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Mahāyāna Essence as Seen in the Concept of
“Return to This World”

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I

“How now are we to understand this Pure Land? Is there really some special place other than this world to which we may go after death, a Pure Land of joy and peace? ... Do common folk, for the most part, believe that their faithful repetition of the nembutsu will assure their entry into some sort of Pure Land—wherever that may be—after they die? Perhaps sophisticated Buddhists, following the lead of Shinran, understand that the Pure Land is not a real place at all, but basically a symbol for a different state of mind; but would such a notion be attractive and acceptable to ordinary practicers of Shin Buddhism?”

Gordon D. Kaufman, a leading Christian theologian at Harvard Divinity School, has asked this question to those of us who are inside the Shin Buddhist tradition concerning the crucial Shin concept of the “birth into the Pure Land.” We should not ignore this question because it was raised by an outsider of the Shin community, nor because it is a problem of “faith” to be solved only subjectively and individually through an indescribable religious experience. If we assume such an attitude, Shinran’s Pure Land doctrine will lose its universal significance of making human life meaningful for the contemporary world.

Kaufman himself addresses a similar question to Christians concerning the crucial concept of “God.” His own theological work started with and may end by finding a reasonable answer legitimate to the modern way of thinking. In such a reconstruction of the concept of “God,” he criticizes a view that “God” can be conceived only through a special religious experience, because it confines “God” within the “circle of faith,” not giving a fundamental meaning for the life of all contemporary people.

When we treat the problem of the “birth into the Pure Land” from Kaufman’s standpoint, there arise several questions. These questions should mostly be attributed to a typically traditional way of placing it on linear time; namely, it is placed on a simple straight line of
“hearing the teaching” \( \Rightarrow \) “realizing shinjin by saying Amida’s Name” \( \Rightarrow \) “attaining birth in the Pure Land.” In such an ordering of these key notions of Shinran’s thought on linear time, shinjin, which is the most primordial in his soteriological system, would lose its true meaning and fall into a mere “ticket” to get to the Pure Land after death only in order to have the sensual pleasures therein—as has been taught and appreciated within the Shin community.

Regarding shinjin as a “ticket” for attaining birth in the Pure Land has blurred its actual function in a religious life for hundreds of years—since the introduction of Pure Land Buddhism to Japan—in spite of the efforts to amend such a view by several Pure Land masters including Shinran. This view also regards the Pure Land as a place where people escape from actual human life, which is full of sorrows and pains with which it is hard to deal. For those who consider the Pure Land in such a way, it becomes a “future paradise,” without giving a concrete meaning for the present life.

There is another way of thinking of shinjin as a product of religious intuition, through which “birth in the Pure Land” is to be only mystically experienced beyond the realm of this empirical world. It is a Pure Land Buddhist version of the “revelation of God” in the Christian sense. However, equating our present existence with Amida and seeing this actual world as nothing other than the Pure Land through intuition was strictly criticized by Shinran, for in that case the standpoint of “ordinary beings” (bombu) in the Pure Land tradition will be lost and it will be transformed into an esoteric Buddhist tradition for sages. For his part, Kaufman would strictly criticize such a view because it lacks a universal religious significance for people in the present world.

All we can do, therefore, to make the concept of “birth in the Pure Land” intelligible for our contemporaries is to reconstruct it on the basis of the true significance of the “ultimate reality,” which is to be traced back to the fundamental truth of Mahāyāna. To speak of the concept of “birth in the Pure Land” from a Mahāyāna standpoint, the concept of “return to this world” is indispensable to make the concepts more meaningful than it literally expresses. The concept of “return to this world,” however, has also been understood on the linear line mentioned above, which will hardly be acceptable by modern people. In this sense, we also have to rethink this concept in the light of the fundamental Mahāyāna doctrine.

The central purpose of my presentation is to claim that shinjin or nembutsu as revealed by Shinran is nothing but the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path, and that it is the concept of “return to this world” (gensō-ekdō) which fulfills the actual significance of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path to its utmost.
II

Placing the concept of "birth in the Pure Land" on linear time and regarding it as occurring after death has long occupied the minds of Pure Land followers, and has smoothly been accepted by them. "De­spising this defiled world and hoping to be reborn in the Pure Land" used to be a slogan of the Pure Land tradition in this country. It was only when the Western way of thinking was introduced to Japan after Meiji Imperial Restoration that such a view began to be grasped from another perspective with a strict criticism of the "orthodox" way of viewing it. And yet, such a view still remains deep at the bottom of fairly many people's minds even today in this country.

It was Nonomura Naoterō who first had doubt about the tradi­tional interpretation of "birth" limited only to the matter of after death. His criticism of the traditional view had two points: one is that the final purpose of the Pure Land teaching is not to be born in the Pure Land after death, and the other is that all the myths or mythological expres­sions of the Pure Land scriptures are no more than the means to lead us to shinjin (in Nonumura's terminology, jinshin, or deep mind) which Shinran advocated in order to let us know the true religious signifi­cance in our life. His claim, however, was too radical a one to be accepted by the "orthodox" scholars of Nishi-Hongwanji at that time, and resulted in a purge from his post at Ryukoku University. It is now almost seventy years since that time.

Similar pressures were brought upon Soga Ryōjin and Kaneko Daiei at Otani University for their "heretical" interpretation of "birth" and "Pure Land." They were both successors of Kiyozawa Manshi, who aimed at the reconstruction of the teaching of Higashi-Hongwanji in order to make it understandable to people who were being brain-washed by the Western way of thinking. Soga's claim was to find Amida at the deepest depth of one's existence, in which sense Amida cannot be objectified as something existing over-against us. Kaneko also tried to place the Pure Land within the spiritual realm which is not objectifiable, unlike the "orthodox" way of taking it as a concrete world existing somewhere apart from this world. Both Soga and Kaneko developed their understanding by taking over Kiyozawa's firm belief that religious truth is to be subjective and personal, which can be summarized in his words that "We do not believe in Buddha or God because they actually exist; they exist because we believe in them." It goes without saying that such a claim was a challenge to the traditional and "orthodox" view that everything concerning the religious life of Shin Buddhists starts from believing in the factual existence of Amida and Pure Land somewhere in the universe and sometime after death.

We have here come back to a point that the Pure Land "is not a
real place at all, but basically a symbol for a different state of mind," which Gordon Kaufman criticizes for not being acceptable by common people. Though Kaufman is suspicious about this, the "practitioner of shinjin," in its true sense in Shinran's terminology, neither grasps his/her "birth in the Pure Land" as a symbolic psychological matter, nor does he/she believe in it as a real substantial place to which we go after death. A "practitioner of shinjin" overcomes both extremes.

In the above sense, the following description by D.T. Suzuki may sound similar to what Kaufman rejects for his "symbolic" understanding of Amida and the Pure Land only appreciated by "sophisticated" Buddhists:

We don't go out of this world in order to be born in the Pure Land, but we carry the Pure Land all the time. Being born in the Pure Land means discovering the Pure Land in ourselves... My conclusion is that Amida is our inmost self, and when that inmost self is found we are born in the Pure Land. The kind of Pure Land located elsewhere, where we stay, is most undesirable.

This view by Suzuki may be acceptable from the standpoint of Zen way of thinking, which is quite similar to the following claim by Shin'ichi Hisamatsu:

Searching neither for Buddhas or Gods outside of man, nor for paradise or Pure Lands in other dimensions, Zen advances man as Buddha and actual existence as the Pure Land.

Even if we admitted such an interpretation by Zen thinkers, it would stand opposed to Shinran's lamentation found in the Kyōgyōshinshō:

The monks and laity of this latter age and the religious teachers of these times are floundering in concepts of "self-nature" and "mind-only," and they disparage the true realization of enlightenment in the Pure Land way.

It would be sufficient only to say that Shinran's standpoint is based on the actuality of bombu in whom the dichotomy of man and Amida, and of this world and the Pure Land is impossible to overcome. Moreover, if such a dichotomy can be overcome as Suzuki and Hisamatsu argue, there would be no room for the salvation of bombu through Amida's working.
III

So far, we have discussed roughly the two types of thinking of “birth in the Pure Land.” One is to place it on linear time after death as being “born” into somewhere called “Pure Land” which is generally conceived as being a substantial entity. The other is to equate Amida and Pure Land with our inmost self and this actual world in which we are living. This identity can be realized through a special religious intuition. Which of the two would be right?

We have to say that both may be accepted and also be rejected by Shinran. Because, for Shinran, “birth into the Pure Land” never fulfills its true significance without realizing shinjin, an awakening to the universal compassion working on everyone of us.

In this sense, the concept of “birth in the Pure Land” is explicated as something which reveals the resultant state of shinjin in order for us, who are living in the world of cause-and-effect, to be involved in such an awakening. Therefore, some might well anticipate in shinjin that they will be born in the Pure Land beautifully adorned as various sutras describe, and others that they will go to a world of nothingness. Either may be right if it is spoken with shinjin.

This sort of discussion has been repeated for a long time—since the introduction of Western way of thinking, or even before then—and seems to be going on as long as the Shin doctrine is comprehended only theoretically. But from the perspective of viewing Shin Buddhism as a Mahayana Bodhisattva path, i.e., on the ground of religious practice, the problem of “birth in the Pure Land,” with the above-mentioned two ways of answering it, would merely have a secondary significance. In other words, the assumption that “birth in the Pure Land” has its utmost importance as the final goal of the Shin practice would only perplex people within and without.

When we read Shinran carefully, we necessarily find the liberation from the present state of ourselves to be his central concern, and our future destiny to be a secondary one. It is clear that shinjin is his central concern and it is this shinjin that locates Shin Buddhism right on the Mahayana Bodhisattva path. This issue of when “birth into the Pure Land” is realized, at the present moment or after death, should be explored on this dimension.

The concept of “return to this world,” which is usually conceived as something we perform after “birth in the Pure Land” upon death, should be reconstructed from the perspective of Mahayana Bodhisattva path. Needless to say, this concept represents the Pure Land Buddhist version of the Mahayana idea of “benefiting others” along with “benefiting oneself,” both of which are necessarily required of a Mahayana Bodhisattva for the fulfillment of his/her ideal. Shin Buddhism, how-
ever, has long been conceived as a Buddhist school associated only with
a very personal and individual salvation. Consequently, shinjin is re-
garded as a special sort of self-satisfaction; as a matter of course, it
tends to confine one to one’s inner self and is not opened up to the out-
side world. This seems to be a natural effect of the aspect of shinjin
which explores one’s true nature from a negative perspective. The nega-
tive aspect that one is full of blind passions and bound by evil karma,
not having any possibility to reach enlightenment or to be saved, is
truly an awakening developed through shinjin, but it does not neces-
sarily mean the impossibility of the salvation of other people. The con-
cept of “return to this world” as a Pure Land expression of “benefiting
others,” the ideal of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path, should not be
apart from “benefiting oneself” expressed as attaining “birth in the Pure
Land.”

In addition to the fulfillment of “benefiting others,” the concept
of “return to this world” can also be regarded as a Pure Land Buddhist
version of the Mahāyāna concept of “nirvāṇa having no place to stay in”
(J. mujū-sho-nehān, Skt. apratīṣṭhita-nirvāṇa).

The notion of Shinran’s concept of “returning to this world” is
based on the Twenty-second Vow of Amida described in the Larger Sūtra
of Immeasurable Life, which states:

When I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattva of other Bud-
ha-lands who come and are born in my land will ultimately and
unfailingly attain [their rank of] “succession to the position [of
Buddhahood] after one lifetime”—except for those who, in accordance
with their own original vows, freely guide others to enlightenment,
don the armor of universal vows for the sake of sentient beings,
emancipate all beings, travel to Budhha-lands to perform bodhisattva practices, make offerings to all the
Buddhas and Tathagatas throughout the ten quarters, awaken
tentient beings countless as the sands of the Ganges, and bring
them to abide firmly in the unexcelled, right, true way. Such
bodhisattvas surpass ordinary ones, manifest the practices of all
the bodhisattva stages, and discipline themselves in the virtue of
Samantabhadra. Should it not be so, may I not attain the perfect
enlightenment.

The intent of this Vow is that Bodhisattvas (Pure Land practi-
tioners) who are born into the Pure Land immediately dwell in the as-
sured state for becoming Buddhas except those who wish to return
to this world in order to save others. However, among the names of this
Vow called by Shinran—“the Vow of necessary attainment of the rank
next to Buddhahood,” “the Vow of attainment of Buddhahood after one
lifetime,” “the Vow of directing virtue for our return to this world”—
more emphasis was put on “the Vow of directing virtue for our return to this world” than the other two. Such an interpretation is based on Vasubandhu’s “fifth gate of emergence”:

With great compassion, one observes all sentient beings in pain and affliction, and assuming various transformed bodies to guide them, enters the gardens of birth-and-death and the forests of blind passions; freely sporting there with transcendent powers, one attains the state of teaching and guiding. This is brought about by the directing of virtue through the power of the Primal Vow.

With a detailed comment by T'An-luan on this passage, Shinran developed further the concept of “return to this world,” as Amida’s virtue directed, in order for us to realize the true significance of shinjin in terms of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path. The “orthodox” interpretation of this, however, is that immediately after attaining “birth in the Pure Land” at death, one returns to this world in order to save others who are suffering in this defiled world. The problem is that it, too, is located only in linear time, and is not directly associated with the present moment of realizing shinjin.

We cannot but say that in Shinran’s thought there is an element which equates shinjin (realized at the very present moment) and the enlightenment in the Pure Land (generally understood to be attained at the moment of death), in other words, an equation of the present time and the future. Namely, the one-moment of realizing shinjin at the present moment includes future. As for this, Nishitani Keiji states as follows:

Simultaneity is defined as a “unity of time and eternity.” It is an “atom of eternity” (Kierkegaard) in time, or a moment at which we touch something eternal. “Present” and “moment” is that in which such simultaneity is established. A “moment” is in linear time and yet beyond it.

If we understand shinjin, a crucial concept in Shinran’s thought, on this basis, the following description will no more be conceived in linear time only, as it has been in the “orthodox” doctrine:

As I humbly contemplate the true essence of the Pure Land path, I understand that Amida’s directing of virtue (to sentient beings) has two aspects: the aspect for our going forth to the Pure Land and the aspect for our return to this world (to save all other sentient beings).
Further he praises:

The countless great bodhisattvas of the land of happiness
Have reached “succession to Buddhahood after one lifetime”;
Entering the compassionate activity of Samantabhadra,
They unfailingly work to save beings in defiled worlds.¹²

Those who reach the Pure Land of happiness
Return to this evil world of five defilements,
Where, like the Buddha Sakyamuni,
They benefit sentient beings without limit.¹³

And further:

The directing of virtue of our return to this world is such
That we attain the resultant state of benefiting and guiding others;
Immediately reentering the world of beings,
We perform the compassionate activity that is the virtue of Samantabhadra.¹⁴

These statements of Shinran’s are praise of the notion of “return to this world.” In these we can find two perspectives; one is a perspective based on linear time, and the other, beyond time. As stated above, the two aspects of “birth in the Pure Land” and “return to this world” have traditionally been taught to be matters in linear time only. But, if we understand on the basis of Nishitani’s view that shinjin includes both present and future (and consequently past, too), Amida’s directing of virtue to beings should transcend linear time, and yet embrace it. A “practitioner of shinjin” lives in linear time when viewed from the perspective of living in this world with a limited physical existence, and, at the same time, transcends it when viewed from the perspective of Amida’s working beyond time.

We have already noted above that in Shinran’s thought there is something inseparable between shinjin and enlightenment. Concerning the concept of “return to this world,” too, we have to take this element into account. Namely, a person of shinjin is one who is seeking after birth in the Pure Land, but for other people who are acquainted with that person of shinjin, he/she may appear to be as guiding them to the final realization.

For instance, Hōnen was one who himself was aiming at attaining “birth in the Pure Land” through nembutsu, but for Shinran Hōnen was an incarnation of Amida or a Bodhisattva working for the salvation of him. Shinran, too, was going on the path to the Pure Land under
Honen's guidance, but for other people he may be a Buddha or a Bodhisattva who has returned from the Pure Land in order to enable us to realize the true compassion.

All the myōkōnin who appeared in the history of Shin Buddhism can be described in the same way. Looking up to all the predecessors of shinjin as Buddhas or Bodhisattvas who have returned from the Pure Land to guide him/her to enlightenment, a myōkōnin penetrates deeply into his/her inmost self as one who is not possessed of any possibility to be saved. And yet, such a myōkōnin is looked up to by others as one who has returned from the Pure Land to lead them there.

Suppose a person is going on a path, along which many people must have walked to get to the destination. In the same way, a person of shinjin follows the way guided by many predecessors, which means just on the path to the final realization there is an encounter with one who has returned from there. Shinjin is that which enables one to be awakened to such an encounter. The concept of “return to this world,” therefore, is to be realized by a person of shinjin, who again is looked up to by others as one who has returned from the final destination to guide them. In this sense, we will be able to say that “going (to the Pure Land)” is one with “return (from the Pure Land),” or, more shortly, “going is returning.”
NOTES

1 Gordon D. Kaufman, “Religious Diversity and Religious Truth,” paper presented for the Colloquium Celebrating the 350th Anniversary of the Founding of Ryukoku University.

2 See n. 7.

3 Nonomura Naotaro, Jodokyo Hihan, or A Criticism of Pure Land Buddhism, (Kyoto: Chugai Shuppansha, 1923).


8 Ibid., III. 368.

9 Ibid., III. 365.


11 Kyogyoshinsho, Chapter on True Teaching, Shinshu Shogyo Zensho, II.2.


13 Ibid., p. 21.

The Problematics of Realization as a Basis for Dialogue in Shinshū and Zen

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It is my contention that shinjin may be understood as a form of realization. "Realization," in common English usage, carries the force of coming to know a fact beyond any inclination to doubt it. Thus shinjin may be said to involve the realization that the enacting of Amida Buddha's Vow of universal liberation is present as the voicing of the Name, "Namo Amida Butsu" (and cognates). For the Jōdo Shinshū Buddhist, realization of, or direct encountering of, the most profound object of his or her religious commitment.

Understanding shinjin in this way can provide a basis for dialogue with other schools of Buddhism. All schools can probably be shown to contain a concern with realization, in the sense in which I am using the term. In particular, I will discuss parallel problems in the matter of realization in Jōdo Shinshū and in Zen. If this investigation proves fruitful, then within Zen and within Shinshū the problematics of realization may be indicated as a basis for future dialogue with a variety of other schools of Buddhism.

In the first section of this paper I will discuss shinjin, understood as a form of realization or direct encounter with Amida Buddha. Some parallels with the matter of encountering tathā/suchness in Zen will emerge in this section.

The second section will outline shared problems in the denial of or minimizing of the role of mediation in Shinshū and Zen. This section and the third will show indebtedness to Bernard Faure's The Rhetoric of Immediacy.¹

The third section will claim that the doctrinal content of certain descriptions of realization is inseparable from an ideological content which defends a power basis of an elite while serving to disempower those who do not affirm the same position.

The concluding section will treat the two truths of Mahāyana Buddhism, the ultimate and the provisional, as properly held in
unreconciled opposition. This point in particular will show the influence of Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota. Discussions with Dennis Hirota have been invaluable in helping me to clarify my concerns with the matters elaborated here. It will be suggested in the final section that the problematics of realization arise from the univocal identity and non-identity of the Ultimate and the relative. Authentic Buddhist living must persevere amidst the unreconciled tension between the two truths. Tracing some of the contours of that tension may nurture renewal within Shinshū and Zen. It may also, in both sects, encourage dialogue with the many other schools of Buddhism.

REALIZATION AS DIRECT ENCOUNTER

The central concern in the religious life of the Jōdo Shinshū Buddhist is usually understood to be the realization of shinjin. As to the question “What is shinjin?”, I have little contribution to make to the centuries-long discussion. I find Dennis Hirota’s elaboration of the concept to be quite satisfactory. In brief summary of that view I will say that shinjin is the taking of the believer into the Vow-Mind of Amida in such a way that he or she is deeply one with the Buddha while at the same time being diametrically opposed to the Vow in his/her passion-driven humanness.

My interest here will be to look briefly at how Shinjin occurs. The clearest explanation of the receipt of shinjin is that it occurs when one hears the Vow:

“Hear” means to her the Primal Vow and be free of doubt. Further, it indicates shinjin.

The “Primal Vow” referred to is the eighteenth amongst the forty-eight vows attributed to Amida Buddha in the “Sūtra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life.” This Vow promises birth in a pure land of great happiness for the purpose of awakening to Buddhahood to those who take refuge in Amida through reflecting upon or saying the Name. This vow, in making awakening available under minimal conditions of worthiness is seen as the most fundamental of Amida’s Vows by Shinran.

Shinjin is explained as hearing the Primal Vow. Such a hearing of the Vow is a direct encountering, not a process of conceptualization or endeavoring in a practice. This direct experiencing of the most profound object of one’s religious concern is precisely what I intend to mean by “realization.”

Whereas such a direct encounter with the object of religious concern is common to most, and perhaps all, schools of Buddhism, the degree to which its immediacy is stressed varies. The contemplative
schools such as Zen are inclined to put great stress on the immediacy of the encounter as well as upon the absoluteness of the object of realization may even be said to be a mere artifact of language. A contemplative may claim that in the pure experience itself there is no distinguishing of subject and object of realization. Note the following statement of the non-objectified nature of the object of realization by the Zen-influenced philosopher Keiji Nishitani:

Emptiness lies absolutely on the near side more so than what we normally regard as our own self.... It defies objective representation.  

By contrast, the realization of shinjin occurs in the encountering of an object, even though that encounter is direct. For the realization of shinjin, the object is not an absolutely non-objectifiable Emptiness, but rather a quite concrete auditory object, "Namo Amida Butsu"/"I rely on Amida Buddha" (or any cognate thereof). In the religious perspective of Shinran, which informs the various schools which refer to themselves as Jodo Shinshu, the object of spiritual concern has already taken the objective form of the Name for the sake of deluded suffering beings. This doctrine is expressed in Japanese through the simple use of the possessive, "no." The Name is the name of the Vow; it is the Vow's Name. This use of the possessive ("no") does not translate into English smoothly and is rendered by Hirota and Ueda with the term "embodies":

... the Name that embodies the Primal Vow

The liberating activity of Amida Buddha as fulfillment of his Primal Vow is the ultimate level of religious concern for the Buddhist of the Pure Land stream of Mahayana tradition. It might be said that emptiness compassionately take the form of Amida Buddha who then makes his vows in order to enact his salvific intent. Shinran does not quite say this and there is an unfortunate tendency in scholarship which is impatient with multiple ideational frameworks referring to what is assumedly the same Ultimate Truth.

All schools of Buddhism are directed toward the attainment of Buddhahood. Certainly all Buddhas realize emptiness. Even so, realizing the reality of Amida's Vow at work in the name, the realization of shinjin, is not the same matter as the realization of emptiness through practice. Shinjin is realized by a person will enmeshed in the passions and unable to realize the emptiness of all things. The family resemblance running through all schools of Buddhism should not tempt us to reduce all its explanatory frameworks to some one grand but empty of
any fixed form Shinran comments on the literal meaning of “Amida” “without measure:”

The supreme Buddha is formless,...in order to make us realize that the true Buddha is formless, it is expressly called Amida Buddha.10

The Ultimate Reality in Mahayana thinking is formless, as Shinran emphasizes. But to be truly formless, truly unlimited by any form, is also to be capable of taking form. Amida Buddha invests himself in his Vows and embodies his most fundamental Vow in his Name. In this way the Ultimate truth becomes the possible object of realization through hearing. In another place I have compared the hearing of the Vow to the discerning of a musical theme being tapped out on a hard surface.11 This analogy may allow us to see the discernment of the Name as the Vow, the realization of shinjin as a matter of hearing-as: the person who realizes shinjin hears the Name as the Vow.

I have borrowed the phrase hearing-as from the philosopher Wittgenstein. He refers to the matter of suddenly discerning as aspect of an object of experience as the dawning of an aspect:

I contemplate a face and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I see that it has not changed and yet I see it differently. I call this experience “noticing an aspect” ... And I must distinguish between the continuous seeing of an aspect and the “dawning of an aspect.” ... Here it occurs to me that in conversation on aesthetic matters we use the words: “You have to see it like this, this is how it is meant.” “You have to hear this bar as an introduction.”12

One aspect of “Namo Amida Butsu,” and all of its cognates, is that it is the embodiment of the Primal Vow. When that aspect dawns upon a person while hearing the Name, that person realizes shinjin. The problematics of coming to such a realization are closely related to the problematics of realization in other Buddhist approaches to directly encountering the Ultimate Truth. In the next section well will investigate some difficulties with regard to the matter of mediation in Jodo Shinshu and Zen Buddhism.

MEDIATION VS. ULTIMACY

The project of directly realizing the Ultimate Truth tends to raise a concern with the immediacy of that encounter. In Zen Buddhism this concern often leads to a demand that the object of realization be entirely one with the subject—that no objectification be involved.
This tends to absolutize the subject as was seen in Nishitani's view that emptiness is nearer (vis. more the subject) than what we ordinarily consider ourselves as subject to be. A similar perspective can be seen in the practice instructions of Zen Roshi Koun Yamada: “The consciousness of pure and clear essential nature is the inside of the whole universe.”

By contrast, the Jodo Shinshu approach involves encountering the pure subjectivity which is the mind of Amida as the object of hearing. While the rejection of mediation in Zen is generally a denial of the objectifiability of the Ultimate truth, in Shinshu it is commonly the rejection of a practice or process of theorizing. Thus Shinran stressed that the realization of shinjin takes place in one thought-moment, which he explained as being of the utmost temporal brevity: “one thought-moment’ is time at its ultimate limit, where the realization of Shinjin takes place.”

As in Zen we see in Shinran’s thought a tendency to identify the ultimate of one’s religious concern with its immediacy. However, the absolute rejection of a mediating process leads to an abstract elevation of one’s object of reverence and eventually, to its trivialization. One must, for example, have some knowledge of the sacred story regarding Dharmakara becoming Amida and some grasp of the teaching that the compassionate activity of the Vow, the very presence of the Buddha is embodies in the Name, in order to hear the Name as the Vow. To reject the mediating process of learning the teaching would be to trivialize the Fundamental Vow under the guise of elevating it. Indeed, in order to hear the Name as the Vow in the one moment of the dawning of shinjin, one must (say and or) listen to the Name being voiced. In cautioning against contrived utterance, Shinran often repeated a motto of his teacher, Honen: “In Other Power, no selfworking is true working.”

In Shinran’s teaching this saying is strongly paradoxical. With Honen, the paradoxically of the statement was balanced by repeated urgings to say the Name often. Thus the motto had the significance of a guide to proper practice. We might paraphrase Honen’s message as “When you allow the voicing to emerge in a natural and unselfconscious way it is the Buddha’s working. Just say the Name and in time any conniving or manipulative intention on your part will fade away and the Buddha’s presence will shine forth through the Name—when selfworking stops the true working of Other Power will illumine your utterance.” If we read Honen’s meaning as some such guidance for proper practice there is nothing fundamentally paradoxical about the phrase.

With Shinran the same statement takes on a thoroughly paradoxical character. This is because the rejection of mediating practice on the devotees’ part, “no selfworking is true working,” is not balanced by frequent urgings to engage in the saying of the Buddha’s Name, as was
done by Hōnen. For Shinran the phrase is not advice as to how to practice, but dismissal of practice as being utterly without value. Shinran uses his teacher's motto not to guide practice, but to describe realization.

Having looked at shinjin as a form of realization we have seen a similar problematic in Jōdo Shinshū and Zen. Both schools are suspicious of mediation. Mediation by practice toward realization, or conceptualization of the Ultimate truth is suspected of relativizing that Truth. Shinshū is not opposed in principle to finding its Ultimate concern in an object. If the Buddha has mediated his presence in the compassionate giving of his Name, then the encounter of the name is still a direct access to the primal Vow, albeit in a mediated form. However, Shinshū is also concerned with the pristine nature of its lauded realization—shinjin. This must occur in the brevity of one thought-moment, where there is no room for contrivance or selfworking. This one thought-moment is said not to be an act of the devotee's mind (“hi i-gō”). Yet this denial of mediation has a tendency to produce the opposite of its intended effect. Instead of safeguarding the absoluteness of shinjin, there is an inevitable thrust toward its trivialization in the denial of mediation. Is it really an absolute and universally compassionate activity which is only encountered by those who see the irrelevance of selfworking and are will moved to utter the Buddha’s Name?

DOCTRINE AND IDEOLOGY

We have been discussing the problematic nature of realization in Buddhism with special attention to the Jōdo Shinshū and Zen schools. A related problem is that any statement regarding the status of mediation is likely to have both doctrinal and ideological force. Ideology, properly so called, is exercise of power which appears to be something else; e.g., an expression of philosophical truth. Such a lateral enforcing of power may take place no matter how sincerely the parties involved engage in the primary, e.g. doctrinal discourse.

“No selfworking is true working,” for example, elaborates an ineliminable aspect of Shinshū doctrine while also stating an ideology which empowers an elite. Those who can grasp, or who are willing to feign grasping, what this rather cryptic phrase means, constitute an elite. Those who really understand the doctrine are liberated from a requirement to practice. At the same time, the lack of practice whereby to encounter the Ultimate Truth is an alienating factor for others. Those still wondering what to do are disempowered by this ideology. Whether they are called heretics, or merely considered ones of little understanding, they are subordinated.

The ideological thrust to the denial of selfworking is prior to and independent of any religious organization. Since the no-selfworking
doctrine sets up an elite as against a subordinated group, it would be a danger to any Shinshū institution which failed to embrace it firmly. An ecclesiastic hierarchy whose officers allowed that self-power practice is efficacious would be subordinated as itself heretical by members who establish themselves as the true Other-power only elite.

In fact, there are passages in Shinran's writing which encourage the saying of the Name in a spirit of aspiration which closely resembles an endeavoring in practice. But for the reasons discussed above, anyone who wishes to appropriate Shinran's teaching from a position of power must de-emphasize such aspects of his thought. Consider, for example, this passage: "People who feel that their birth in the Pure Land is not yet settled should say the Nembutsu aspiring for birth."

This is one of many passages in which Shinran encourages the utterance of nembutsu prior to realization of and in hopes of receiving shinjin. But to avoid emphasizing this side of his teaching does not merely serve ideological interest. That the Name embodying the Primal Vow dawns upon one suddenly is an essential aspect of Shinran's insight. No amount of repetition of the Name nor any rigorous study of Buddhist philosophy will ensure that the aspect of the Name which is that it is the very working of the Vow will dawn upon one. The Ultimate Truth of the Buddha's compassionate working is in agnostic tension with the relative mode of its realization—saying and hearing the Buddha's Name.

The fact that doctrinal discourse also has an ideological side does not invalidate it. Faure's critique of the Zen rhetoric of immediacy includes the following caution:

(Scholarship) cannot totally reject the possibility of a heterology—of an irruption of the "Other" into the tautological discourse of metaphysics, the shining through of some kind of transcendence into the most flagrantly ideological discourse. 21

In Mahāyāna Buddhism the Ultimate Truth is always discovered in contradictory tension with our access to it through relative truths. In the concluding section I will suggest that the paradoxically which we've seen in the stance on mediation and also the elusive role of ideology in Jodo Shinshū derive from a vision of the two truths which no school of Mahāyāna Buddhism can avoid.

