but the mediums, as they are, cannot be holy unless they negate themselves in pointing to the divine.¹⁰ In the same vein, for Jesus of Nazareth to be the bearer of the final revelation, he must have the power of negating himself without losing himself. For Tillich the distinction between Jesus the Christ and the idols is consummated through the death of Jesus on the cross as the negation of his own finite condition. In other words, since his disciples tried to make him an object of idolatry, Jesus of Nazareth became the Christ by conquering his finitude on the cross. But there is a pitfall for Tillich because Jesus Christ who accepted his crucifixion two thousands years ago may become a new idol.

We come to know that Jesus Christ and the *nembutsu* are very similar to each other in that they can both function as *upāya* and idols. Unlike Jesus Christ, however, the *nembutsu* which is not a historical person cannot negate itself. But this task of negation in pointing to the divine/ultimate reality must be achieved in the *nembutsu* as well in some way. As we have seen, the *nembutsu* is always an idol for humans insofar as they are attached to it as the means for birth in the Pure Land. This attachment is rooted in the human volition to be born there. In Shinran, what those who utter the *nembutsu* need to do in order to eliminate their volition to be born there is to hear, in the *nembutsu*

("I take refuge in Amida Buddha"), Amida Buddha's summoning for them to come to the Pure Land.¹¹ In so doing, they are to empty the "I" in the *nembutsu* utterance. Then the *nembutsu* becomes *upāya* exclusively.

The "negation", therefore, is being performed not by the *nembutsu* but by humans in striving to eliminate their self-centered volition aiming at their own interests. In the same way, for Jesus Christ who died on the cross to be a real Christ for Tillich in the twentieth century, the Jesus Christ must be incessantly crucified in Tillich himself.

II. UPĀYA AND IDOLS IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES TODAY

In contrast to Tillich, Kaufman and McFague are more concerned with the relationship between God and humans, that is, the world than with Jesus Christ. The characteristic of their theologies lie in criticizing and rethinking the traditional interpretations of doctrines and dogma. For Kaufman, "Christ" refers to the complex of salvific events around and including the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, images of community as the Christian paradigm are considered to be "more appropriate for finding and representing the normatively human than any image of an individual can ever be."¹² On this basis, Kaufman argues the necessity of the communities of "genuine equality, freedom, and love,"¹³ in which none are dominating or oppressing the others. It is for this reason that he needs to seek out the way we construct such communities in relation to the concept of God. In so doing, he is more interested in the fundamental theological task to distinguish between God and idols.

As for McFague, on the ground that a mythology of the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ is no longer credible to us moderns, she understands the mythology as the expression of the promise of God to be permanently present to us in all empirical time and place of our world.

Although her metaphorical theology, at first glance, seems similar to Kaufman's, we find a fundamental chasm between them when we apply the notions of *upāya* and idols to their theologies. It is meaningful to see how the two theologies understand God's revelation without putting an emphasis on the traditional revelatory agent. We will, first, look at Kaufman's theology and, then, turn to McFague's.

A. CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW UPĀYA AND NEW IDOLS

As the very basis of monotheism, the idea of God has been variously formulated in order to express that God is the ground and foundation of everything that exists, and therefore there can be nothing behind or beyond God. The most succinct characterization of God's transcendence was given by Anselm, "God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived."¹⁴ There are two major functions of God as an ultimate point of reference. As Kaufman maintains, God is, on the one hand, considered to be the "humanizing center of orientation,"¹⁵ who brings about human salvation and is usually conceived in anthropomorphic images. But, on the other hand, God is mysterious and beyond all human knowing, or the "relativizer" of everything human and definite. It is, thus, only in relation to God that genuine human salvation is to be found while, at the same time, God is conceived to be radically transcendent and independent of all human striving and desiring. These functions, humanizer and relativizer, are interrelated. If either of them is taken without the other, it would ultimately lose the function and significance of God as the object of human devotion and service.

Based on Anselm's characterization of a monotheistic God and God's function, Kaufman would argue the difference between God and idols. First of all, God is the ultimate point of reference in terms of which all else is grasped, whereas idols are within the finite order. Secondly, God is humanizer and, at the same time, relativizer, whereas

idols are among those relativized by God and do not bring about full humanization. Thirdly, God is the one who unmasks all idols, showing them to be unreliable shams.

It is true that a monotheistic God can distinguish Godself from idols owing to God's characteristic, but precisely because "God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived" by humans, God's distinction between Godself and idols is absolutely irrelevant to humans. Is it not the case that what theology needs to do is to articulate the way by which humans come to know the distinction? The key to the answer of this question is alluded by the point that "the idea of the finite and the idea of God are correlative and interdependent parts of a conceptual whole,"¹⁶ and that "therefore the full significance of either of these ideas cannot be grasped apart from the other."¹⁷ Kaufman considers idolatry in the following way.

To give the expressions and constructions of earlier generations such authoritative and uncriticizable standing — once we have recognized that this is what we are doing — is out-and-out idolatry, an intolerable position for a theology seriously attempting to speak of God.¹⁸

If the human construction of the concept of God is the continuous criticism and reassessment of idols including previous or received notions of God, this construction itself will become the construction of a new *upāya*. Thus the concept of God, as Kaufman puts it, functions as a "limiting idea"¹⁹ or as "the idea of something which can only be approached but never actually reached, certainly not surpassed."²⁰ The concept of God, therefore, is that which functions to present the relationship between *upāya* and idols. In short, for humans to

distinguish between God and idols does not lie in their discursive epistemology but is the existential act of their incessant self-criticism based upon God's relativizing function.

B. THE WORLD AS *UPĀYA* IRRELEVANT TO IDOLATRY

In a similar way to Kaufman, McFague, in her metaphorical theology, considers idolatry to be the patriarchal, hierarchical, triumphalist model of relationship between God and the world, which excludes "the emergence of other models to express [appropriately] the relationship between God and the world."²¹ Her main concern is how we should understand the presence of God in order to empower a "destabilizing, inclusive, nonhierarchical vision of fulfillment for all of creation."²² Her own answer to this question is, for example, to present the experiment with the metaphor of the world as God's body along with the personal agential metaphors such as God as mother, lover, and friend on the basis of the paradigm of the cross of Jesus.

McFague, it seems, begins her heuristic, metaphorical theology with her own understanding of the passion narrative of Jesus. In sharp contrast to Tillich's interpretation that Jesus Christ needs to conquer his finitude in order to affirm himself as the Christ, she interprets the narrative to be, "human beings killed their God in the body of a man [Jesus]".²³ She needs to do so because, in order to develop her experiment with the metaphor of the world as God's body, she cannot avoid dealing with the evils we humans have created in our world such as the nuclear issues. In other words, we humans have put the world at risk just as we did against Jesus two thousand years ago. The metaphor of the world as God's body is the remythologization of Jesus' passion narrative. She insists that we humans, as co-workers of God, must take responsibility to care for the "incarnate God,"²⁴ i.e., our world.

In the metaphor of the world as God's body, the world itself could be *upāya* in the sense of the incarnation of God. But this *upāya* of the world is imperfect. As we have seen in both Shinran and Tillich, *upāya* is affirmed necessarily through negation. Kaufman also, in my opinion, implies the human construct of the concept of God as the perennial construction of an ever new *upāya*, in which the continuous criticism and reassessment of the finite including *upāya* are achieved by humans on the basis of God's relativizing function. In contrast, the world as the incarnate God is a straightforward affirmation of the world without going through any notion of negation or criticism. It is true that McFague discusses the evil in the world, but all evil, as she claims, "is not a power over against God."²⁵ It is part of God's being, and it does not function as that which can negate the world as a whole.

Furthermore, what she calls "idolatry," that is to say, the patriarchal, hierarchical, triumphalist model of God is not a real idolatry from Kaufman's point of view. The reason for this is that the hierarchical model of God is just an example antagonistic to her theology. In other words, her thesis can be argued without discussing an "idolatrous" model of God. Kaufman's theology, on the contrary, though he claims the same notion of idolatry as McFague's, develops its thesis along with the criticism of the idolatry as an indispensable element.

III. CONCLUSION: THREE MOMENTS IN THE TENSION BETWEEN *UPĀYA* AND IDOLS

We have seen how the notions of *upāya* and idols based on Shinran's thought are applicable to Christian theologies. Tillich and Shinran are very similar to each other in that both of them consider idols along with the phase of revelation of the ultimate reality. Tillich, however, must bridge

the gap between the traditional Christian scheme and Tillich himself who lives in the twentieth century by giving rise to the tension between Jesus Christ who conquered his finitude on the cross and Jesus Christ who becomes a new idol.

Kaufman's theology is much freer than Tillich's because, as a premise, Kaufman has to scrutinize and criticize every doctrine for concept which is taken for granted and regarded as authoritative. His theology provides us with a wider perspective to rethink the concept of human as well as the concept of ultimate reality regardless of form of monotheism. He, in a sense, seems to be criticizing our mind which tends to seek out a clearly defined understanding of religious symbols like "God." His main theological task, to distinguish between God and idols, therefore, must be worked out not in the humans' discursive epistemology but in existential act of their incessant self-criticism based upon God's relativizing function.

Although McFague elaborates to provide us with the more appropriate metaphors of God's salvific activity, she essentially lacks the point of view that the revelatory mediums and idols are one and the same. In short, her position is, to the end, dualistic in reference to the crucial phase of salvation. In my opinion, there is no objective idolatry irrelevant to our own concept of God. For McFague, the elimination of the patriarchal model of God is one thing, and promotion of the heuristic model of God is another. All we need to do is to seek out a dialectic way to reconciling the two irrelevant stances which McFague is arguing.

We come to know from the scrutiny thus far that the tension between *upāya* and idols has three moments: 1. *upāya* and idols are essentially one neutral thing symbolized by such things as the *Nembutsu*, Jesus of Nazareth, the concept of God, and so on. 2. Idols can approach *upāya* but they cannot reach it. Yet, *upāya* is always an idol for humans. 3. Through negation idols are turned into *upāya*.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gordon D. Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), p. 17.

2. Shinran wrote many articles on his teachings. The most important writing is *A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment of Pure Land Buddhism*, ed. Mitsuyuki Ishida, trans. Hisao Inagaki, et al., Ryukoku Translation Series, vol. 5 (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1966).

3. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), vol. 1.

4. Kaufman, *op. cit.*

5. Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

6. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), p. 215.

7. Tillich, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

11. Shinran, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

12. Kaufman, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

19. Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 13.

20. Kaufman, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

21. McFague, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Buddhist-Christian Dialogue: Comparative Sainthood, Comparative Prayer

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INTRODUCTION

To become a sage, a saint, an immortal, a transcendent being, seems to be the common aspiration in many religious traditions. There is something alluring in the ideal of reaching above the level of common humanity, but such an ideal is not only attractive, it is also frightening. Sainthood (or whatever other term is used) can only be reached at an extremely high price. Yet in each religious tradition, it seems, there are some individuals, exceptional one must admit, who reach or who are perceived to reach this level of transcendent status.