IN CONCLUSION: TWO TRUTHS

We have seen that the project of realizing the Ultimate Truth leads to the question of how it is relativized in the necessary mediation which it must undergo in being understood. The classic statement of
the mutual dependence of the Ultimate Truth (paramārtha-satya/shintai) and the conventional truth (samvrti-satya/zokutai) was made by Nagarjuna:

The ultimate truth is not shown except on the basis of the conventional truth. Without gaining the ultimate truth nirvana is not to be obtained.22

There are a variety of possible interpretations of what relation actually obtains between these two truths. Also, there are numerous different sorts of perspectives from which this question has been approached by various Buddhists teachers and writers. My approach here is certainly not that of a logician, a historian of ideas or a practitioner of sectarian hermeneutics. My comments will be quite non-technical and my concern pastoral. The question of the relation of the two truths arises for me at a level which a Zen Buddhist would call practice-level. The view which I am taking here is that the Ultimate Truth is utterly incommensurable with those conventional expressions upon which Buddhists monks, nuns and laity depend for its understanding. At the same time, and in the same sense, the ultimate truth and the conventional truth in no way differ from one another. The non-identity of the conventional and Ultimate truths is in no way canceled by the univocal affirmation of their identity.

Taking this perspective, let us look back briefly at some of the concerns raised earlier in this paper. The fact that the ultimate Truth and the conventional truth must be held in simultaneous unreconciled opposition underlies the problematic of mediation which we have seen to be present in both Jodo Shinshū and Zen. Even saying "Namo Amida Butsu" is suspected of cheapening one's relation to Amida's Vow if that utterance is a sort of technique. Shinran's teacher, Hōnen, suggested the paradoxical nature of the nembutsu way in the following statement as well.

The way to say the nembutsu lies in having no "way." If you just say it earnestly, without taking account of your conduct or the good and evil of your heart, you will attain birth.23

The paradox of having "no way" is mitigated by the encouragement to sat the Name. Hōnen encouraged his followers to repeat the nembutsu tens of thousands of times a day. Shinshū aficionados have often tried to find a way out of the incommensurability of the Vow and any deliberate action on our part—an escape of the paradox for Shinran. Factions within Shinshū have urged some special way of saying the Name, e.g., in a spirit of gratitude, or spontaneously.24 In fact there is no way out. Shinran's teaching squarely confronts the unstable tension
in which the Ultimate truth and our conventional understanding present themselves. There is no way to go about bridging the gap between our self-centered relativity and the Ultimate truth—not by being grateful, not by being spontaneous—no way at all.

Although conventional formulations must fail to adequately express the Ultimate Truth, there is no other way to reach it. This necessary use of relative formulations leads to the problem of implicit ideological force attending expressions of doctrinal positions. Individuals always have a stake in the power structures which enmesh their lives, a personal agenda, a political orientation. For example, there is a strategy of condescension underlying Shinran’s claim to be merely repeating the instructions of his teacher, Hōnen.25 That maneuver did nothing to cancel his authority as an independent leader, while accruing to him the added power due a humble and loyal student whose pronouncements carried all the authority of his great teacher.

It is in keeping with the spirit of Shinran’s teaching to note the problem of ideological force connected with even the most sincere statements of doctrine. Shinran’s teaching truly endeavors to be the way of no way in all its radical transcendence of linear reasoning and in all its depths of faith. Amida’s presence as his name (pastorally speaking, the Ultimate truth) is in unreconciled tension with the relative mode of its actualization—we simply say and hear the Name. This vision has commonalties with the necessary holding of inconsistent views which is urged repeatedly in the Prajñāpāramitā literature. For example:

...as far as any conceivable form of beings is conceived: all these I must lead to Nirvana, into that realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana. And why? If in a Bodhisattva the notion of a “being” should take place, he could not be called a “Bodhi-being.”26

The only genuine approach to living a life informed by the relation between the Ultimate and the relative is to hold them in unreconciled tension—whether simultaneously or dialectically.27 So far as the actual project of living one’s life as a Buddhist goes, the only alternatives would be a hierarchical or an immanentist-reductionist view. The former betrays the non-dualist insight fundamental to the Buddha-way, and leads toward something like theism. The latter, referred to as “the naturalist fallacy” in Zen tradition, abandons the hope for transformation of human suffering, which is the source for all Buddhist thought, practice and devotion.

The sense in which the Ultimate may be said to be identical to the relative in Mahāyāna Buddhism does not cancel the fact that they are diametrically opposed to one another. There is no way for anyone to
have the last word on this matter. The fact that the relative is fundamentally opposed to the Ultimate leads to a critique of mediation (e.g., "no selfworking is true"). This liberates some from contrived detours, but enslaves others to an ideal which they have no means to approach (e.g., shinjin, kenshō). The embracing of mediation (e.g., "just say the Name in an unselfconscious way and the fact that it is the embodiment of the Vow will dawn upon you one day.") liberates some from alienation from an Ultimate which they are not in touch with; but it enslaves others to a calculative approach which itself becomes a barrier.

The problematics of realization which we have considered here cannot be solved. Sincere seekers of the Buddha-way must live amongst their tension. Whole-heartedly adopting both the Ultimate and the relative perspectives sometimes opens out into an unsynthesized panoramic vision. Those who experience the Truth from such a perspective give its realization various names: shinjin, kenshō, etc. Without blurring the uniqueness of the discrete Buddhist pathways and the distinctiveness of their fruits, there may still be helpful dialogue on our shared problems in the matter of realization.

NOTES

2 For a clear account of the two truths which is consistent with the intent of this paper see Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota, Shinran, An Introduction to His Thought (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1989), pp. 81-82.
3 On the nature of shinjin I have nothing to add to the explanation of Ueda and Hirota, Shinran, Chapter 4, especially pp. 130-154. For an elaboration of Shinjin as contrastive to faith see Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls, Shin Buddhism Translation Series, (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1981), pp. 77-82. On the realization of shinjin in one thought-moment see Dennis Hirota, “Breaking the Darkness: Images of Reality in the Shin Buddhist Path” in Japanese Religions, vol. 16, no. 3 (January 1991), especially p. 36.
4 Shinran, p. 195, with the Japanese text on page 364 or see Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho, vol. 2, (Kyoto: 1941) 604. 13-605. 2.
6 A reference to shinjin in terms of “realizing” can also be seen in the work of Takamaro Shigaraki: “My interpretations of Shinjin as it was used by Shinran is that its meaning has two aspects: that of ‘realizing’ or ‘knowing’ as well as the implicit aspect of truth or reality.”
(The Buddhist World of Awakening, tr. William Masuda, [Honolulu: Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, 1982], p. 8). In the section from which this quotation is taken, Shigaraki tends to minimize the distinction between realizing shinjin and realizing satori. Acknowledging that shinjin is a realization does not tie one to such a project. I have elsewhere stressed the distinction between shinjin and satori using the analysis of shinjin as a realization (see footnote 11). What I am drawing out of the concept “realization” is a recognition of significance which, outside the context of direct experience, would be elaborated by means of a conceptual structure such as a philosophical theory. The implications I am drawing out of the term “realization” are also present in the English-language notions of “discernment,” “appreciation” and “recognition”. Locating shinjin in terms of more traditional levels on the path toward satori has proved a confusing matter in Shin dogmatics.

For procrustean reasons it is sometimes identified with the seventh or eighth level of Bodhisattva development of Bhumi. Shinran himself stated it was equivalent to the (rather preliminary) Streamwinner stage of śrāvakayāna progress and to (the much higher but non-Ultimate) first Bhumi; see Kyōgyōshinshō, (Kyoto, Ryukoku Translation Center, 1966) p. 54; or SSZ. 2. 33. 10013. On the distinction between shinjin and the realization of nirvana see discussions of “Shojo Metsudo” in, e.g., Anjinrondai Kōyō Jodoshinshu Hongwanjiha Shuppanbu, Kyoto, 1987.

9 It is my decision not use sexually inclusive language in reference to the sutras and classic commentaries to the Pure Land tradition. It cannot be reasonably argued that the sutras do not refer to Amida as specifically male. I do not think that reducing all such references to “mere symbols” is a solution. I do not think that disguising the sexually discriminatory intent of the Pure Land scriptures by substitution of inclusive language in embarrassing passages is an adequate solution. My preference is to leave the scriptural tradition with its sexually discriminatory language intact when reference is made to it. On the basis of honestly confronting such errors imbedded in Pure Land tradition, future renewal may be possible. Further remarks on this problem are outside the range of this, or any, paper by a male writer.
11 Gregory G. Gibbs, “Concepts of Faith in Three Categories, Their Ap-
plicability to the Texts of Shinran and Their relation to Shinjin,” M.A.
thesis, Graduate Theological Union and Institute of Buddhist Studies,
13 Koun Yamada, *Gateless Gate*, (Tucson, Arizona: The University
14 Shinran, p. 196.
15 Ibid., p. 219.
16 For an explanation of the paradox implied in this statement see
Shinran, pp. 221-2.
17 If I walk down the stairs to go out the door, I am using the stairs to
mediate my exit. Nonetheless, I am leaving directly. The question of
whether there is “mediation” in an activity tends to lead to an ab­
stract debate. “Directness” is often a concept more to the point in
discussions of religious experience. On the problem of the mystifica­
tion of the concern for direct knowledge see “Other Minds,” in *Philo­
18 Whether the Name is audibly voiced or silently reflected upon, the
question of its being volitionally presented to and for oneself is here
the key question. Also, what I have said regarding shinjin being the
hearing of the name as the Vow would be equally applicable to en­
countering it as the Vow in one’s silent reflection.
19 I hope that my use of the term “mediation” has been reasonably clear.
In fact, it is a complex concept which occurs in multifaceted contexts
of discussion. For me to try to give the term a fixed definition here
might obscure more than it clarifies. A classic source for the problem
of mediation in philosophical and religious theory is the Preface to
Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. See *Hegel’s Phenomenology of
Spirit*, translation by A. V. Miller, (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1977), see especially p. 6.
20 Shinran, p. 232.
21 Faure, p. 318.
22 Quoted in Gibbs, p. 82.
23 Plain Words on the Pure Land Way*, translated by Dennis Hirota,
(Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1989), p. 50.
24 See Minor L. and Ann T. Rogers, *Rennyq*, Asian Humanities Press,
Berkeley, 1991. On p. 292, they point out that the emphasis on be­
lievers maintaining an attitude of gratefulness “is vulnerable to coer­
cion by the leaders of a religious order enjoining conformity, submis­siveness, and obedience.
25 See Faure, p. 20, on the strategy of adding to one’s power base the
additional authority accruing from its symbolic denial.
27 I am distinguishing the simultaneous holding of the radically opposed two truths from taking them together in a unified temporal progression which also refuses to feign a synthesis. This dialectical view was characteristic of Madhyamaka. For a brief analysis see Edward Conze, Buddhist Thought in India, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), pp. 242–9.
Adapting Jōdo-Shinshū Teaching for the West: An Approach Based on the American Work Ethic

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The essentials of Jōdo-Shinshū doctrine are comprised of the interrelationship between jiriki, tariki, and shinjin. In the West these terms have been translated into Self-Power, Other-Power, and Faith, respectively. Self-Power is the self-actuated, self decided, self-directed thoughts, words, and the actions that are done for self-gain. It’s principle feature is that it is rooted in a desire to benefit or protect one’s own self. Jōdo-Shinshū teaching emphasizes that this self desire can and does taint the entire spectrum of personal decision making. This understanding is quite easily evidenced in each person’s day to day activities that so often are directed towards the fulfillment of some need or some want or some personal want. But Jōdo-Shinshū teaching goes further by explaining that even activities done for the purpose of self-improvement and religious enlightenment, if powered by those self-same personal decisions, are tainted by the desire to benefit one’s self. Part of the insightful realization that marks non-retrogression in Jōdo-Shinshū teaching is specifically the profound awareness that thoughts and actions that may be personally and deeply felt to be derived from pure motivations can and still are tainted by this self desire. This aspect of awareness helps to remove the delusion that an individual is entirely dependent only on him/herself. It opens one up to the realization of one’s interconnectedness not only to all others around him, but to the fundamental compassionate principle and power of true reality that is Amida Buddha.

Amida Buddha is the Other-Power of infinite compassion that is manifested in our everyday lives to bring each of us to enlightenment. Its “other-ness” is most exemplified in the circumstances that have been created to allow us to hear and learn and benefit from these particular teachings. But more than this is the teaching that the dynamic motion of Other-Power is everywhere manifested for the benefit of all without restriction to those relative few who are knowledgeable about Jōdo-Shinshū teaching. It infuses each person’s karmic fruitions with the intention to bring all to the karmic moment of realization.
Part of Other-Power realization is seeing beyond one’s self, seeing one’s interconnectedness to others, seeing the lessons in self-desire within our karmic fruitions, and seeing Amida Buddha’s compassion in all circumstances. Such an understanding of Other-Power leads to continued progressive awareness and insight into the workings of Other-Power. Moreover it leads to a commitment of all thought, word, and deed to act in gratitude for that realization and in concert with that compassion to help in the continuous demonstration and expression of Other-Power.

Faith is the personal experiential realization of the truth of Amida Buddha’s salvific power and marks the stage of non-retrogression in one’s practice. With respect to Self-Power we have seen how Faith is in part the removal of the veil of ignorance that is self-important, self-aggrandizing, self-forgiving, and just plain selfish. In addition, we have examined how, with respect to Other-Power, this realization is the becoming aware of and commitment to living with the simple certainty of an all encompassing compassion. More than this is also, in part, the realization that awareness and commitment by themselves still only represents a stage of one’s particular practice. At such a level it is the doing that demonstrates one’s insight and awareness to move from momentary shinjin to everlasting wisdom and compassion. Faith here is manifested without exception in all the actions in one’s life. Every thought, word, and deed becomes more external evidence that Amida Buddha’s Compassion not only has saved but, as in all things, is working through one’s self for the benefit of all others.

The introduction of Jōdo-Shinshū teaching into the American way of life has been occurring for almost a century. Over this time its acceptance has been intimately tied to the ability of Japanese-Americans to preserve their cultural heritage in the face of vastly different cultural environment. Succeeding generations have grown up within this different cultural context giving them a uniquely shared cultural heritage. Moreover the significant majority of indigenous individuals remain a product of their own significant cultural and religious roots. This has caused some difficulty for a message that has been honored over eight centuries to appeal to and guide those with such an alternative cultural environment. The present day challenge to all of Buddhism is to adapt the essence of the teachings so that they are more appropriate to the new audience without as well as the rapidly changing audience within.

Initial attempts to translate major Jōdo-Shinshū terms into English have been useful in providing points of resonance so that others might understand the background of Jōdo-Shinshū. Alternatively this has lead to preconceptions and misconceptions as to the true meaning of these terms. Attempts to return to the original Japanese terms as a corrective to these misunderstandings have sometimes seemed to
insert the additional barrier of language between the teachings and their easy accessibility. More recently attempts have been directed towards customizing the message of Jōdo-Shinshū Buddhism specifically for the American audience. The concepts of trans-ethical responsibility has been introduced as a basis for ethical action that recognizes a higher compassion and tries to use that Other-Power guideline for everyday decisions. This addresses the innate American bias to do something positive and pro-active. The idea of Self-Power action with Other-Power attitude as suggested by Corless attempts to provide a basis for the sundry virtuous activities of individuals as an integral part of Jōdo-Shinshū practice. This addresses the American bias towards individual responsibility and taking charge of one's life. These later two approaches have only recently been introduced so their effectiveness has yet to be demonstrated.

We would like to provide an additional perspective of this approach that tries to more clearly evaluate the target audience. It is hoped that by better understanding the target audience that Jōdo-Shinshū teachings may find a more receptive appreciation of its fundamental teachings. It is not intended to be exclusive of other attempts but designed as an approach that continues their appreciation that the message must fit the audience. Our approach is based on an analysis of the American Work Ethic as it influences the personal bias of those being raised and living in America. A further understanding of this ethic would provide the basis for decisions regarding which aspects of Jōdo-Shinshū teaching to emphasize for the beginning American listener.

The concept of work reaches back to biblical times where the work of God is nothing less than the creation of the universe. Since that time the idea of meaningful work has been a fundamental aspect of human activity. In many ways work has defined our existence just as the answer to the question, "What do you do?" is filled with the association of likely income, life style, living environment, and probably relationships. Honorable work thus becomes more than activity of livelihood but a moral imperative to provide meaning and worth to everyday activities. This underlying basis for work is the foundation upon which work can be termed an ethic.

The status of work continued to be recognized as important in the Bible where the Ten Commandments speak of working for six days to perform all one's labors. The Hebraic teaching emphasizes that work is a gift from God and as such it should be accepted with satisfaction as a good and proper endeavor. Moreover there is the instruction that "he who does not teach his son a trade teaches him to steal." This particular teaching was quite different from the hierarchical civilizations of the time where there were those who worked and those who enjoyed the fruits of those labors. This message continued in the life of Jesus whose honest labors was as a working carpenter. In a study on the contribu-
tion of work to American society it has been said:

Christianity undercut slavery by giving dignity to work no matter how seemingly menial that might be. Traditionally, labor which might be performed by slaves was despised as degrading to the freeman. Christian teachers said that all should work and that labor should be done as to Christ as master and as to God and in the sight of God. Work became a Christian duty. Before the end of the fifth century slavery was declining.

Augustine proposes that “to work is to pray.” During the Renaissance creativity is done “to the glory of God alone.” The Reformation altered the distinction between sacred and secular work when Luther wrote about the work of monks and priests is “in God’s sight no way whatever superior to the works of a farmer laboring in the field, or of a woman looking after her home.” Such teachings freed people up to do what they could do best for God. The Puritans came to America as “laborers for their Lord.” As a result the idea that individual work has merit is ingrained into American culture. Moreover the nature of American history since has been to glorify and revere the accomplishments of particular individuals as exemplars of all that could be accomplished once determined effort and work was applied to a particular problem. The idea of sacrifice, perseverance, innovation, and achievement are everywhere evident in the biographies of American heroes.

This consideration provides a background for understanding areas of indigenous American interest and areas where Americans might be more naturally attentive. Any introduction of a fundamentally different approach to everyday life must therefore address the question of how this new approach can be used during everyday work and circumstances. It is clear from this presentation of the American Work ethic that Americans would be naturally attentive to an approach that will make immediate adjustments in their behavior towards everyday circumstances. The rubric of “try it, you’ll like it” is nowhere more easily heard than in America. In the next section we will further discuss the individual elements of the Work Ethic and how they may be approached by Jodo-Shinshu teaching.

A significant area of emphasis regarding the American Work Ethic is in the choice, actions, and rewards made and gained by an individual. It is this idea of individuals that is an inherent part of this concept that each individual bears responsibility for their choices, actions, and the consequences of those actions. The individual here is the unique person who is presented with and part of the circumstances surrounding and contributing to any particular decision point. Not a soul or a permanent self, it is a recognition that each individual is uniquely different and possesses a point of view and a set of abilities and poten-
tialities that are unique to that person. As such it further recognizes that the individual who finds him/herself within a particular set of circumstances has a unique contribution to make towards the further development of those circumstances. This emphasis on the individual and their unique responsibilities has been critical in the American understanding of personal responsibility. It leads us to try to further understand the role of this unique individual as he/she decides and acts based on the American Work Ethic.

The American Work Ethic has three essential elements, (1) individual choice, (2) individual action, and (3) individual reward. This goal oriented approach of decision and action directed toward a specific reward, requires that one identify a reward, decide on a course of activity, and commit fully to those actions that will help in researching that goal. Regardless of the goal, the nature, quality, or quantity of the actual work is not a consideration in the decision as total commitment includes whatever sacrifices are necessary to get the job done. This ethic of achievement by personal effort and experience leads the American to consider the superficial idea of self-power to be good, other-power as not being applicable, and faith as a means only of further self-confidence not as a belief in a higher authority. The concept of Easy Practice for the ultimate reward becomes directly confrontational to the American understanding that effort and sacrifice should rise in direct proportion to the worthiness of the goal. For Jōdo-Shinshū to make the East-West transition, each of these three aspects of the American Work Ethic must be directly addressed.

It is apparent that the classical teaching of Jōdo-Shinshū that emphasizes the largesse and compassion of Amida Buddha to make entry into the Pure Land easy is potentially disconcordant to American listeners. Though it is well known that Jōdo-Shinshū requires the ultimate sacrifice of all one's selfish motivations and desires in lieu of acknowledged true faith and acceptance of Amida's compassionate power; classical teaching emphasizes the fact that individuals are bonbu and cannot by their own self-power achieve true faith. This is not to say that effort and activity done from compassionate motivation is outside the scope of Jodo-Shinshu teaching—just that it has not been clearly defined. The ideas of trans-ethical responsibility as well as self-effort activity with Other-Power motivation as previously presented are specific attempts to deal with the influence of Jodo-Shinshu teaching into everyday activities. It is thus apparent that finding Jodo-Shinshu teachings that may help to adjust the work-ethic emphasis on individual choice, action, and reward would materially aide in the American acceptance of Jodo-Shinshu teaching.

The concept of (1) individual choice may be addressed by extrapolating from classical Jōdo-Shinshū teaching. These teachings are embodied in the saying "just because there is an antidote available one
should not drink poison" as well in the doctrine that all post-shinjin virtuous deeds are done in gratitude for Amida's Compassion without any thought of personal reward. In the classical presentation of the idea of the presence antidote it is often discussed how Shinran and hence Jōdo-Shinshū teaching is not a license for evil activities. This may be easily extended to the idea of choice given the presence of options requiring evaluation and reflection before choosing poisonous or non-poisonous activities. In the present context it can be understood from the standpoint of individual choice that each of us can choose between virtuous actions and non-virtuous actions. Moreover the classical discussion is firm evidence that choosing virtue over non-virtue is the appropriate decision for all Jōdo-Shinshū practitioners, new and old. The concept of post-shinjin activity done in gratitude to Amida and for the benefit of all further emphasizes the idea that there is a role for deliberately choosing a virtuous path in everyday decisions. The normal activity for the most respected exemplar of Jōdo-Shinshū teaching—the post-shinjin individual—is a person who consistently does virtuous deeds for the benefit of all. His/her particular motivation is to be in gratitude to Amida Buddha's all encompassing compassion. And yet the evidence of his/her actions is everywhere manifest.

For Jōdo-Shinshū teaching in America, an elaboration of this approved form of individual choice would provide direct and useful instruction for the beginning practitioner. Guidelines, examples, and role models derived from the specific activities of Jōdo-Shinshū devotee actually does. As those activities are different or attractive to the beginner, it offers a reasonable choice for that individual to follow, thus allowing the beginner to choose Jōdo-Shinshū teachings to influence their own everyday actions.

With respect to (2) individual action it is evident that our knowledge of past activities are in the description of the deeds of these various models. Just as one's thoughts and motives cannot be fully known by others, the true experience of shinjin cannot be adequately expressed. Since this experience becomes everywhere evident in all the actions of these exemplar individuals, it can then be clearly taught and emphasized that a commitment to Jōdo-Shinshū is a commitment to identifying Amida's Compassion in each and every action of evade living. Using the role model approach individuals may study how one who has fully accepted Amida's compassion resolves and carries through with actions that benefit all. The study of each action and its compassionate ramifications would then lead to a case study understanding of Amida's compassion in each and every decision of a practitioner's life. These case studies would serve as additional guidelines for those trying to make decisions and act on the compassionate principle of benefiting all mankind. Using the model of the American Work Ethic, each individual action is the culmination of having made the decision to pursue a plan
of action based upon the evaluation of the options available. The results of the action are forecasted to bring reward based upon the individual's knowledge and awareness of as many contributing factors as possible. Evaluation of the results are compared to the desired outcome.

In Jōdo-Shinshū teaching the additional factor of Amida's compassion is integral to understanding the multitude of factors that make up each individual incident. Recognizing that Amida's Compassion is everywhere manifest also gives a unifying perspective to expand one's analysis of every situation. By the same token, evaluation outcomes and interactions in the context of Amida's Compassion with True Faith allows for a much larger thorough awareness and understanding of the total environment in which one is acting.

In the area of (3) individual rewards we can again look to the life of Shinran and others as realized recipients of Amida's unconditional compassion. This concept may be restated for Western understanding by saying that there is no greater reward than virtuously helping others simply because it is the correct decision to make and action to take. Amida's dedication to help each individual is manifest in the guidelines that are made available to us to be able to distinguish virtue from non-virtue. In each effort to better apply those principles is received the reward of a deeper experience with respect to demonstrating to one's self that Amida's teachings apply to present day circumstances. In the individual reward we do not suggest that this is the road to shinjin but simply that the consequences of virtue done for virtue's sake is the greater happiness of all involved. This happiness is a reward that may be received in every choice and every action as one becomes more and more aware of the truth of Jōdo-Shinshū teachings. It is as unique to each individual as are the unique circumstances, decisions, and actions that each individual will make and do in everyday life.

To the uninitiated the American Work Ethic view of individual reward is focused on wealth, recognition, and power. Those who have dared to act upon their dreams and are able to reap the rewards of their labors are now living their dreams. The interpretation of the work ethic has consistently separated the ideas of choice, action and reward. This is not actually the case as repeatedly demonstrated in the practice of medicine where the true focus of the reward is in deciding and doing the action in a more and more beneficial manner i.e., walking the path. One's choice of virtuous deed (diagnostic or therapeutic) as well as learning from that deed to improve patient care is reward in itself. Mundane rewards may be associated with the path but they are not the reason the path is taken.

This is the key to Jōdo Shinshū to reach the American audience. Focusing on the true nature of reward allows one to recognize that the benefits of following Jōdo Shinshū teaching are immediate,
always expanding, and everlasting. (They are the gold standard of true reward.)

For Jōdo-Shinshū in America, further elaboration on this form of individual reward for individual actions is necessary to provide a complete introduction of Jōdo-Shinshū for an American audience. Initiating such contact speaks directly to the propensities of the American Work-Ethic where choice, action, and rewards are so everywhere evident. As empathy is a significant aspect of compassion, it becomes clear that the message of Jōdo-Shinshū must begin to empathize with the different cultural context of present day American audiences. Appreciating the foundations of this American point of view as in part defined by the American Work-Ethic is a first step in that empathetic appreciation. Through a thorough understanding of their bias towards individual choice, action, and rewards it becomes clearer how the message of Jōdo-Shinshū teaching must be adapted in order to be accepted by Americans. It should not be felt in any way that the true teaching is being diluted or watered down for this new audience—simply that this new audience offers greater opportunity to better understand and practice the Other-Power compassion of Amida. For it is not for ourselves that we try to pass on the teachings of Amida Buddha, but for the audience of listeners who have not yet had the benefit of such exposure.

It is hoped that this paper offers yet another step in the process of bringing the true teaching to all mankind. By this examination of the American Work-Ethic we hope to reiterate that compassion towards others begins with a concerted effort to understand the other party. We hope that further efforts towards this understanding will open up new avenues to the transmission of Jōdo-Shinshū teaching.

NOTES

My first word to you must be arigato. Or maybe sumimasen. This “thank you” is not only to you here today who give me the opportunity to express what I have in my heart and on my mind, but also through you to all the members and friends of the Buddhist Churches of America. The BCA has put an on on me, for which I am grateful.

Some of you know that I am a Christian minister who has been serving for the past ten years as Director of Development for the BCA Endowment Foundation. Some of my friends and some of you may consider this relationship strange, an anomaly, even an oxymoron. The question is rightly raised, “Why would a Christian minister work for the advancement of Buddhism?”

The answer to that question will appear as this homily unfolds. In a sentence it is this: I have long been captured by a broad ecumenical vision which seeks to be inclusive of and instructed by other perceptions of Reality, and I am persuaded that a person’s religious life will be deepened and enlarged through contact with other belief systems and traditions. There is no little truth to the statement “to know one religion is to know none.”

Without any hesitation or equivocation, I want to report that I think (at least I hope) that I am a better Christian because of the experiences of Buddhism gained through my association with so many fine people within the BCA community. I intend this statement to be the
highest possible compliment I could imagine. My personal understanding of beauty and truth and of life and death, and my Christian perspective on these realities, have been immeasurably enlarged and enhanced by the privilege you have afforded me to live in your midst and to learn from you of the Buddha-Dharma. Again, arigato. Thank you.

MUTUAL OPENNESS AND UNDERSTANDING

I stand here as a sign (even though a feeble, inchoate and even tarnished and cloudy sign) of what I believe to be a moral imperative for the whole human family; that is, the willingness to understand each other’s religious convictions and to allow them to interpenetrate our own belief systems so that the specific and very personal religious views of all of us may be strengthened and deepened.

Religious confrontation and aggressive activity aimed at converting each other are no longer tolerable within the global family. They must give way to acceptance, understanding and cooperation. While maintaining our own particular religious identity and vitality, we need to learn to live with each other and to learn from each other in order to be better practitioners of our own respective religious heritage, and in order to fashion a more just, humane and harmonious world.

Ideology must give way to openness and mutual enrichment. We may not see eye to eye, but we live side by side, and as we rub elbows with each other we must be vigilant in restraining ourselves from jabbing or puncturing our neighbors’ sacred beliefs. It is irresponsible to dismiss other experiences or expressions of Reality with disdain, contempt or intolerance, or even indifference.

This city, Chicago, exactly one hundred years ago, under the auspices of the Columbian Exposition, was host to the World’s Parliament of Religions, where for the first time in history representatives from virtually all known living religions gathered to present their respective faiths with a readiness to learn from each other. This remarkable Congress of religious leaders was a harbinger of the spirit of mutual acceptance which I feel is today a necessity and not simply a courtesy.

In the Rigveda, India’s oldest collection of sacred writings, we read, “Reality is one, though the wise speak of it variously.” I interpret that to mean, in part, that Reality is multi-faceted and that persons in different places at different times perceive Reality differently. That just seems to me to be common sense. We are all different, and we perceive Reality differently.

Let me use a simple illustration. I can’t ever imagine what it would have been like to have grown up in Egypt 5,000 years ago, or to have been a Russian serf under Catherine the Great in the 18th cen-
tury, or an Italian immigrant living in New York City a hundred years ago. I can't even begin to know what it was like to live in China 1,000 years ago or even during the more recent Communist revolution. I have no idea what it is like today to grow up in Harlem, Somalia or Bosnia. I don't even know what it's like today to grow up on a farm in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in an Amish family, without electricity, and whose only means of transportation is a horse and buggy. Even though I now live among these people, I can't possibly enter into their lives. I shall always remain outside their culture.

My point is this: There are not only subtle differences within the human family, but there are in fact vast differences among people, cultures and eras. And these differences color our perception of Reality. In his An Interpretation of Religion, John Hick has said: "Every religion arises from within [its own] complex cultural structure on which it feeds and to which in turn it contributes."

Religion, I believe, is the human response to Reality. It is the way we make sense of what is, the way we provide meaning for our lives. It is the structure of meaning, the philosophical house, where we feel at home.

It is no great intellectual leap to see that vastly different people growing up in vastly different ages in vastly different cultures develop vastly different religious dwellings.

What we have that is similar, even identical, is the earth, the universe, and our common humanity. We are all thinking, feeling persons living in one and the same physical world.

Given the variegated life and experiences of countless generations of men and women, it should not be surprising to see so many different religious traditions, so many different ways of perceiving Reality and seeking to make sense of life.

**REALITY: A COMPASSIONATE EMBRACE**

It is now time to turn our attention to our respective responses to reality: the Jodo Shinshu and the Christian. I don't want either to deny or to minimize the differences, but I am more interested in emphasizing some striking similarities. Keep in mind the purpose of this exercise: to strengthen our own faith by looking at each other's beliefs.