When I studied Roman Catholic theology, I was immensely attracted by the phenomenon of sainthood. One of the reasons why the Catholic Church must be seen as divinely supported and therefore of divine origin, (so I learnt) was the fact that the Catholic Church had produced and still produces many saints. The continued flowering of saints within the Church was an infallible sign of divine presence, of divine power. (That was, in retrospect, an argument against Protestantism, which did not put great stock in saints and sainthood, but by the same token could not be overly impressed by the Catholic Church's display of sainthood!)

When I started to study Buddhism and other great Asian traditions, I discovered a new range of "saintly" phenomena. I was astounded to see that for instance, in Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as in Taoism, many individuals were mentioned and their biographies described, who were considered to be "sages" or "saints" in their own circles. Later I discovered that in Islam there had been mystics who certainly qualified for sainthood; where the Confucian tradition very

often quotes *sheng-jen* of old: persons of heroic stature and literally called "saints."

After so many experiences and years of reflection and maturation, I have abandoned my earlier Roman Catholic view that only the true Church of Christ can and does produce real saints. As I expressed in a degree dissertation, I admitted that other religions produced saints, but that these individuals transcended their own religious tradition and unknowingly pointed toward redemption by Jesus Christ. I now consider such a view as poorly informed, mildly intolerant, and perhaps too arrogant. There is, as I discovered in my later studies, authentic sainthood in other religious traditions. Concepts of what sainthood involves may differ and cannot be universally defined and certainly cannot depend upon bureaucratic decisions to be verified.

In this article, I would like to single out Buddhism and Christianity (Roman Catholicism) to present a comparative view of what is seen as sainthood. It is only a case study, but whenever possible or feasible, general principles will be invoked, so that it will become clear that these cases possibly point to a more universal concept of what constitutes a Christian saint versus what constitutes a Buddhist saint.

At the end of Shan-tao's biography in Chapter Three of my manuscript *Visions of Sukhāvati*, it is casually mentioned that Shan-tao could be considered to be an embodiment of 'Buddhist sainthood' and from a different angle, was comparable to one of the modern Roman Catholic saints, Saint John Vianney, parish priest of Ars (France). Further, Shan-tao's method of meditation, as explained in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou-Fo ching*

opens up another field of evaluation and comparison with certain methods of Christian meditation and prayer.¹ These aspects of Shan-tao's personality and/or activities have to be discussed in order to fully evaluate his contribution to the religious life of his contemporaries and to the field of comparative religion. This essay, therefore, consists of two sub-divisions:

- 1) Christian and Buddhist Sainthood;
and
- 2) Christian and Buddhist Meditation
and Prayer.

These two fields of comparative study are not intended to be fully and exhaustively developed: the focus will be on the problems of authenticity of sainthood and of meditation-prayer within Buddhism as exemplified by Shan-tao. The reason why this viewpoint is being adopted here is because of the traditional 'superiority-complex' of Christianity, especially of Catholicism, toward non-Christian religions. Is such a stand legitimate, not so much from a theological perspective, but from the broader viewpoint of human experience? Shan-tao's testimony may offer an indication of how this problem can be solved.

CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHIST SAINTHOOD

Both Christianity and Buddhism extol the supreme perfection of man as the ultimate end of religious life. However, beyond this basic similarity there are marked differences as to the essence of his perfection and as to the means to attain it. Christian perfection consists in the full development of theological and moral virtues, resulting in intimate union with God. To be formally recognized as a saint, within Roman Catholicism, one has to cultivate the virtues in a heroic way: "When, by divine grace, a person's whole being is, as nearly as possible, governed by the complexus of virtues centered about religion, that stage of heroic virtue has been attained that the Church recognizes

as worthy of the title of saint."² Formal recognition as a saint is made through a slow and scrutinizing process of canonization: it is the final result of a canonical process "that establishes juridically the heroism of a person's virtues, as well as the truth of the miracles by which God has manifested his heroism."³

The idea of heroicity of virtue or of 'superhuman virtue' was in fact taken over from Aristotle by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas: through them the term found its way into scholastic theology and finally into ascetic-mystical use.⁴ According to P. Lambertini (later Benedict XIV), "the attainment of a heroic degree of natural virtue of one kind or another was theoretically possible to nature unaided by grace, though it was rarely, if ever, actually so attained."⁵ Although "the heroic degree is, in fact, simply the perfection of virtue," or, in other words, "Heroic virtue is based upon the intensity of charity,"⁶ in more recent times the emphasis has been considered "fulfillment of the duties and obligations of one's state" (Benedict XV), or, according to another papal document, "heroic virtue was to be sought in the ordinary things of daily life." (Pius XI).⁷

What seems to be essential in the definition of Christian sainthood, as explained above, is, from the human side, heroic virtue, and from God's side, the assistance of divine grace. Virtue in a heroic degree cannot be achieved without supernatural help, and, as a more basic presupposition, divine help is thought to be only fully available within the Christian Church.

The whole problem of sainthood and the Christian conception of it can only be fully understood within the broader perspectives of the Church's attitude toward the non-Christian religions. Although this attitude has changed throughout the ages, the present official stand taken by the Roman Catholic Church was clearly expressed in the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions in 1965,⁸ where it is said that the Church "rejects nothing

that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and life, those precepts and teachings which ... often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men."⁹

A conclusion that may be drawn from this statement is that only the Church possesses the *full* light or the full Truth, and therefore the full means of divine grace which lead mankind to perfect sainthood. If the Church is consistent with her exclusive claims of divine revelation, sainthood achieved outside her ranks, cannot be considered as fully authentic. This is an *a priori* position which seems unescapable.

However "from the fruits you can recognize the tree."¹⁰ This saying reflects the opposite approach; it is *a posteriori*, or based on observation of facts outside the Church. Here, we return to Shan-tao. Although it has been said that "... the Christian Saint is unique in human records [that] He is quite, quite different from the Buddhist, from the Zoroastrian ...;" that "all the good stuff that the Buddhist ... possesses is in the Saint ...," etc.,¹¹ the argument is not convincing when we consider Shan-tao as a concrete example of Buddhist sainthood. Whatever is attributed to Christian saints in the following text, can, with some adjustments, be applied to such Buddhists as Shan-tao:

Saints are *men* who are *super-natural*. Super-naturalized. Their actions, bodily or mental, thus constantly rise higher than their human source because of that added thing that is to be called Grace—God's 'free gift'—which is *so* added, however as to be infused throughout their Self ...

No question whatsoever, in a Saint, of working for his own career, or name, or wealth, or comfort. Lest he be deluding

himself, he will try rather for total effacement, personal humiliation, poverty so complete as possible, nay, suffering it-self.¹²

When comparing Shan-tao with one of the modern Christian saints, St. John Vianney (1786-1859, canonized in 1925), the following parallel characteristics are most striking: born in a farmer's family, John Vianney was a poor student who was unable to learn Latin and theology and was almost refused for the priesthood. Shan-tao apparently had a brighter intelligence, but was not interested in the abstract speculations of the San-lun School. Both men had a preference for contemplative-active life, in which direct religious experience was central. Both men were characterized by the practice of common moral virtues, which they developed to the extreme: deep consciousness of their personal sinfulness,¹³ extreme asceticism and poverty,¹⁴ radical chastity,¹⁵ total surrender to the service of others.¹⁶ In fact, their lifestyles, although in many respects quite different, are similar in that both took to the active ministry of their fellowmen (serving them for more than thirty years) and drew their energy from prayer and meditation. The example of their lives drew the people and made them believe in their respective ideals: J. Vianney was active in Ars for thirty years and "by degrees the place was completely reformed."¹⁷ Shan-tao worked in Ch'ang-an for over thirty years and the whole city was won over to the invocation of Buddha Amita. In order to touch people emotionally, both men used similar methods: the lustre of ritual and of external media. Shan-tao's example of using Pure Land representations and of organizing 'rebirth-rituals' is well known; but incidentally, similar attitudes characterized J. Vianney: "Another attitude of the Curé ... is significant: his affection for the externals of worship: his enthusiastic love for pictures, ornaments, decorations; for the embellishment of the

church and the pomp of ceremony. He wanted to make use of everything to appeal to, to stir up hearts and minds."¹⁸

Further, if the subject of mystical and extraordinary experiences is touched upon, it appears that both men were unusually privileged: Shan-tao's practice of *samādhi* was often accompanied with raptures and ecstasies; it appears that he had the gift of reading the minds of others (see, e.g., the incident about Tao-ch'o's threefold shortcoming), and it is also reported that he predicted his own death a few days before it took place. J. Vianney is said to have had numerous supernatural visions and ecstasies (although he was extremely reluctant to communicate these events to others),¹⁹ it is reported that he had an extraordinary talent in knowing the thoughts and wishes of others,²⁰ and also predicted his death, a few days before it actually happened.²¹

Finally, there is one 'fact' narrated about the two men that shows how people in their immediate surroundings must have seen them: of Shan-tao it is said that light came out of his mouth whenever he pronounced the name of Amita; with regard to Vianney, there have been several witnesses stating that they saw light shining forth from his person: one person going into the confessional "saw him wholly enveloped in a transparent and unearthly radiance."²² At another occasion, someone observed that the priest's face "seemed to project two fiery rays, his features being completely hidden by the brightness of their light."²³ No matter how these 'facts' are interpreted, one reasonable explanation is that somebody who is fully absorbed in the transcendent (however understood), like these two men, becomes somehow transparent and shining; or, in modern terminology: they radiate an aura, which can be seen by some witnesses who would translate this phenomenon in terms of light. What is said about J. Vianney in this respect, can probably equally be applied to Shan-tao: "As he grew old there came upon his visage, ... an ethereal spiritual beauty."²⁴

One possible conclusion of this comparison is, that, notwithstanding the great difference of ideological background, and the differences in circumstances and personality, a common spirit appears to have animated their lives: complete renunciation of the self, total devotion to their fellowmen, total reliance on the transcendent. This total reliance was the very source of their heroic life and the cause of their great achievements. Another conclusion is that Shan-tao's life and personality (although less furnished with historical information than J. Vianney's) shows that authentic sainthood is possible in Buddhism. Finally, as a happy result of the above comparison, it has become clear that Shan-tao's person and life is even more fully understood and appreciated when compared with his outstanding Christian counterpart, St. John Vianney. One light does not obscure the other, but increases its intensity and splendor.

CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHIST MEDITATION

Generally speaking, it can be said that Christian prayer, even when it assumes the higher forms of contemplation, is usually directed toward dialogue with the Divine Being or with Jesus Christ and may sometimes reach high levels of union. Buddhist meditation, on the other hand, is characterized by intellectual analysis at the beginning with the aim of understanding the nature of reality and eventually reaching mystical experiences of absorption. If this is true in principle, or theoretically, it does not follow that the facts always correspond with the theory. Christian meditation also can be rather intellectual, directed at the understanding of some points of doctrine, whereas in Buddhism certain forms of meditation seem to approach the Christian way of prayer.

In fact, two concrete examples of close similarity in method, and perhaps in aim and final result, are available for comparison: (1) the Buddhist 'meditation' method consisting in visualization-inspection, described in *Kuan Wu-liang-*

shou-fo ching (KWLSC) and explained by Shan-tao in his commentary is comparable to a particular form of Christian contemplation recommended by St. Ignatius of Loyola in his 'Spiritual Exercises.' (2) the oral invocation of the name of Buddha Amita is comparable to a certain Christian prayer, probably existing universally in the Christian Church, but clearly exemplified in what is called Jesus prayer (*Herzensgebet*) in the Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity.

1. Amita-Inspection vs. Ignatian Contemplation

The 'Spiritual Exercises' written by St. Ignatius²⁵ consists in a very methodical system of meditations to bring about a kind of inner conversion to God. The whole program takes four weeks to be completed. The first week is spent in mental preparation and could be called an initial awakening of the soul. From the second week onward, most of the exercises are called 'contemplation,' and it is here that a striking similarity with Buddhist visualization-inspection appears. The preparatory stages in both cases are different; according to the Christian method, the meditator tries to make himself fully aware of being in God's presence and asks for his divine assistance to make a fruitful meditation possible. As Shan-tao pointed out in his *Commentary*, the Buddhist meditator purifies himself, worships the Buddha and, seated in the right bodily posture, concentrates his full attention on the chosen object. The exercise itself, however, is strikingly similar in both cases: the Buddhist meditator imagines, visualizes, and inspects, one by one, the various adornments of *Sukhāvatī*, to reach a climax in the vision of the Buddha and his two assistant bodhisattvas. In the Ignatian exercise, the direct prelude sets before the meditator a general and summary view of the meditation topic, but afterwards, in the meditation itself, according to Ignatius' own words:

... let it [the mind] pause upon the several parts, so as to consider them and penetrate their meaning. It is as if a man should cast his eyes upon some painting, comprising a great variety of objects, and in one comprehensive view take them all in confusedly and know what the picture contains and then afterwards should fix his gaze on the several particulars which are there represented, examining each in turn more fully and accurately."²⁶

The usefulness of this method consists in its results: not only are the various particulars of a given object, for instance, the events in the life of Christ, better understood through this application of the senses, but also a feeling of direct participation is evoked: "For by this means the Mysteries of our Lord's Life will be contemplated not as long past events, but as present realities of which we are ourselves actual spectators."²⁷ It is certain that this method of contemplation is much older than the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius. Many authors on spirituality in the Middle Ages had already applied and propagated it. However, it was considered to be an appropriate way for beginners, and not only the sense of sight was used, but, in fact, all the senses. Although some authors rejected the method as dangerous, eventually leading to wild imaginations and uncontrolled fantasies, the majority did approve it as a preparatory method to higher mysticism.²⁸ It is here that one can see the essential difference between Christian and Buddhist way: in the Christian version, the application of the senses leads up to a vivid mental image of the topic under consideration; but there it stops. There is no 'immersion' into it, no realization of complete union with the person, for instance of

Jesus Christ. The final phase would be a dialogue between the meditator and the divine Person, and even if a mystical experience would follow, the sense of separateness between the human and the divine is never abandoned. In the Buddhist context, however, absorption into the very essence of the Buddha, or in other words, identification with the Buddha nature, is proposed as the desired effect of the practice. Whether the meditator is always successful is a different matter, but the possibility of the experience is positively indicated as a reachable goal.

Abandoning temporarily the comparative viewpoint, what is the psychological significance of the various meditations described in the *KWLSC*? C. G. Jung has drawn the attention to the deep symbolical values of the various objects of 'meditation'.²⁹ Some of Jung's presuppositions are based on incorrect information as when he says that the *KWLSC* "belongs to the sphere of the so-called theistic Buddhism, in which one finds the teachings of the Ādibuddha, or Mahābuddha, (the 'Urbuddha'), from whom proceed the five Dhyāni-buddhas or bodhisattvas."³⁰ This initial mixing up of two distinct cult developments, warns to caution. About the various symbolism expressed in the sutra, the author offers the following interpretations: both the setting sun (first exercise) and the water (second exercise) are allegorical presentations of Buddha Amita, the giver of immortality.³¹ The sun is the source of warmth and light and as such, giver of life; water is another source of life. (Both symbols are equally important in Christian allegorism.)³²

The setting sun, furthermore, is perhaps chosen for its hypnotical value: the fixation of a bright object prepares for the subsequent light-visions. The water as object stirs the active imagination, since no external object is used anymore. The practitioner imagines a mirroring water surface, reflecting the light; the change of water into ice is a procedure to change the immaterial sunlight into material water and hence, into the solid materiality of ice. In this way, the vision becomes

concretized, materialized. Based on the materiality of this world, another reality of 'spiritual matter' ("seelischer Stoff") is created. Ice changed into blue lapis lazuli, becomes an illuminating and transparent bottom, an absolutely real foundation.

The shape of the 'Land' is octagonal and correspondingly, there are eight lakes: the source of its water is the wishing-pearl, symbolizing the highest value. The voice of the water proclaiming the basic truths of Buddhism, means that ultimately the Buddha himself is the center, and the source of the water.

The climax of the sutra consists in the reconstruction of the Buddha-image: this leads to the insight that the Buddha is identical with the psyche of the meditator, with the meditator himself. The Buddha seated on the lotus in the center of the octagonal Amita-Land 'reveals' himself as the true self of the meditator. The I-consciousness disappears, the anti-pole is reached in which the world vanishes as an illusion.³³

The last part of Jung's article analyzes the significance of the practice and compares it with Western methods. He feels that Western meditation has nothing comparable to this practice, which aims at the total penetration and understanding of the unconscious: whereas the Western spirit seeks 'Erhebung' (which seems to point toward external knowledge of the real), the Eastern spirit wants 'Versenking, Vertiefung',³⁴ i.e., 'descends' to an inner experience of the real, leading up to the extreme point where the most inner self, the unconscious self, is clearly understood and therefore loses its own individual identity, which is experienced as absorbed in, or identical with Buddhahood.³⁵ Only in the Western practice of psychoanalysis, is the Oriental approach somewhat realized.

From another viewpoint, it appears that Western religion (Christianity) rather emphasizes God's Transcendence and Holiness, resulting into a depreciation of the self; whereas Eastern religiosity (Hinduism, Buddhism, perhaps also Taoism) looks for the Immanence of the 'Divine,' the

'Buddha-nature,' etc. so that emancipation consists in becoming conscious of the true self (Hinduism) or the real 'no-self' (Buddhism). If the *kuan* sutras provide a method for visualizing and inspecting the Buddhas and their transcendent realms, their ultimate aim, at least in the *KWLSC* does not consist in only 'seeing' the Buddhas, but in realizing that there is no Buddha beyond one's consciousness. It appears that this was Shan-tao's understanding, obtained in his own experiences. If he did not always stress this point clearly and unambiguously, it was because of his understanding of the psychology of his followers: not all were ready for this supreme experience. A gradual preparation was necessary for the simplest forms of devotion (invocation of the name) passing through a strict discipline of ethics and meditation, until the peak could be reached in the *kuan-Fo-samādhi*.

2. Oral Invocation vs Christian "Prayer"

That Shan-tao believed in the effectiveness of oral invocation of Buddha Amita's name is beyond question; the confusion that exists in this regard concerns his true appreciation of the practice. As I have pointed out elsewhere,³⁶ *nien-fo* means several things and the shift in interpretation of what Shan-tao meant by it, is due to incorrect emphasis of one of the meanings of *nien-fo*. Shan-tao was not an exclusivist: he encouraged the majority of the people to recite Amita's name, hoping that some would go further and take up the more arduous task of Amita visualization and *samādhi*.

It is quite natural to believe that Shan-tao himself, while not actually engaged in the practice of the *kuan-Fo-samādhi*, used the recitation of Amita's name (or: *Namo O-mi-t'o-Fo*) quite often as a kind of short prayer formula. Whether he used beans or other small objects to count his invocation, as Tao-ch'o had encouraged his followers to do, is doubtful and, perhaps not relevant. The presently important question is about the meaning of

such short and frequent invocations, and how they compare with some Christian practices.³⁷ Anticipating the results of the study, it seems to be legitimate to state that *nien-Fo* in Chinese Buddhism (as exemplified by Shan-tao) has at least two distinct meanings with perhaps one intermediate: first, there is the simple recitation of the name (*k'ou-ch'eng nien-Fo*) an act of oral praise, reverence or taking refuge; in the second place, at the other extreme, there is what Japanese Buddhists have called *kuan-nien nien-Fo*, but is formulated by Shan-tao as *kuan-Fo-samādhi*. This is the basic message of the *KWLSC* and the highest ideal for a Pure Land 'meditator'. Not often explicitly mentioned in Shan-tao's work, but presumably considered to be important within his overall system of religious practice is the *nien-Fo* of 'remembrance' of the Buddha, i.e., the possibly or hopefully continuous consciousness of being with the Buddha, of cherishing the thought of him, of paying homage to him and being grateful to him: "When sentient beings start practicing, whenever they orally invoke the Buddha, he hears it. Whenever they worship the Buddha, he sees it. Whenever in their minds they think of the Buddha, he knows it. When sentient beings keep the Buddha in their remembrance, he also keeps them in his remembrance."³⁸

Shan-tao refers to these various activities as 'three actions,' but in fact, there are four phrases: the third and fourth both refer to mind action, but there is certainly a difference in intensity. The initial activities of a devotee (a beginner) comprise oral invocation, worship and thinking of the Buddha. When his practice becomes more advanced he reaches the point of keeping in memory or making a (continuous) remembrance of the Buddha. This is not yet the fullest achievement which comes only through intense concentration, and is a result of the devotee's desire to 'see' the Buddha: "if sentient beings wish to see the Buddha, he responds to their wish (literally their *nien*) and appears in front of them."³⁹

What 'remembrance of the Buddha' exactly means, can be explained by an analogous practice, recommended in Christian spirituality: 'the presence of God.'⁴⁰ It is an "habitual sense of God's presence,"⁴¹ which Brother Lawrence in his letters describes as walking before God, simply, in faith, with humility and love, applying oneself to think always of God; it is simple attention to and a general fond regard of Him, which may be called "an actual presence of God; or, to speak better, an habitual, silent, and secret conversation of the soul with God,"⁴² beyond which nothing is sweeter and more delightful; and which cannot be comprehended except by those who practice it.⁴³

Such a habit is not easily obtained; it requires long and continuous effort, but once acquired, it leaves the mind open for God alone, while all other actions do not interfere with it. Hours of formal prayer are only continuation of the same exercise, and benefit from it enormously: "... when I apply myself to prayer, I feel all my spirit and all my soul lift itself up without any care or effort of mine, and it continues as if it were suspended and firmly fixed in God, as in its center and place of rest."⁴⁴

It seems that the practice of *nien-Fo* is very similar to this Christian method: the mind's attention and the heart's emotion are in continuous contact with Buddha, whereas the physical activities which ordinary life prescribes, are in nothing different from everybody else's. This consciousness of the Buddha's 'presence' can be acquired by effort, and specifically by repeated oral invocations (whether in loud or low voice, or even mentally) and if this sense of the Buddha's presence is gradually acquired, it may ultimately develop into the mystical experience of vision of the Buddha, such as explained in Shan-tao's *Commentary*. In this way, all the various ways of practicing *nien-Fo* are in fact inwardly related to each other and stimulate each other: the simple oral *nien-Fo*, if properly practiced (with sincerity, etc. ...), is ultimately leading up to a state of mystical union or

samādhi, in which no distinction between subject and object exists any longer. It cannot be expected that all devotees reach these higher stages of mysticism: each, according to his efforts and his own predispositions, will reach the degree that is appropriate to him. But all, Shan-tao stresses, are able to be welcomed by Buddha Amita at the end of their lives, even those who have hardly started on the path.