The first point of contact between these religions is this: They both see ultimate Reality as good and they both perceive ultimate Reality as embracing us compassionately.

The great physicist Albert Einstein once remarked that the most important religious question we can ask is this: "Is the universe friendly?" Both Shin Buddhism and Christianity answer that question in the affirmative.
For Jodo Shinshu, the Primal Vow is the primordial base, the spring from which flows the understanding of Amida as all-embracing, all-encompassing, never-forsaking compassion, the truthful and fruitful saving activity of Reality. As a Christian, when I say “God is love” I mean something similar, namely that at bottom, at the root of Reality, at the center of all, is a friendly face or force, a hug that holds us and accepts us as we are.

For you, the symbol of Amida’s embracing, awakening and saving compassionate activity is the standing statue of the Buddha-figure leaning slightly forward, actively coming toward you. For Christians, the symbol is the cross, a sign to us of incarnate compassionate suffering love. Both of these symbols convey the cosmic dimension of compassion to their respective believers.

Since for some years I have held the conviction that both Shin Buddhism and Christianity share a common perception that ultimate Reality embraces us like a loving parent, you can imagine my satisfaction in reading recently the following statement by a Shin Buddhist scholar. John S. Yokota (whose name was Ishihara before he took the name of his parents-in-law) wrote this in an essay published in a Japanese religious journal, “The symbols Christ and Amida are the designations of the active and grace-filled activity of Reality that above all makes clear that Reality is Reality-for-us. This Reality-for-us is saving power, that primordial activity which makes Reality so intimately tied up with our destiny.”

One of my teachers in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was John Noss, a professor of philosophy and religion at our church-related college and seminary located there. He was born in Japan and had become an internationally acclaimed scholar of world religions. For thirty years his book, Man’s Religions (later entitled Living Religions) was the most popular textbook in the country for university courses in comparative religion.

In his account of Buddhism, he writes, “In Mahayana Buddhism the Absolute Essence or Suchness is identified with a sort of Love-behind-things that produces Buddhas—a Buddha-essence at the heart of the universe. Christian theology and Buddhist metaphysics here share something of a common ground.” In both Pure Land and Christian teachings, Noss sees expressed a kind of cosmic optimism, a sense of the goodness and grace that Reality seems to reveal about itself and of the limitless possibilities open to those who respond to this Reality.

Buddhists and Christians concur, I believe, in conceiving of life as clothed with and enclosed within a Compassionate Reality, and we both seek continuously to become more aware of and responsive to this astonishing courtesy by which we are clasped and in which we are enfolded.
One Source, One Sway
One Life enfolding us
In Love alway.

A PERSONAL PARENTHESIS

Before proceeding further, perhaps a personal addendum might be helpful. What I am saying about Jodo Shinshu is a distortion. I don’t mean it to be. I don’t intend to misrepresent your religion, but I see Buddhism from a western slant, from a Christian perspective filtered by a different culture and tradition, and that stance necessarily obscures and colors what I see.

We are all saddled with a similar situation, namely the obvious inability to remove ourselves from our cultural, historical and existential circumstances. But not to worry! As long as we honestly intend to see each other’s religions sympathetically and appreciatively, then let us not fear to open ourselves to the lessons we may learn from each other and from each other’s traditions, even from our distortions of the other’s beliefs.

The result of this openness to each other will be the interpenetration of our respective traditions, beliefs and practices. And this will change us, and we shall grow. Perhaps I should only speak for myself, so let me simply say that learning of Amida has (as I mentioned) deepened and enlarged my understanding of Christ. In saying this I hope not to trivialize, minimize, qualify or objectify the person or power of either Amida or Christ. They are what they are regardless of what I say or how I relate to them. But from my very limited, sinful and ignorant perspective, I see Christ more clearly since Amida Buddha has come into my line of vision and my frame of reference.

Just as I do not need to hate all other women to prove that I love my wife, so I need not reject Amida to accept Christ. In fact, my insight into Reality provided by Buddhism has not diminished but has embellished my Christian religious convictions.

THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Now I turn to another aspect of our religions which we seem to share and the understanding of which may deepen through interpretation and subsequent interpenetration.

My first point has been that Shin Buddhism and Christianity agree that we are accepted and warmly welcomed by the Reality that is, by the Suchness of our existential situation. In some way by some means Another Power saves us from submerging into the slough of delusion, ignorance and blind passion.
My second point centers on the reaction we have from this perception of salvation by Other Power. Having been embraced unconditionally, Buddhists and Christians both shout “Hooray!” In a word, I am speaking of gratitude, the grateful response to the graceful and gracious activity of Amida and Christ.

In three weeks I shall retire after more than forty-five years as an ordained minister. In anticipation of this, I began thinking—perhaps six or seven months ago—of what I would like to say “If I Had Only One Sermon to Preach.” Indeed, this is the last sermon I will preach before retirement. I had no idea six months ago that my last sermon as a Christian minister would be preached in a Buddhist Temple, but I did determine then that my last hurrah would be a hooray!

If I had only one sermon to preach, it would be on gratitude. There is no more important subject. In my view, the attitude of gratitude is the primary posture for religious persons.

By “attitude” I don't mean simply a mood or a status. It is not something static. The attitude of gratitude is an activity, a positive force. We defined religion as a response to Reality. Now we may add a further word and say that for Buddhists and Christians the spontaneous reaction to Reality is a grateful response.

**GRATITUDE IN SHINSHU**

When we talk of Amida or the Dharma, or Reality and Truth; when we talk of the Pure Land, Nirvana and Enlightenment; when we speak of Other Power, the Nembutsu, and the Buddha-Dharma; when we speak of these things we are talking of values and realities not easily grasped or defined. But gratitude! That is something we all experience and express. We all know something about gratitude. While not easily practiced, it is nevertheless within our ability to comprehend.

For both Shin and Christian believers, gratitude is the foundational attitude toward Reality and the fundamental activity in life as we are called to live it. Let us look at Shinshu first. Please remember that I may unintentionally distort what you mean by gratitude. But this is what I've absorbed and assimilated into my western-born bones from my association with you, from my reading of your sacred literature, and from other persons who have sought to interpret your religion.

As far as I can discern, the entire life and practice of a Jodo Shinshu believer is, ideally, lived in an attitude of gratitude.

Even a cursory reading of the Seiten reveals gratitude as the dominant note in Shinshu practice. In their introduction to "The Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment," the editors wrote: “We know that Shinran’s motive in writing the Kyo Gyo Shin Sho rose from his feeling of gratitude to the Buddha and the Seven Patriarchs.” In the
preface of that same small treatise, Shinran wrote, “I express joy over what I have heard and praise what I have received.”

Note that joy is the constant companion of gratitude, that praise is one way to express gratitude, and that the sense of indebtedness precedes the feeling of gratitude. Hear Shinran’s voice again:

What a joy it is to place my mind in the soil of Buddha’s Universal Vow, and to let my thoughts float on the sea of the Inconceivable Dharma. I deeply acknowledge the Tathagata’s Compassion, and I sincerely appreciate the Master’s Benevolence. As my joy increases, my feeling of indebtedness grows deeper.

In the Gatha of True Faith, we read, “Uttering only the Tathagata’s Name always, we should express our gratitude for the Great Compassionate vow.” In their commentary on the contents of the Seiten, the editors wrote:

The Utterance of the Name is called an act of gratitude from the standpoint of sentient beings. The Utterance of the Name is not for the purpose of gaining merits; it can only be an act of gratitude in response to one’s salvation. Hence, Faith becomes the right cause and the Utterance of the Name becomes an act of gratitude. The practice is none other than the practice of gratitude.

In Zendo’s Kannen-bomon we read “I reverently address all those who desire to be born in the Pure Land: If you hear the Teachings, you should in response to this voice grieve and shed tears like rain. And for kalpas and kalpas—piled up and linked together—you should crush your bodies and break your bones to return in gratitude the Buddha’s compassion.”

Based on this passage, Shinran wrote his familiar wasan:

The benevolence of Amida’s great compassion,
Even if we must crush our bodies, should be returned in gratitude.
The benevolence of the masters and teachers,
Even if we must break our bones, should be returned in gratitude.

In one of his letters, Rennyo wrote, “As long as we have life in us, we should say the Nembutsu thinking of it as a response of thankfulness.”

Moving to more contemporary interpreters of the Nembutsu as a life of gratitude, let us listen to some wise words from the late Rever-
end Yoshitaka Tamai, minister at the Tri-State Buddhist Temples for over fifty years. These passages were culled from his last book, entitled Ichinyo. Some of these statements were first addressed to persons interned in relocation camps during World War II. Listen to his wisdom:

It is the purpose of the Buddha-Dharma to teach people to move from ingratitude to knowing your indebtedness, and from knowing your indebtedness to repaying your indebtedness.

A life worth living is not a life of self-benefit and satisfying egoistic desires, but rather awareness of our indebtedness and gratitude for it.

I believe the biggest defect in American democracy is that there is no feeling of gratitude toward others, and this is what the Buddha-Dharma has to teach the people of the United States.

Unfortunately, our present generation places too much emphasis on individual rights and not enough on our indebtedness to others. . . . If we can come to truly appreciate and realize the infinite amount of our indebtedness, everything will be embraced in the light of gratitude.

The mind that has forgotten gratitude will never give birth to shinjin, the mind of faith.

These reflections remind us again of Shinran Shonin’s comment, “Only when we enter into the wisdom of shinjin do we become aware of our indebtedness to the Buddha;” and of the opening passage of one of his Wasan:

While reciting Amida’s name those with shinjin
Never forget their indebtedness to the Buddha.

This over-powering sense of indebtedness has been one of Buddhism’s major contributions to Japanese culture. I recall some years ago reading Ruth Benedict’s classic, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, a study commissioned by the Office of War Information to help the United States government better understand Japanese culture. Dr. Benedict makes this profound distinction: in Western nations people speak of being “heirs of the ages,” but in Eastern countries—in Japan—the coin is turned to the other side, and they speak of being “debtors to the ages.”

What an indictment of western civilization, where we selfishly seize our patrimony, thinking of ourselves as rightful “heirs;” while in contrast eastern peoples tend in humility to remember that they are undeserving recipients and therefore view themselves as “debtors.”
Alfred Bloom reinforces the prominence of gratitude in the Teachings. He writes, in *Shinran's Gospel of Grace* “The emphasis on gratitude became a distinctive characteristic of the Shinshu view of life,” and for Shinran, “religious activity is the expression of gratitude to Amida Buddha;” “the meaning of life consists in one's gracious response to Amida Buddha’s compassion,” and naming the name, utterance and the Nembutsu are all “signs of gratitude.”

In his *Strategies for Modern Living*, an explication of the *Tannisho*, Bloom writes that “reliance on Other Power means a life of thankfulness which recognizes that in all areas of our lives we are more receivers than givers,” and that “all actions are to be considered as expressions of gratitude for the compassion that we have received.”

As T. Hirose has instructed us: “Salvation is always experienced as transcendent gratitude. And gratitude spontaneously manifests itself as compassion.” Bishop Seigen Yamaoka has written extensively on the Nembutsu of Gratitude and has identified gratitude as one of “The Six Aspects of Jodo Shinshu.” In the booklet of that title, he writes of the name and the utterance as “an expression of gratitude,” and that this life of gratitude produces a sense of responsibility.

In other words, gratitude lies at the base of morality. It is the well from which all right actions spring and flow. When gratitude is our attitude, we will find it to be the oil that lubricates our relationships: our interaction with nature, the whole human family and all other sentient beings.

When we walk through the world wearing gratitude as a garment, we will find life more comfortable for ourselves, and we will help, thereby, to make it more hospitable for others.

One final comment on my perception of Shin Buddhism’s understanding of gratitude.

We are so bonno and bombu that we can no more generate gratitude than we can create compassion. Not only the Compassionate Embrace of Amida is the working of the Other Power, but our grateful response to that activity is also a result of the Other Power. The source and the substance of gratitude is in, with and under the Nembutsu.

Taitetsu Unno, a BCA minister and a Shin scholar teaching at Smith College, says it clearly, “Our ability to be grateful is a manifestation of Amida’s working in each of us. The source of gratitude [is] deeply rooted in the working of Amida's Primal Vow.”

Everything is a product of and a gift from Amida. The Vow, the Name, the Utterance, the Nembutsu, and especially the practice of gratitude, are all gifts. All is Other Power, Amida working in us and for us and through us.

We can, therefore, take no credit for our salvation, or even for our expression of gratitude for such an Eternal Embrace. A quatrain
from Daiei Kaneko uses three historic figures—Genshin, Hōnen and Shinran—to illustrate this point:

Genshin, with a deep feeling of gratitude
bowed his head. Hōnen naturally and
spontaneously lowered his head. Shinran
was humbled and could not lift up his head.

A SMALL HOLE IN THE EVENING

One of the vivid memories of my ten years with you is that I never sat down at table whether in a restaurant or in a home without your observing an initial gassho before eating. Invariably there is that hesitation, that hint of gratitude, when faced with the hospitality of Reality. More than a tip of the hat or a nod of the head, it is the heart acknowledging debt before indulging. It is the pause before Reality that truly refreshes.

The week after Thanksgiving, several years ago, a revealing article appeared in The New Yorker, that most secular, sophisticated and often snobbish magazine. It was the lead article under the regular section entitled “The Talk of the Town.” The author reported having cooked a huge Thanksgiving meal in his uptown (and probably up-scale) Manhattan apartment. He described the nine diners, including his wife and daughter, and how for the previous five years fixing this meal was his particular pleasure. This was “the best ever” he wrote. Just reading his description of the food he had prepared made my mouth water.

After talking about his family and guests in the living room and his work in the kitchen, and the meal almost ready to be served, he says, “I sit in my kitchen on the day of abundance feeling a lack of something.” Then he ruminates about this “lack.” First, he identifies it as a “lack of reverence.” Then he relates it to eating and makes this amazing confession:

“The lack of a table grace
at my friends’ dinner parties and my own
leaves a small hole in the evening,
the kind of hole you’d feel
if the host failed to welcome the guests.
The wild rice dressing, the gorgeous bird, the yams—
do I really intend to take all the credit for this?
A dinner this good requires a half-minute’s graceful pause.”

“A small hole in the evening.” I’ve never felt like that when I’ve eaten with you. It is the pause before Reality that really and truly re-
GRATITUDE IN CHRISTIAN PRACTICE

We turn now to look at the Christian concept of gratitude, which, surprisingly, seems to have close points of contact with the Shin view as I have just explicated it.

As you know, the Bible is our basic source-book, and half of it (the Old Testament) we inherited from the Hebrews. The biggest book in the Old Testament is the section entitled "Psalms." It is really a collection of hymns which were (and still are) sung and recited by the Jews during services in their temples and synagogues. Joy, praise and thanksgiving are the basic notes sounded in the Psalms, and these grew out of their feeling of gratitude for the compassionate Reality by which they felt accepted, surrounded and saved. The last song, Psalm 150, is the grand finale of this hymn book. The writer is so happy and so grateful for the grace-filled Reality which the community has experienced that he invents a whole symphony orchestra to help the people express their thanks. He encourages participants to praise with trumpets, harps and lyres. With drums, strings and flutes. With cymbals (and to underscore his ecstatic intensity) he adds, "Praise with loud-clashing cymbals."

Finally, exploding in a violent spasm of high fever and fervor, the psalmist shouts, "Let everything that breathes praise!"

That's gratitude that has almost gotten out of hand!

The second half of the Bible is the Christian half, the New Testament. I'll quote only one sentence to illustrate how important and pervasive gratitude is to the authors of these writings. Paul, an early Christian patriarch, wrote scores of letters to friends and churches; we still have a record of a dozen or so of them. The sounds of joy and gratitude ring through all his epistles; he is forever giving thanks. His attitude of gratitude is summed up and epitomized in four words in one letter to the Thessalonians (II Thess. 5:18) where he says, "In everything give thanks." (An echo or mirror of the psalmist I just quoted!)

What Paul is suggesting is that he has experienced the deepest Reality as coming to him as a good and benevolent force. He felt warmly embraced, as by a loving, supportive and sympathetic parent. Finding himself so surrounded and so accepted, his response was an immediate, spontaneous, and life-long litany of thanks. And in his letters he expressed the hope that other persons could share that same experience of acceptance, joy and gratitude.

The Roman Catholic Church was the dominant branch of Christianity in Europe until the Protestant Reformation. As a German, I come from what was called the Reformed Church. To instruct persons properly in that branch of Christendom, a German Prince asked two
young ministers in the city of Heidelberg to draw up a catechism, a simple question and answer textbook for children. This textbook was first published in 1563. Four hundred years later, it is still used, and when I was a boy I had to go to a class once a week for two years to study this book before I could be admitted as a member of the church.

My father was the minister who led me through those 232 questions and answers. For our purposes this morning, it is interesting to note the second question, which is this: "How many things is it necessary for you to know to live and die happy?" The answer is this: "Three: first, the greatness of my sin and misery; second, how I am saved from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to be thankful for such salvation."

The whole textbook was divided into these three sections, and it may astonish you to learn that the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer were placed in the final section, entitled "On How I Am To Be Thankful."

In other words, behavior or morality is thought of as a sign of gratitude, and prayer is primarily a paean of praise. To the question "Why must we do good works?" the answer is "That with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful." And prayer is called "the chief part of thankfulness." All that we are, all that we do, our whole life, is supposed to be an expression of gratitude. I really believe that. I only wish I could live that way.

To illustrate how dominant this note of gratitude is and to make clear that Christians believe that they can do nothing to earn, merit or effect salvation, and to emphasize that a life of gratitude is the only response we can make in the face of a grace-filled Reality, I want to quote a few passages culled from five or six books written by Karl Barth, who lived in Switzerland and who some people feel was the greatest interpreter of Christianity in this century. In his *Church Dogmatics* he writes:

To believe in Jesus Christ means to be grateful.
All that we can do is to be grateful.
The response to God's revelation can be nothing than works of gratitude.
The total life-act is to be performed in gratitude.
In every self-understanding in which persons try to understand their being as a Christian otherwise than as the fulfillment of thankfulness, they misunderstand themselves as Christians.
Gratitude is to be understood not only as a quality and an activity but as the very being and essence of a person. The person is not merely grateful. The person is itself gratitude. A person can see himself or herself only as gratitude because in fact a person can
only exist as pure gratitude.

Gratitude is the response to a kindness which itself cannot be repeated or returned, which therefore can only be recognized and confirmed as such by an answer that corresponds to it and reflects it. Gratitude is the establishment of this correspondence.

Grace evokes gratitude like the voice an echo. Gratitude follows grace like thunder lightning.

Radically and basically all sin is simply ingratitude.

These quotations are from one of the most profound contemporary interpreters of our religion. And now I'll let you in on a little secret: I think he learned something about the meaning of gratitude from Shinran. In the first book of a seventeen-volume series, he has an extensive section about Shinran and Jodo-Shinshu. Let me quote Barth again:

As Shinran saw it, everything depends on the faith of the heart. We are too firmly embedded in fleshly lusts to be able to extricate ourselves from the vicious circle of life and death by any form of self-activation. All that we can do is simply to give thanks for the redemption assured by Amida without any activity at all on our part. In the Jodo-Shu doctrine the hour of death loses its emphatic and critical character, and calling on Amida loses the last remnant of the character of an achievement or a magical act. It becomes simply a sign of our thankfulness.

So we have come full circle: from Shinran and Shinshu to Barth and Christianity, and back to Shinran. Gratitude as the primary response to Reality is at the heart of both religions.

Another intellectual giant from my German Reformed tradition was Reinhold Niebuhr, a professor for thirty years at a theological school in New York City. Toward the end of his career, The Saturday Review asked him to write an article on “Some Things I Have Learned.” Here are two sentences from that article. “At home the emphasis expressed in family worship and in instruction was on gratitude for the blessings of life... I learned that gratitude is the natural response of a life lived in faith as trust in the goodness of life.”

In summary of these quotations on gratitude, I cite a line from the greatest teacher I have ever had, John Baillie, of the University of Edinburgh. He is cogent in his analysis and so simple in his explanation that I continue to read and re-read his books. Recently, I came upon this sentence, which sums up his philosophy of life.

There is nothing of which I am more persuaded than that the right attitude to life is that of the person whose whole comportment
and activity have their root in the sentiment of gratitude.

Dr. Baillie wrote that over forty years ago, but just last month I read in an interview with the most recent recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, the poet Derek Walcott, a native of St. Lucia in the West Indies, a statement that epitomizes this sentiment. In the interview, Walcott was responding to a question about his book-length, Greek-style epic poem entitled “Omeros.” Here is what he said about it:

The book had already been written in the mouths of the Caribbean tribe. And I felt that I had been chosen, somehow to give it voice. So the utterance was inevitable. In a sense I saw it as a long thank-you note.

It appears as though we are all called to live out our lives as one long thank-you note.

GRATITUDE: A REASONABLE RESPONSE TO REALITY

A clear consensus has emerged among religious persons and a pervasive consciousness seems to course through most of humanity that gratitude is a reasonable response to the Reality that enfolds and encompasses us.

Gratitude is accepted as such a normal and healthy reflex that ingratitude is often viewed as flowing from a sick, depraved or demented personality. Ingratitude is unhealthy and abnormal, if not immoral and irreligious.

Shakespeare of course is the preeminent literary genius of western civilization. His plays deal with the values, aspirations, emotions and behavior common to all. And I was not surprised to learn—after some basic research that I conducted—how often he touched on the subject of gratitude, and its negative corollary, ingratitude.

What is most important to discern in his plays is the way the words and emotions transcend the characters and the settings in which they speak. The strength and beauty of Shakespeare lie in the fact that the words on the stage have a dimension of truth and power far beyond the particular plot of the play. For example, as we hear King Lear rage against the ingratitude of Cordelia, his daughter, our own ingratitude toward ultimate Reality, which we experience here and now as life, is exposed.

When Shakespeare has Lear rant about the “monster ingratitude,” the “dues of gratitude,” of “sharp-toothed unkindness,” of “ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend”—when he has Lear shout, Oh
"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child"—the playwright is revealing our lack of gratitude for the benevolent cosmic totality that surrounds us. He is trying to make us aware of and grateful for the force in the universe that seeks to transform, renew and deepen life.

Shakespeare addresses a universal condition, the terrible sense of alienation in which we all live separated from the true self and from the true structure of Reality. He perceives Reality as fundamentally good, and when persons become aware of being within this warm embrace they are freed to envision the possibility of a radically better state of being and are then enabled to live in harmony with that Reality.

His plays not only reveal the fundamental human condition, but they also point us (the audience/the reader) to the means of transformation. *King Lear* teaches us that we are liberated by accepting gratefully the Reality by which we are embraced. Shakespeare uses this drama to illuminate and confirm the truth that gratitude is the attitude of response which best corresponds and conforms to Reality, to one's true nature, and which thereby leads to noble, joyful and enlightened living.

If we listen carefully to the words of the Bard of Stratford, perhaps we can hear the voice at the deepest level of life speaking to us. Listen:

"We have all Great cause to give great thanks."
"Not proud you have, but thankful that you have."
"The thanks I give is telling you that I am poor of thanks."
"Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you."

And two passages from *Twelfth Night*. First, Viola:

"I hate ingratitude more in humanity
than lying, vanities, babbling drunkenness,
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption
Inhabits our frail blood."

The best passage I've saved for the last. Here is Shakespeare's response to Reality in the words of Sebastian:

"I can no other answer make but thanks,
and thanks,
and ever thanks."

In these passages Shakespeare is speaking to us and to all humanity about our indifference, insensitivity and ingratitude in the face of an all-embracing, benevolent and life-providing Reality.
Can we not agree, whether Buddhist or Christian, that a life of gratitude lifts one above ideology and morality? Beyond legalism and intolerance. Beyond ignorance and illusion. That gratitude helps save us from being constricted ("cribbed, cabined and confined") by that narrow, crooked streak which runs through the lives of us all?

Gratitude is the fundamental way of relating to the Real, the primordial ground of life and the transcendent element in life.

To live without gratitude is to die a dry and dusty death, smothered by the debris of self-deception, parched by the illusion that we are self-sufficient and independent.

Gratitude lifts us above the ordinary, the natural, the flat plain on which we spend most of our lives. It acknowledges depth in life and points to the immeasurable, the incomparable, the incomprehensible. It reveals and acknowledges the eternal structure of Reality.

Gratitude implies humility, suggests dependence and results in interdependence. It spawns a multitude of virtues, sweetens personal relations and saves us from arrogance and pride.

A sense of gratitude liberates us from the ladder of striving and frees us from the relentless wheel that wears us down by defining life in terms of success and failure. It releases us from the oppressive tomb of guilt and replaces fear as a controlling force in life.

Isn't it true that in the end what matters most is a life lived in and out of gratitude?

Shakespeare had it right:

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
Thou art not so unkind
As humanity's ingratitude.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky!
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot."

I believe at the very base of my being that we are all bound together in this bundle of life and that if we will live with gratitude

in sickness and in health
in poverty and in wealth
when happy or sad
when good or bad
and by this way of living
affect (however modestly)
another person so to live
then we will not have lived in vain.
CONCLUSION

This address has been prepared and delivered as an expression of my gratitude to the Buddhist Churches of America for every kindness and courtesy afforded me during the past ten years.

I hope that what I have said and done today (and during these years together) will not have dimmed your understanding of Amida nor impeded your journey to the Pure Land.

My coming among you and now my leaving remind me of that moving statement at the entrance of the Buddhist Temple in Toronto which reads:

"I went out alone.
But returned with another.
How grateful I am.
Namu Amida Butsu accompanied me back."

Okage-sama
which I understand to mean
I owe it all to you; it is all due to your efforts
thank you very much
As I have noted elsewhere, relative to other areas of inquiry in Buddhist Studies, apart from S. Tachibana's *The Ethics of Buddhism* (published in 1926), Winston King's *In the Hope of Nibbana* (published in 1964), and H. Saddhatissa's *Buddhist Ethics* (published in 1970), until quite recently there has been very little scholarly publication in the area of Buddhist ethics. Frank Reynolds' useful (and now updated) "Buddhist Ethics: A Bibliographic Essay," illustrates the same point. My own concern for this dilemma has been expressed by, and expanded upon, by Damien Keown in his excellent book *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*. He states, 

The study of Buddhist ethics has been neglected not just by the tradition but also by Western scholarship. Recent decades have witnessed an explosion in all aspects of Buddhist studies while this fundamental dimension of the Buddhist ethos, which is of relevance across the boundaries of sect and school has become an academic backwater. Only recently have the signs appeared that this neglect is to be remedied... 

Besides Keown's work, the only full-length study that moves even nominally beyond this limitation is G.S.P. Misra's *Development of Buddhist Ethics*, published in 1984.

The topic of Buddhist ethics, though, has become sufficiently timely and consequential that it now provides the occasion for sponsoring international conferences. In 1990, the first Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies International Conference on Buddhism was organized by its director, Venerable Sheng-Yen, and convened at Taipei's National Central Library with "Buddhist Ethics and Modern Society" as its
essential focus. The papers presented at the conference were collected into a volume entitled *Buddhist Ethics and Modern Society*, edited by Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Sandra A. Wawrytko. It is perhaps the most useful of all recent books on the subject due to the breadth and scope of its twenty-nine papers spanning the past, present and future. The success of the initial conference enabled the Chung-Hwa Institute to hold a second conference in Summer 1992.

Venerable Sheng-Yen, in the Prologue to *Buddhist Ethics and Modern Society*, says “The precepts (Vinaya) form the basis of Buddhist ethics.” He goes on to say that “Buddhist lay members need obey only 5, or at the most 8, Buddhist novices must obey 10, while adult monks and nuns have to obey anywhere from 250 to more than 300.” Although Sheng-Yen is wrong in not distinguishing the basis of ethical conduct for the laity as separate from the monastic code of the Vinaya, a traditional association in East Asian Buddhism where the terms śīla and Vinaya are compounded, his mistake is rather commonly made even the Indian tradition where the terms are indeed separate and never compounded. Akira Hirakawa has offered considerable insight on the need to separate the traditional compound śīla/vinaya into its component parts for a proper understanding of each term, but it is rather ordinary and regular, I think, for scholars to associate Vinaya rather than śīla with ethics.

It is critical for our study to understand why the distinction between these terms is so important, and precisely how the distinction impacts on our original topic. The technical term Vinaya, derived from the Sanskrit prefix *vi* + *mṛ*, is often rendered as (some variant of) training, education, discipline, or control. John Holt, utilizing another etymologically valid approach suggests “Vinaya, the reified noun form of the verb *vi* + *mṛ* therefore leads us to the general meaning of ‘that which separates,’ or ‘that which removes.” Holt goes on:

Our translation of the term vinaya begs the question: what is being removed? To answer that question in the simplest terms, that which is being removed are wrong states of mind, the conditions of grasping, desire and ignorance which stem from the delusion that we have a “self” that can be satiated. The discipline of the *Vinayapitaka* represents a systematic assault on the idea of “ego-consciousness.”

Charles Wei-hsun Fu, utilizing Hirakawa’s etymological analysis which captures the essence of both meanings cited above, comes to the same conclusion: “Vinaya referred to the established norms of the Sangha that all members were expected to observe to maintain the monastic order and insure its continuation.” In other words, the Vinaya was as much concerned with the pariśuddhi or complete purity of the community,
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individually and organizationally, as it was with the specifics of ethical conduct. Under no circumstances should we presume that ethical concerns were superseded in the Vinaya, but rather were included in a series of tiered concerns that focused on institutional, but not exclusively ethical conduct.

Sīla, more difficult etymologically than Vinaya, is probably derived from the verb śīl and generally translated as virtue, moral conduct, morality, or some similar variant (although Buddhaghosa in the Visuddhimagga traces it to a different verb root, associated with “cooling” and Vasubandhu in the Abhidharmakosā suggests it derives from the verb śīl, which he too associates with cooling). As such, it is a highly ethical term, almost exclusively applied to the individual, and referenced to his or her self-discipline. Additionally, one finds such references continually in the literature. Unlike the Vinaya, which is externally enforced, sīla refers to the internally enforced ethical framework by which the monk or nun structures his or her life. Taken in his light, we can see that sīla is an incredibly rich concept for understanding individual ethical conduct. Thus, as Fu points out, with respect to sīla and Vinaya:

Hirakawa’s analysis of the two words seems to have enormous significance for Buddhist ethics and morality, to address the task of its constructive modernization, demands that we give serious consideration to the means for maintaining a balance between autonomy (sīla) [sic], expressing the inner spirit of Dharma, and the heteronomous norms or precepts (vinaya) of the Buddhist order.