To conclude, another analog between *nien-Fo* and a particular form of Christian prayer has to be pointed out. E. Benz⁴⁵ has drawn the attention on the fact that oral invocation of Amita's name is not a unique phenomenon in religious history, but shows surprising analogies with the theory and practice of the so-called 'heart-prayer' (*Herzensgebet*), which is found within Eastern-Orthodox Christianity. Although the term 'Herzensgebet' does not apparently suggest a form of oral prayer, the facts are that it really is a form of prayer strikingly similar to the Buddhist *nien-Fo*, in almost all of its modalities and methods. The essential practice of 'Herzensgebet' consists in the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ by means of the formula: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us!"⁴⁶ Like the *nien-Fo* in Buddhism, it is essentially a lay-practice; it is recommended to repeat the formula many times a day (even methods of counting are suggested), in such a way that it becomes a part of the physiological process, in that the invocations are synchronized with the person's heartbeat: first beat: Lord; second beat: Jesus; third beat: Christ; fourth beat: have mercy; fifth beat: on me (us).⁴⁷ Although it is not clearly explained why this practice is called 'heart-prayer,' it may be assumed that this synchronization with the heartbeat is the very reason, whereas in some texts, quoted by the author, another and perhaps less misleading term is used: 'Jesus-prayer.'⁴⁸

As in Buddhism, where the practice of *nien-Fo* hopefully leads the practitioner to an ever increasing degree of meditation, even to the point of mystical experiences, so here, too, will the

invocation of the name of Jesus prepare the practitioner to the highest ecstasies and union with God.⁴⁹

The problem of historical connections between the two methods of prayer has to be answered with a question mark. Although the similarities are very striking, even to the point that breath-regulation and bodily posture⁵⁰ are recommended on the Christian side, there is no evidence to conclude to a positive influence in either direction.⁵¹

Whatever the historical links may be, the least that can be said is that the practice of *nien-Fo*, with its various gradations up to the higher levels of mysticism is not a unique phenomenon in the religious history of mankind. Although the most striking parallel in Christianity is the above discussed 'Herzensgebet,' a closer investigation will probably bring to light many other forms of name-invocations within various religions and thus throw a light on the spiritual needs of those who are not gifted enough or do not have the opportunity to practice strict meditation. It was Shan-tao's great merit to have realized this deep concern of the lay-people of his time and to have offered them a satisfying alternative toward salvation, which also is ultimately based on sound Buddhist principles. In this respect, his work and career are not isolated facts, but are linked closely together with many other similar tendencies in man's religious quest.

FOOTNOTES

1. Shan-tao's own meditation experiences resulting into *samādhi* (through 'vision' of the Buddha and his Pure Land) make it impossible to escape another comparative study: Christian and Buddhist Mysticism. However, since this topic is too vast to be included here, it appears better to leave it out altogether rather than to give it an unfair treatment. It could become the subject of a separate study.

2. C. O'Neill, "Saint." *New Catholic Encyclopedia (NCE)* XII (1967), 852-853.

3. A. D. Green, "Canonization of Saints (Theological Aspects)." *New Catholic Encyclopedia (NCE)* III (1967), 61.

4. K. V. Truhlar, "Virtue, Heroic." *New Catholic Encyclopedia (NCE)* XIV (1967), 707.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. See J. L. Gonzalez (compiler). *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II* (Boston, 1967), pp. 253-260; A. Gilbert, *The Vatican Council and the Jews* (Cleveland and New York, 1968), pp. 271-279.

9. J. L. Gonzalez, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

10. *Matthew* 8:20.

11. C. Martindale, *What are Saints?* (London, 1945), p. 153.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

13. Compare Shan-tao's relentless stress on the age of corruption and his rituals of confession, with Vianney's intense desire to leave his ministry "to weep over his sinful life." See J. de La Varenne, *The Curé of Ars and His Cross*, trans. J. W. Saul (New York, Paris, 1959), p. 91.

14. Compare Shan-tao's ascetic and self-denying life with Vianney's almost cruel austerities: he gave away his furniture, slept only about two hours a day, lived on one or two boiled potatoes a day, and used iron chains and disciplines to chastise his body. See F. Trochu, *The Curé d'Ars*, trans. R. Matthews (London, 1955), pp. 155-158.

15. Compare Shan-tao's refusal to look at a woman with Vianney's equally rigorous chastity: "... he refused even to embrace his mother; he did not allow himself to caress a child." (J. de La Varenne, *op. cit.*, p. 88).

16. Compare Shan-tao's efforts to spread his teaching among the people of Ch'ang-an (his biographies indirectly make one feel his amazing efforts) with Vianney's spiritual leadership: for

many years he spent as much as seventeen hours daily in the confessional. See F. Trochu, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-114.

17. T. Maynard, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

18. J. de La Varendo, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

19. F. Trochu, *The Curé d'Ars, St. Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney*, trans. E. Graf (London, 1927; 2nd ed., London, 1949), pp. 526-545.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 482-512.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 554-556.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 530.

23. *Ibid.*

24. T. Maynard, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

25. See, e.g., W. H. Longridge, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (London and Oxford, 1919; 4th ed. 1950); A. Brou, *Ignatian Methods of Prayer*, trans. W. J. Young (Milwaukee, 1949); K. Rahner, *Spiritual Exercises*, trans. K. Baker (New York, 1965).

26. W. Longridge, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

28. A. Brou, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-167.

29. C. G. Jung, "Zur Psychologie Ostlicher Meditation," *Bulletin de la Société Suisse des Amis de l'Extrême-Orient* (or *Mitteilungen der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft der Freunde Ostasiatischer Kultur*) V (1943), 33-53.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 36 (my own translation).

31. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-45.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-53.

36. See my article "The Meaning of Nien-Fo in the Three Pure Land Sutras," *Studies in Religion* 7 (1978), 403-413.

37. It is beyond the scope of this essay to investigate in depth the meaning of *mantra* and the power of the spoken word, etc., of which the *nien-Fo* seems to be a concrete example.

38. Shan-tao's *Commentary on the KWLSC*, T. 1753, 37, 268, a 6-9.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 268, a 10-11.

40. See, e.g., Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God being Conversations and Letters of Nicholas Herman of Lorraine* (New York, 1958; 2nd ed. 1966); A. Brou, *Ignatian Methods of Prayer*, pp. 46-53.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

45. E. Benz, "Nembutsu und Herzensgebet," in S. Yamaguchi, ed. *Buddhism and Culture* (Kyoto, 1960), pp. 126-149.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 145. The author, p. 146, quotes from *Aufrichtige Erzählung eines russischen Pilgers* (Freiburg, 1959), p. 45: "While I experienced very intimately these and similar consolations, I noticed that the effects of the 'Herzensgebet' (heart-prayer) express themselves in three ways: in the spirit (mind), in experiences, in revelations. For instance in the spirit: the sweetness of God's love, internal quietude, rapture of the spirit, purity of thinking, the sweetest remembrance of God; in experiences: a pleasant melting together of the heart, an infusion of all one's limbs with unnameable sweetness, a joyful surging of the intellect, understanding of the Scriptures, recognition of the language of creation, being freed from all worldly vanity and recognition of all the sweetness of the inner life, certainty of God's proximity and of his love for us." (my translation).

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 148-49.

Bibliography of English-Language Works on Pure Land Buddhism: Primarily 1983-1989

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The growth in publications on Pure Land Buddhism in the 1980's has warranted an update of its works in English particularly since 1983 when the last such comprehensive bibliographies on the field were published. This geometric increase in the publications, particularly of the Japanese school of Jōdo-Shinshū, is attributable in large measure to the enhanced activities of several academic journals in English.

The Eastern Buddhist (Kyoto), published by the Eastern Buddhist Society founded by D. T. Suzuki, continues its tradition of featuring a healthy share of Pure Land and Zen materials. *Pure Land* (Kyoto), begun in 1979, serves as the only Western language journal devoted exclusively to Pure Land articles, with large percentage of its contributors being European and North American members of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies. Reflecting the primary mission of its sponsoring institute, the *Annual Memoirs of the Ōtani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute* (Kyoto) has since 1983 included a good number of interpretative and bibliographical articles devoted to Pure Land Buddhism. *The Pacific World* (Berkeley) with a world-wide circulation of 7,000 copies devotes half of its materials to Pure Land Buddhism. Initially started in the 1920's by The Reverend Dr. Yehan Numata (founder, Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai) to foster greater understanding about Asia among Americans, the journal was 'resurrected' in 1981 after over 50 years of hiatus as the journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Seminary and Graduate School.

The increasing number of festschrift volumes dedicated to eminent Japanese scholars have come to serve as podium for Pure Land writers to publish articles in English. Also, the *Encyclopedia of Religion* published in 1987 as a major reference source on world religions contains numerous Pure Land entries which should prove valuable to those seeking concise, primary information.

The present listing is intended to update three earlier bibliographies:

1. Muraishi, Eshō. "A Bibliography on Pure Land Buddhism Written in English." *Junshin gakuho* 2 (Dec. 1983): 1-33.
2. Rhodes, Robert. "Bibliography of English-Language Works on Pure Land Buddhism 1960 to the Present." *Annual Memoirs of the Ōtani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute* (henceforth, OC) 1 (1983): 1-28.
3. Overseas Buddhist Studies Research Project. "Bibliography of Foreign-Language Articles on Japanese Buddhism 1960 to 1987." OC 6 (1988): 151-212 (in particular, pp. 153-166, 195).

The present listing also includes (1) entries which were omitted from the above three lists and (2) entries which are repeated on account of their significant contribution.

Notes

= listed in previous bibliographies but again included here due to its importance

(*) = entries based on an unpublished paper submitted at the August, 1989 academic meeting of the International Association of Shin Buddhist studies by John Ishihara, "Western Language Bibliography of Pure Land Buddhist Related Topics."

Abbreviations of Journals and Special Volumes

EB - *The Eastern Buddhist*, Kyoto.

ER - *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Macmillan Pub. Co., 1987.

Fujita Festschrift - *Indian Philosophy and Buddhism: Dr. Kōtatsu Fujita Festschrift*. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1989.

Ishida Festschrift - *Essays on the Pure Land Buddhist Thought: Dr. Mitsuyuki Ishida Festschrift*. Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1982.

JIABS - *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*

JR - *Japanese Religions*

OC - *Annual Memoirs of the Ōtani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute*, Kyoto.

MN - *Monumenta Nipponica*, Tokyo.

PL - *Pure Land: Journal of Pure Land Buddhism*, Kyoto.

PW - *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, Berkeley.

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Book Reviews

Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899

by Notto R. Thelle. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987. xi + 356 pp., cloth.

Over the past few decades the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity has evolved in the United States, Japan and a number of other countries. This tendency appears to be developing more and more like a great unstoppable current. As the world continues to shrink, the meeting of the two world religions representing the East and West, that is Buddhism and Christianity, is inevitable. Yet dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity is not an easy task because conflict, confrontation, even antagonism based on misunderstanding and apologetic motivation often take place in an interfaith relationship. How the convinced believers of two religions can engage in creative dialogue with open-mindedness is a crucial problem in our time.

Given this situation, Notto R. Thelle's book, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899* is highly welcome as a careful historical study of the complex relationship between Buddhism and Christianity in Japan, particularly in the period in which Japan openly encountered Western civilization and Christianity. The book suggests many things for the on-going dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity.

The first six chapters are of a more introductory character and give a historical perspective on the development of the relation between the two religions in nineteenth century Japan. In these chapters Thelle carefully describes how Christianity, combined with Western culture, caused ambivalent reactions among Japanese Buddhists and how Christian missionaries and the

leaders of Japanese Christians regarded Buddhism from the perspective of their own faith.

From Chapter Seven to Chapter Fourteen, the main body of the book, the author deals with the development of Buddhist-Christian relations, particularly from 1889-1899. To explain the reason, Thelle states:

Never before had such dramatic confrontations and radical changes in the relationship between the two religions occurred. Most of the attitudes and types of contact depicted in the previous pages can be observed also in the 1890s, but during this decade they were more intense and on a large scale; the confrontations were more violent and the mutual recognition more unreserved. So the 1890s can be regarded as the conclusion of almost four decades of development of Buddhist-Christian relations. (p. 95)

Although Thelle himself was a missionary-scholar for over fifteen years in Japan, his description and discussion is quite academic and objective, free from Christian bias. He also tries to clarify how Buddhist-Christian relations were influenced by the transformation of the entire Japanese society. This manner of interpretation of religious development within the framework of political and social

change is successful in giving a dynamic picture of Buddhist-Christian encounter in the Japanese society of that time.

The book includes nineteen illustrations which are reproductions of various scenes of Buddhist-Christian conflict from periodicals published in 1880. They all graphically convey the complex feelings between Buddhists and Chris-

tians in those days and are extremely interesting and useful in helping readers to understand the issues.

The book is highly recommended not only for those who are interested in Buddhist-Christian dialogue but also for students of Japanese culture and history.

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The Record of Tung-shan

Translated by William F. Powell. Honolulu: Kuroda Institute, University of Hawaii Press, 1986. Foreward by Robert Aitken, Preface by Shuya Sakurai. xii + 99 pp., paperback: \$10.50.

Published in the Kuroda Institute's "Classics in East Asian Buddhism" series, this is the first English translation of the *Jui-chou Tung-shan Liang-chieh ch'an-shih yü-lu* (The Discourse Record of Master Liang-chieh of Tung-shan in the Jui-chou era. T. 47). In addition to the translation, the book includes a forward and preface, a descriptive introduction, notes, a map of 9th century Ch'an sites in Southeast China, and an index of figures mentioned in the text, giving both Chinese and Japanese names. The text itself consists of 120 short anecdotes and poems, among them the famous "Gāthā of the Five Ranks," which was elaborated upon by Tung-shan's disciple Ts'ao-shan and became the basis for much later commentary and criticism.

As with most of the sources for this "middle period" of Ch'an history, the text originates from a Ming dynasty compilation, made in 1632. The translator notes, however, that many of the anecdotes are also preserved in the *Tsu-t'ang chi* (Collection from the Patriarchal Hall) com-

pleted in 952, slightly less than a century after Tung-shan's death, and also in the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* (The Transmission of the Lamp compiled during the Ching-te Era), completed in 1004.

Tung-shan (807-869) is identified as the founder of the Ts'ao-tung (Japanese: Sōtō) lineage, one of the "Five Houses" or major Ch'an lineages demarcated in the Sung dynasty. Aside from its intrinsic interest, the text is thus important for an understanding of Ch'an/Zen history. This is the lineage transmitted to Japan by Dōgen in the 13th century, and Tung-shan is mentioned frequently in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

The Record of Tung-shan is one of only a handful of English renditions of Ch'an classics. In making this translation of the record of such a pivotal figure both useful for scholars and accessible to a wider audience, William Powell has made a substantial contribution to the furtherance of Ch'an/Zen studies.

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Shingon Japanese Esoteric Buddhism

by Taikō Yamasaki, edited by Yasuyoshi Morimoto and David Kidd; translated and adapted by Richard and Cynthia Peterson. Foreward by Carmen Blacker. Boston and London: Shambhala, 1988. xviii + 244 pp., paperback: \$19.95.

This work is the first to appear in any Western language which combines a discussion of the origins, history, teachings and practices of the Japanese Shingon school of Tantric Buddhism. Much of the work is based on Professor Yamasaki's *Mikkyō Meisōho* (The Meditation Techniques of Shingon Buddhism, 1974) and *Mikkyō Meisō to Shinsō Shinri* (Shingon Meditation and Psychological Theories of Mind, 1981) but is also supplemented, as explained in the foreward, by other unnamed sources, presumably written in Japanese. The translators are to be commended for giving us a very lucid translation.

Taikō Yamasaki belongs to the *Shingi* branch of Shingon Buddhism, traced back to Kakuban (1095-1143 A.C.E.), and as is typical of his publications, this work is characterized by both an accurate historical narrative, referenced by original sources, as well as a personal style based on his own meditation experiences. Mr. Yamasaki alludes in his introduction to the early split in the Shingon tradition between those who concentrated on scholarly studies and those who emphasized meditation practice, and he contends both are necessary for a true understanding of Shingon. This translation reinforces his position that more should be published and explained about Shingon meditation practices. Taikō Yamasaki is abbot of Jokōin Temple in Kobe, Japan and is Dean of the Department of Esoteric Studies at Shuchiin University in Kyoto.

This work is divided into eight chapters and includes an appendix with Japanese names and terms with Sanskrit or Chinese equivalents and an index and footnotes. The eight chapters are as follows: 1) Origin and Development of Esoteric Buddhism in India and China; 2) Historical Back-

ground of Shingon Buddhism in Japan; 3) Mikkyō: the Esoteric Teaching; 4) The Ten Levels of Mind; 5) The Secret Activities of Body, Speech and Mind; 6) The Dynamic Mandala; 7) The Scope and Complexity of Shingon Ritual; 8) Concentrated Three-Secrets Practices.

Mr. Yamasaki's discussion of the history and teachings of Shingon does not especially break new ground or add appreciably to our knowledge of these topics. Similar information can be found in a variety of other sources.¹ In this section of his work he does, however, provide a concise but excellent discussion of the development of the Shingon sect in Japan up to the present and its historical relationship with Tendai, nembutsu practice, mountain worship, hijiri and popular beliefs (pp. 34-55).

This work's principal contributions are twofold. First, I would identify Yamasaki's attempt to restate and clarify, in as simple a manner possible, Shingon teachings and the two mandalas of the sect in relation to Shingon practices. Second, his discussion of Shingon meditation techniques based on long years of personal experience (Chapters 7 & 8, pp. 152-215). Anyone introduced to Shingon practices immediately is overwhelmed with their complexity and Yamasaki's purpose here is to make accessible their single but difficult goal of "knowing one's own mind as it truly is." "Because complicated forms of practice require considerable ability in visualization" (p. 191) Yamasaki focuses on simpler techniques (morning star meditation and A syllable visualization) for the benefit of the reader and would-be practitioner.

An appealing aspect of this work is that throughout it Yamasaki makes brief comments about the Shingon tradition which could only be

made by one intimate with the tradition. This enhances the overall value and attraction of the work. For example, he states "In general, Shingon has emphasized textual study of the *Dainichi-kyō* more than of the *Kongōchōgyō*" (p. 86). In his discussion of different types of Shingon initiation he notes that the initiation of scholarly practice (*gakushū kanjō*) "is still practiced on Kōyasan, but the debate aspect has become formalized today, since scholarly studies are largely pursued in Shingon universities" (p. 177). Needless to say, Yamasaki's explanation of the famous Morning Star Meditation, practiced by Kūkai throughout his life, and his account of his experience of it are a noteworthy precedent.

Yamasaki's somewhat detailed explanation of Shingon meditation techniques contributes to a small but growing number of such works now available in English. The first to appear were Taisen Miyata's *A Study of the Ritual Mudras in the Shingon Tradition* (1984), Dale Todaro's "A Study of the Earliest Garbha Vidhi of the Shingon Sect." (*JIAS*, 1986, Vol. 9, No. 2) and Richard K. Payne's *Feeding the Gods* (1985). The impetus for including these explanations is given in the author's introduction when he says:

"... Although it is not possible to disclose all of Shingon's secrets in this book, it seems equally impossible to withhold whatever might be of value to a wider audience." (p. xviii)

Much soul searching has occurred recently in the Shingon tradition and a trend to make some of the

"secret" practices more available to any interested and committed party has developed over the last ten years in Japan. In part, the tradition is responding to a widespread social and institutional need to re-emphasize the benefits of its traditional meditation techniques, both complex and abbreviated. Needless to say, these techniques are not suitable or attractive to everyone and the requirements of serious Shingon meditation will not be lost on the reader.

I recommend this work as the best overall introduction today on Japanese Shingon Buddhism. It is comprehensive, authoritative, easy to read and fully referenced to permit further detailed investigation. While repeating historical and doctrinal information found in other sources, it is the first work to combine somewhat detailed explanations of Shingon meditation techniques with Shingon doctrines on attaining enlightenment in the present body.

Dale Todaro, New York, NY

1. Chou Yi-liang, "Tantrism in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, VIII, 1045; Tajima Ryūjin, *Les Deux Grands Maṇḍalas et la Doctrine de L'esoterisme Shingon*, 1959; Hakeda Yoshito, *Kūkai Major Works*, 1972; Matsunaga Yūkei, "A History of Tantric Buddhism in India with Reference to Chinese Translations," *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilizations Essays in Honor of Herbert V. Guenther on His Sixtieth Birthday* (1977); Matsunaga, Daigon & Alicia, *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism*, Vols. 1 & 2 (1978); Kiyota Minoru, *Shingon Buddhism: Theory and Practice* (1978); etc.

The Merton Annual: Studies in Thomas Merton, Religion, Culture, Literature and Social Concerns, Vol. 1.

Edited by Robert E. Daggy, et al. New York: AMS Press, 1988. \$42.50.