Although the Sūtravibhāṅga and its paracanonical precursor, the Prātimokṣa (that portion of the Vinaya Pitaka devoted to precepts for the individual monks and nuns), contain many rules reflective of significant ethical awareness and concern, is it appropriate to identify the Sūtravibhāṅga as an exclusively ethical document? If we could establish that the canonical Vinaya texts, of which the Sūtravibhāṅga is a critical part, have their basis in the precepts of sīla, then such an argument might be well taken. In this regard, one of the pioneers of comparative Prātimokṣa study, W. Pachow, argues for precisely that position in asserting that the Buddhist disciplinary code was little more than an embellishment of the traditional, widely known, and quite early, pañcaśīla or five ethical precepts. Pachow says,

It would not be unreasonable to say that the code of discipline of the Samgha is but an enlarged edition of the Pañcaśīla which have been adopted by the Buddhists and the Jains from the Brāhmanical ascetics. And under various circumstances, they developed subsid-
ary rules in order to meet various requirements on various occasions. Thus appears to us to be the line of development through which the growth of these rules could be explained.\textsuperscript{14}

He then attempts to identify a clear developmental relationship between the individual precepts of the pañcaśīla and the lesser, secondary rules of the Prātimokṣa. Pachow’s interesting approach is cited by most scholars researching the problem. Holt, for example, says, “If this hypothesis were absolutely sound, we could somehow relate all of the disciplinary rules in some way to the four pārājikas or to the pañcaśīla. Unfortunately, we are not able to do this.”\textsuperscript{15} Using the Pāli text as the benchmark, 139 of the 227 Patimokkha rules can be explained. Nonetheless, eighty-eight rules cannot be reconciled! Undaunted, Pachow simply creates new categories to accommodate them.\textsuperscript{16} The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that the pañcaśīla largely mirror the rules for Brahmānical ascetics and Jain monks. Holt summarizes well:

Thus, if we are to argue that the fundamental basis of Buddhist discipline consists of the primary concerns of śīla, we would have to admit that the basis of Buddhist discipline is not exclusively Buddhist, nor śramanic, not even monastic for that matter: not a very satisfying finding.\textsuperscript{17}

In the beginning of his important chapter on “Aspects of Śīla” in \textit{The Nature of Buddhist Ethics}, Damien Keown clearly identifies the impact of the above argument: “Overall, there seems to be no reason to assume that the Vinaya is either derived from a simpler set of moral principles or founded upon a single underlying principle or rationale.”\textsuperscript{18} The remarks of Holt and Keown mirror what Prebish said rather directly in 1980: the “Prātimokṣa is not just monastic ‘glue’ holding the sangha together, but the common ground on which the internally enforced life of śīla is manifested externally in the community.”\textsuperscript{19} More recently, and aggressively, Lambert Schmithausen has made the same point. He notes, “The Vinaya is not concerned, primarily, with morality proper but rather with the internal harmony and external reputation of the Order.”\textsuperscript{20} He goes on to say, “One of the main purposes of the Patimokkha (though some of its prohibitions do also refer to morality proper) is no doubt, besides internal harmony, the correct and decorous behaviour of the Order and its members in society.”\textsuperscript{21} If Upāli’s recitation of the first council of Rājagrha has as much to do with communal administration and conduct as it does with individual moral behavior, and if the canonical Vinaya Piṭaka, even in the Sutravibhaṅga, devotes more than one-third of its regulations to matters that could at best be referred to as etiquette, where, if anywhere in the Buddhist cannon, can we find a
fuller exegesis of śīla, acknowledged to be a more comprehensive, apt, and better descriptive term for Buddhist ethical concerns than Vinaya? Further, although the commentarial tradition associated with the Vinaya presents an immense literature in Pāli, replete with tikās, sub-tikās, and the like, it remains somewhat limited in scope with regard to more modern issues. Thus, it becomes necessary to question whether it is possible for the textual material on śīla to be functional in a transtemporal and transcultural fashion?

If we acknowledge that the most general and consistent treatment of ethics in Buddhism is revealed by its expositions on śīla, then it also becomes critical for an accurate understanding of Buddhist ethics to ask the question clearly put by Winston King in 1964: “What is the relation of ethics to the total structure of Buddhist doctrine and practice, particularly with regard to the definition of moral values, their metaphysical status if any, and the nature of ultimate sanctions.” The traditional way of expressing King’s question considers the relationship between the three aspects of the eightfold path, śīla, samādhi, and prajñā, and their connection to nirvāṇa. Damien Keown reviews several long-standing notions on how these soteriological elements relate. Keown first cites the most common view that śīla leads to samādhi, which leads to prajñā, and that prajñā is identified with nirvāṇa. In this context, the ethical concerns expressed by śīla are at best subsidiary to the others, and are generally thought to be transcended with the attainment of nirvāṇa. Secondly, it may be argued that ethical enterprise may facilitate enlightenment, and following the attainment of nirvāṇa, once again become operative. Thirdly, ethics and knowledge (i.e., prajñā) may both be present in the attainment of the final goal. About his review Keown concludes:

The three possibilities outlined above represent very different visions of the role of ethics in the Buddhist soteriological programme. In the first two cases, which I have bracketed together, ethics is extrinsic to nibbāna, dispensable, and subsidiary to paññā. In the third it is intrinsic to nibbāna, essential, and equal in value to paññā.

Although the prevailing viewpoint in Buddhist scholarship has tended toward a utilitarian conclusion on the issue of śīla, especially with regard to Theravāda studies, and despite the contrariness of Mahāyāna-based testimony, an ever-increasing volume of new scholarship has rejected the so-called “transcendency thesis,” in favor of a more valued role for those practices collected under the categorical term śīla. In so doing, it becomes possible to consider those principles categorized as śīla collectively, as a synthetic reflection of both nikāya Buddhism and Mahāyāna, and perhaps to at least reconsider, and at most dispel, such notions as
śīla representing a purely mundane goal, largely considered as the highest pursuit for the laity, and practiced by monks and nuns only as a preparation for samādhi.

Although the transcendency thesis was advanced as early as 1914,27 Winston King's In the Hope of Nibbana (1964) and Melford Spiro's Buddhism and Society (1970) offer the clearest exposition of the argument. The argument is simple and straightforward. Using Spiro's terminology, Nibbanic Buddhism involves monks pursuing the goal of nibbāna by destroying kamma through bhāvana or meditative discipline, while Kammatic Buddhism involves lay practitioners pursuing the goal of favorable rebirth through the production of puñña or merit by acts of dāna (giving) and śīla (morality). The theory is largely based on the well-known "Parable of the Raft," taken from the Alagaddapama-sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya ("Discourse on the Parable of the Water-Snake"). I.B. Horner, in her translation, understands the raft parable to establish that morality is left behind upon the attainment of nibbāna. It is curious that she and others overlook further passages in the Nikāyas which contradict the transcendency thesis by clearly stating that śīla is part of the farther shore.28 A similar, contrary position is advanced in the Mahāsāṃghikha-sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (and affirmed by Buddhaghosa in his Commentary) in which Buddha addresses the issue of clinging to the Dhamma as opposed to the issue of whether śīla is transcended.29 Coupled with additional evidence provided by Aronson in Love and Sympathy in Theravāda Buddhism and Katz in Buddhist Images of Human Perfection,30 the King-Spiro approach is rather clearly contradicted. If we summarize the relationship between śīla, samādhi, and pārañña, it becomes possible to delineate a clear and precise connection:

The fact that the Eightfold Path begins with śīla does not mean that morality is only a preliminary stage. The Eightfold Path begins with śīla but ends with śīla and pārañña. Śīla is the starting point since human nature is so constituted that moral discipline (śīla) facilitates intellectual discipline (pārañña). Until correct attitudes, habits, and dispositions have been inculcated it is easy to fall prey to speculative views and opinions of all kinds. This does not mean that there is a direct line leading through śīla to pārañña, or that morality is merely a means of limbering up for the intellectual athlete. No: morality is taken up first but constantly cultivated alongside insight until the two fuse in the transformation of the entire personality in the existential realisation of selflessness.31

Finally, the author of the above quotation integrates the role of samādhi in the progression as well. He says, "In the scheme of the Eightfold Path,
samādhi stands between sīla and pañña and supplements them both. It is a powerful technique for the acceleration of ethical and intellectual developments towards their perfection in nibbāna.  

Having established the efficacy of sīla rather than Vinaya as the primary and most essential category of inquiry for matters pertinent to the ethical tradition in Buddhism, and having established sīla as critical throughout the Buddhist path to enlightenment and after its attainment, we can now proceed to an examination of the sūtra, and to a lesser extent, Abhidharma literature fundamental to the sīla tradition.

The clearest and most detailed exposition of sīla in the Pāli Canon can be found in the first thirteen suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya, a section collectively referred to as the Śīlakkhandhavagga. The first, and perhaps most important of these thirteen texts cited above, is the Brahmajāla-sutta or the “Discourse on Brahma’s Net.” The preliminary, critical portion of this text is divided into three sections termed, respectively, the short (cūla), medium (maṣjihma), and long (maha) divisions. These three sections occur in each of the thirteen suttas of the Śīlakkhandhavagga! Thomas W. Rhys Davids, in the notes to his translation of these sections of the Dīgha Nikāya, refers to them as the “Śīla Vagga,” and says that “the tract itself must almost certainly have existed as a separate work before the time when the discourses, in each of which it recurs, were first put together.” The short tract (as Rhys Davids calls the division) contains twenty-six items of moral conduct, the medium tract ten, and the long tract seven, and while each tract is important for understanding the developing notion of Buddhist morality, it is the short tract that is most critical. Compared to the various codes of precepts that have become the standard of proper Buddhist conduct, namely, the (in Pāli) paṇcaśīla (five precepts), aṭṭhānagātī (eight precepts), dasaśīla (ten precepts), dasakusala-kammaphala (ten good paths of action), and Pātimokkha (formal monastic disciplinary code), one can correlate four of the five paṇcaśīla to the short tract, seven of the eight aṭṭhānagātī, nine of the ten dasaśīla, seven of the ten dasakusala-kammaphala, and, as we have seen above, 139 of the 227 offenses of the Pātimokkha. This close correspondence is important because “...the conduct of the ideal samana as defined in the Short Tract becomes the foundation of Buddhist ethics.” Although the Brahmajāla-sutta is possibly the clearest exposition of all the discourses in the Śīla Vagga, a number of other texts are also especially important for understanding sīla in a contextual framework consistent with Buddhist soteriology. The Samaññaphala-sutta or “Discourse on the Fruits of the Religious Life,” for example, links the practice of sīla to meditative attainment, destruction of the imperfections known as asavas (usually translated as “outflows” or “cankers”), and the achievement of arhathood. The famous eightfold path, with its division into sīla, samādhi, and pañña, is mentioned in the Mahāli-sutta (“Discourse to Mahāli”) and the
Kassapasthanāda-sutta ("Discourse on the Lion’s Roar to Kassapa"). Nor should we conclude that ethicality is not emphasized in the other parts of the canon, as the Mangala-sutta of the Khuddhaka Nikāya, Metta-sutta of the Suttanipāta, and Sigalovāda-sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya are among the most important Theravāda texts on this subject. It would also be incorrect to presume āśīla as topically important only in the sūtras. It is also of much interest to Abhidharma and later commentarial authors as well. Nowhere is this more plainly visible than the Theravādin Abhidhamma, the first text of which (i.e., the Dhammasaṅgani) classifies mental elements around a markedly ethical base. According to G.S.P. Misra, to Puggalapaññatti as well “deals with the task of the classification of human types in which ethical consideration, among others, is the most dominant principle.” Anuruddha’s Abhidhammattha-sangaha offers a list of fourteen immoral and nineteen moral mental constituents (cetasikas). Additionally, ethical concerns abound in the appropriate sections of Buddhaghosa’s Visuddhimagga and virtually throughout the Milindapañha. In the Sarvāstivādin tradition too, twenty-eight of the forty-six caittas have clear ethical import: ten positive mental constituents known asuṣalamaḥābhāmika-dharmas and eighteen negative mental constituents (composed of six kleśas or defilements, two akuṣala-maḥābhāmika-dharmas or universally bad elements, and ten upakleśas or secondary defilements). The ethical considerations in Vasubandhu’s Abhidharmakośa are simply too numerous to cite. What it boils down to is this: “The Abhidharma posits two classes of mental forces which produce either defilement or purification of the mind.”

How does the above present a consistent, harmonious picture for the early Buddhist? In the Kassapasthanāda-sutta, Buddha says, of his own ethical attainment:

Now there are some recluses and Brahmans, Kassapa, who lay emphasis on conduct. They speak, in various ways, in praise of morality. But so far as regards the really noble, the highest conduct, I am aware of no one who is equal to myself, much less superior. And it is I who have gone the furthest therein; in the highest conduct (of the Path).

Of course the Pali word utilized to indicate “highest conduct” is ādhisthāla. The implication of Buddha’s statement is clear enough: Buddha’s attainment was unquestionably motivated by compassion and fueled by moral development of the highest order, but also that the attainment of Buddhahood (or, for that matter, arhatship) does not preclude ethical propriety. No doubt the cultivation of meditational attainment, as we indicated earlier, bridges the proverbial gap between sthāla and pāñña,
and not only does this suggest that meditational experience has serious impact on the moral life, but also that “Sīla is a central feature of the conduct of the enlightened...” Keown notes that “the Arahat certainly has not gone beyond kusala, and kusala is the term which par excellence denotes ethical goodness.” Ethical goodness, as manifested by Buddha or any serious practitioner, is a reflection of his sympathy (anukampa) for all sentient beings and manifested by cultivation of the four brahmavihāras or “Divine Abodes,” as Aronson has amply demonstrated.

If the above paragraph demonstrates that Buddhist ethical development takes its inspiration from Buddha's personal example, it is not unreasonable to conclude about the Buddha, as Lal Mani Joshi does, that

His love of solitude and silence was matched only by his universal compassion towards the suffering creatures. Hīnayāna seems to have laid emphasis on the former while Mahāyāna on the latter aspect of the Buddha's personality and ideal. Such an approach lead Joshi and others to identify the ethical approach of the Buddhist nikāyas as narrower and more limited in scope than Mahāyāna. About Mahāyāna, Joshi remarks, “Its aim is higher, its outlook broader, and its aspiration more sublime than that of Hīnayāna.” One should not read Joshi's evaluation too aggressively, or as a rejection of the earlier understanding of sīla, but rather as what Keown aptly calls a “paradigm shift.” This paradigm shift is of course reflected by the Mahāyāna emphasis on the bodhisattva ideal.

Nalinaksha Dutt, in his still important Aspect of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Its Relation to Hīnayāna, notes that the Chinese pilgrim I-ching “who was chiefly interested in the Vinaya, remarks that the Mahāyāna had no Vinaya of their own and that theirs was the same as that of the Hinayānists.” Dutt, however, goes on to list a large number of Mahāyāna sūtras that deal with ethical issues, including the Bodhisattvakaraṇīrdeśa, Bodhi-sattva-pratimokṣa-sūtra, Bhikṣu Vinaya, Ākāśagarbha-sūtra, Upālīpariṣṭchā-sūtra, Ugradatta-pariṣṭchā-sūtra, Ratnamegha-sūtra, and Ratnarāsi-sūtra. Of these, the Bodhisattva-pratimokṣa-sūtra and the Upālīpariṣṭchā-sūtra are clearly the best known. The former was edited by Dutt and published in Indian Historical Quarterly, 7 (1931), pp. 259-286, but to my knowledge, has never been translated into English. It is a sūtra only in name, comprised primarily of fragments taken from the Upālīpariṣṭchā-sūtra and the Bodhisattavabhumi. Nonetheless, it is not a code of monastic rules for bodhisattvas, as its name implies, but rather a general ethical guide for both lay and monastic bodhisattvas. The Upālīpariṣṭchā-
sūtra has benefited from the fine scholarly translation of Pierre Python.49

There is little doubt that at least three major texts form the basis of Mahāyāna ethics: the (1) (Mahāyāna) Brahmajāla-sūtra, an apocryphal Chinese work50 (2) Śiksāsamuccaya of Śantideva, and (3) Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śantideva. The Śiksāsamuccaya was of sufficient importance to prompt Joshi to state, "The fundamental principle of Mahāyāna morality is expressed in the first verse of the Śiksāsamuccaya: 'When to myself as to my fellow-beings, fear and pain are hateful, what justification is there that I protect my own self and not others?'"51 Structurally, the text is organized into three parts, beginning with twenty-seven kārikās outlining the ethical ideal of the bodhisattva. A second part offers an extensive commentary on these verses, with the third part offering a huge compendium of supporting quotations from additional Buddhist texts. Taken collectively, its three parts form a comprehensive statement on bodhisattva ethics. The Bodhicaryāvatāra is possibly the best known Mahāyāna text associated with the conduct of the bodhisattva. It is arranged in ten chapters, five of which address the pāramitās, but with mindfulness (smṛti) and awareness (samparājanya) substituted for the traditional dāna and śīla. This does not mean say that the śīla-pāramitā is omitted, for Chapter V, Verse 11 mentions it by name.52 Specifically ethical concerns are also considered in Chapter II, Known as "Pāpa-deśanā" or "Confession of Evil." Overall, an incredible breadth and scope of ethical issues are considered.

Curiously, it is not from these famous Mahāyāna ethical texts alone that we find the key which unlocks the major emphasis of bodhisattva conduct. Two further texts are critically important here: the Mahāyānasamgraha and the Bodhisattvabhūmi, and it is on the basis of their evidence that many authors, Buddhist and otherwise, have advanced the theory of the superiority of Mahāyāna ethics over that of nikāya Buddhism. In fact, the tenth or "ethical" chapter of the Bodhisattvabhūmi was the focus of a complete translation and study by Mark Tatz.53

Keown, in The Nature of Buddhist Ethics (pp. 135-157), provides an extremely careful exposition of the argument. The Mahāyānasamgraha suggests that Mahāyāna morality is superior to Hinayāna in four ways: (1) in its classifications (prabheda-viśeṣa), (2) in its common and separate rules (sādhārana-asādhārana-śīkṣāviśeṣa), (3) in breadth (vaipulyaviśeṣa), and (4) in depth (gāmbhīryaviśeṣa).54 The first category is the most important of the four since it supports the other three, and is itself composed of three sections: (a) morality as temperance (samvarā-śīla), (b) morality as the pursuit of good (kuśala-dharma-samgrāhaka-śīla), and (c) morality as altruism (sattva-artha-kriya-śīla).55 The threefold categorization of morality as temperance, the pursuit of good, and
altruism is further developed by the Bodhisattvabhumi, concluding that it is the element of altruism that enables Mahayana morality to surpass its nikaya Buddhist counterpart. The extreme importance of the issue of altruism in asserting the superiority of Mahayana ethics has not gone unnoticed by modern Theravadin. Walpola Rahula, for example, says,

The bhikkhu is not a selfish, cowardly individual thinking only of his happiness and salvation, unmindful of whatever happens to the rest of humanity. A true bhikkhu is an altruistic, heroic person who considers others' happiness more than his own. He, like the Bodhisattva Sumedha, will renounce his own nirvana for the sake of others. Buddhism is built upon service to others.

Other Theravadin authors echo Rahula's sentiment. Regarding the specific conduct of bodhisattvas, the Bodhisattvabhumi postulates a code having fifty-two rules, of which only the first four are categorized (as parajayika-sthaniya-dharma) and a number of which allow the violation of (some of) the ten good paths of action. The second category explores the differentiation between serious and minor offenses, emphasizing that while both bodhisattvas and Sravakas are enjoined to observe all the major rules of conduct, bodhisattvas may breach minor matters of deportment while Sravakas may not. Of course the circumstances under which a bodhisattva may engage in this kind of behavior are also stated. The third category is essentially a summary. Finally, the fourth category is the most innovative, focusing on the notion of skill-in-means (upaya-kausalya) in relation to Mahayana ethics.

In the fourth chapter of the Bodhicaryavatara, one reads “The son of the Conquerer, having grasped the Thought of Enlightenment firmly, must make every effort, constantly and alertly, not to transgress the discipline (siksa).” In the next chapter: “Thus enlightened, one ought to be constantly active for the sake of others. Even that which generally is forbidden is allowed to the one who understands the work of compassion.” How can these two conflicting views appear in the same text, and in such close proximity? The answer lies in a proper understanding of upaya-kausalya and its role in Mahayana ethics: it is a theme that permeates Santideva’s writings. Throughout the eighth chapter of the Siksmaucayya on “Purification from Sin” (Papadoshanam), citations abound, especially from the Upalipariprccha-sutra and the Upayakausalya-sutra, in which ethical transgressions are allowed and sanctioned in the name of skill-in-means. Keown concludes from all these examples “that the freedom allowed to a bodhisattva is enormous and a wide spectrum of activities are permitted to him, even to the extent of taking life.”

He goes on, however, to say:
When actions of these kinds are performed there are usually two provisos which must be satisfied: (a) that the prohibited action will conduce to the greater good of those beings directly affected by it; and (b) that the action is performed on the basis of perfect knowledge (prajñā) or perfect compassion (karuṇā).

The relationship between śīla and prajñā in Mahayana is thus parallel to that noted above with respect to nikāya Buddhism in which it was remarked that “the two fuse in the transformation of the entire personality in the existential realization of selflessness” (see note 31). What seems not to be parallel is that the nikāya Buddhist adept is at no time allowed to breach the practice of proper morality while the Mahāyāna bodhisattva may, under certain circumstances invariably linked to altruistic activities and based on karuṇā, upāya-kauśalya, and prajñā, transcend conventional morality. G.S.P. Misra, for example, notices that, “In the Bodhisattvabhūmi we find an enumeration of the circumstances under which a Bodhisattva may justifiably commit transgressions of the moral precepts; the governing factor, however, is always compassion and a desire to save others from sinful acts.”63 The above passages notwithstanding, parallel references can also be found emphasizing a strict observance of the precepts for bodhisattvas. As a result, we find ourselves confused over the apparent incongruity in the textual accounts of Mahāyāna ethical conduct, and wondering just how breaches of conventional ethical behavior are sanctioned.

The solution emerges from the postulation of two uniquely different types of upāya-kauśalya. About the first, which he categorizes as normative ethics and calls upāya, Keown says:

\[\text{Upāya}, \text{ does not enjoin laxity in moral practice but rather the greater recognition of the needs and interests of others. One's moral practice in now for the benefit of oneself and others by means of example. Through its emphasis on karuṇā the Mahāyāna gave full recognition to the value of ethical perfection, making it explicit that ethics and insight were of equal importance for a bodhisattva.}\]

The second type of upāya has nothing to do with normative ethics or ordinary individuals. It is the province of those who have already perfected ethics and insight. Thus:

\[\ldots \text{it is the upāya of bodhisattvas of the seventh stage (upāya-kauśalya-bhūmi) and beyond, whose powers and perfections are supernatural. Upāya, is depicted as an activity of the Buddhas and Great Bodhisattvas (Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas) and it is only they who have the knowledge and power to use it. It is by virtue of upāya,}\]
that bodhisattvas transgress the precepts from motives of compassion and are said to do no wrong.66

There can be little doubt that upāyā2 is not the model by which ordinary beings perfect themselves but rather the pragmatic moral outcome of the attainment of the seventh stage of the bodhisattva path. Upāyā2 is the social expression of a genuine understanding of the notion of emptiness (śānyata) in which no precepts can even be theorized. It is emphasized throughout the Mahāyāna literature on emptiness, but nowhere as eloquently as in the discourse between Vimalakīrti and Upāli in the third chapter of the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra.

Reverend Upāli, all things are without production, destruction, and duration, like magical illusions, clouds, and lightening; all things are evanescent, not remaining even for an instant; all things are like dreams, hallucinations, and unreal visions; all things are like the reflection of the moon in water and like a mirror-image; they are born of mental construction. Those who know this are called the true upholders of the discipline, and those disciplined in that way are indeed well disciplined.67

As such, it represents the far extreme of the ethical continuum, a Buddhist situation ethics established not simply on love, as in Fletcher's system, but on the highest and most profound manifestation of compassion.

Having concluded in the above pages that śīla is operative throughout the individual's progress on the nīkāya Buddhist path, even after the attainment of prajñā, and that the same claim can be made for Mahāyāna, enhanced by the altruistic utilization of upāyā; up to the attainment of the seventh bodhisattva stage, after which upāyā becomes operative, albeit in rather antinomian fashion, it now becomes important to address the issue of whether textually based Buddhist ethics can be truly current; whether an ethical tradition solidly grounded on the textual heritage can serve as the foundational basis for a socially engaged Buddhism, effective in addressing the complex concerns cited in the growing literature on the subject.

The relative vitality of Buddhist ethics in today's world is a concern that cannot be minimized. Indeed, Kōshō Mizutani, in the Prologue to Buddhist Ethics and Modern Society asserts, "I submit that a study of Buddhism that emphasizes its ethical aspects will be the most important task facing Buddhists in the twenty-first century."68 Studies abound stressing the difficulties of living effectively in a postmodern society that is becoming increasingly pluralistic and secular. This dilemma is further exacerbated for Buddhists in that "Buddhists today
face the question not only of how to relate to other religions, but also how to relate to other forms of Buddhism from different traditions.\textsuperscript{69}

In 1987, Rick Fields delivered a paper on “The Future of American Buddhism” to a conference entitled “Buddhism and Christianity: Toward the Human Future,” held at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. Although case specific to the American Buddhist situation, Fields concluded his presentation with a sketch of eight features he felt would be critical in the on-going development of American Buddhism. All eight points were directly or indirectly related to issues of Buddhist ethics, prompting Fields to comment: “The Bodhisattva notions of direct involvement in the world will tend to overshadow tendencies towards renunciation and withdrawal. Buddhist ethics, as reflected in the precepts, the paramitas, and the Bodhisattva vow, will be applied to the specific problems of day-to-day living in contemporary urban North America.”\textsuperscript{70} It is difficult to consider Fields’ words, and those of similar, like-minded individuals such as the contributors to works in the genre of The Path of Compassion edited by Fred Eppsteiner without feeling much sympathy for the predicament facing Buddhists in Asia and America as they try to confront ethical dilemmas directly. Consequently, when we read articles by Sulak Sivaraksa, Thich Nhat Hanh, Jack Kornfield, Joanna Macy and others we must commend them for the depth of their sincerity and commitment, the expanse of the timely issues they confront, and wonder why there is rarely a footnote, hardly a textual reference in their writings which might provide additional and persuasive authority to their arguments.

In an exciting new article, drawing heavily on the work of recent biblical scholarship, Harold Coward points out that

The relationship between a religious community and its scripture is complex, reciprocal and usually central to the normative self-definition of a religion. The awareness of this relationship is the result of postmodern approaches that no longer see scriptures as museum pieces for historical critical analysis, but recognize them to be the products of human perception and interaction—both in their own time and in today’s study by scholars.\textsuperscript{71}

The problem of precisely how ethical guidelines can be appropriately reinterpreted in the context of changing times and cultures was confronted early on in Buddhist religious history. By including only the presumed works of the Buddha, referred to as Buddhavacana, within a closed canon, nikāya Buddhism in general and Theravāda in particular made a clear statement about the relationship of community and scripture in the early tradition. Mahāyāna chose the opposite approach. As Coward points out: “Rather than closing off the canon as the Theravāda
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school had done, Mahāyāna maintained an open approach and added to
the ‘remembered words’ of Ananda new sūtras such as the Prajñāparamitā
Sūtras and the Lotus Sūtra.”72 This openness allowed Buddhists the
occasion to utilize Buddha’s own approach in transmitting the substance
of his teaching if not his exact words. Robinson and Johnson point this
out clearly in The Buddhist Religion: “Both strictness in preserving the
essential kernel and liberty to expand, vary, and embellish the expres­
sion characterize Buddhist attitudes through the ages toward not only
texts but also art, ritual, discipline, and doctrine. The perennial diffi­
culty lies in distinguishing the kernel from its embodiment.”73

The openness in creating new scripture emphasized by Mahā­
yāna, and the utilization of an on-going commentarial tradition, as
fostered by earlier Buddhism, conjointly provide the potential for a pro­
foundly current Buddhist ethics that is also textually grounded. Such an
approach is solidly in keeping with the program outlined by Charles Wei­
hsun Fu (in a slightly different context). Fu says, “The Buddhist view of
ethics and morality must be presented in the context of open discussion
in a free and democratic forum.”74 To be successful, it requires that

A philosophical reinterpretation of the Middle Way of paramārtha­
satya/samvṛti-satya must be undertaken so that the original gap
between these two can be firmly bridged, thereby accomplishing the
task of constructive modernization of Buddhist ethics and morality.
On the theoretical level, a new ethical theory based on the Middle
Way of paramārtha-satya/samvṛti-satya can meet the challenge of
modern times...75

Not to beg the original question, the above more than argues for
the composition of new commentarial literature focusing on those
significant texts mentioned earlier and including especially, the: thir­
ten suttas identified as the “short tract” (Slakhandhavagga) of the
Dīgha Nikāya, Mangala-sutta, Metta-sutta, Sigalovāda-sutta, Dhammasaṅgani, Puggalapaññatti, Abhidhammattha-sāṅghā and
Milindapañcha of the Theravadin tradition. Mahāyāna texts worthy of
new consideration would also include those with the richest heritage of
ethical underpinnings, for example, the: Brahmajāla-sūtra, Śīkṣāsamuccaya, Bodhicaryavatāra, Mahāyāna-samgraha,
Bodhisattvabhbhūmi, Bodhisattva-prātimokṣa-sūtra and Upālipariprchalasūtra. Certainly this does not mean to say that there are no other texts
of ethical import for Buddhism, but simply that the ones cited above
represent the most fertile, reasonable place from which to begin a new
and revitalized textual tradition. The process would be a high expression
of what Coward calls “the reciprocal relationship between text and
tradition in Buddhism,”76 a profound demonstration that Buddhist
ethics can indeed be meaningfully current and textually supported.
NOTES


7 Ibid., p. 4.


11 For example, see Charles S. Prebish, Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahāsāṃghikas and Mulasarvāstivādins (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), p. 42. The text reads:

śleṇa yukto śraṇaṇa tiṣṭi śleṇa yukto brāhmaṇo tiṣṭi /
śleṇa yukto naradevapūjyo śleṇa yuktasya hi prātimokṣam //

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15 Holt, Discipline: The Canonical Buddhism of the Vinayapitaka p. 64.
16 Keown, in The Nature of Buddhist Ethics p. 33, notices the same dilemma.
17 Pachow, A Comparative Study of the Prātimokṣa, Appendix I, pp. 1-2
18 Holt, Discipline: The Canonical Buddhism of the Vinayapitaka p. 65.
19 Keown, The Nature of Buddhist Ethics p. 34.
25 Keown, The Nature of Buddhist Ethics, pp. 8-23.
26 Here I have in mind especially the work of Harvey Aronson, Love and Sympathy in Theravāda Buddhism (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980) and Nathan Katz, Buddhist Images of Human Perfection (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982).
31 Keown, The Nature of Buddhist Ethics, pp. 111-112.
32 Ibid., p. 76.
34 Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 29.
38 Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 81.
41 Ibid., p. 124.
44 Ibid., p. 93.
45 Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 130.
47 Ibid., pp. 290-291
49 See Pierre Python (tr.) *Vinaya-Viniscaya-Upariprccchā* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1973), which offers Tibetan (with Sanskrit Fragments) and Chinese text along with a French translation of the Chinese (taken from Taishō 310, 325, 326, and 1582). Python notes on page 1 that the Sanskrit fragments are taken from Dutt’s edition of the *Bodhisattva-prātimokṣa-sūtra*. Python’s text is an entirely different text than Valentina Stache-Rosen (tr.) *Upālipariprccchasūtra: Ein Text zur buddhistischen Ordensdisziplin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), which offers a translation from Chinese (Taishō 1466) with parallels to the Pali.
51 Joshi, *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, p. 93. The Sanskrit reads:

\[ \text{yadā mama pāresām ca bhayaṁ duḥkham ca na priyam /} \]
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4. "See, for example, *Bodhicaryavatāra*, Chapter IV, verses 8-10; Matics, *Entering the Path of Enlightenment*, p. 158.