The reviewer of *The Merton Annual* is confronted with a wide variety of tributes, themes, proposals, dialogues, speculations, personal notes, as well as a bibliographic survey, reviews and Merton's Zen-like drawings. Since there is more material than one can adequately discuss in such short space, I will just briefly mention each of the contributions in the order of their appearance, and insert a few markers to indicate what I take to be the key essays.

The first is the most significant — "The Zen Insight of Shen Hui," — an unpublished manuscript of Merton's written early in 1968. It was to have introduced Richard S. Y. Chi's translation of the writings of the Seventh Ch'an Patriarch which unfortunately never appeared. About it, Chi wrote in a letter to Merton: "It will be immortal, and the work of Shen Hui will also be immortalized by your introduction." In his essay Merton suggests that Shen Hui was a revolutionary figure in Ch'an, as important as Hui Neng, who taught that there is no *dharma* to teach, and that one cannot canonize the pure without also canonizing the impure along with it. What most matters to him, Merton writes, "is not a 'sign' of authenticity but authenticity itself." (12)

In the second essay, "Zen Influence on Thomas Merton's View of Self," Bonnie Thurston traces Merton's intra-religious views by rehearsing the dialogue between Buddhist Emptiness and Christian *knosis*. She is rightly convinced that Merton's theological anthropology was most influenced by the Zen process of ridding the self of self. In her view, Merton understood that in both Christianity and Zen, self-emptying is the context from which love arises.

The next two essays are more personal and biographical, and take us beyond Merton the thinker to Merton as artist, poet, romantic, dreamer. The first, "HARPO'S PROGRESS: Notes Toward an Understanding of Merton's Way" is by Robert Lax, a long-time friend and correspondence partner. HARPO, a pseudonym which Merton used in his anti-letters to Lax, is a creative attempt to recreate Merton's idiosyncratic ways. It is followed by a conversation with Matthew Kelty, O.C.S.O., called "Looking Back to Merton: Memories and Impressions/An Interview," edited by Dewey Weiss Kramer. Kelty was a novice under Merton for two and a half years. His remembrances and deft insights correct mistaken impressions which have circulated about Merton, for example Monica Furlong's suggestions in *Merton: A Biography* that he took himself very seriously, and that his relationship with his superior Dom James was often strained. Kelty, from an insider's-eye-view, very matter-of-factly refocuses some of these impressions.

The next two essays construe what the authors claim to be Merton's central method and central message. William H. Shannon in "Thomas Merton and the Living Tradition of Faith" traces the development of Merton's concern for methodology from *The Sign of Jonas*, in which he moved from speculation to personal experience, to *No Man is an Island* and *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* in which tradition became a vital center of his creative activity. For Merton, he argues, tradition needed to be enriched and surpassed through an openness to the world of other faiths.

Next, James Conner, O.C.S.O., writes a pivotal though brief essay, "The Experience of God and the Experience of Nothingness in Thomas Merton," which he begins with Merton's own words: "Leave nothingness as it is. In it, he is present." For Conner these words express, or come near to expressing, Merton's central message — it is in and through utter self-emptying that disciples unite with the self-emptying of Christ. Brief though it is, when read alongside the Thurston essay, it provides readers with the context from which Merton could maintain his bold statement: "I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Christianity." (29)

The next two essays shift our attention to his prophetic dimension, to the issue of peace and peacemaking. In one of the finest, most provocative inclusions in the volume, itself prophetic, "The Peacemaker: Merton's Critique and Model" David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B., places Merton before us as a prophet. Skillfully he indicates that Merton's model of peacemaking is a "model-shattering model" (119) for there can be no model, least of all monasticism, for the shattering insight that God is the only peacemaker. Paul E. Dinter follows Brother David by suggesting in his "Merton, Non-violence and the Bishop's Pastoral" that Merton's writings, though earlier than the Bishops' Pastoral, *The Challenge of Peace* (1980), may be more prophetic (e.g., his views on the "just war teaching").

Three of the next four works relate primarily to Merton's poetry, and the fourth to his use of language. Patrick F. O'Connell's "The Geography of Solitude, Thomas Merton's 'Elias — Variations on a Theme'," David D. Cooper's "From Prophecy to Parody: Thomas Merton's cables to the Ace" and Gail Rainshaw's "The Pattern in Thoms Merton's cables to the Ace" discuss Merton's longer poetry. Michael Rukstelis, C.O., in "Thomas Merton's Understanding: The Claritas Strategy" explores Merton's attraction to William Blake's aesthetic spirituality. For

Rukstelis this became an important backdrop out of which Merton's contemplative insights emerged.

The next essay, "Merton's Journey from Seeds to New Seeds" by Ruth Fox, O.S.B., highlights the development of several fundamental themes (e.g., true self and false self, mercy and compassion, solitude and the world, and monastic virtues) from Merton's earlier *Seeds of Contemplation* (1949) to his *New Seeds of Contemplation* (1961). Rather than the word "change," which she uses to describe this development, I would have used the word "complementarity" to describe the parallels. What emerges in her essay is a picture of a monk on the move, yet in the stillness of the silence at the center of the turning world, and a monk who clearly anticipated Vatican II.

John Albert, O.C.S.O., in "Lights Across the Ridge: Thomas Merton and Henry David Thoreau," attempts to step inside Merton's environment in order to reanimate his spirit. A "second-generation Merton student," he visited Merton's Kentucky hermitage, Our Lady of Gethsemani, to develop creative connections between Merton and Thoreau. Keeping a journal of his observations, as Merton would have, he attempted "to see what Merton saw, looking for what he saw by first looking to the phenomenon of clouds and mist, of crows and jet planes, of light across the ridge ..." (294) This preoccupation, while at first enticing, tends to distract the reader from Merton to Albert's writing about Merton.

Aside from the essays, one of the outstanding contributions of this anthology is that it directs readers toward other resources. In what is to be a regular feature, Robert E. Daggy writes "The Merton Phenomenon in 1987: A Bibliographic Survey," an invaluable resource for serious students of Merton's development. The *Annual* concludes with six reviews of books on or about Merton along with notes on all the contributors.

Clearly one's response to *The Merton Annual* will be influenced and perhaps shaped by one's intellectual/spiritual resonance with the monk who spoke in so many tongues (autobiographical, theological, contemplative, lyrical, fictive, prophetic, and visual), and superbly in each. For those to whom Merton's life and work is an expression of the monastic archetype in everyone, and who are smitten by his spiritual eloquence, each selection will deepen and enrich the contours of that view. For those who are less sympathetic, cognizant of a seeming contradiction implicit in a monk's calling attention in writing to his spiritual practice, this volume will seem uneven. Its strengths I believe are the Merton-Zen connection, especially in the heretofore unpublished essay introducing the Seventh Patriarch Shen Hui, in Thurston and Conner's essays on Merton's Buddhism, in Shannon's, Rukstelis' and Fox's reflec-

tions on Merton's methodology, clearly in Brother David's empathetic description of Merton's "model-shattering model," in Daggy's extensive Bibliographic Survey (1987), and in the tasteful weave of Merton's drawings.

In summary, the first *Merton Annual* laudably achieves what it sets out to do — to reintroduce us to Merton's prophetic, mystical and artistic message. Its admirable assembly of essays allows the reader to become intimate with some of the deepest traces of Merton's monastic spirituality. How fitting, therefore, to close with a line from Merton's journal *The Sign of Jonas*: "The man who began this journal is dead." (328) Thomas Merton died twenty years ago today, December 10, 1968.

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Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought
Edited by Peter N. Gregory. Studies in East Asian Buddhism No. 5.
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987. ix + 474 pp., hardback:
\$37.50.

The fifth book in the Kuroda Institute's ongoing series of works dealing with East Asian Buddhism, *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* grew out of a conference organized by the Institute in May, 1981 dealing with the recurrent theme of the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese thought. The book is divided into three parts and contains a total of ten essays. Part one provides a historical background of Western scholarly discussions on the topic. Part two covers the theme as it occurred in Chinese Buddhist thought. Part three deals with the impact of the topic in the cultural sphere.

The division of the book into three parts suggests a natural approach to reviewing it. I will cover one section at a time, describing its essays and evaluating its contents, and conclude with a few general thoughts on the book.

Part one is labeled "The Sudden and Gradual Debates." As mentioned above, this section provides a historical background to Western scholarly discussions on the theme of sudden and gradual in Chinese thought. The initial essay in this section is Paul Demiéville's 1947 article "The Mirror of the Mind." This is a good choice to introduce the topic. Demiéville's essay on the sudden/gradual polarity established the vocabulary for later discussions on the topic. As the title suggests, Demiéville traces the metaphor of mirror in different traditions, both East and West, showing how it operates to express the sudden transformation undergone in the mystical experience.

The second essay was written by R. A. Stein in response to Demiéville's article. In it he more closely examines the terminology employed in the sudden/gradual debates, showing that the sudden aspect of the Buddhist experience should be taken to mean simultaneous comprehension of

the absolute and the phenomenal, and not their instantaneous comprehension. In essence, he is refining Demiéville's work, bringing out further nuances of the subject. Like Demiéville's work, though dated, it provides further background to scholarly discussions on this topic in the West.

The last work in this historical survey brings the discussion up-to-date. Writing for this book, Luis Gómez further refines the discussion of the sudden/gradual polarity in his article on the metaphor of effort and intuition in Buddhist thought and practice. Through a number of examples, he shows how the subject of sudden and gradual is in truth multivalent in the Chinese tradition. There is no one set of doctrines that characterizes either the sudden or gradual position, nor any set of doctrines that can be used to distinguish these two positions universally. The language of the two camps overlap in many ways, reminding us that we have to approach this polarity with caution.

The principles of disciplining children are applicable in evaluating this section. In disciplining children the personality of the child needs to be separated from his or her action. In the same way these articles need to be distinguished between what they are and what they do. Although Demiéville and Stein's articles are seminal to the discussion of the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese thought and so deserve inclusion in this book, what they actually do leaves room for consideration. Demiéville, in concentrating on the single metaphor of the mirror, glosses over the differences between the traditions on which he writes. So, even though he brings to light this important topic in Chinese Buddhism, the way he handles it leaves us hungering for the specifics. Stein attempts to provide some of those specifics, and his

conclusions do have some appeal. Unfortunately, his article focuses mostly on Tibetan Buddhism. Which leaves it up to Gómez to finally provide the perspective needed to discuss the issue of sudden and gradual in Chinese thought with any amount of precision. As such, it makes for a fitting conclusion to this section. Demiéville and Stein are needed for an understanding of where the discussion on sudden and gradual has been. Gómez is needed to show us where it should go, leading naturally into the second part of the book.

The subtleties in the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese Buddhism are explored in part two. The section is arranged historically, starting with Tao-sheng (c.360-434) and Chih-i (538-597), moving to Shen-hui (684-758) and Tsung-mi (780-841) and finishing with *k'an-hua* meditation. It is a neat package, intelligently arranged to cover a broad spectrum of Chinese Buddhist thought. It is also the most rewarding part of the book. The articles in this section include:

Whalen Lai on Tao-sheng's theory of sudden enlightenment. Tao-sheng was one of the first thinkers in China to propose the theory of sudden enlightenment. Interestingly enough, at first he framed his argument about *Abhidharmic* literature and the One Vehicle doctrine (*ekayāna*) as found in the *Lotus Sūtra*. Only later, with the introduction of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* into China was he able to argue for sudden enlightenment on the basis of the all-prevailing Buddha-nature.