7. See, for example, *Bodhicaryavatāra*, Chapter IV, verses 8-10; Matics, *Entering the Path of Enlightenment*, p. 158.


72 Ibid., p. 142.


75 Ibid.

76 Coward, “The Role of Scripture in the Self-Definition of Hinduism and Buddhism in India,” p. 143.
Buddhism and the Manners of Death in Japan: Extending Aries’ histoire de mentalité de la mort

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In 1974, Philippe Aries’ Johns Hopkins lecture at the John Hopkins University was published as Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to The Present. Thus was introduced to the English world an avenue of research into the manners of death that Aries, then a curator in a Museum, largely helped to found. Since then, his scholarship had been recognized by the French academia enough; he now holds a professorship. We shall use this small book to seek out the possibility of an Oriental parallel.1

Aries lists four modes of death (seeinfra). Although Aries did not intend his scheme to be applicable to the East, the fact that it may raise both theoretical and methodological problems. Aries’ mentalité, being seen as irreducible to material factors,2 and therefore culturally unique, should not be that easily duplicated in the East. If it does, it may point to more general, spiritual and material factors shared by East and West in their advance from the “Middle Ages” to “the Present.” Though a short summary of Aries’ small book would not do him justice, it is appended below to facilitate discussion.

Aries postulated four types of death: Tamed Death, One’s Own Death, Thy Death and Forbidden Death, aligned roughly, not absolutely, with certain periods since the Dark Ages.

Tamed Death

This mode, common to primitive cultures, lasted roughly in Europe up to the twelfth century—further for backwaters such as the Russian peasantry. It is marked by familiarity with death. Mortality is seen as natural, part of the rhythm of things, so well accepted and anticipated that the dying knew exactly when to summon the priest himself. Over such death, excessive emotions are not shown. In the French epic, Roland the knight could thus express sorrow at leaving this world but then, when the hour drew near, wipe away the tears in
preparation for the final departure. He forgave all and asked forgiveness in return from God. Death is tamed: it is a passage, not a break; a beginning, not an end. It is only in recent times, says Aries, that Death had become "wild" and uncontrollable (pp. 1-14).

Death was however also remembered as tabooed; it pollutes. This is an ancient and primitive notion. In both Greece and Rome, the dead could not be housed among the living. Burial of this dark horror was ex urbe, away from the city, far from the light of life. It is only during the Middle Ages, that the Dead slowly made their way back among the living. Christianity, a religion of death when compared with Homeric love of life, sanctified certain otherwise tabooed death into the holy and the purifying.

What I call Sacred Death began with Christ's triumph over mortal death. This extended itself into the cult of the martyrs. The latter were buried ex urbe, but in their own city, the necropolis, the city of the dead, in North Africa. Because of the belief in the atoning blood of such saints, ("it washes away sins"), there was eventually a desire to be buried close to them, ab sanctos. A decisive turn of events came in the passing away of Saint Vaast in 540. Somehow, as legend goes, the body of this bishop ("it grew suddenly so heavy") refused to leave its home church. Consequently he was buried in the compound. And since the church was in the city, this is the first case of burial in urbe, among the living. Other bishops followed, and, naturally, the royalty themselves in their private chapels (pp. 14-18).

Other Christians wanted to die in the womb of the Mother Church. To be buried close to or in it is to be saved. However, before the advent of the proverbial church graveyard for its parishioners, burial in the medieval ages was something else. For the commoners, burial meant simply dumping the bodies in ditches in the church courtyard, the atrium. The atrium was then the large open-air enclosure before what we now deem the church-building proper. Or the bodies could be dumped as easily in ditches running along its outside walls. When space ran out, old bones were exhumed and placed into the charnel houses, sometimes made into chandeliers or candle sticks for votive lights. The poor were buried anonymously; the wealthy patrons under flagstones but even their remains were regularly exhumed; only monks might have more lasting markers. (pp. 1-22) No one thought the exhuming of the corpses an undue disturbing of the dead. Even in Louis XVI's reign the Cemetery of the Innocent was so regularly recycled. Beggars, after all, cannot be choosers. It is the 19th century (p. 75) that suddenly found that custom sacrilegious.

Tamed death was familiar. Villagers would join whatever wakes that happened to pass by. Christian Death was edifying, so they attend the service to hear the Word. Nor were children shielded from the bedside of the dying. Church fairs and peddling could take place next to
funeral processions or exhumation in the same courtyard (pp. 23-25).

One's Own Death

The Renaissance brought the light of greater individuality (for the elite at least) and the Reformation the darker despair over one's salvation. Both helped to foster Death as One's Own. Death is no longer fact but crisis; dying no longer easy resignation but anxious introspection, a matter of personal concern.

The individualization of the death as crisis is reflected in the changing funeral iconography. The earlier motif, ultimately more Jewish than Hellenistic, of communal resurrection at the eschaton (end of time) was being replaced by the notion of individual judgment immediately after death. Death was no longer peaceful sleep prior to the great awakening. Death is the precarious threshold dividing Heaven and Hell, Bliss and Damnation. Instead of a Doomsday Book for the whole world, now individual Christians carried a passbook of merits to the weighting of souls. This went with the new teachings. The popular preachers were then urging moral conscience. The Reformers would question the magical passage guaranteed by the Catholic last rite (pp. 27-29). Christ and the Devil are now seen hovering over the deathbed, perhaps battling for the man's soul, although Aries prefers to see in the disinterest of a watchful God above the drama of man's last decision for Good and Evil instead. On this last decision his fate hanged. Duly, the Counter-Reformation criticized this as over-reliance on a last gamble (pp. 33-37). The phenomenon of "life flashing before one's eyes at the moment of death," is a result of this 16th century moral anxiety. Mankind was not that biographically self-conscious before (p. 38).

The dread of Death (Reformation) went with a love of Life (Renaissance). In the arts, there appeared an obsession with the worm-eaten corpse in all its Gothic gruesomeness. Huizinga had taken this to mean that there was an abnormal horror of death in those last days of the Middle Ages, but Aries took it to mean instead a new attachment to life, an awareness of its transience and a nostalgia for health and potency (pp. 39-45). Perhaps, with the Dark Ages receding, the elite living in clover had cause to miss their good life on earth. They sought to carry, as it were, over to the other side their social distinctions and individuality secured on this side. Instead of anonymous burials, now there was the concern for more lasting monuments, personalized inscriptions, permanent sites, even life-like effigies (pp. 46-52).

Thy Death

Obsession with One's Own Death cannot last forever. With the new bourgeois family came the new concern for the Death of Intimates.
Drawing on his other study, Aries shows how with the emergence of the warm family, the departure of beloved one became a painful affair. Seemingly interminable emotional mourning that was alien to Roland's era went unchecked. Death is no longer natural or universal; it is a particular break; no longer a village, a Church, a privately spiritual affair; it is now, a family affair, the passing of an irreplaceable Thou.

The final entrustment by the dying was not directed at God or Church; his fondest wishes were lodged with his surviving family. Not the state of his soul but the welfare of his memory was the main concern. Aries admits that the legal last will and testament sounds cold, even manipulative, but he also points to an implicit trust by the dying in the survivors who would see to his welfare (pp. 64-45). Now great attention is paid to the cemetery, which is an eighteenth century creation. It has moved away from the grim church graveyard to the sunlit civic lawn. If one is the gateway to Heaven, the other is a reminder of this Good Earth, laid out in such a way, not for the visitation of angels but by family members. The personality of the dead is preserved through mementos, designed into the gravestone, on family plots held in perpetuity, and kept up by the vogue of family outings. The emotions of longing are genuine; widows remarried much less often in faithfulness to the deceased. And on occasions, one sees macabre obsession with the memory of the dead (pp. 63-68). The Romantic movement contributed its share of Death fantasies, as Eros, as Life's fulfillment, as orgasmic break.

Aries covered some noticeable culture-religious variations among different nations; we will skip this aspect too refined for our comparative purpose. Sufficient it is to note that as part of the new civil religion of the modern secular states, there is the universal commemoration of its national heroes in every park and square - our modern saints and saviours. This completed the trek of the Dead back to being among the living, refusing to leave, reminders of this-worldly callings (pp. 68-76).

Forbidden Death

The romance with Thy Death remains with us but in the advanced industrial societies, a colder rationality is surfacing. Death became once more a tabooed topic in our midst. The dying now is banned to the sanitary hospital, and the young are shielded from this fact of life. The excessive grief of Thy Death lingers on but since the society frowns on a public display of it, it has been forced to turn in upon itself, not without taking tolls on the psyche (pp. 85-103). The present situation being fluid and changing, we will also skip over this stage in our East/West comparison.
An Appraisal of Aries' Schema

Aries has been and can be easily criticized for his overgeneralizations but in my opinion he only highlighted fairly convincingly in the manners of death, the change of mentality from the medieval to the modern. At that level of abstraction, he cannot be selectively faulted.

In one sense, what Aries did is to historicize Durkheim's sociology as related to the function and dysfunction in the rite of passage at death. Tamed Death is when Death is perceived as passage, and the rite functions smoothly to ease the trauma for both the individual and the community. So successful (so reintegrative) is the funeral ritual that the community of the survivors feels reintegrated in the process so that "there was no excessive mourning" (i.e. no disruption of community life). It follows, neatly, that One's Own Death occurs when the Death passage to a Beyond was overshadowed by a Renaissance nostalgia for this life, and when the traditional Catholic passage offered was questioned by the Reformers. Once the outcome of the Death passage is in doubt, the communal or integrative is superseded by the individualized, the One's Own, the critical. What Aries sees as the uncontrolled grief in Thy Death is consequent to the spiritual individuation and subsequent to the rise of the primary gemein, the family (over the village, guild or Church). It marks the final disintegration of the old rite of passage and the old Gemein, the otherworldly Christendom. The warm family—a bourgeois institution, some say—is flawed because the new intimacy prevents effective consolation of the bereaved. Dying became unstructured, because there is no secure Beyond; mourning became accordingly anomie. As Death is an end, instead of a Beginning, what was tamed is now, or can only be, wild.

If Aries' schema has this Durkheimian rationale, then it follows that in Japan, during a similar transition from her Middle Ages to early modernity, we can expect an approximate parallel. To this possibility and whatever amendments to Aries' schema as the data might offer we will now turn.

IN SEARCH OF A JAPANESE PARALLEL

There are many books on Japanese funeral practices but no work has yet matched the comprehensiveness and historical observations of Tamamuro Taijo's Soshiki Bukkyō (Funeral Buddhism). Page numbers entered in brackets henceforth refer to this study. Other supplementary references will be noted in the body.

It is well known among Japanologists that at present the major role of Buddhism in Japanese society is its near monopoly of funeral services for the dead. From this the temples draw their major income.
This cult of the dead is also tied to the ancestral worship as shown by Robert Smith’s *Ancestral Worship in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1974). Unfortunately that association gives the impression that Confucian filial piety or Thy Death is timeless. The sentiment might be; the custom is not.

We will dramatize below this overall observation made by Tamamuro in his Preface to the book:

What Buddhism means for the (Japanese) people is (a) performance of services for the dead, (b) curing of the sick, and (c) promises of good fortunes. In the history of Japan, Buddhism first cured the sick, then brought good fortunes, and then finally from the fifteenth century on, performed funeral services. With this last specialization, Buddhism truly became the religion of the masses (p. 1). Buddhism cured the sick (cf. Nara), promised worldly goods (cf. Heian) before it saved souls (i.e. Kamakura) and popularized funeral (in Tokugawa). Before the last, Thy Death, gave form to filial piety, Japan had her share of the Tamed Death and One’s Own Death.10

*Tamed Death*

Death was hard to tame in Japan; the goryo (vengeful dead) haunted her down the centuries. Even the masses for the war dead in Kamakura were conducted more out of fear than respect. In ancient Japan and as preserved within the Shintō tradition, Death is one of the most polluting if not the most polluting tatari. It is known as the black taboo (as blood would be the red taboo). Similar to funestus or French funeste, a cadaver is a profanation, something deadly, an ill omen (Aries, p. 14). Dirt was sin tsumi. Nothing so deadly can be introduced into a Shintō shrine: a death in the family would automatically involve shielding the household shrine with a piece of white cloth; at one time, the imperial palace had to be rebuilt and relocated following any death therein. What all these point to is the fact that Shintō, the native religion of life and light in Japan, could not deal with his powerful negative reality. This also meant that little wonder Buddhism had a near monopoly of rites for the dying.11

Buddhism played the role parallel to Christianity; it too helped to sanctify Death which was not possible before. In the Yayoi period, a corpse was kept in place by a rock in fear of its returning to haunt the living. In the Kofun period, the giant tombs for the rulers were located away from the living (pp. 89-93). And tools used for the excavation were polluted enough to be abandoned at the site. Nowadays, peasants returning from a wake still throw stones over their shoulders to ward off the dead who were nostalgic for home. Even when Confucianism came in, the custom of burial extra urbem was probably observed, because the Chinese classic on rites (Li chi) so specified it.12 Given the fact that the
sphere of the living is then the sphere of the local kami's domain, both identified with the actual village itself, it is only natural that the dead used to be abandoned outside the village. The village gate then marks the boundary between the living and the dead, the sacred and the profane. There a traveler on returning home would “wash away the dust” of his journey as his fellow villagers welcome him (receive him back into the sacred community).

Not all dead were polluted; clan ancestors were probably clan gods, ujigami. They deserved reverence. This respect was later reinforced by Confucian filiality. The worship of the dead went back to primitive association of such ancestors with the ubusunagami, protective fertility spirits and both with the coming and the going of the water from the mountains marking the arrival and departure of vegetation. Thus the obon festival has prehistoric roots; it celebrates harvest, return of the dead, release of the hungry ghosts from hell, visitation by ancestors altogether (pp. 87-89, 146-147). The dual feeling of fear and respect toward the dead is not incompatible nor so irreconcilable. The ujigami was ancestor and god of the ruling uji clans. The common people were attached to the various uji but were not admitted to worship at the clan shrines. (ise, the imperial shrine, was not open to the masses until Tokugawa.) Only the elite had divine ancestry well commemorated; the common people had only anonymous forefathers.

The ambivalence toward the Dead is kept even nowadays. China, Korea and Japan had a two grave system (pp. 144-145). In Japan, the polluted ashes might be kept in the first grave site while formal worship goes on at the second grave site. It is not necessary to move the remains from the first to the second; when that occurs, the polluted dead is supposed to have been purified, sanctified, or, in common parlance, jobutsu (become or transformed into a Buddha; this involves a ritual rooted probably in Heian ideology).

What then happened to the commoner dead, or at least that foul aspect of the physical remains? As in the Medieval Europe, they were simply abandoned. The bodies were dumped in mountains, on hillsides, or on beaches (pp. 83, 143). Many words involving “abandonment” designates graveyard. Thus it is recorded that when the Korean envoy from Pohai was expected in 883 A.D., the court had to edict all corpses be removed from the roadside on the envoy's route (p. 96). Modern Japanese (Confucian) sentiment might find this abhorrent just as eighteenth century Frenchmen found disturbing the Cemetery of the Innocent unforgivable. Yet what seems now impious was at one time the norm and the son in the Japanese folktale who had to carry his mother to the suteruyama, mountain for abandoning (the aged) was not less filial than later pious sons. Nor would the parents begrudge the sons on that account. This custom of leaving the dead outside the village was not changed by the Chinese (Confucian) influence. The Taika code would
like to see all citizens (meaning, at best, the elite) buried Chinese style, with fitting stelae listing the social service of the official and in designated sites to be administered by local officials. However, except for effectively outlawing once and for all the ancient custom of accompanied burial (called loyal death) and animal sacrifice, such Confucian formality hardly touched the mainstream of Japanese burial customs (pp. 94-96). The Taming of Death and the offering of holy rites for all was left to the Buddhists.

Buddhism originally showed little interest in funerals. Death being part of the cycle of rebirth, it was considered a profane matter, or at least a cold fact. When the Buddha was about to pass away, his instruction was to cremate his body, and to scatter his ashes, following the Indian custom. Death was seen in terms of the dispersal of the five Great Elements, something the knowledgeable ones would even welcome as one form of release. Circumstances however changed that, and, not unlike the Crucifixion, the Buddha’s cremation became the first of the Holy Deaths. Disobeying the Buddha and appeasing the princes that came for some mementoes of the saint, the disciples decided to honour the relics (the ashes, bones) by building stūpas (the forerunner of the pagoda) which are half-domes for royal burials. Soon other stūpas followed commemorating the passing of Kaśyapa, an arhat as well as others of the Buddha’s disciples. Of course, not every death was seen as a “holy death”; only the liberated deserved such honour. However, as a natural extension of this practice the granting of this sanctity reached more and more believers until in Japan all Japanese would be counted as hotoke at death (Buddhas: the term, uniquely Japanese, might go back to the word hotoki, a vessel for offerings).

Now it is commonly said that the divinization of ancestors went back to timeless past in Japan. Ideologically this is true. The human-divine continuum in Japan assumes fluidity between man and kami (gods) and it would only be a mere extension of that into a blurring of man and hotoke. However, again, we must insist that at first not all men became Buddhas at death; that universal Buddhahood requires time to be actualized. For example, the presently ubiquitous sutoba (the wooded stūpa marker on Japanese graves) has a beginning in time; its growth in popularity can be traced. At one time, such holy makers was preserved only for an elite.

To die a Buddha was no easy achievement. To die even properly as a Buddhist would takes some doing. The first case of a genuinely Buddhist burial in Japan is Dōchō’s. Dōchō who died in 700 AD instructed that his body be cremated according to the Indian practice. This is 160 years after Buddhism entered Japan (p. 99). Dōchō was a student of the pilgrim Hsüan-tsang who went to India, bringing back, among other things, this custom of death by fire that was contrary to native Chinese practices. Dōchō introduced fairly early cremation to Japan.
Japan also accepted it far more readily than China would.

It is not clear whether Dōchō's ashes were located, on site, removed to the second graveyard, or actually deposited in his temple in urbe. Given the Shinto taboo about death and the custom not to have cremation done near the living, it is doubtful that the cremation was carried out inside the temple. From later examples, it is doubtful also whether Dōchō, as the holy dead, could be housed so early in the main building. Even Kūkai's famous mummified body, a sign of a saint who would not die, was enshrined in a sealed cave away from the main temple. Still, it would be natural to honour the memory of eminent monks somewhere in the community. If it happened Christian monasteries, it probably happened here also.

What is telling is that soon after this renowned monk was so cremated, the status and prestige of that ritual/passage was such that in 703, 707, 721 and 748, the Japanese emperors followed Dōchō's footsteps in adopting this new mode of death (pp. 100, 105-108). Since the tenno was supposed to be a descendent of the Sun-goddess, he would be deemed a kami in death as he was so already in life. If that continuity is assumed for his Buddhistic standing, then he would have died a hotoke, Though the germ of that now familiar passage might be there already, I really doubt whether the cultic ramifications existed then. This is because, as we know, the inscriptions to donated statues in Japan at the time and the practice to have sūtras chanted on the dead's behalf (and on behalf of shrine kami) assumed that the dead were far from being liberated. They still required additional merits to attain that end. I do not want to overstress this, since the same still applies today to the departed.

Once the imperial house co-opted the monk's mode of death, it was not long after that the aristocracy followed suit. Smoke from these noble deaths rose from hills outside Kyoto. This we know from reading such works as the Genji monogatari. The Genjis had their own clan burial ground at a certain mountain outside the capital, and only they could be buried therein—not even spouses who married into the clan. This affirms the custom of burial or cremation ex urbe. It also alerts us to the fact that since only noble families owned such mountains, men without property (the peasant majority) could not claim any permanent site for their ancestral burial; they had a stick as marker at best. Having no land to their name, they had to use "the commons land" such as hillsides. So the commoner died anonymously and became at best anonymous fertility kami honoured anonymously by the sumameless village community.

The monopolizing of sacred death by the elite was very natural. As Aries noted in his book (p. 11), in the legend of King Arthur, only the clerics—especially the monks—received the supreme unction; the knights of the Round Table received the corpus christi at death. The monks deserved it because they led an angelic life unlike sentient mortals: the
knights because they had pledged themselves to Christ. The commoner might be a Christian, but he could not have received the supreme unction. There being so many of him, he would not be so well served at his deathbed—not until the popular preacher volunteered to come down to his level. So similarly, until and unless Japanese Buddhist monks moved out of their cloisters and willingly administered to the people, the peasants would be wrapping the corpse and bundling it off to hills without the fanfare of Buddhist rites and homilies. Generally speaking that age of popular *bijiri* and mendicant preachers came only in late Heian.

That monks were honoured at death by *stūpas* was current already in fifth century China. A yogin like Hui-shih might not have been cremated, but a small pagoda would commemorate him. If so, Dōchō should also have one to his name. It seems though that the *stupa* erected for such elite dead stayed at the burial site. In the *shōji engi shū* (Legends of the Various Temples), it is recorded that a son of the Fujiwara clan (he died in 714 AD) filially dug up the bones of his father and carried them to a ridge overlooking the valley. There he reburied them with a three story *stūpa* (pp. 150-152). This is but a decade or so after Dōchō's death. It seems that cremation did not occur originally and that the dead were buried in the hills; the son, a pious Buddhistconvert, now relocates the bones on a choice site within view. That is as far as the dead could return. However, in 921 AD, the urn of the ashes of a nobleman-man, previously cremated, was deposited in a *shijiya* or “private temple.” The monk Renshu became the overseer of this “private chapel,” probably chanting *sūtras* too on the soul’s behalf. Soon after, says Tamamuro, the practice to deposit the ashes, once considered polluting, in temples began (pp. 104-105). Because the *shijiya* may serve as a kind of Buddhist *ujiadera* and the temple might be situated among the living, this change, though not as dramatic as St. Vaast’s, marks the return of the Dead to being among the survivors. Now it was also a custom to build the Nijugosammeito, Hall of the Twenty-Five Trances, at grave sites specifically for the soul’s welfare. The word *sammei* (Sanskrit *samādhi*) is now a euphemism for graveyard. Though both the *shijiya* and the Nijugosammeito might originally be located outside the city, both could and historically did seem to become habitats. The overseer monks lived there and perhaps whatever supportive personnel (farmhands, etc.) close by. Either because the city expanded into the hillside, or as the community around these private temples grew, the encroachment of the living into the dead or vice versa became an actuality. Death had been sanctified and reclaimed.

Buddhism does not have the Papal doctrine of salvation through the Church alone. (The Church is the Body of Christ, but the Sangha is a separate jewel from that of the Buddha.) Therefore, no exact parallel to the desire to be buried *ab sanctos* exists. However, Buddhism did
supply to Japan the magical rite of passage to Buddhahood at (or some time after) death. This was fueled in the Heian period by the doctrine of *hongaku*, a priori enlightenment for all beings. We are all Buddhas at heart; what is needed is an evoking of that reality (*jobutsu*, a term mentioned earlier). As Buddhism is a universal religion, there would be built into it the impulse to grant such rites to all, when it is physically and/or temperamentally possible. In the Heian period, the ritual transition between humanity and *hotoke* status was afforded to a few and was made possible by special halls in Heian temples. The Tendai school provided the Hokke or Lotus Hall which was focal to Tendai mysteries. To a person, the Japanese emperors found their eternal rest there (pp. 100-102, 105-108). The aristocracy availed themselves to this or else the Jogyo Hall. The latter is for “Perpetual Practice,” a meditative mode directed at the Buddha Amitabha or Amida of the Western Pure Land (p. 703). It was a Heian fashion among the nobility to chant Hokke (*the Lotus Sutra*) in the morning and the name of Amida (*nembutsu*) at night. However, increasingly with the growing despair about this world, the latter gained ascendancy because it promised a paradise beyond, a sentiment more transcendental than the more immanent Lotus piety. From this the cult of *ōjō* (birth in Pure Land) would take its cue. The Shingon school would not be outdone. It offered its own *Kōmyō* (*Light*) rites (pp. 108-112). In the thirteenth century, a monk would open up eligibility to its rite to any distant donor even.

Meanwhile, plebeian deaths went uncelebrated. A traveler, told in the *Nihon Ryoiki*, dreamt of a suffering ghost; it turns out to be a skull lying close by pained by bamboo sprouting through its eye sockets. However, even as the elite memory might be kept alive more formally, the elite’s polluted remains were treated probably more lightly than we would think. In Sung China, the depositing of the dead at temples was current too. Ssu-ma Kuang, a Neo-Confucian who decried the barbaric practice of cremation (because this is harming the body put in our charge), noted:

> Nowadays it is common practice to have the funeral service performed in the house of the monks, with no attempt to keep an eye on the physical remains.... Proper burial would not take place for years. Meanwhile, the urns might be broken into by thieves or thrown out by the monks themselves.

It is not that the monks were irreverent or careless. To the Confucian who loved this life and this body, the remains should indeed be properly kept, but to the Buddhist (like to the medieval Christian) who looked to a Life of the Spirit beyond, the body is ultimately inconsequential. Buddha/God can keep count of the dead without it.
One’s Own Death

At the end of the Heian period, Japan experienced what would correspond to the spiritual crisis of late medieval Europe. 1152 was judged to be the dawning of the last age, mappō (to last 10,000 years though) and there was much anxiety about one’s eligibility for salvation in this corrupted era. One’s Own Death became men’s overriding concern, and impatience about the immediate state of the soul a virtue.

Symptomatic of that anxiety and a decisive Either/Or is Genshin’s Ōjōyōsha (Essentials for Birth in Pure Land), a best seller in late Heian that would trigger off the Kamakura “Reformation” headed by Hōnen’s Pure Land sect (Jōdo-shū). Typical of the Ōjōyōsha popular preaching is the polarization of potions at Death. The Buddhist had long believed in the six paths of rebirth, topped by leisurely gods and bounded below by Yama’s halls. Such karmic fates are a basic staple of the Nihon Ryōiki’s morality plays. The Ōjōyōsha, however, belongs to a slightly different genre, the ōjoden (Legends of Birth in Pure Land).17 It set up the opposition between Hell and Pure Land, damnation and deliverance. Although the Ōjōyōsha covers the traditional six paths in full, it is best remembered for its opening scary depiction of the various hells. Similar to the last decision for Christ or the Devil, the dying man now has to walk the strait (the canonical metaphor is “white”) path.

Genshin followed the Tendai teaching. The death rite in the Ōjōyōsha is basically that of the Nijugo-sammei of the Jōgyō Hall (pp. 113, 116). The dying man faces West, the direction of Amida’s Pure Land, before a statue of the Buddha or a painting of that kingdom of bliss. A five-colored string is used to link the last breath of the dying man to the statue or the painting, symbolizing thereby his birth in that Pure Realm. The rite was in use before, but it grew in popularity. Also, what is new in Genshin’s society for Buddha-name-chanting (nembutsukai) is his recruitment of commoners. The charter states that all the local members should attend the death of any member. The members then bear witness and chant in unison Amida’s name as a send-off for a fellowman. Before, the Pure Land of the Heian aristocracy was more an extension of this world, a resort like their mountain retreats (yama-zato) laid out as a Pure Land (cf. the phoenix hall of the Byōdōin). The favorite iconic theme was the visitation by Amida, raigō. Now in true Pure Land piety, the preference went to the scene of ōjō, the willing departure from this polluted world to the Pure beyond.18

The Heian aesthetics had always known transience, majō. But now despair about this world and fear of damnation raged enough to bring forth or to the forefront, from the late tenth century on, the flowering of Hell Pictures (jigokue) (p. 170), with their share of worm-eaten corpses. The theme is ancient; the Buddha made rotting flesh the subject of sermons and meditations. But the gruesomeness of it is new,
more so with the crudities of popular art. One is hard pressed to see in them the nostalgia for life (Aries' reading); there is more (Huizinga's stress on) obsession with death and judgment.

Such a bleak situation makes for radical decision. And it is Honen, founder of the Buddhist Reformation, who made “decision” the criterion of faith itself. His major work is on this very topic, Sengaku. It is believed by this sect that birth in Pure Land is secured at that last moment through ten recitations of Amida’s name. Though the recitation is ritualistic (unlike the stress on faith by Shinran), the stress on the sincere mind and the elimination of surrogate chanting (by paid monks for example) helped to personalize this rite of passage.

Honen derived his radical teaching from the Chinese Pure Land master Shan-tao (Zend!!) who has this to say about the proper way to die. In a piece, popular in Sung, attributed to Shan-tao, a certain inquirer thanks his master:

You, sir, have opened my eyes to the pious practice of chanting the name of the Buddha as the means to gaining birth in Pure Land beyond. Yet even as I understand the principle thereof, I fear that my mind might waver as I near my hour of death in my sickness. My family might disrupt my proper state of mind and I might lose hold of that means to birth (in Pure Land).

How, he asks, may one die properly to achieve the entrance to Pure Land? The answer focuses on the last minute attentiveness:

Let drop both mind and body. Arouse no further attachment to life itself. Though beset by ill, do not weight its relative severity. Only be singlemindedly open to the reality of Death itself. Instruct the family members, nurses or visitors to chant the Buddha’s name and not to talk about things at hand or family matters. They need not comfort the dying with pleasantries for such are futile words in the face of Death. As illness grows more heavy and death is near, instruct family and relatives not to come forward in tearful laments. That indeed might disrupt the dying man’s composure and proper (contemplative) state of mind. Rather they should look forward to (the Pure Land of) Amitabha, chant aloud his name in praise for the dying man’s sake. Do that until he breathes his last. Then they might give vent to their emotions (i.e. cry) though it is better that some informed soul takes the occasion to explain the true import of the faith.

This document is important. It shows the dovetailing between Tamed Death and One’s Own Death, between right ritual and right faith. With imagination, we can see why Roland died the way he did, with no tears; it is because it is his duty to prepare himself for the beyond in proper
composure and with no attachment to this vale of tears of a world. Through this we also see why Death can become anxious (One's Own) under stress. When the sacredotal system that was Heian Buddhism collapsed in the age of mappō (which invalidated priestly prerogatives), personal decision became weightier. So would the import of the "last thought." Then a person, virtuous all his life, might still miss Heaven because of a last minute doubt, distractions, attachment to this life, etc. By making nembutsu for ājō imperative, Honen changed a one-time Tendai ritualistic Tamed Death into an anxious One's Own Death.

Now Aries went a bit too far to date thereby the genesis of "life flashing before one's eyes at death" to the 16th century. Personal conscience existed, if not etched as deeply or widely, in the records before. Certainly in the East! Karma has always been biographically defined and recollection of one's deeds in one's life time is found in common karmic legends: a butcher would at his deathbed supposedly see all the animals he had slain coming after him.

The discovery of One's Own Death and the concern thereby to make the means to ājō available to all men unleashed the Kamakura Reformation, by the end of which everybody proverbially would be saved. However, in this recruitment of all men into deliverance, at work were also factors other than just the spiritual. The late Heian period saw the rise of the warrior, the samurai, the new rulers in the Kamakura era. Now, whereas the Heian nobility owned private mountains to bury their own, the warriors who used to be their clerks, did not. They began burials now in temple graveyards. (Temples had wrestled land rights from the aristocracy before this time.) The Hōjōs, for example, had their dead buried in their Toseiji in Kamakura (p. 148). Generally, warriors used more diversified, local, mostly Zen temples, instead of the old Hokke or Jōgū Halls of the Kyoto schools. The warriors also introduced other innovations that changed the funeral practice. The local temples of the myōshu helped the proliferation of temple graveyards. Also, a portable Buddhist shrine they carried into battle led to the miniaturization of this sacred building until it became the present household butsudan in which the ancestral ibai namesheet is kept. The ibai itself went back to the Chinese wooden ancestral tablet, mokuhai, also a Zen and samurai introduction. These effectively moved the Dead back not just into the city but into the homes themselves.