Neal Donner on Chih-i's conjoining of sudden and gradual. As might be expected, Chih-i tried to find a middle position between sudden and gradual. He taught that teaching and meditation are both sudden (that is, perfected) and gradual. Stages in the path are needed to avoid arrogance, he argued, and perfection to avoid self-deprecation. He did not want to downplay either pole, instead he sought to harmonize them, once again demonstrating the synthetic nature of Chih-i's thought.

John McRae on Shen-hui and the teaching of sudden enlightenment in early Ch'an. An excellent article, it puts Shen-hui's thought into

good perspective in two ways. First, it shows how Shen-hui's thinking did not differ all that much from already existing Ch'an thought. Second, it demonstrates that Shen-hui's polemics against the so-called Northern school of Ch'an established the slogans found in later Ch'an. The crux of the matter was Shen-hui's teaching style. He was more concerned with gaining converts than training disciples, so his rhetoric concentrated on a form of the religious experience which emphasized the religious experience at the time of conversion. That was the heart of the matter for Shen-hui, with the implication being that Shen-hui was not as interested in destroying Northern Ch'an as he was in trying to establish a style of rhetoric that avoided just those dangers in practice, especially dualism, that Northern Ch'an itself recognized.

Peter Gregory on Tsung-mi's notion of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation. Another excellent article, it explores Tsung-mi's synthetic approach to sudden and gradual. To support the idea of sudden enlightenment in Buddhist practice, Tsung-mi argued that in the womb of the Tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*) enlightenment is the natural state of mind. But, saying enlightenment is the natural state of mind left Tsung-mi having to account for the presence of ignorance. He did so by employing the Yogācāra idea of the storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), which is the seedbed of impurities, including ignorance. Tsung-mi stated the storehouse consciousness has two aspects, the enlightened and the unenlightened. Through an elaborate diagram, he illustrated how, through the storehouse consciousness, the suffering of karma comes to be and how it is put to an end. Using this scheme, Tsung-mi was able to preserve sudden enlightenment, by then the orthodoxy of Ch'an, while still accounting for gradual practice.

The last article in part two is Robert Buswell on the evolution of *k'an-hua* meditation in Ch'an Buddhism. Buswell analyzes the forces driving Ch'an towards *k'an-hua* practice, especially the need to put Buddhism in a form ame-

nable to the Chinese. Necessary elements included the Chinese emphasis on this world, the Chinese preference for substantiative metaphors, and the Chinese choice of suddenness as the preferred method of insight. Because these elements were indigenous, two consequences resulted. One, Ch'an made Buddhist spirituality more accessible to the Chinese, and two, *k'an-hua* meditation was the natural consummation of native forces which were at work all along in the Ch'an tradition.

As stated above, this is the most rewarding part of the book. The centrality and the malleability of the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese Buddhism is brought to light through these articles. The polarity was central in that it proved a dominant metaphor in Chinese Buddhist discussions on the nature of enlightenment and how to attain it. This was true not only in Ch'an, the tradition most noted for employing this polarity, but also in Chih-i's T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, and even in such early Buddhist thinkers as Tao-sheng. The polarity was malleable in the number of ways it was used. Chih-i applied it to both teaching and practice, Shen-hui used it as a rhetorical device to inspire conversion, and Tsung-mi employed it to establish the ontological grounds for sudden enlightenment followed by gradual practice. This malleability in the use of the metaphor is a good object lesson in hermeneutics, clearly illustrating the diverse interpretations possible for a single idea. By showing the centrality of the sudden/gradual polarity, this section provides valuable insights into the nature of Chinese Buddhism; by illustrating the malleability of this polarity, it offers rich food for thought in the area of hermeneutics. Taken as a whole, this section forms the heart of the book; it pulses with intellectual vitality.

The third section on sudden and gradual in the cultural sphere provides a refreshing twist on the subject. This section is comprised of two articles, one by Richard Lynn examining the Ch'an-poetry analogy in poetic criticism, the other by James Cahill on Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's "Southern

and Northern Schools" in the history and theory of painting.

Lynn takes the overview approach in his article, opting for breadth rather than depth. Instead of dwelling on any one poet or school's use of sudden and gradual in poetic criticism, he provides a historical survey of the subject. Using this approach he is able to present the spectrum of Chinese thought, including Buddhist, Neo-Confucian, and Philosophic Taoism, that was employed to argue for and against the sudden/gradual polarity as it applied to poetry. Much of the argument centered around the issue of freedom versus rules in poetic composition, in much the same way that Buddhists argued the issue of sudden enlightenment versus gradual cultivation in their practice.

Cahill focuses on Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636), an influential thinker in Chinese painting theory. Tung constructed an intricate theory of the difference between the "Southern" and "Northern" schools of painting, which included patriarchal lineages, theories of practice, and levels of enlightenment. When looked at more closely, however, his work served a polemical purpose more than anything else. Tung's theories were meant to defend amateurs working in free, spontaneous styles from professionals working in detailed, decorative, and academic styles. So Tung highlights the political uses for which the sudden/gradual polarity was employed in Chinese thought.

The interesting point of these two articles is that they offer insight into areas that are not normally taken into account in considerations of Chinese thought. A culture is judged on its artifacts as much as, if not more so, than on its thought. The interfusion of these two concerns come together nicely here, showing how thought can influence, justify, and direct artistic endeavors. As such, Lynn and Cahill's respective articles are a welcome addition to the book, which, after all, is supposed to be about sudden and gradual in Chinese thought in the first place, upon which note we are ready to turn our concluding remarks.

There are three areas that need to be evaluated in thinking about the quality of any given book. The first is the idea that informs the book as a whole. The second is the presentation of that idea. The third is the actual contents of the book. In each of these areas, *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* succeeds quite admirably. The idea that informs the book, the sudden/gradual polarity, was of no small consequence in Chinese thought. It formed a centerpiece piece of intellectual dialogue throughout much of Chinese history. As such, the detailed treatment of that idea as found in this book makes for an exciting topic of investigation. The presentation of that idea is handled nicely, too. The division of the book into three parts makes for an effective package. The topics informing each section, as discussed above,

provides a well-rounded review of the subject, leaving one with a thorough grounding in the topic, not just in its Chinese manifestations, but in Western interpretations of the subject as well, something that is always helpful in putting essays of these types into perspective. Finally, the content of the book is of the highest caliber. On the whole, the essays are well thought-out and informative. New insights are offered into Chinese thought and culture, adding well to our store of knowledge in these respective areas. All-in-all, then, this is a solid book. Its contents and conclusions certainly deserve consideration in any discussion on the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese thought.

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Nagarjuna's "Seventy Stanzas:" A Buddhist Psychology of Emptiness by David Ross Komito. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1987. 226 pp., paper: \$14.95.

Komito has set out to achieve two ends which are often seen as antagonistic to one another. On the one hand, he has attempted to make Nagarjuna's *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness* (Sanskrit: *Shunyata-saptatikarika-nama*) accessible to those who, while not scholars, are intent on understanding the thought of a figure so central to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. On the other hand, he has attempted to provide scholars with a thorough treatment of a text which is an important component of the Nagarjuna corpus. It is a pleasure to say that he has accomplished the difficult task of speaking to both audiences within the confines of a single volume. The work itself consists of four parts: a foreword and three chapters. The foreword briefly retells one of the legends surrounding Nagarjuna, that of his visit to the realm of the nagas, the supposed origin of his name.

The first chapter, entitled "Buddhist Psychology," explains the book's subtitle. The Tibetan Buddhists attempted to integrate the mass of Buddhist material they received from India into a single coherent whole. As explained by Komito, this integration was organized around the subject—object relation of knowing. Within such an explanatory system, the import of Nagarjuna's work is understood to be that it demonstrates the emptiness of the object of consciousness. Nagarjuna's work is seen as a sort of therapeutic philosophy which, by developing wisdom about the nature of the object of consciousness:

results in a transformation of the karmic formations and so the entire perceptual process which depends upon them is also transformed. As the creation of objects in the perceptual process is

transformed, what had previously appeared as samsara now appears as nirvana. (pp. 67-8)

The second chapter is composed of two parts. First, a translation of the *Seventy Stanzas* into very readable English. The second part is much more complex and will appeal more to the expectations of scholars. It comprises the Tibetan text of the *Seventy Stanzas* rendered into Roman script, accompanied by notes as to variations between the Peking and sDe dge editions. Along with the Tibetan, the same text as appeared in the English translation of the *Seventy Stanzas* is repeated with a typographical discrimination between the literal text and the translator's insertions. This is done by italicizing the literal part of the translation, while printing the insertions in Roman. This presents a text more easily read than the more customary technique of demarcating insertions with parentheses. Last, there follows a new commentary of the *Seventy Stanzas* by Geshe Sonam Rinchen which, according to the linear notes, "was created expressly for the contemporary English reader." This commentary not only expands the otherwise terse text, but also assists the reader to follow the flow of the argument as Nagarjuna develops his position in dialogue with various opposing positions.

Third chapter is a brief summary of the place of the *Seventy Stanzas* in the corpus of Nagarjuna's works and a discussion of the history of its transmission to Tibet and its importance there. This chapter closes with a section on the history of the translation of this text into English. This includes a discussion of Komito's disagreement with Lindtner, who has himself done major work on Nagarjuna and the *Seventy Stanzas*.

Komito's approach to translating this text is not the only one possible. In sharp contrast to Komito's style is that of Lindtner, for example in his *Master of Wisdom: Writings of the Buddhist Master Nagarjuna* (Oakland: Dharma Press, 1986). Lindtner's translation is very literal, attempting to reproduce the extremely precise, but very condensed form of Nagarjuna's text as closely as possible. Here, for example, is Lindtner's rendering of the ninth stanza:

Permanent is not, impermanent
is not, not-self is not, self is not,
impure is not, pure is not, pleasure
is not, and suffering is not.
Therefore the perverted views
do not exist. (p. 97)

In contrast, Komito renders the ninth stanza as follows:

Because contaminated things
arise in dependence on one
another they do not exist inherently
as permanent phenomena
nor do they exist inherently as
impermanent phenomena; neither
as phenomena with self-nature
nor without self-nature;
neither as pure nor as impure;
neither as blissful nor as suffer-

ing. It is thus that the four distortions do not exist as qualities which inhere in phenomena, but rather as imputed to phenomena. (p. 81)

For those of us who are not Nagarjuna scholars, what is important in comparing these two translations is not attempting to decide which is "right" or "best." Rather, it is that by having more than one translation we have more perspectives from which to see Nagarjuna and that our understanding is enriched thereby. Reading different translations in parallel can often clarify a text which is otherwise opaque.