Something also happened to the status of the common dead when Kamakura Buddhism enfranchised the lowly, the ignorant, the most sinful and the most underprivileged. Calling itself the "easy path," the Pure Land school for example drew in emperors as well as peasants, offering to both alike ājō to Pure Land. It means that the holy rites were no longer affordable only by emperors and the aristocracy; every man could and should have it. Ājō became henceforth a synonym, a euphorism for death. With the breakdown of the lay/monk distinction - especially in
Shinshū - the former co-opted the prerogatives once limited to the latter. A very telling remark from a Kyoto gazetteer is cited by Tamamuro:

People (nowadays) buried and cremated are referred to as obo, but this term was originally intended for the tonsured monks and them only. It was the custom in our country to call the shorn monks obo.

Recently however the term is used to refer to anyone buried in [what used to be] the monks' cemetery, so much so that now the unshorn layman is called also [posthumously] obo. (pp. 118-119)

At one time, only monks could be buried in the temple compound, because, having left home, their families could no longer claim their bodies or prepare for their disposal. However, in the Yōshu district now, says the observer, the layman was also so buried in temple plots—and as monks, that is, given the status previously reserved for the holy dead. I suspect this means receiving the Dharma-name.

Before Man is born equal (Rousseau's dream), Man first must die equal. The Reformation, West and East, made Death, theoretically the great equalizer, the truthful ritual equality. All sinners are saved; all evil men achieved ojō, and by one single, simple means. Indeed, in the early Ojōden, only monks and nobles were recorded as having attained birth in Pure Land; in the later legends, the man of street was finding his admission to paradise.25

Meanwhile though, custom died hard. Dead bodies still ended up outside Kyoto, yes, even in the second story of its famous Western gate, the Rashomon.26

Thy Death

Modern Japanese funeral customs really began with Tokugawa. In 842, Kyoto officials had trouble with what to do with 5,500 such bodies (p. 96). In 1181, a similar problem surrounded 43,000 who had starved to death. However, the Pure Land sect now generously took care of them, saving souls in more than a nominal way (p. 119). Still, in 1279, a dozen youths died of plague and were similarly left in the fields (p. 97). (This might have involved medical consideration though.) However, says Tamamuro, as late as the early part of the fourteenth century, bodies were still abandoned in hills to be gnawed away by dogs and horses (p. 97). Filial piety needs certain material incentive to become “prim and proper.” By the 15th century, the old abandoning of corpses became a barbaric practice of a forgotten past.

Several incidental factors aided the rise of the “proper” burial. First, the new religions of the Reformers abandoned the previous Heian Buddhist sale on this-worldly magical rites. It was a step in the right, rational, direction, but it also meant a loss in the traditional temple
revenue. Partly to fill the coffers, the temples now had to offer rites for the soul to the Beyond. Japan now has the most elaborate of memorial services for ancestors, lasting for up to 33 years (pp. 171-172). That the monks became more and more embroiled in this area of expertise has been shown by Tamamuro with reference to the Sōtō and Rinzai school; for example, monks taking care of such matters soon outnumbered the original emphasis on Zen meditation training (pp. 128-130).

Something else happened to the structure of the temple community during the Kamakura period. When the old manorial (shōen) system collapsed in the era of wars, that sizeable manor unit broke up into the smaller and autonomous village federates known as go, shō. These were headed by the myōshū, local warriors that aligned themselves to the new warlords. The Heian Buddhist schools used to build their economic basis on the old manors, but the spread of the new Kamakura sects is by way of these village federates. Shinshū (Pure Land True Sect) for example spread by converting the local lords of these units. Once so converted, their village followers would be converted en masse. This seems to be the standard pattern; the gospel of personal salvation did not mean and did not have to mean individual conversions. (That came later, not unlike the spread of Protestant faith by regional units.) Within 200 years after the Ōnin war, the religious map of Japan was largely rewritten. From then on Japan was “parished” out by these new units to different sects. The Tokugawa bakufu added the finishing touch to it by enforcing such temple danka affiliation by law, thus eliminating any unforeseen overlap, divided loyalty or unaffiliated temples left over from the warring period. By skillful means, Shingon had better hold of its old shōen loyalties than Tendai (partly absorbed by Nichirensha) would. It offered the esoteric Kōmyō rite for the dead; this spread widely in the 13th century (pp. 109-110).

Temple graveyard burial, once used by warriors, is now being offered to all temple members. By law, only danka members could be buried within the dankadera cemetery. The Tokugawa regime was eager to make Confucianism normative for the behaviour of its subjects, so it aided the popularization of Buddhist services for ancestors. The census’ offering of surnames to all Japanese might have indirectly created greater lineage consciousness.

In East as in West, private property and legal inheritance seems to go with the consolidation of the family or the household as the psychologically warm and legally tight unit. Private property and with it, family burial lots, did not come easy. During the Kamakura period following the collapse of the shōen-system, the peasant class began to own their tools, and for the better-off, even some animals and some land. These could then be passed down to the descendents. In Japan, primogeniture being the rule, the first son inherited whatever land leases the family might have. A symbol of his authority is the butsudan, the
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Buddhist family shrine so entrusted to him. The main house, honke, keeps it. As the honbakushobecame free yeoman in the course of the Edo reign, the ie became the basic unit. In this ie or household system (a subdivision coming from out of the go or sho), the ancestral list or ihai is kept in a drawer under the Buddha statue. As the first son is the beneficiary to ancestral property, we can be sure that whatever filial duty there already was is further reinforced by the patriarch's last will. These psychological and material factors created the "warm family." It is no accident that all commoners' graves and their ancestral ihai genealogy (as used by Robert Smith) did not go back beyond Tokugawa.

Thus, it is only in the Tokugawa era that Buddhist funerals, temple burials and ancestral worship at home became realizable on a general scale. Japan still lives under that shadow, although signs of Forbidden Death are also appearing in this advanced industrial society. For our purpose, we will not go further into the more recent developments, except perhaps to note this: that it is in the Meiji period, in the new cities with a population uprooted from the village, that the government also created the beautiful civic lawns; Tokyo's suburban Tamaekoen is such a transectarian cemetery park. The honouring of national heroes at parks also became a vogue. Perhaps the Buddha statue made out of the war dead is the most complicated landmark in its histoire de mentalité de la morte.

CONCLUSION

The coincidence of the manners of death East and West or the applicability of Aries' typologies to Japan is due, ultimately, to similar spiritual tensions and associated social changes in both cultures. The tabooed death is universal but a higher religion that looks beyond this worldly life and transcends death helps to tame this horror. The Church and the Buddhist sangha provided the necessary refuge, the ease of passage to the Beyond, in the medieval era. However, the crisis-faiths of their Reformation brought to focus once more the trauma of judgment or deliverance at Death. This personalized Death. However, as men turned away from the Heavens to the limited but legitimate joys of this life, as men celebrated the warmer human ties afforded by the sheltered and sheltering family/household, men also learned, in one sense, to put egoistic Death behind and relish or suffer (or both) this life and this death on earth. Like it or not, we inherited this recent tradition.

One pays a certain price for the modern mode of Death and at a time when Death is Forbidden once more, not because of taboo but because of certain seeming inhumanity and calculated indifference in the highly industrialized, overly atomistic, society, it is well to remember, perhaps to relive and reconstruct, saner Deaths that went before. Hopefully the above grand overview of an Oriental parallel might teach
us to live differently by knowing how it was possible to die differently.

NOTES

1 Professor, Program in Religious Studies. An earlier draft of this paper was read at the national conference of the American Academy of Religion at New Orleans in 1978. A revised version was prepared for a 1981 conference on Buddhism in Japanese Civilization: Humanistic Inquires, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. More recently, a translation has been made of Aries' more detailed, original study in French. However he might be accused of overgeneralizations in his small book, his specific discovery of data and skillful interpretations thereof in his larger work stand well on their own. However, for our purpose, we will use only the shorter book. One cannot after all expect exact Buddhist counterparts to specific Christian motifs he uncovered; one can only stay with the broader outlines. Thus the essay is offered, not as any definitive history of Death in Japanese History—a task that would require years of work and volumes to fill—but, as a test of Aries' theory and method when applied to the rich data of Japanese funeral practices.

2 In this, he is like his French contemporary Foucault who capitalizes on "episteme," in a similar oblique critique of modern rational individualism.

3 In his larger book, Aries notes how the idea of a second chance in the Purgatory became popular not before but during the 16th century.

4 Since Aries noted how Rome too had such practices at one time, one must attribute the rebirth of individuality somewhat to the economic recovery then.

5 The late medieval crisis can no more sustain itself than the Post-War existentialist despair over the demise of Dasein.


7 Not because it is inappropriate; there are some very interesting studies being done on the New Japan's handling of the aged parents.

8 Whatever excessive mourning can be duly institutionalized; thus the Chinese would have professional wailers; but the wake (esp. the Irish one) is typically one of celebration of life.

9 TAMAMURO Taijo, Soshiki Bukkyo (Funeral Buddhism) Tokyo: Ohörin, 1964. Tamamuro, an historian of Buddhism, had written earlier Soshiki hoyo no shakaishiteki kōsatsu with Nihon shūkyōshiki kenkyusho (no date or other information noted in the bibliography of said book), a sociological investigation into funeral customs.

10 I shall follow Aries in distinguishing the timeless physical family from the psychologically warm family; only the latter secures Thy Death.
Yoshida sect Shintō in Tokugawa did co-opt funeral services in part to combat that monopoly. See Tamamuro, pp. 275-285.


12 One usually associates fear with the more primitive reaction, as evident in African religion, but Confucian sentiments are strong; traditionalist Far Eastern scholars would insist that reverence is more primary.

13 This divine genealogy is told in the Nihongi. The pattern is similar to the Greeks whose noble houses also claimed always divine patrimony. Only the nobles had the civic rights to worship the city god; the plebeians did not. See also similar pattern in Egypt where the Pharaoh was buried like a god (he was a god) while his subjects, called his "cattle," only had primitive burial (with a stone on the corpse too). See Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion (New York: Harper & Row, 1948). I doubt whether a dead slave in ancient Japan was referred ever as kami, since kami (though intoned differently) is known to stand for social superiors (uesama).


15 From the Sandai jitsuroku.

16 When Neo-Confucianists in Sung sought to augment the same rational program in order to trim the barbaric Buddhist cremations, they left Ming and Ch'ing local officials with many unCLAIMED dead from poor classes left to rot.

17 It would appear that Buddhists in China did not adopt cremation that early. It became popular after the 10th century. In the fifth century, they were still customarily interred, following the Confucian norm. Even the Ch'an legend of Bodhidharma, a late one, gave him a coffin. It seems that Pai-chang who wrote the Zen monastic rules still only complained against the standard lay burials within monks' compound.

18 Cited in Wen Chih-t'ai, Chung-kuo chuang-li (Chinese Funeral Customs), a thin book from PRC (Hua-hsueh yen-chiao she; n. p.; n. d.) pp. 36-38. On cremation in China, see pp. 27-40. Ssu-ma Kuang might be referring to the practice to have ashes scattered into ponds or bones dissolved in acid baths. Economy dictated this as it dictated the exhuming of bones from Church atriums—to make space for more.

19 For an overview, see Öjöden no kenkyū (Tokyo: Kōten isan no kai, 1968).

20 Characterization above taken from well-known sources: Ienaga Saburō's judgment on Heian Buddhism, art historians' study of Pure Land paintings etc. that I would not need to specify.
The intentional contrast of Hell and Pure Land was already used by Shan-tao in China with great effect. More on the popularization of Hell pictures, see Nishikō Gison, “Jigokue no ryōkō nituite,” Ryōgoku daigaku Bukkyō shigaku ronshū (1935).

Heian had some Hell Screens, but they were more sublime than even bizarre, in the tradition of Shingon mysteries.

Observations drawn from personal study of the Nembutsu hongan senchakushu and prior scholarship on the Pure Land school in general. The “ten recitations at death” is not new; it is canonical. The popularization of decision is.

A forgery, but quite in keeping with Shan-tao’s teaching.

From my full translation of the piece from the Lung-shu ching t’u-wen (T. 41, p. 287bc) and the same, with slight variance, in the Le-pang wen-lu (T. 47, p. 312ab).

Even if Roland cried his head off, pious recorders censored that relapse; all Ōjōden depict only peaceful departures. Thus this caution: Aries’ scheme works in part because of the pious nature of the materials he was using. Identical genre in our time would depict Tamed Death still. One must then assess the representative nature of the records of death vis-à-vis the temperament of the era.

Note how “deathbed salvation” was not unknown before. Early Christianity and early Buddhism had accepted this.

I am thankful to Winston Davis for this reminder. His attention to the infrastructure is spelled out in “Toward Modernity: A Developmental Typology of Popular Religious Affiliations in Japan,” Cornell University East Asian Papers, 12 (1977).

Nowadays, the lengthier that name, the more costly it would be to the surviving family. One expects the sutoba to go up along with it.

See Ōjōden no kenkyū cited.

Told in the Konjakumonogatari (comp. 1077).


In 1264, the monk Hongaku popularized this by making it available to not just monks and nuns, or just those living nearby, but anyone who cared to register with some donation. This is part of the late Heian and Kamakura attempt on the part sometimes of improvised temples to rebuild a popular basis through such sales of mamori etc. (cf. Ise in Edo.) Such ke-en need involve no actual deposit of ashes in the home temple.

The danka system was created by Tokugawa in part for census and tax revenue purposes; henceforth the temple kept the record of the citizens and their land holdings; also to combat Christian heretics and to stop sectarian conflicts.
It seems silly to say that the "warm Japanese family" began only in Tokugawa when Confucianism had always insisted on the innateninjō (human feelings) fostered at home. However, following Aries' 1962 book, one must stress the importance of a physicalie for any intimacy of the household members. Manor serfs who lived in communal male and female lodges in Heian with no real private life or claim to the life and livelihood of their offsprings do not lead "warm family lives."
According to the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, the enlightened state of consciousness known as nibbāna is possessed of a single nature, without division. Thus one must find it odd, if not ironically humorous, to discover the fervent dissension amongst scholars as to the exact nature of this very crucial concept. Some equate nibbāna with the state of consciousness attained by Siddhattha Gotama at the age of thirty-five under the Bodhi tree, a state which is also experienced upon attaining arahanthood. Others perceive nibbāna as a state that can be achieved only upon death, since nibbāna is often described as a condition beyond mind and matter (nāmarūpa), thus transcendent of the five aggregates that constitute the amalgam of mind and matter. Yet a third group interprets nibbāna as synonymous with the mental state known as saññāvedayitanirodha (literally “the cessation of recognition and of sensation”). The characteristic of this later condition seems to fall somewhere between the two interpretations of nibbāna mentioned above, for it is clearly described as an experience beyond mind and matter (nāmarūpa) wherein the experiencer continues to live after exiting the trance. (It is noteworthy to mention that the experiencer is clinically dead during the trance.)

One celestial being once asked the Buddha: “How can one untangle this mess?” We may transpose this question to our field of inquiry, especially when the tradition itself seems to offer conflicting opinions regarding the true interpretation of nibbāna. This article will attempt to clarify the nuances between these apparently different states. After examining the distinction between the nibbāna that the Buddha attained at the age of thirty-five and thenibbāna he entered into at the time of death, we will further our investigation by delving into both the traditional and the modern-academic controversies associated with the state of saññāvedayitanirodha. This will enable us to circumscribe the traditional interpretation of saññāvedayitanirodha and to affirm whether consistency runs throughout the tradition.
Most Buddhist scholars hold that the historical Buddha experienced enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at the age of thirty-five and, according to certain scholars, reached nibbāna simultaneously. According to others, however, he only entered into nibbāna when he passed away at the age of eighty. It is misleading to believe that these two perspectives on nibbāna are mutually exclusive. Such a confusion is probably due to an overlooking of the difference between “two types” of nibbāna, namely sopādisesa (with residue) and nirupādisesa or anupādisesa (without residue).

According to Pali texts, nibbāna has, both strictly speaking (nippariyatā) and in the ultimate sense (paramatthato), a single nature, and is thus without division or distinction. But for the sake of logical treatment, and in order to make known the nature of the attainment of nibbāna, the concept can be divided into two categories: sopādisesa and nirupādisesa (or anupādisesa). This nuance is thoroughly explained by Buddhaghosa in the Visuddhimagga:

But this [single goal, nibbāna] is firstly called with result of past clinging left (sopādisesa) since it is made known together with the [aggregates resulting from the past] clinging still remaining [during the Arahant's life], being thus made known in terms of the stilling of defilement and the remaining [results of the past] clinging that are present in one who has reached it by means of development. But [secondly, it is called] without result of past clinging left (nirupādisesa) since after the last consciousness of the Arahant, who has abandoned arousing [future aggregates] and so prevented kamma from giving result in a future [existence], there is no further arising of aggregates of existence, and those already risen have disappeared. So the [result of past] clinging that remained is non-existent; and it is in terms of this non-existence, in the sense that ‘there is no [result of past] clinging here, that the [same goal is called] without result of past clinging left.'

The Itivuttaka (upon which the previous passage of the Visuddhimagga probably bases its interpretation) mentions that one who has attained sopādisesa nibbāna continues to possess the five senses and to experience both pleasant and painful sensations, while the attainment of nirupādisesa nibbāna is characterized by the eradication of all becomes (bhava), implying that no emergence from this state is possible.

On the other hand, the state of sopādisesa nibbāna, as the words themselves imply, is “nibbāna-with residue” in the sense that subtle kammass still remain. These kammass are not strong enough to propel the arahant into another rebirth, but merely sufficient to maintain the life process. Liberated persons cease to produce further kamma, for the
kamma-process (kammabhava) has been eradicated. They have eradicated all kamma-results (kammavipaka) that may lead to another life, but must still reap some subtle kamma-results. It is these kamma-results that maintain both the regeneration of the five aggregates and the kamma-process itself. Therefore, this sopâdisesa nibbâna could be correlated to a state of mind that alters our perception of the world, or rather, enables us to truly perceive the world as it is (yathâbhûta). This definition is echoed in Aryadeva’s interpretation of the state of visamyojavimukti.phala.

Ce fruit de délivrance [visamyojavimukti.phala], disons nous, n'est pas une certaine entité à part du lien, de ce qui est lié et du moyen. —C'est-à-dire: 1. quand on obtient d'être délivré du lien, on ne réalise pas une certaine délivrance qui soit à part, qui soit extérieure au lien. Ce qui est nommé délivrance, c'est seulement la non-naisance d'un [nouveau] lien en raison d'un certain état qui est la vue des choses telles qu'elles sont (yathâbhûta); 2. de même pour ce qui est lié. Ce qui est nommé délivrance, ce n'est pas une entité (saddharma) à part, mais un certain état d'aise et d'indépendance [dans lequel le lié est] dégagé du lien des passions-erreurs; 3. de même pour le moyen. Ce qui est nommé délivrance, ce n'est pas une entité à part, extérieure au chemin; c'est une certaine efficacité qui dégage des passions erreurs.10

Nirupâdisesa nibbâna, on the other hand, is “nibbâna-without residue” in the sense that all kammas have been completely eradicated and, consequently, no fuel remains to perpetuate life. Nirupâdisesa nibbâna is usually referred to as khandhaparinibbâna, a total extinction of the five aggregates (khandha). This state of nirupâdisesa is nibbâna beyond mind and matter, no different from the state of nibbâna that the Buddha attained at the moment of death.

Correlations are often made between the terms nirupâdisesa nibbâna (without residue) and parinibbâna, and between sopâdisesa nibbâna and “plain” nibbâna. However, no sound textual justification is found for such an identification. It seems that in the sutta literature the term parinibbâna is restricted to the passing away of the arahant (i.e. the attainment of nirupâdisesa nibbâna). Yet the substantive in these particular passages virtually functions as an elegant or polite term for an arahant’s death rather than entering into nirupâdisesa nibbâna itself. We often find the verb form parinibbâyatâ being used to mean the attainment of arahantship itself without implying the passing away of the arahant at that particular moment.11 Furthermore, commentarial literature mentions two kinds of parinibbânas: 1) kilesaparinibbâna, the extinction of defilements which is equated with sopâdisesa nibbâna, and 2) khandhaparinibbâna, or the extinction of the aggregates, i.e. the
passing away of the arahant, nirupādisesa nibbāna. As Peter Mansfield pointed out in his article “The Nibbāna-Parinibbāna Controversy,” not even the past participle parinibbuta refers exclusively to the state of nirupādisesa nibbāna. Because of its dubious significance, the term parinibbāna is not used in this article. The concepts of nirupādisesa and sopādisesa are the precise technical terms that refer respectively to the total eradication of the aggregates at the time of the death of the arahant, and to the state attained by a living arahant.

Although the distinction between these first two kinds of nibbānas is clear, the problem associated with the state of sāññāvedayitanirodha is not as simple to tackle! Pāli texts repeatedly refer to a state beyond sensation or, more literally, a state characterized by the eradication of recognition and sensation (sañña and vedanā; sāññāvedayitanirodha), a state which Buddhaghosa and Dhammapala have compared to nibbāna. In order to better understand this mysterious state, we will now examine pertinent textual evidence, and respond to some modern interpretations.

The life of Siddhattha Gotama just prior to his enlightenment, as portrayed in the Ariyapariyesanasutta, offers significant information on numerous “trance-like” states. According to this text, the bodhisattva visited many saints who were engaged in different types of penance, the most eminent being Āḷāra Kalāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. Gotama first approached Āḷāra Kalāma and mastered the stage of fākiṇaṇñiyātana samādhi (the third samāpatti) which was the highest known to his teacher. When this realization did not correspond to final liberation, he left Āḷāra Kalāma and went to study under Uddaka Rāmaputta. With the later, he quickly mastered the samādhi of nevamaññana sañña (the fourth samāpatti), similarly the highest he could learn from him. The bodhisattva did not regard this condition as final liberation either and thus left to independently pursue his goal. Only then did he finally experience nibbāna and become a buddha. This text explicitly states that Gotama had attained all the eight absorptions, i.e. the four jhānas and the four samāpattis, and that he attained an even higher state: nibbāna. In this very same sutta, Gotama is portrayed as instructing the monks not only as how to attain each of these eight absorptions, but also how to reach a state higher than these eight. This state is called sāññāvedayitanirodha, the eradication of recognition and sensation, and it seems at first approach to be the same as nibbāna. As La Vallée Poussin says:

*Ils [les bouddhistes] pensent que ce neuvième [recueillement] a été découvert par le Bouddha; ils le nomment, non pas recueillement d’inconscience (“sans samjña”), mais recueillement de destruction de la conscience et de la sensation (“samjñaveditanirodha”) ou, plus*
simplement, recueillement de la destruction (niruddhasamāpatti); ils lui donnent un caractère nettement bouddhique en le définissant comme une prise de contact avec le Nirvāṇa (ou avec une entité semblable au Nirvāṇa).\textsuperscript{17}

However, many modern scholars, such as Rune Johansson, hold that saññāvedayitanirodha is different from nibbāna:

However, \textit{saññāvedayitanirodha} is not included and it is not identified [in Pali texts] with nibbāna. There are texts that would seem to imply a very close relationship, but they are exceptions. \textit{Nirodha} is frequently mentioned as an aid to the attainment of nibbāna; but nibbāna can be attained on the other levels just as well, even without meditation [the author probably means the practice of the jhānas and samāpattis]; what is important is the destruction of the obsessions.\textsuperscript{18}

Yet the \textit{Ariyapariyesasuttad}epicts the Buddha teaching his disciples how to successively reach the eight absorptions, the same eight that he himself had attained, \textit{and} how to experience \textit{saññāvedayitanirodha}. According to this text, the Buddha establishes a parallel between the various attainments his disciples must achieve, and his own. It would therefore be strange rhetoric to find the ninth attainment of the Buddha, i.e. nibbāna, radically different from the ninth of his disciples, i.e. \textit{saññāvedayitanirodha}. Theoretically, there should not be any major difference between the two, especially since \textit{saññāvedayitanirodha} is described in the same way that nibbāna is often described. Both are described as “crossing over the entanglement of the world”, as being out of reach of the evil one (Māra).\textsuperscript{19}

If the correlation between \textit{saññāvedayitanirodha} and nibbāna were based solely on this hypothesis, of course, it would not stand on firm ground. However, this assumption finds firm support in the commentarial literature, texts that Rune Johansson may have overlooked. For example, in a chapter devoted to the discussion of \textit{saññāvedayitanirodha}, the \textit{Visuddhimagga} states that certain monks enter into this “trance” thinking: “Let us dwell in bliss by being without consciousness here and now and reaching the cessation that is nibbāna”.\textsuperscript{20} A few pages later, the same text reiterates that \textit{saññāvedayitanirodha} is “an attainment which a noble one may cultivate; the peace it gives is reckoned as nibbāna here and now.”\textsuperscript{21} The commentary of the \textit{Visuddhimagga} goes even further by introducing an equivocal correlation between the term saññāvedayitanirodha and “nibbāna-without-residue”: Nibbānam\textsuperscript{ti} anupādesanibbānam\textsuperscript{matvā viya} \textsuperscript{22} Noteworthy is the commentator’s introduction of the particle viya, which suggests similarity rather than identity. The passage should therefore be translated thus: “(in this
particular context of the Visuddhimagga, the expression ‘attaining nibbāna’ means attaining [a state] similar to nibbāna-without-residue.” As Dhammapāla established no more than a correlation between saññāvedayita nirodha and anupādisesanirodha, we cannot directly equate these two concepts. It can not be overemphasized that the exegete did not establish a one-to-one correlation between the two terms, but only stated that they are “similar”. However, Buddhaghosa mentions that the mind of one who has emerged from saññāvedayita nirodha tends towards nibbāna. This suggests that the “trance” is a kind of abandration of nibbāna that bends the mind towards achieving nibbāna itself rather than achieving the state that resembles it.

Nevertheless, although commentarial literature equivocally links saññāvedayitanirodha with nibbāna-without-residue (nirupādisesanirodha), this equation is often questioned by scholars. For example, David Kalupahana stated that “scholars more conversant [than William James] with the Buddhist tradition go to the extent of equating the state of cessation (saññāvedayitanirodha) with freedom (nibbāna)”. According to Kalupahana, these two states cannot be equated, in any sense.

There seems to be, however, a flaw in Kalupahana’s argument against correlating saññāvedayitanirodha with nibbāna. Although he correctly points out that the former ought to be experienced by the body (kāyena sacchikariya), his preceding remark misleads the reader, for Kalupahana considers that the Ariyapariyesanasutta, in which the Buddha refused to equate freedom with the state of cessation, should serve as a corrective to this wrong identification by James and others. A careful reading of the Ariyapariyesanasutta, however, shows that the Buddha never refused to equate nibbāna with saññāvedayitanirodha. What we do find in this particular text is simply a statement that none of the eight absorptions can be equated with nibbāna:

This dhamma [the teaching of Ālara Kalāma] does not lead to disregard, nor to dispassion, nor to cessation, nor to tranquillity, nor to super-knowledge, nor to awakening, nor to nibbāna but only as far as reaching the plane of “no-thing”.

It seems that, either because saññāvedayitanirodha is sometimes described as the ninth absorption or because it is one of the eight deliverances (vimokkha), Kalupahana has mistakenly associated saññāvedayitanirodha with the attainments of the eight absorptions (actually the four jhānas and the four samāpattis). It is important to recall, however, that the eight absorptions are not usually even mentioned along with saññāvedayitanirodha, except when the latter is described as higher than any of the former. Moreover, the Ariyapariyesanasasutta does not mention the attainment of
saññāvedayitanirodha in this specific passage, and taking for granted that it is implied is precarious. Therefore, we cannot affirm with certainty that the Buddha refused to equatesaññāvedayitanirodha with nibbana.

Saññāvedayitanirodha is known as a state beyond mind and matter, as is nirupadisesa nibbana. However, one notable difference between the two is that the latter can only be experienced after death, while the former requires that one be alive. Alive, yes, but not in appearance. For all intents and purposes, one dwelling in saññāvedayitanirodha exhibits the same features as a deceased person with the slight exception that life (āyu) and bodily heat are still present, and that the sense-organs are purified. Thus the experiencer is technically dead.

We saw earlier that nirupadisesa nibbana is sometimes defined as khandaparinibbana, i.e. totally freed from the five aggregates. Nirupadisesa nibbana is also comparable to saññāvedayitanirodha in that the five elements are almost completely deactivated and become temporarily latent. As the name saññāvedayitanirodha implies, this state is devoid of sañña and vedana. Without the existence of these two aggregates, neither of the two remaining mental aggregates (sakkāra and viññāna) can be present in their active form. According to the paticcasamuppāda, sakkāra is the necessary condition for the arising of the viññāna which can potentially turn into vedanā. Thus, if vedanā is eradicated, there can be no sakkāra, for the three links of the paticcasamupāda that follows vedanā (tanha, upadana and bhava) are members of the sakkārakkhandha. Furthermore, without sakkāra, viññāna cannot arise, due to its dependence on sakkāra. This argument is implicitly supported by the Visuddhimagga in its definition of saññāvedayitanirodha: “What is the attainment of cessation [saññāvedayitanirodha]? It is the disappearance of consciousness (citta) and its mental factors (cetasikas) owing to their progressive eradication.” Noteworthy is that abhidhamma literature synonymously interchanges the terms citta and viññāna, while cetasika comprises not only vedanā and sañña, as we would expect from saññāvedayitanirodha, but also the fifty factors that constitute sakkāra. It follows that since saññāvedayitanirodha is devoid of citta and cetasikas, it is devoid of viññāna, vedanā, sañña and sakkāra as well. Only the remaining aggregate, the rūpakkhandha, must continue to be present, for the body remains alive and must be sustained by the rūpa-jivitindriya (material faculty of life), one of the twenty-four upādārūpa. Therefore, saññāvedayitanirodha is not simply a “more radical negation of apprehensions [sañña]”, as Tilmann Vetter suggested, but a radical negation of all four mental aggregates. In this sense, it could neither be equated, as Winston King advanced, with the fruits of the paths, for these are
still characterized by the four mental aggregates, while saññāvedayitanirodha is completely devoid of them.

It is said that while dwelling in the state of saññāvedayitanirodha, the body is entirely protected from sustaining any type of injury. Pali texts offer us the shocking example of Mahānāga who was dwelling in this trance when the house in which he temporarily dwelt caught fire. The blaze persisted until the villagers put out the fire; Mahānāga remained totally unaware of the event. After all, without the four mental aggregates, one cannot be aware of anything in the mundane world! However, it is said that only the house burned; the monk was left untouched by the flames. It is interesting to note that when describing the villagers attempt to quench the fire with water, Buddhaghosa employed the causative form (nibbāpetva), which shares the same etymology as nibbāna. Emerging from saññāvedayitanirodha, Mahānāga even jokingly made a pun (“I am discovered!”) and then “flew away.”

While in the trance, Mahānāga’s own fire (i.e. his five aggregates) was temporarily quenched; after he emerged from saññāvedayitanirodha and realized that the villagers were trying to extinguish the fire, he exclaimed “I (meaning the five aggregates metaphorically associated with the fire) am discovered”, thus stressing the crucial polarity between fire and water, the five aggregates and nibbāna.

Unfortunately, this sensational (albeit deprived of sensation) state of saññāvedayitanirodha is not available to just anyone. According to the Visuddhimagga, only the anāgamī and the arahant who have successively passed through the eight absorptions can enter it. This point is extremely important, for many scholars argue that equating saññāvedayitanirodha with nibbāna is impossible since, according to the Theravada tradition, nibbāna can be experienced only by means of wisdom (pañña) and discriminative insight (vipassana), while the eight absorptions can be attained simply by practicing concentration (samatha).

However, the fact that it is compulsory to be either an anāgamī or an arahant in order to experience saññāvedayitanirodha implicitly demands that a certain amount of wisdom and discriminative insight have been acquired. In fact, only those who have perfected these two qualities would be capable of experiencing the state of saññāvedayitanirodha. As Winston L. King emphasizes, “only those who have attained the Path can attain cessation. It cannot be repeated too often that cessation is an integral blending of the two (insight (vipassana) and concentration (samatha)).” Therefore, anāgamīs and arahants who have reached the goal (sopādhisesanibbāna) but have not followed the path of the absorptions cannot reach this state.

Not all scholars agree with the above commentary. Paul J. Griffiths, for example, so strongly refutes this view that he devotes an entire book to the subject. According to Griffiths, only the path of
discriminative insight (vipassana) leads to nībāṇa, and only the paths of concentration (samatha) leads to the absorptions and to saññāvedayitanirodha. The two are distinct and thus can never be "blended," as suggested by King, in order to attain either goal. Griffiths accuses Buddhaghosa, and other exegetes of wrongly attempting to reconcile these two paths by correlating saññāvedayitanirodha with nībāṇa-without-residue (nirupādisesananībāṇa), and by further stating that in order to experience cessation, one must have already perfected wisdom through discriminative insight to the level of anāgāmi. Griffiths does not agree with Buddhaghosa’s reasoning, almost to the degree of charging the commentator with heresy. Griffiths’ statement is rather fierce and, as will be shown, I do not feel his arguments bear out the charge.

Griffiths maintains two major arguments against the identification of saññāvedayitanirodha and nībāṇa. The first is based on the following statement from the Visuddhimagga: “Why do they attain nirodha? [...] they attain it by thinking: ‘let us live happily by being mindless in this very moment and having attained cessation which is nībāṇa.’” According to Griffiths,

it is unclear how a condition in which no mental events occur can possess affective tone as appears to be suggested [by Buddhaghosa]. Presumably it would be more accurate to describe the attainment of cessation as a condition which is free from both happiness and sadness and indeed from all affective tone whatever.

The remark is accurate; since saññāvedayitanirodha is a state where none of the mental aggregates function, making it impossible to experience either pleasant or unpleasant sensations. However, Griffiths’ reference does not seem to give proper consideration to Dhammapāla’s commentary of the Visuddhimagga. According to Dhammapāla, the word happiness (sukham) in this particular passage simply means the absence of suffering. The commentator believes that this is what Buddhaghosa intended when he said that those wishing to attain cessation do so in order to “live happily”. We must understand that the Buddhist noble truth of suffering postulates the universality of suffering. Suffering does not merely result from unpleasant sensations, physical or mental, as Griffiths seems to imply, but is inherent in all compounded phenomena (saṅkhāra), i.e. all psycho-physical phenomena of existence, all the five aggregates. These are characterized by constant change, they arise and pass away; they are transitory (anicca). Because of this inherent instability, they are subject to suffering. Moreover, suffering is often directly correlated with the five clinging-aggregates (saṅkhittena pañcupādānakhandha pī dukkhā). Although
the state of saññāvedayitanirodha, being defined as beyond any of the four aggregates, can certainly not be characterized by pleasant and unpleasant sensations, it can be understood as a "pleasant" experience in Dhammapāla's sense, for it transcends the suffering that is inherent in all types of sensations.

Griffiths' second argument is that Buddhaghosa's identification of nibbāna with saññāvedayitanirodha "seems to approach uneasily close to a standard Buddhist heresy" for it "encourages some version of the annihilation view." In the Theravada tradition, the annihilation view (uccchedaditthi) is defined as the belief (held mainly by non-Buddhists, of course) that there is an unchanging self which remains constant throughout life and which, at the time of death, simply disappears. In other words, it is the belief in the existence of an entity which is more or less identical with the five aggregates and which become totally annihilated at the time of death. Of course, Buddhism categorically rejects the view that there is a permanent entity which is identified with the five aggregates: the tradition denies the truth of this presupposition altogether by affirming that there is merely a sequence of events that are causally related, but that this similarity can in no way be perceived as identity. Furthermore, Buddhism also repudiates the view that there is absolutely no existence after death, but rather that there exists a continuum from one life to another, wherein the last consciousness of the present life (cuticitt) engenders the first consciousness of the next (patissandhivinīnāna). The only possible way to exit this cycle of birth, death and rebirth is to eradicate all karmic activities (sakkharas) during the lifetime and attain nibbāna; otherwise the samsāric circle is continued as described above. This being standard Buddhist doctrine, we must question how Griffiths can make such a statement as "many Buddhist texts, especially those which discuss the nature of nibbāna, do in fact read as though they embrace just this 'annihilation view'." It is true that nibbāna is most often described in negativistic terms, but reaching the goal is often the result of many lives of practice; this very point indicates that there is some sort of continuum from one existence to another, a view that the "annihilists" would reject. "However this may be", as Griffiths continues, "it certainly seems as though this text of Buddhaghosa's, identifying the attainment of cessation with nibbāna, is one of those that encourages some version of the 'annihilation view'." It is mysterious how Griffiths can interpret the words of Buddhaghosa in such a manner, since the passage in question clearly states that the disciple works for the attainment of cessation in order to attain a certain "bliss" (sukham). The very fact that "bliss" (or whatever this might refer to) is present—and experienced indicates that this is not total annihilation. Furthermore, it is not the association of saññāvedayitanirodha with nibbāna which should be considered in this light, but nibbāna per
se, as it is the latter (or at least nirupâdisesanibbâna) which is described as being beyond the five aggregates — a statement which resembles the annihilistic view in the sense that all constituents of the individual are destroyed, but contradicts it in the sense that there is still something left (perfect bliss; paramam sukham), and many lives preceding it.

The Theravâda commentarial tradition has established an equivocal relation between saññāvedayitanirodha and nibbâna-without-residue, in the sense that in the particular passage of the Visuddhimagga referred to earlier, Buddhaghosa does not seem to be making a straightforward doctrinal statement that saññāvedayitanirodha is nibbâna. He simply states that certain monks enter into this trance thinking: “let us dwell in bliss by being without consciousness here and now and reaching the cessation that is nibbâna.”54 But Buddhaghosa places this statement in the mouths of others, in what seems to be from the context a loose, metaphorical way of speaking, for such rhetoric is not typical of Buddhaghosa when writing in a strictly analytical manner and when supporting a doctrinal point. Hence the commentator, Dhammapala, rushes in to prevent misunderstanding by explaining that “reaching the cessation that is nibbâna” means “as though reaching nibbâna-without-residue”.

However, according to Pali sources, there is a major distinction between saññāvedayitanirodha and nibbâna. On the one hand, nibbâna is not particularly a meditative attainment, but rather asabhāvadhamma, a reality which exists in the ultimate sense (paramatthato). As an ultimate reality, nibbâna differs from all other dhammas in that it is unconditioned, unborn, undying, etc. It is realized by practitioners when they attain the paths and fruits, but its existence is by no means dependent on anyone’s attainment. Nibbâna exists and remains as such whether or not it is realized. On the other hand, saññāvedayitanirodha is not a sabhāvadhamma, it has no individual essence and it is produced (nipphanna). For the simple reason that it has no individual essence, according to the Visuddhimagga, it is not classifiable as formed or unformed, mundane or supramundane.55 According to Pali literature, nibbâna is a real dhamma, āyatana, and dhātu, while saññāvedayitanirodha is not. The latter is simply the cessation of mental factors reached through the procedure described in the Visuddhimagga.56 In the light of these canonical definitions of saññāvedayitanirodha and nibbâna, the juxtaposition of these two states as one becomes almost impossible.

We cannot conclude this discussion without mentioning one final hypothesis, put forward by Louis de La Vallée Poussin57 regarding nirodhasamâpatti and its place within Buddhism. In his article, Le Vallée Poussin explores the debt of Buddhism to the ancient form of Samkhya or yoga where the practice of complete withdrawal of the
senses was the only means of achieving cittavrtti nirodha, which in turn was the only means of attaining kaivalya or liberation. He argues that the early Buddhists wanted to show that having incorporated every kind of practice into their system, they had reached an attainment higher than any of those associated with other practices. Therefore integrating saññāvedayitanirodha into the Buddhist tradition could be no more that the result of an attempt to make Buddhism appear superior to rival practices.

In conclusion, we must concede that, being mere scholars and with limited resources at our disposition, it is perhaps impossible to determine with one hundred percent certainty whether nibbāna and saññāvedayitanirodha are truly one and the same; we can be sure of the controversies surrounding the subject! We may now affirm, however, that Pāli texts are not in total accord on this matter: the suttta literature does not explicitly equate saññāvedayitanirodha with nibbāna, the abhidhamma seems to stress the difference between these two stages, and the commentarial and sub-commentarial literature implies a similarity between them... Yet, one point seems clear: nibbāna and saññāvedayitanirodha both share a “blissful feeling”, which in itself may again be interpreted in various ways. As mentioned previously, the peace generated by saññāvedayitanirodha “is reckoned as nibbāna here and now” for it shares nibbāna’s peaceful quality. However, saññāvedayitanirodha cannot be identical to nibbāna, for it has no individual essence (sabhava) and it is produced (nipphanna). It could simply be some kind of blissful foretaste of the nibbāna element without residue, but on this matter as well, the texts remain inscrutable (at least for the moment...).

NOTES

1 AbhS. VI,14.
2 Th. Stcherbatsky represents the followers of this perspective: “Buddha and Nirvāṇa are different names for the same thing”. Stcherbatsky, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa (Varanasi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1968), p. 79.
3 As Louis de La Vallée Pouissin stated in one of his lectures at Manchester College: “It may therefore be safely maintained that Nirvāṇa is annihilation.” The way to Nirvana: six lectures on ancient Buddhism as a discipline of salvation(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) p. 117.
4 Anto jāta bahi jāta jatāya jatīta pajar: tam tam Gotama puchchāmi: ko imam vijataye jatān tī S.i,13; 165. Also quoted in Buddhaghosa’s introduction to his Visuddhimagga (Vsm. p.1).

5 Tad etam [nibbānām] sabbhāvato ekavidham pi, saupādisesa-nibbānadhātu anupādisesanibbānadhātu ceti duvidham hoti kārānapariyāyena. Abha VI,14. The text further classifies nibbāna into three modes: void, signless, and absolute content. This division, however, does not influence our discussion. See S. Z. Aung’s translation of the Abhidhammatthasangaha entitled Compendium of Philosophy (London P.T.S., 1979), p. 166.

6 The Path of Purification, p. 580-581. This subject is further elaborated in the Itivuttaka (38,39,40,41) as well as in Kamaleswar Bhattacharya’s article “Upadhi, upādi et upādāna dans le canon bouddhique pāli”. Mélanges d’indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou (Paris: Publications de l’institut de civilisation indienne, 1967), pp. 81-97.

7 Tassa tit thanteva pañcindriyāṇi yesam avighātattā manāpāmanāpām paccanubhoti, sukhadukkham paṭisamvediyati...saupādisa nibbānadhatu. It. 38.

8 Anupaṭisasa pana samparāyikā yamhi nirujjhantī bhavāni sabbaso It. 38


10 See M. i, 67.


12 The reader may wish to refer to the following two passages. Sukham vāyadi vā dukkham adukkhasukham saha ajihatta ca bahiddhā ca yam kīcch atthi veditam etam ’dukkhan’ tī ṅatvāna mosadhammanyam palokinam phussa phussa vayaṃ passam evam tattha virajjati vedanānam khayaḥ bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto tī (Sn. 144[738-9]). Samāhito sampājano sato buddhassa sāvako vedanā capajjānati vedanānaṃca sambhavam. Yattha cetā nirujjhantī maggaṇca khayāgāminam vedanānam khayaḥ bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto tī (S. iv, 204; another similar passage at S. v, 57).

13 Nayam dhmmo nibbiḍḍaya, na virāgaya na nirodhaya na abhiṁnāya na sambodhaya na nibbānāya samvattati M. i, 165.

14 M. i, 167.

15 M. i, 174-175.

16 Louis de la Vallée Poussin, “Muslīm et Nārada; Le chemin du nirvāṇa”, Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes
Boisvert: Nibbāna and Saññāvedayitanirodha

Études Chinoises, 1937) p. 212.
19 M. i, 175.
20 Ditth' eva dhamme acittaka hutvā nirodham nibbānam patvā sukham viharissāmā ti samāpajjanti Vsm. p.705; translation from the Path of Purification, p. 828.
21 Iti santam samāpattim imam ariyasevitam, ditth' eva dhamme nibbānam iti sakkham upāgatām Vsm. p.709; translation from the Path of Purification, p. 833.
22 VsmA. 902.
23 Vasubandhu, in his Abhidharmakośa, seems to have been as careful as Dhammadīpāla in his definition of saññāvedayitanirodha: he stated only that the latter is similar (sadrā) to nibbāna. AbhK. ii, 44.
24 Vutthitassa kin ninnam cittam hott ti nibbānaninnam Vsm.708.
26 Which is interpreted by the commentator as arising simultaneously with the mental body (nāma). Kāyena ti sahajātā-nāma-kāyena D.A. iii, 1023.
27 Kalupahana, The Principles of Buddhist Psychology, p. 94.
28 Nāyam (Āḷārakālāmassa) dhammo nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na abhiññāya na sambhodhāya na nibbānāya samvattati, yāyad-eva akiññācaññāyatanañapattiyā ti M. i, 165. Translation inspired from Middle Length Sayings, vol. i, p. 209. The same is said about the teaching of Uddaka Rāmaputta with the slight nuance that this latter leads no further than to the state of “neither-perception-nor-non-perception” (see M. i, 166).
29 For example, the Dīghanikāya describes nine successive “cessations”, which consist of the four jhānas, the four samāpattis and saññāvedayitanirodha. D. iii, 266.
30 A. iv, 306.
31 That is M. i, 166-167.
32 Āyu aparikkhino, usmā avapasanta, indriyāni vippasannāni M. i, 269.
34 Tattha kā nirodhasamāpattī ti yā anupubbanirodhavasena cittacetasikānaṃ dhammānaṃ appavatti Vsm. 702.
35 Nyānatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary, p. 37.
36 “Probably in a period already dominated by the method of discriminating insight some persons wished to make use of this wasteland and
discovered in the cessation of apperceptions and feelings [saññāvedayitanirodha] a state (or rather a name) not yet touched by any criticism. 'Neither apperception nor non-apperception' [the fourth samāpatti] now becomes the last but one stage and its description is to be understood as a middle-way formulation allowing for a more radical negations of apperceptions. Tillman Vetter, The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1988) pg.68.

37 Saññāvedayitanirodha “is the maximum possible temporal extension of those nibbāna realizations contained in Path and fruition awareness as well as the experiential ultimate, nibbāna itself, tasted in one’s present existence”. King, Theravāda Meditation: the Buddhist Transformation of Yoga (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1980), p. 104.

38 Vsm. 706.

39 Ke tam samāpajjanti, ke na samāpajjanti ti sabbe pi puthujjana sotāpannā sakadāgāmino, sukkhapassakā ca anāgāmino arahanto na samāpajjanti. Ātha samāpattilabhino pana anāgāmino khāṇāsavā ca samāpajjanti: dvāhi balehi samannāgatattā tayo ca sankhārānaṃ pātipassaddhiya solasaḥ nāṇacariyāhi, navahi samādhicariyāhi vasibbāvatā pañña nirodhasamāpattiya nāṇam ti hi vuttam Vsm. 702. The reader might want to refer to the section of the Visuddhimagga (p. 702-709) which explains how one can entersaññāvedayitanirodha, what are the requirements, how does one emerge from that state, etc.

40 See A. iii, 192; Vsm. 705.

41 King, Theravāda Meditation, p. 108.


43 Kasmā samāpajjanti ti [...] dīṭṭh’eva dhamme acittakā hutvā nirodham patvā sukham viharissāmā ti samāpajjanti Vsm. 705.

44 Griffiths, On Being Mindless, p. 29.

45 Sukham ti niddukkham. VsmA. 1673.22.

46 As stated in the Saṁyuttanikāya: “What do you think, monks: is rūpa permanent or impermanent?” “Impermanent, Sir.” “And that which is impermanent, is it suffering or pleasant?” “Suffering, Sir.” “Tam kim maññathā bhikkhave rūpa niccam vā aniccam vāti. Aniccam bhante S. iii, 67. The same mode of questioning is used for the four other mental aggregates.

47 Griffiths, On Being Mindless, p. 29.


49 Rūpaṃ vedayitam saññaṃ viññaṇam yañca sankhatam n’ eso aham asmi. S. i, 112.

50 Such as portrayed in D. i, 55.
For example, the Jātaka offers the biographies of hundreds of the previous lives of the bodhisattva on his way to enlightenment.


"But [secondly, it is called *without result of past clinging left* (*nirupādisesa*)] since after the last consciousness of the Arahant, who has abandoned arousing [future aggregates] and so prevented kamma from giving result in a future [existence], there is no further arising of aggregates of existence, and those already arisen have disappeared. So the [result of past] clinging that remained is non-existent; and it is in terms of this non-existence, in the sense that [sic] there is no [result of past] clinging here, that the [same goal is called] *without result of past clinging left*" *The Path of Purification*, p. 580-581.

Vsm. 705.

Dhs. 2; Sn. 362; It. 87; Ud. 80, etc.

Vsm. 507.

Nirodhasamāpattisaṅkhāta asaṅkhāta ti ădi pucchāyam pana saṅkhāta ti pi lokiyā ti pi lokuttarā ti pi na vattabbā. Kasma? Sabbāvato n’atthitāya Vsm. 709. A similar statement regarding the mundane and supramundane classification of *saṅñāvedayitanirōdha* is found in the *Kathavatthu*, p. 516.

Vsm. 705 ff.

Louis de La Vallée Poussin, “Āryadeva et le Nirvāṇa”.

This hypothesis of ‘appropriation’ was also advanced by Martin G. Wiltshire regarding other Buddhist doctrines. See *Ascetic Figures Before and In Early Buddhism: the Emergence of Gautama as the Buddha* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990).

Blissful in the sense that it is devoid of sensation rather than being characterized by a pleasant feeling.

VsmA. 833.
The Hasshū-Kōyō by the Scholar-Monk Gyōnen (1240–1321)

Part Three: Sanron, Tendai, Kegon, Shingon, Zen and Jōdo Traditions

translated by

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EDITOR’S NOTE: In this issue we conclude the publication of Leo Pruden’s translation of this important historical work. This work will also appear as a part of the Tripiṭaka Translation and Publication Project of the Bukkyō Dendo Kyokai. For further information concerning this project, please see the closing pages of this issue.

The Sanron-shu, the Sanron Tradition.

Question: Why is this tradition termed the Sanron (= three treatise) tradition?
Answer: It is termed the Sanron tradition because some three commentarial works constitute the literary authority upon which it relies.

Question: What are these three works?
Answer: First, the Chū-ron (= the Mala-madhyāka-karikās), in four volumes. This was composed by the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna. Second, the Hyaku-ron (= the Śata śāstra), in two volumes. This was composed by the Bodhisattva Aryadeva. Third, the Juni-mon-ron (= the Dvadaśa-mukha), in one volume. This was composed by the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna. These are called the three treatises (sanron). However if we add the Chi-ron (= the Daichido-ron, the Mahāprajñāpāramitā upadesā) in one hundred volumes, then this makes some four treatises (shiron). This work was also composed by the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna.
Of these four treatises, the (first) Three Treatises are treatises of a general nature, for they all expound the various teachings of both the Mahāyāna and the Hinayāna. The Daichido-ron is a commentary that serves as a commentary on only one specific text, for it specifically comments on the text of the Daibon-hannyakyō. If the Daichido-ron were to be fully translated (into Chinese), it would fill some one thousand volumes. The Tripitaka Master Kumārajīva reduced the text by some ninety percent, and taking only that which was essential, he translated the work in only one hundred volumes.

As for the three treatises, the Cha-ron primarily demolishes the Hinayāna, while at the same time demolishing the teachings of the non-Buddhists, and in this way it presents the teachings of the Mahāyāna. The Hyaku-ron primarily demolishes the non-Buddhists, and only secondarily demolishes all other (Buddhist) groups, and in this way it presents the teachings of the Mahāyāna. The Jani-mon ron demolishes both the Hinayāna and the non-Buddhists, and truly presents the profound teachings of the Mahāyāna. What is elucidated in these three treatises is none other than the two truths.

Now it is the major purport of this tradition that the two teachings, that of demolishing error (hajā) and of presenting the truth (kensho), serves as their rule. Although there are three treatises, there are only these two primary paths to their teaching. The demolishing of error on the one hand rescues sinking humanity, while on the other hand the presentation of the truth disseminates the Mahāyāna Buddhadharma. That which serves as a standard and as a model is only these two teachings, and these indeed make up this great tradition.

**Question:** What errors are destroyed in the demolition of error?

**Answer:** In sum, all clinging views are demolished. Elucidating these in summary form however, there are not more than four views.

First, this tradition demolishes the erroneous, non-Buddhist view of a substantial self (atman); second, it demolishes the Abhidharma’s clinging views of real, substantial existence; third, it destroys the one-sided views of emptiness of the Jōjitsu tradition; and fourth, it destroys the Mahāyāna views and opinions that there is anything to be grasped.

Both internal and external (= Buddhist and non-Buddhist) opinions are all demolished, and both the Mahāyāna and the Hinayāna are totally crushed. What is demolished is only that there is anything to be grasped. For this reason then there is nothing that is not demolished, and there is nothing that is not criticized. This is what is termed this tradition’s teaching that “demolishes error.”

**Question:** What truth is presented in this tradition’s presentation of the truth (kensho)?

**Answer:** There is no separate presentation of the truth outside of the demolition of error. When the demolition of error has been thoroughly
exhausted, then there is nothing that can be grasped. If there is nothing that can be grasped, speech and rational thought have nothing in which they can lodge.

However, it is only in opposition to the demolition of error that there is also the presentation of the truth. If this one source (of enlightenment) is not comprehended, then discriminative thoughts have not been extinguished; if even a small fraction of the truth has not been exhausted, then the truth has not been presented. If there is nothing in the source that has not been comprehended, then vain discussion is exhausted therein. If there is no truth that has not been exhausted, then the most profound way is understood. If, however, we are to rely upon words in discussing this truth, then there is nothing that will not be elucidated.

**Question:** If this is the case, what does it mean to say “present the truth?”

**Answer:** The ultimate truth is profound and ultimate, and words cannot touch it. If we say that it is existence, then we devolve into stupidity. If we say that it is non-existence, then such is not wisdom.

Subhuti was scolded and Śāriputra was criticized (for holding such views). It is neither existence nor non-existence; it is not existence and non-existence together; and it is not non-existence nor non-existence. Words and speech are cut off, and thoughts and ideas are all extinguished. Profound, there is nowhere wherein thoughts may lodge; broad and vast, all supports are sundered. We do not know how we may verbalize it, but obliged to do so, we call it “presenting the truth.”

**Question:** If the mind and speech are both cut off, and if both existence and non-existence are abandoned, then this is the teaching of emptiness. What relationship does this have with the presentation of the truth?

**Answer:** Since both existence and non-existence have been abandoned, how can one abide in emptiness? The nature of the way of the Buddhas lies truly in that there is nowhere wherein one can lodge (the mind, and discriminative thinking). Since both existence and non-existence have been sundered, there is nothing that can be grasped. The purport of presenting the truth is exhausted in this.

**Question:** Both existence and non-existence have been abandoned. Now if this is the case, how can all of the various dharmas which arise through conditions be posited as existing?

**Answer:** All of the various dharmas which arise through conditions are only provisionally existent. Being provisionally existent, they are nothing that can be grasped. It is on the basis of this that the two truths are posited, and the four middles are posited with reference to this. Because of conventional truth, the limits of (real) existence are not touched, and the existence of all of the dharmas is established. Because of absolute truth, provisional names are not destroyed, and yet the true aspect (of things) is explained.
Thus emptiness, just as it is, is existence; and existence, just as it is, is emptiness. The meaning of the statement, that “Rupa is identical to emptiness, and emptiness is identical to rupa” lies in this.

The two truths are merely the words of the teaching, and do not concern the realm of truth. But because (the teaching) is couched in conditioned things, there are the two truths. Because there is the substance of truth, the two truths are submerged.

Existence is the existence of emptiness. Although we speak of existence, it is not existence. Emptiness is the emptiness of existence. Although we speak of emptiness, it is not emptiness. Because it does not equal existence, we speak of emptiness as being identical to existence. Because it does not equal emptiness, we speak of existence as being identical to emptiness. All the Dharmaas preached by all of the Buddhas depend always on these two truths. This is the meaning of them.

What this tradition presents is none other than the true insight into the fact that there is nothing that can be grasped. Thus did a person of ancient times say, “The wind of the marvellous truth of the eight negations sweeps away the dust of deluded thoughts and vain discussions. The moon of true insight that there is nothing to be grasped floats on the surface of the water of the One, True Middle Way.” Because there is nothing to be grasped, all of the dharmaas of provisional names abound just as they are. All this may be known on the basis of the above.

Question: What does this tradition say with respect to the resultant state of Buddhahood?

Answer: All sentient beings are basically and originally Buddhas. All sentient beings in the six realms of rebirth are basically quiescent and extinguished. There is no delusion, and also there is no enlightenment. How can one then speak of attaining or not attaining Buddhahood? Thus, this tradition teaches that both delusion and enlightenment are basically non-existent, that both are clear and transparent, quiescent and extinguished. However, within the teaching of provisional names, delusion and enlightenment, and the attainment and the non-attainment of Buddhahood, are discussed.

Based on this teaching then, there is both the slow and the speedy attainment of Buddhahood, depending on whether the human faculty in question is sharp or dull. The attainment of Buddhahood in one moment of thought is the short (attainment of Buddhahood), and the attainment of Buddhahood that takes some three asamkhyeya kalpas is the long (period of attainment).

However, this one moment of thought does not obstruct the three asamkhyeya kalpas, and the three asamkhyeya kalpas do not hinder (the attainment) in one moment of thought. The one moment of thought is identical to the period of three asamkhyeya kalpas, and the three asamkhyeya kalpas are identical to the one moment of thought. This is
likened to one night's sleep wherein one dreams of one hundred years' events, and the events of some one hundred years devolve into this one night. Because some three asamkhyeya kalpas are traversed, the myriad number of practices are accumulated, and when they exist in one moment of thought, the attainment of Buddhahood is swift.

**Question:** How many stages are there in the accumulation (of the various practices) during the three asamkhyeya kalpas?

**Answer:** During the three asamkhyeya kalpas the Bodhisattva traverses some fifty-one stages, and only then does he arrive at Buddhahood. Thus, this tradition posits some fifty-two stages (leading to, and including Buddhahood).

The teaching of this tradition is that the nature of enlightenment is basically existence. But because there is delusion, there is the round of birth-and-death. When one turns his back on delusion, he returns to his source. When one merely sweeps away the accumulated dust of the defilements, one's basically enlightened nature will reveal itself just as it always has been. This is termed the initially enlightened Buddha. Know then that this enlightenment is posited only in opposition to delusion, and that it is by opposition to enlightenment that there is delusion. When enlightenment is generated then there is no delusion, and when there is no delusion, how can there be enlightenment? There is neither delusion nor enlightenment. Both delusion and enlightenment are originally non-existent, and both are basically and essentially quiescent and extinguished. Delusion and enlightenment, defilement and purity are temporarily established, provisional names. True insight into the non-existence of anything to be grasped is what marvelously comprehends the Path of the Ultimate.

**Question:** What are the eight negations?

**Answer:** They are: no arising, no extinction; no annihilation, no eternity; no similarity, no differentiation; no going (= no past) and no coming (= no future). These eight negations are taught in order to abandon the eight delusions. This is the truth revealed by this tradition.

This tradition has four types of analysis in their elucidation of all of the dharmas. First is the analysis based on a thing's name; second is the analysis based on the causes and conditions that generate a thing; third is the analysis based on meditation practice; and fourth is the unstructured analysis. All of the various teachings may be analyzed on the basis of these.

This tradition also sets up four levels of the two truths. First, existence is conventional truth, and emptiness is the absolute truth. Second, both existence and emptiness constitute conventional truth, and neither emptiness nor existence is the absolute truth. Third, emptiness and existence, and neither emptiness nor existence constitute conventional truth, and neither non-existence nor non-emptiness is the abso-
lute truth. Fourth, all of the former constitutes conventional truth, and
neither not-non-existence nor not-non-emptiness is the absolute truth.
This does nothing other than demolish (the philosophical positions)
of the non-Buddhists, of the Abhidharma, and of the Mahayana which still
holds that there is something to be grasped.
Question: How many teachings does this tradition posit to include all of
the various teachings?
Answer: It posits two pitakas and three turnings of the dharmacakra, in
order to embrace all of the teachings taught in the whole lifetime of the
Tathagata. The two pitakas are: first, the sravaaka pitaka: this is the
Hinayana teachings; second, the bodhisattva pitaka: this is the Mahayana
teachings. All the teachings of both the Mahayana and the Hinayana are
totally included within this. This is based on the Daichido-ron.

The three turnings of the dharmacakra are the following:
First is the fundamental dharmacakra. This is the Kegon teachings.
Second is the secondary dharmacakra. This is all of the teachings from
the time of the Agamas up to, but not including, the Lotus Sutra. Third
is the dharmacakra that includes the secondary, and reverts to the
fundamental teaching. This is the Lotus Sutra. All of the various
teachings given by the Tathagata during his one lifetime of preaching
are totally included within this. This is based on the Lotus Sutra.

Both the Mahayana and the Hinayana are one and the same in
their presentation of the truth, but they differ in accord with various
types of human faculties. The various Mahayana scriptures are one in
their presentation of the Truth, but they differ with respect to various
conditions. But in the evaluation of the various Mahayana scriptures,
each (scripture) sets up some three aspects—equality, superiority, and
inferiority—and it is by this that all of the various teachings are judged.
In this way then there are not any one-sided opinions.

The Tripitaka Master Kumara-ji arrived in China during the
era of the Yao-ch'in Dynasty. Here he translated a large number of
scriptures and commentaries, and he exclusively transmitted this tradi-
tion. All of the four treatises were translated by the Master Kumara-ji.
The beauty of their translation has received praise from ancient times up
to the present. Kumara-ji was esteemed in all three countries—India,
Kucha, and China—for the talent of his profound wisdom, and he was
surrounded by disciples and students, as the myriad stars surround the
full moon. Members of the nobility revered and honored him, and in this
they resembled the various rivers which merge into a great sea.