Komito provides us with a very accessible translation of an important work by Nagarjuna. While the perspective from which this translation was prepared is that of the later, scholastic tradition of Tibet, Komito explains the significance of this interpretative orientation adequately. This allows the reader to see how this work influenced the history of Buddhist thought in its Tibetan development, as well as providing an interpretative orientation from which the work may be approached by contemporary students of the Dharma.

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BUDDHA DHARMA KYOKAI (SOCIETY), INC. (BDK USA)

Perhaps the greatest patron of Buddhism in modern times is The Reverend Dr. Yehan Numata, a 92-year old industrialist turned philanthropist, who received an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from the University of Hawaii in December 1988. Yehan Numata though born into a temple family, became a businessman solely to obtain profits which could be diverted to the propagation of Buddhism. His belief was that the Buddha's teachings, which are based on the spirit of wisdom and compassion, would assist in bringing about lasting peace and happiness for all humanity. Embarking on his quest, he established a precision measuring instruments manufacturing company called Mitutoyo Corporation in 1934. Profits from the enterprise enabled him to found the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai (Buddhist Promoting Foundation) (acronym BDK) in 1965. Under his guidance, this organization began to sponsor various activities to share the teachings of the Buddha with as many people as possible. Late in life, Yehan Numata became a Buddhist priest.

The Teaching of Buddha. The first and most significant project undertaken thus far has been the re-editing, re-publishing and dissemination of *The Teaching of Buddha*, a small book containing the essence of Buddha Dharma. The book was an abridged translation of the Japanese work, *Shinyaku Bukkyō Seiten* (The New Translation of the Buddhist Scriptures) compiled and published by the Bukkyō Kyōkai (The Buddhist Society) under the supervision of The Reverend Muan Kizu in 1925. It was believed that not only would *The Teaching of Buddha* be an authoritative introduction to Buddhism, but it could also become a daily source of inspiration and a guide for daily living. In order to make it understandable and available to the peoples of the world, the book has been translated into 35 different languages, printed, and nearly four million copies distributed free of charge in 47 countries.

Tripitaka Translation Project. Another major undertaking was the translation and publication of the voluminous *Taishō Chinese Tripitaka* in English, first initiated in 1982 in Tokyo. It was the desire of Yehan Numata to introduce the still largely unexplored Chinese Mahayana Tripitaka throughout the English-speaking world. A 13-member group of leading Japanese Buddhist scholars, headed by Professor Shōyū Hanayama of the Musashino Women's College, was formed as the Tripitaka Editorial Committee, along with the Tripitaka Publications Committee chaired by Professor Shōjun Bandō of the Ōtani University. These two committees are responsible for administering the overall project of the translation and publication of approximately 10% of the Chinese Tripitaka by the year 2000 A.D. Dr. Gadjin Nagao, Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University, is currently the overall advisor of the entire project.

Buddhist Studies Chairs. The third major project was the endowment of Buddhist Chairs at leading universities of the world. It was Yehan Numata's objective to make the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism available to the academic world on a day-to-day basis. Begun in 1984, the Numata Chairs in Buddhist Studies have been established at five institutions in the U.S., the University of California at Berkeley, Harvard University, University of Chicago, University of Hawaii and the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, and one in Canada, the University of Calgary. Negotiations are currently underway with some universities in Europe for similar chairs. Sufficient contributions to the endowed chairs are made annually for up to twenty years, by which time each chair is expected to have become self-perpetuating from the cumulative funds.

Administrative Control. In order to supervise the activities to promote Buddhism in overseas areas, Yehan Numata insisted that in each country concerned, a local organization should be formed to be financially and operationally responsible for all propagational activities undertaken. Toward this end, a number of affiliates of BDK Japan were organized in countries where branches of the Mitutoyo Corporation were located, such as in the United States, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, Taiwan, Singapore, West Germany and England. In the United States, the first such organization, called the Buddhist Educational Studies, Inc., was formed in 1982 in Springfield, Virginia, to publish Buddhist materials and conduct educational activities. In 1986, it was superseded by the Buddha Dharma Kyōkai (Society), Inc. (acronym BDK USA) in Emerson, New Jersey. Its first President is The Reverend Kenryū Tsuji, Minister, Ekōji Temple, Springfield, VA, and the former Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, and as Trustees, Shigeru Yamamoto, former Chairman of the Board, MTI Corporation, MITUTOYO U.S. & Canada Operations, Bishop Seigen Yamaoka, the current Head of the Buddhist Churches of America, and The Reverend Seishin Yamashita, Director of the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research. This organization serves as the headquarters and the umbrella for all of the propagational activities in the U.S. It retains control over the U.S. responsibilities for the Tripitaka Translation Project, the distribution of *The Teaching of Buddha*, and the administering of the Numata Chairs in Buddhist Studies, as well as miscellaneous projects, including publications.

Numata Center. The Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research was established in November 1984 in Berkeley, CA. Its dedication and opening ceremonies were attended by the leaders of BDK Japan and by Dr. George Rupp, then Dean of the Divinity School at Harvard and Provost Leonard Kuhi of the University of California at Berkeley, along with many distinguished Buddhist scholars and guests. The principal role played by the Numata Center is to act as the agent of BDK Japan in the Tripitaka Translation and Publication Project and assist in the finalization of the translation manuscripts. It also assists the BDK USA and BDK Japan in the accomplishment of their respective missions. Key staff members include Dr. Nobuo Haneda and the Reverends Shōjō Oi and Seishin Yamashita.

Distribution of *The Teaching of Buddha*. For this function, two organizations were formed. The Sudatta Society was established in Hawaii in 1978. Its leadership has been in the hands of Mr. Ralph Honda, a prominent Honolulu businessman, from the very beginning. Through his diligent efforts, 190,000 copies of *The Teaching of Buddha* have been distributed to hotels, hospitals, prisons, and military units in the Hawaiian Islands. The other organization is the Society for Buddhist Understanding established in 1978 in the City of Industry, California. The head of this group is Mr. Tomohito Katsunuma. Thus far, Mr. Katsunuma has succeeded in the distribution and placement of 325,000 copies of *The Teaching of Buddha* in hotels, libraries, temples, and the military forces on the U.S. mainland.

Tripitaka Translation and Publication. The Tripitaka Editorial Committee in Japan selected 80 prominent Buddhist scholars, who were able to translate the Buddhist Scriptures from classical Chinese into English. These academicians were selected from ten different countries, with the U.S. and Japan having 40% and 45% of the translators respectively. Among the American scholars chosen are Professors Stanley Weinstein of Yale University, Lewis Lancaster of University of California at Berkeley, David Chappell of University of Hawaii, Richard Gard of Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, Taitetsu Unno of Smith College, Minoru Kiyota of University of Wisconsin, Robert Gimello of University of Arizona, Francis Cook of University of California at Riverside, John Keenan of Middlebury College, Minor Rogers of Washington and Lee University, Leo Pruden of University of Oriental Studies, Paul Groner of University of Virginia, Allen Andrews of University of Vermont, Kenneth Tanaka of Institute

of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, and Drs. Diana Paul, J. C. and Thomas Cleary. Some of the Tripiṭaka texts being translated by these scholars are the *Diamond Sūtra* (T-235), *Śrīmālā Sūtra* (T-353), *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (T-278), *Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra* (T-1519), *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (T-642), *Commentary on Vasubandhu's Triṃśikā* (T-1585), *Profound Meaning of the "Three Treatises"* (T-1852), *Commentary on the Buddhāvahīni Sūtra* (T-1530), *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* (T-1593), *Blue Cliff Record* (T-2003), *Gateless Barrier* (T-2005), *Bodaiśhinron* (T-1665), and *Rokusodangyō* (T-2008). For these and all other translations, the BDK USA makes payments worldwide through the Numata Translation Center in Berkeley, CA. The translation project is progressing smoothly with the first volume expected to appear in 1990. Among the first texts to be published are the *Śrīmālā Sūtra*, *The Golden Light Sūtra*, *The Lotus Sūtra*, *The Four-Part Vinaya*, and the *Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra*.

Visiting Professorships in Buddhism in USA. During 1984, two Numata Chairs in Buddhist Studies were established, at the University of California, Berkeley, and at Harvard. Since its inception at the University of California, five Japanese professors have filled the chair: Professors Hisao Inagaki of Ryukoku University, Shōryū Katsura of Hiroshima University, Musashi Tachikawa of Nagoya University, and Professors Emeritus Akira Fujieda of Kyoto University, and Jikido Takasaki of Tokyo University. At Harvard, two professors have completed their assignments, Professor Yuichi Kajiyama of Kyoto University and Professor Michio Tokunaga of Kyoto Women's College. The University of Chicago was endowed with a chair in 1985. Two professors, Dr. Yoshiro Tamura of Rissho University and Dr. Masao Abe, Professor Emeritus of Nara University of Education have taught in the program. The University of Hawaii received its chair in 1988, with the first Visiting Professor being Dr. Hisao Inagaki. In 1986, a Numata Chair was established at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, CA. Under a special teaching arrangement, the following professors have lectured at the Institute: Dr. Roger Corless of Duke University, Dr. Allan Andrews of University of Vermont, Dr. Whalen Lai of University of California at Davis, and Dr. John Carman of Harvard.

Publication of Buddha Dharma. Since the popular *The Teaching of Buddha* was a condensed version of a much longer text, the decision was made in 1982 to make available to the English reading public an unabridged edition of Muan Kizu's *The New Translation of Buddhist Scriptures*. This would provide the essence of Buddhist doctrines in considerable detail. The first edition of the complete translation, called *Buddha Dharma*, was translated by Buddhist scholars in America and published in 1984. The revised second edition, complete with a section on Scriptural Sources, a glossary, and index is due to be published in early 1990, again by the BDK USA. For both editions, Buddhist Churches of America Minister Emeritus Kyoshiro Tokunaga, as the editor-in-chief, devoted countless hours in bringing the project to fruition.

Pacific World. The first issue of the *Pacific World* was published in June 1925 by Yehan Numata when he was still an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley. As the editor-in-chief, he published it on a bi-monthly basis in 1925 and 1926, and then on a monthly basis in 1927 and 1928. Articles in the early issues concerned not only Buddhism, but also other cultural subjects such as art, poetry, and education, and then by 1928, the articles became predominantly Buddhistic. Included in the mailing list for the early issues were such addressees as the Cabinet members of the U.S. Government, Chambers of Commerce, political leaders, libraries, publishing houses, labor unions and foreign institutions. The publication of the *Pacific World* ceased after Yehan Numata returned to Japan following completion of his studies in 1928 and the receipt of a M.A. degree in statistics. The lack of funds also precluded further publication. In 1982, the publication of the *Pacific World* was again resumed, this time on an annual basis.

by the Institute of Buddhist Studies with funds provided by the foundation, BDK USA. The 1988 autumn issue of the journal was distributed to 6,500 addressees throughout the world. The journal is now devoted to the dissemination of articles on general and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism for both academic and lay readers.

The officers of BDK USA are grateful for the encouragement and support received from the institutions with endowed chairs, the Buddhist clergy, and lay people in BDK USA efforts to disseminate the teachings of the Buddha throughout the United States and look forward to their continuing assistance.

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