His disciples Tao-sheng, Seng-chao, Tao-jung, and Seng-ying
worked shoulder to shoulder and transmitted these teachings, and his
disciples Tan-ying, Hui-kuan, Tao-heng and Tan-chi were praised for
their unity of will. The Master Tan-chi succeeded his teacher and widely
disseminated these teachings, eventually transmitting them to the
Master Tao-lang. Tao-lang transmitted them to the Master Seng-chüan, and Seng-chüan transmitted them to the Master Fa-lang. Fa-lang transmitted them to Chi-tsang, the Great Chia-hsiang Master (= the Master of the Chia-hsiang ssu monastery). The Great Chia-hsiang Master, Chi-tsang, was originally a native of a barbarian country. In his youth he accompanied his father to China, and it was here that he studied the San-lun (= Sanron) teachings under the guidance of the Master Fa-lang. Chi-tsang is truly the model and leader of these teachings, and he far surpassed those of both past and present ages. Imposing in his awesome qualities, he manifested majesty as does the elephant, the king of beasts. In wisdom and eloquence he was so illustrious as to steal away the brightness of the sun and the moon. His literary compositions were many and profuse, and he brought forth many volumes of texts. The three treatises and the Lotus Sūtra were his major concern, but he thoroughly comprehended the profundities of both the Mahāyāna and the Hinayāna. The greatly flourishing state of the San-lun is exclusively due to this master. Thus, among all of the various masters of this tradition, he is especially designated as the Great Master. In his understanding and in his explanations he exhausted the truth. There is no one like unto him. Eventually he transmitted the San-lun teachings to the sojō rank monk Hui-kuan of Kōryō.

Hui-kuan came to Japan and widely disseminated this tradition. Hui-kuan transmitted this teaching to the sojō rank monk, Fu-liang. Fu-liang transmitted the teachings to the sojō rank monk Chih-tsang. Chih-tsang transmitted them to the Vinaya Master Dōji, and to the Dharma Master Raikō. Dōji transmitted the teachings to the Venerable Zengi. Zengi transmitted them to the sojō rank monk, Gonsō, and Gonsō transmitted the teachings to the Venerable Anchō.

Thus, there has been a transmission from master to master up to the present time, without any interruption. Eminent masters arose and one after another they widely disseminated these great truths. It is clear that the transmission of this tradition has not died out in any one of the three countries. Thus did the Tripitaka Master I-ching say, "In India there are two (Mahāyāna) traditions, the Yogacāra and the Madhyāmaka..."

Its teachings and its truths are very deep: what tradition can come up to this one? The monk Dōsen of Mt. Fuki has said, "The waters of all four rivers flow equally out of Lake Anavatapta. The seven traditions have split off one from the other, but in turn they all come from out of the Sanron."

Know then that all of the various Buddhist traditions are subsidiaries of the Sanron, and that the Sanron is the basis of all of the traditions. How can there be a tradition that does not enter into the mind of Nagarjuna, for all traditions esteem him as their Great Master!
**Question:** Why is this called the Tendai (= Tien-t'ai) tradition?

**Answer:** Because this tradition arose from out of that mountain, it takes its name from the mountain (= Tien-t'ai shan).

**Question:** What teachings form the basis for this tradition.

**Answer:** The *Hokke-kyō* (= the Lotus Sūtra) constitutes its fundamental scriptural authority, and this text is used in evaluating all of the teachings proclaimed during the lifetime of teaching of the Tathāgata. However, in the outline of its doctrinal classification, all of the various teachings are utilized. As the Dharma Master Yin-jen (= Ching-hsi Chan-jan) says in his *I-Li*, "As for the teachings of this tradition, and the teachings that it utilizes, the *Hokke-kyō* are the bones (= the underpinnings) of this tradition, the *Daichi doron* serves as its guide, the *Dai-kyō* (= the *Daihatsu Nehangyō*, the Mahāyāna Parinirvāna Sūtra) serves as the support for its teachings, and the *Daibon-hannya-kyō* serves for its teaching of meditation.

“All of the various scriptures are quoted in order to increase one’s faith, and all of the various commentaries are quoted in order to aid one’s attainment. Meditative insight is the warp and all of the dharmas are the woof, and by this all of the various texts are woven together, unlike any other tradition within Buddhism.”

**Question:** Who does this tradition regard as its patriarchal masters?

**Answer:** The chief master of this tradition is Chih-che (= Chih-i), the Great Master of Mt. Tien-t’ai. Nevertheless, the Dhyāna Master Hui-wen, on the basis of the *Daichi do ron*, posits the three insights into the one mind, and transmitted his teachings to the Dhyāna Master Hui-ssu, of Mt. Nan-yüeh. The Dhyāna Master Hui-ssu had heard the *Lotus Sūtra* when it was preached on Mt. Grdhraḵuṭā, and at this time he remembered it. When he cultivated the *Lotus samādhi* he attained the rank of the purification of the six sense organs. He marvelously understood the phrase in the *Daichi do ron*, “The three wisdoms are attained in one mind . . .”, and the *gāthā* of the three truths from out of the *Chu-ron*. He most profoundly generated both *samādhi* and *prajñā*, he attained *siddhi* in his *samādhis*, and he attained perfection and illumination in both insight and understanding. He eventually transmitted this teaching to Chih-che, the Great Master of Mt. Tien-t’ai.

The Great Master Chih-che was also on Mt. Grdhraḵuṭā in the past, and he too heard the (preaching of the) *Lotus Sūtra*. When he met the Great Master of Mt. Nan-yüeh, Hui-ssu, he marvelously remembered this event. Cultivating the *Lotus samādhi*, Chih-che attained the stage of the Five Grades (of spiritual attainment, the stage of identity through the cultivation of insight meditation). Chih-che established this one sectarian tradition. In his person he fully possessed the ten qualities.
Hui-wen and the Master of Mt. Nan-yueh, Hui-ssu, had merely raised up the outlines of this teaching, but when the succession reached the Great Master of Mt. T'ien-t'ai, it was he who most grandly set up the teachings of the various times, and it was he who fully evaluated the whole lifetime teachings of the Tathāgata. The flourishing state of this tradition is solely due to this patriarch.

Next, there was the Great Master Chang-an (= Kuan-ting), who succeeded upon the Great Master of Mt. Tien-t'ai, and he widely disseminated this tradition. Chih-che had merely spoken in an unsystematic manner, and it was Chang-an who collected all the works of Chih-che together and formed from them the writings of this one tradition, creating the outline of this tradition's teachings.

Next, there was the Great Master Chih-wei, who received the teachings from the Great Master Chang-an, and he widely transmitted this tradition. Chih-wei handed down these teachings to the Great Master Hui-wei, and Hui-wei handed down these teachings to the Great Master Hsüan-lang. Hsüan-lang handed down these teachings to the Great Master Miao-lo (= Chan-jan). The Great Master Miao-lo wrote commentaries upon the writings of the Master Chih-che, and in addition, he composed many essays and writings. Chan-jan composed, in this order, the *Fu-hsing*, the *Shih-ch'ien*, and the *Shu-chi* to the *Chih-kuan*, the *Hsüan-i*, and the *Wen-chü* of Chih-che. None of the writings of any other tradition can match those of this Master.

There are none of other writings of the Patriarchal Master (= Chih-che) upon which Chan-jan did not comment. For this reason then his writings have been especially relied upon from past times up to the present, and in all places they are revered as authoritative. He most marvelously grasped the purport of Chih-che's teachings, for only the writings of Chan-jan truly ally with the teachings of this Great tradition.

The Dharma Master I-t'ung, the Dharma Master Chih-li, the Dharma Master Ching-ch'üeh, and others, were all successors to Chan-jan. The Great Master Miao-lo (= Chan-jan) handed down the teaching to the Upadhyāya Tao-sui. He was the spiritual center of the teachings. The masters Hsing-man, Tao-hsien, as well as Chih-tu, and others, all received the teaching from Chan-jan. They joined their shoulders together and taught others, and they were all like dragons and elephants, the kings of beasts.

Now then, the Great Master Dengyō (= Saicho) of Japan went to the China of the Great Tang Dynasty, where he met the Upadhyāya Tao-sui. This tradition was fully transmitted to him, as water is poured into a vessel, with not a drop being spilled. When the transmission was completely finished, Saicho returned to Japan, and widely disseminated these teachings on Mt. Hiei.

Saicho was succeeded by the Upadhyāya Gishin, the Great
Master Jikaku (= Ennin), and the Great Master Chishō (= Enchin). In this way patriarchal masters, worthies of former ages, succeeded one after the other, transmitting the teachings in a continuous stream, without interruption, up to the present time.

Throughout the land of Japan there was not one place where these teachings were not disseminated. In all of the various provinces and districts these teachings were handed down and were widely studied. Although we are now in mappō, there is none that surpasses this tradition in the allegiance of mankind. How noble it is! How great it is!

Question: This tradition sets up how many chronological periods of the teaching in its evaluation of the whole lifetime of the teaching of the Tathāgata? Also, what teachings does it elucidate?

Answer: The major purport of this tradition is two-fold: the teaching itself, and the practice of insight meditation.

With respect to the teaching, the understanding of its principles nurtures the spirit, because the path of the Buddha is perfectly revealed therein. As for the practice of insight meditation, when one advances in the practice of this insight meditation, a state of awakened enlightenment is marvelously generated.

The teachings are: the four teachings, the five tastes, the ekayāna, and the ten aspects of the absolute.

Insight meditation is (insight into): the twelve links of dependent origination, the two truths, the four types of samādhi, the three delusions, etc.

In its evaluation of the whole lifetime teachings of the Tathāgata, there are some four teachings with respect to the teachings, and some five times with respect to the chronological period (during which these four teachings were given).

The four teachings are of two types. First, there are the four teachings of the conversion dharmas (= four teachings of doctrinal content). These are the major outlines which explain the teachings. Second, there are the four teachings of methods of teachings. These are the major outlines for the evaluation of the teachings. These two types of four teachings together make up the eight teachings.

Question: What are the four teachings of the conversion dharmas?

Answer: First, there are the trimśāka teachings. All of the Hinayāna teachings are included within this teaching. Second, there are the common teachings. All of the teachings of the various Mahāyāna scriptures which are directed to beings of the triyāna (= śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas) are included within the scope of this teaching. Third, there are the separate teachings. All of the teachings of the various Mahāyāna scriptures which have nothing in common with the Hinayāna (i.e., with the śrāvakas), but which are exclusively for the bodhisattvas, are included within this teaching. Fourth, there are
the perfect teachings. All of the teachings of the various Mahāyāna scriptures which teach the unhindered teachings of perfect interpenetration and mutual identity of the tangible characteristics of objects are included within this teaching.

The first are the tripitaka teachings; within the Hinayāna teachings the various sectarian groups have divided into many streams. However, there are only four of these groups which are essential. The first is the Hinayāna teaching of existence. This is the Abhidharma. The second is the Hinayāna teaching of Emptiness. This is the Jojitsu-ron. The third is the Hinayāna teaching of both existence and emptiness. This is the Biroku-ron. The fourth is the Hinayāna teaching of neither existence nor emptiness. This is the Kasen-kyō. The Biroku-ron and the Kasen-kyō have not yet been transmitted into China.

Explaining these teachings (= the tripitaka teachings) then from the point of view of the Abhidharma's teaching of existence, this teaching teaches the tangible characteristics (= the reality) of the cultivation of the practice and the attainment of the fruit of each of the triyāna. First, the vehicle of the śrāvakas has the seven stages of the wise and seven stages of the holy.

The seven stages of the wise are: first, the five types of settled minds; second, concentration on one specific characteristic; third, general concentration on all characteristics. These three are the stages of external common persons, stages in accordance with their degree of liberation. Fourth is the dharma of warmth. Fifth is the supreme dharma. Sixth is the dharma of patience. Seventh is the highest worldly dharma. These four are the stages of internal common persons, stages in accord with their degree of attainment of discriminative wisdom.

The seven stages of the holy are: first, practice based on faith; second, practice based on the Dharma; third, understanding based on faith (= adhiṃokṣa); fourth, attainment of insight; fifth, the bodily attainment of awakening; sixth, occasional liberation; and seventh, non-occasional (= perpetual) liberation.

The first two of these seven are the path of views (= darśana-mārga). When one has dull faculties, this is called the practice based on faith; when one has sharp faculties, this is called the practice based on the Dharma. When a person with dull faculties enters on to the path of cultivation (bhāvāna-mārga), he is termed one who has understanding based on faith; when a person with sharp faculties enters on to the path of cultivation, he is termed one who has the attainment of insight. These two persons—the one who has understanding based on faith and the one who has the attainment of insight—attain the absorption of extinction (niruddha-samāpatti). They are also called ones who have the bodily attainment of awakening. When a person with dull faculties attains the
fruit of Arhatship, he is termed one who has attained occasional liberation. When a person with sharp faculties attains the fruit of Arhatship, he is termed one who has attained non-occasional liberation. Although this teaching has these seven stages of the holy, this is only the attainment of the four types of the fruit of Arhatship. At its swiftest, this attainment of awakening takes some three lifetimes, and at its slowest, some sixty kalpas.

The vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas is two-fold. First is the pratyekabuddha who cultivates his religious practices together with a group, and second is the pratyekabuddha who is likened to a unicorn’s horn (= totally alone). He who cultivates his religious practice together with a group does so by arising in a period when a Buddha is in the world, in a period when the various sectarian groups are numerous. The pratyekabuddha who is likened to a unicorn’s horn is totally alone, for he does not know a Buddha’s appearance in the world. At its swiftest, the attainment of this fruit takes some four lifetimes, and at its slowest, one hundred kalpas.

The bodhisattva traverses some three asamkhya kalpas. He also traverses some one hundred kalpas, and only then does he attain to Buddhahood under the Bodhi Tree.

All of these beings of the triyana cut off the delusions of both views and of intellectualization. But what these beings of the triyana meditate on differs for each of them. The śrāvakas meditate on the four noble truths. The pratyekabuddhas meditate on the twelve links of dependent origination. And the bodhisattvas cultivate the six paramitas. When these beings of the triyana attain to their fruits, they all of them enter into nirvāṇa-without-residue (anupadiṣeṣa-nirvāṇa) wherein their bodies are reduced to ashes, and their intellects extinguished.

This teaching elucidates the dharma of birth and death, the four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, the six paramitas, the two truths, etc. This is a phenomenal teaching within the Three dhātus.

Second are the separate teachings. There are some four teachings within this. Much of this teaching elucidates the teachings of Emptiness. This teaching elucidates Ten bhūmis held in common by all the beings in the triyana. These ten bhūmis are: first, the bhūmi of dry wisdom: this is the external, common stage; second, the bhūmi of inner wisdom: this is the internal, common stage; third, the bhūmi of the eight types of persons; fourth, the bhūmi of insight: these cut off the delusions of views within the three dhātus: this is the first fruit (of śrotāpanna); fifth, the shallow bhūmi: this is the fruit of sakṛdāgāmin; sixth, the bhūmi separated from desires: this is the fruit of anāgamya; seventh, the bhūmi wherein one has accomplished that which one should have accomplished: this is the fruit of arhatship. The śrāvakas, from the
beginning of their cultivation, arrive at this stage and enter into nirvāṇa-without-residue, wherein their bodies are reduced to ashes and wherein their intellects are extinguished.

Eighth is the bhūmi of the pratyekabuddha: the influences (of the defilements, the vasanas) are cast aside and one enters into the insight meditation of emptiness. The pratyekabuddha attains this stage and, being awakened to this fruit, enters into quiescence.

Ninth is the bhūmi of the bodhisattva: this is the stage wherein one (definitively) departs from provisional existence. When the bodhisattva attains this stage he goes somewhat beyond the kalpas as numerous as particles of dust. Departing from provisional existence, he yet benefits all living beings. Both the path and its insight are outflowing in him. Tenth is the bhūmi of the Buddha. In his last body, the Bodhisattva cuts off all of the remaining influences (of the defilements), and with the garments of the devas going to make up his seat, he attains Buddhahood under a seven-jewelled tree, and he eventually enters into quiescence.

This teaching elucidates the dharmas of the unarisen four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, the two truths, etc. This is a teaching of principle within the three dhātus.

Third there are the separate teachings. There are also some four teachings within this. Much of this teaching employs the teaching of both existence and emptiness. This teaching elucidates some fifty-two stages.

First there are the ten stages of faith. This is the external, common stage. From the provisional one enters into emptiness. Second there are the ten abodes. This is the stage in which one cultivates his tendencies. In the first abode one cuts off the delusions of views of the three dhātus. In the next six abodes one cuts off the delusions of cultivation of the three dhātus. And in the last three Abodes one eliminates the influences from the above delusions as well as minute delusions. In this stage one perfects (= attains siddhi in) emptiness insight, and in addition, he cultivates the provisional and the middle. Third are the ten practices. This is the stage in which one cultivates one's nature. One primarily cultivates insight meditation into the middle, and one destroys minute delusions. Fourth are the ten transfers of merit. This is the stage of the cultivation of the path. One cultivates insight meditation into the middle path, and one puts down ignorance. These stages of the ten abodes, the ten practices, and the ten transfers of merit are internal, common stages.

Fifth are the ten bhūmis. This is the stage of the cultivation of holiness. Sixth is the stage almost equal to enlightenment. In both of these two stages one destroys ignorance, and one is partially awakened to the middle path. These are called the stages of partial holiness. Seventh is the stage of marvellous enlightenment. This is the stage of
extreme holiness. One destroys Ignorance, and is awakened to the fruit of Buddhahood. In this stage some seven jewels constitute one's seat, and in this manner one attains Buddhahood.

This teaching elucidates countless four noble truths, twelve links of dependent origination, etc. This is a provisional teaching outside of the three dhātus.

In its elucidation of the hindrances, this tradition sets up in sum some three delusions. First, there are the delusions of views and of intellectualization. Second, there are the delusions which are minute delusions. Third, there is the delusion of ignorance. The delusions of views and of intellectualization are delusions within the three dhātus. Thus they are cut off by those beings within the triyāna teachings of the tripitaka teachings and of the common teachings. Minute delusions, and the delusion of ignorance, are delusions which are outside of the three dhātus. Thus they are cut off by those beings within the separate teachings and the perfect teachings. Each one of the fifty-two stages puts down and cuts off these three delusions. Such is also the case for the stages of the six identities within the perfect teachings.

Fourth, there is the perfect teaching. There are also some four teachings within this. Much of this teaching is with reference to the teaching of neither existence nor emptiness.

This teaching posits the stages of the six identities. First is the stage of identity in principle. In any one moment of thought of all sentient beings there is the truth of tathāgatagarbha. This mind then fully possesses the marvellous principles of the three truths, and is inconceivable. This is termed identity in principle. Second is the stage of identity in name. One hears of the above mentioned one, true bodhi, and one penetrates it and understands it with respect to its name. One knows that all of the various dharmas are the Buddhadharma. This is called identity in name. Third is the stage of identity through the cultivation of insight meditation. This is the stage of the five grades. The ten thoughts are fully possessed, and there is insight meditation into the attainment-vehicle of the ten dharmas.

One recites scriptural texts, and, in addition to this, one preaches the dharma. One cultivates the six pāramitās as a subsidiary practice, and then one cultivates the six pāramitās as a primary practice. Because these (five) practices are cultivated, this is termed the stage of the five grades. This is the external, common stage. Fourth is the stage of identity in appearance. This is the stage of the purification of the six sense organs, the ten stages of faith, likened to an iron cakra. In the first stage of faith one cuts off the delusions of views within the three dhātus. In the next six stages of faith one cuts off the delusions of intellectualization within the Three dhātus, and in the last three stages, one cuts off any remaining influences (of the defilements) and the minute defilements
outside of the three dhātus. One puts down (= but does not definitively cut off) the delusion of ignorance. This is the internal, common stage. Fifth is the stage of partial identity with the truth. These are the stages of the ten abodes, the ten practices, the ten transfers of merit, the ten bhūmis, and the stage almost equal to enlightenment. In each one of these forty-one stages one cuts off one grade of ignorance, and in each one of these stages there is revealed one part of the truth of the middle path. Also (at the end of these stages) one attains Buddhahood complete with the eight marks, and saves all beings. One manifests himself universally (= in many different forms) and so benefits persons with their different capacities and faculties. This is termed the stage of partial holiness. Sixth is the stage of ultimate identity. From the stage almost equal to enlightenment, one undergoes just one change and enters into the stage of marvellous enlightenment. The fruit of Buddhahood is perfect, and both the cutting off (of the defilements) and the awakening (to enlightenment) are carried to their ultimate limits. This teaching elucidates the uncreated four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, etc.

Question: Of the three bodies (=modes of manifestation) of the Buddha, what are the fruits of Buddhahood as discussed in these Four teachings? Answer. The tripiṭaka teachings and the common teachings are of the nirmanakāya. Of them, the tripiṭaka teachings are of an inferior nirmanakāya, and the common teachings are of a superior nirmanakāya. The separate teachings are of a body experienced for the benefit of others (= an aspect of the sambhogakāya). The perfect teaching is of a body experienced for the benefit of itself. In this body both the principle (= the Truth) and its wisdom are fused together; unobstructed in its interpenetration, the Three Bodies are one tathāgata.

Question: In what lands do the Buddhas of these Four teachings dwell? Answer. This tradition posits some four types of pure lands. First there is the land where (saints and non-saints) dwell together. Here ordinary persons and saints live, mixed together. The inferior nirmanakāya Buddha as taught in the Tripiṭaka teachings dwells in the midst of this land. This land is two-fold; first, there is the defiled land where (saints and non-saints) dwell together, as in the case of (this) Saha world, etc.; second, there is the pure land where (saints and non-saints) dwell together, as in the case of Sukhāvatī, etc. Second is the expedient land, wherein one still possesses the delusions. This lies outside of the three dhātus. Only those persons of the triyāna, who have separated from bodies in the three dhātus, dwell in this pure land. The superior nirmanakāya Buddha, as taught in the common teachings, dwells in this land. Third is the land of true recompense. Bodhisattvas who have cut off the delusions of ignorance and who have revealed the truth of the middle path—bodhisattvas of the ten bhūmis of the separate teachings,
and of the ten abodes of the perfect teachings, or higher—dwell in this land. If we speak with reference to the Buddha as its teacher, then this is the Buddha the body of which is experienced for the benefit of others, as elucidated in the separate teachings. Fourth is the land of stillness and light. Only the true body of the Buddha dwells in this land. This land is apart from capacities and faculties, for it is the Buddha realm of the Buddhas. This is the dwelling place of the dharmakāya, which possesses the paramitās of the four qualities, which are: all permeating, quiescent and all-illuminating, the mystical union of principle and its wisdom. The Buddhas of the four teachings dwell, in this order, in these four lands.

It is by means of these four teachings that the various teachings, both Mahāyāna and Hinayāna of the one lifetime teaching of the tathāgata are evaluated. There is not one of them that is not totally comprehended. The Four teachings of the converting dharmas are, in outline, like this.

Next, there are the four teachings of the methods of conversion. First there is the sudden teaching, as in the case of the Kegon-gyō. Second, there is the gradual teaching, as in the case of the chronological periods of the Agon (= the Agamas), the Hodo (= the Vaipulya, or miscellaneous Mahāyāna) texts, and the Hannya (= the Prajñāparamita) texts. Third, there is the indeterminate teaching. In this case the hearers’ individual capacity and their understanding differ one from the other: although they listen to one and the same sermon, they hear it differently. Although they may hear the Hinayāna, they understand it to be Mahāyāna. However, their knowing one another’s (presence, capabilities, and sermons that they have heard) is the indeterminate teaching. Fourth there are the esoteric teachings. On one occasion of preaching, the Tathāgata preaches differently in accord with individual capacities. Sometimes when preaching a Hinayāna sermon, he may speak of the one, true dharma. Sometimes when preaching a Mahāyāna sermon, he may yet speak of other dharmas. Nevertheless, his hearers do not know of one another’s (presence, capabilities, or understanding), and so this is called the esoteric teachings. All these are called the four teachings of the methods of conversion.

Know then that the teachings of these methods of conversion do not differ from the teachings of the converting dharmas, and the method of the teachings of the converting dharmas do not go beyond these methods of conversion. Thus, this tradition posits the eight teachings to serve as an evaluation and as an understanding. These then are the items of this broad outline of the teachings.

The five chronological periods are: the Kegon-gyō, the Agon-gyō, the Hodo-kyō, the Hannya-kyō, and the Hokke-kyō and the Nehan-gyō. The sequence of the presentation of the methods of conversion, and of the one lifetime of teaching of the Tathāgata, do not go beyond these five.
They are also termed the five tastes.

This tradition teaches some one thousand aspects of thusness (tathāta) in one hundred realms, and some three thousand aspects of existence: these are all perfectly and rapidly contained within one moment of thought, but neither temporally nor spatially so.

This tradition has a seven-fold teaching of the two truths. The four types of samādhi constitute its method of religious cultivation. The three insights are fully and perfectly contained within one thought, and it has the free mastery of the mutual identity of all tangible characteristics, unobstructed and perfectly interpenetrating. One sees the Buddha as identical with ordinary beings, and ordinary beings are revealed as identical to the Buddha. If the three thousand (aspects of existence) are only in the realm of truth, they will likewise be called ignorance. If the fruit of these three thousand is realized, then they are likewise termed eternal and bliss. Now the marvellous purport of the Hokke-kyō truly lies in this.

Among the various teachings, this teaching is the most outstanding. Among the various traditions, this is the deepest and most profound. The most exceedingly perfect, which transcends the eight (types of teachings), its purport is profound and majestic. Its speedy attainment of the great fruit (= Buddahood) is also marvellous!

The Kegon tradition.

Question: Why is this tradition termed the Kegon tradition?
Answer: It is so called because the Kegon-kyō (the Avatamsaka Sūtra) constitutes its authoritative text.

Question: How many different types of scriptures are there in the Kegon-kyō corpus?
Answer: Speaking in detail, we would say that there are some ten different types (of scripture). However, speaking of the most essential scriptures, we would say that there are only three (essential) texts.

First is the most expanded form of the Kegon scripture. This work is made up of gathās equal in number to the number of dust particles found in ten three-thousand great thousand universes, and of chapters equal in number to the number of dust particles found in all four world systems. Second is the Kegon scripture of medium length. This work is made up of 498,800 gathās, and is in 1,200 chapters. These two texts are kept within the palace of the nagas, and have not been transmitted to Jambudvīpa. Third is the shortest form of the Kegon scripture. This work is made up of 100,000 gathās, and is in thirty-eight chapters. This work has been transmitted to Jambudvīpa, and has been widely propagated throughout all of India. These are termed the three texts of the Kegon scripture.
The shortest form of the Kegon scripture, in 100,000 gāthās, has been transmitted into China, and has been translated some three times: in the Eastern Chin Dynasty, the Tripitaka Master Buddhaghosa translated this work, which comprises sixty volumes. The Sanskrit text that he had was 36,000 gāthās in length. Next, in the Great Tang Dynasty the Tripitaka Master Śikṣananda translated this work, which comprises eighty volumes. The Sanskrit text that he had was 45,000 gāthās in length. Lastly, in the Great Tang Dynasty the Tripitaka Master Prajñā translated this work during the Chen-yuan period (785-805), and this comprises forty volumes. However, this is merely a translation of one of the chapters, that of "Entering into the Dharma-dhātu" (= Ganda-vyūha).

**Question:** Who does this tradition regard as its Great Master?

**Answer:** The Great Teacher Hsiang-hsiang (= Fa-tsang) is regarded as its Great Master. However, speaking in greater detail, this tradition sets up the seven masters. The first is the Bodhisattva Aśvaghosa. The second is the Bodhisattva Nāgarjuna. The third is the first Chinese master, the Meditation Master Tu-shun. He was a manifestation of the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Tu-shun resided on Mt. Chung-nan, and here he composed the Hua-yen Fa-chiēh kuan, the Wu-chiao Chih-kuan, the Shihsuan chang, etc. He widely propagated this tradition, and he was awarded the posthumous title of Ti-hsin tsun-che ("The Venerable One, the Mind of the Emperor").

The fourth master is the Meditation Master Chih-yen. He received the teachings from the Master Tu-shun, and he too widely propagated this tradition. He composed many literary works, and he resided in the Yun-hua ssu monastery. He was awarded the posthumous title Yun-hua tsun-che ("The Venerable One of the Yun-fa ssu monastery"). The fifth master, the Hsiang-hsiang Great Teacher (= Fa-tsang) received the teachings from the Meditation Master Chih-yen, and he widely diffused the Kegon. The whole court looked upon him as the National Teacher, and all within the four seas esteemed him as precious. When he would lecture on the scripture heavenly flowers fell down as rain, and when he would elucidate its principles five colored rays of light would shine out of his mouth. The usurping Empress Wu of the Great Tang Dynasty awarded him the posthumous title Hsien-shou P'u-sa ("Bodhisattva Chief of the Wise Ones"). Fa-tsang composed an exceedingly large number of explanatory commentaries on scriptures and on commentaries; he composed the basic commentary on the major scripture (of this tradition, that is, on the Kegon-gyō), separate essays on other scriptures, and "records of principles" on various commentaries. There was nothing that he omitted in his explanation of all of the principles of this tradition, and he narrated in full all of its principles. In all, the greatly flourishing state of the Kegon tradition is exclusively due
The sixth master, the Ch'ing-liang Great Teacher (= Ch'eng kuan) received the teachings from Fa-tsang, and he widely propagated the Ke-gon teachings. His wisdom and his understanding were deep and vast, and encompassed all of the traditions of Buddhism. However, this perfect tradition (= the Ke-gon) was his major concern. He composed the Yen-i-ch'aoon (Fa-tsang’s) Major Commentary, as well as various other essays and sub-commentaries. Their number are very many, and the whole court took refuge in this tradition, and he was regarded as a National Teacher. He was firm in his ten vows, and he was never lax his whole life long. He resided on Mt. Chung-nan Ch'ing-liang, and he was awarded the posthumous title Hua-yen P'u-sa (“The Bodhisattva of the Avatamsaka”).

The seventh master, the Meditation Master Tsung-mi, received the teachings from Ch'eng-kuan, and he widely propagated the Ke-gon, as well as being thoroughly versed in all of the various traditions of Buddhism. He composed many works. He resided in the Ts'ao-o-t'ang ssu monastery, on Mt. Kuei-feng, and he was awarded the posthumous title of Ting-hui Ch'an-shih (“The Samàdhi and Prajñà Meditation Master”). A list of these seven masters was compiled under Imperial auspices by the Dharma Master Ching-yuan.

In the case of China, there are only some five masters, starting with the Master Tu-shun. In Japan, some four masters have been especially revered and studied. These are the Masters Tu-shun, Chih-yen, Fa-tsang, and Ch'eng-kuan. The Vinaya Master Dōsen (Tao-hsüan) is regarded as the first master of this tradition in Japan. Dōsen received these teachings from Fa-tsang, and in turn he transmitted them to Roben-sojō. From that time onward, up to the present, there has been a continuous transmission of this tradition in an unbroken lineage from master to disciple. Question: How many traditions and teachings does this Ke-gon tradition posit in order to embrace the whole lifetime teaching of the Tathāgata? Answer: It sets up some five teachings and ten traditions in order to embrace the whole lifetime teaching of the Tathāgata. The five teachings are: first, the Hinayāna teaching; second, the initial teaching of the Mahāyāna; third, the final teaching of the Mahāyāna; fourth, the sudden teaching; and fifth, the perfect teaching.

First, there are the Hinayāna teachings. The purpose of the Tathāgata’s appearing in the world is to teach the one vehicle teaching, and to so convert living beings. Thus, under the Bodhi Tree, he taught the basic teaching of the one vehicle, in the manner that a high mountain is the first to receive the light (of the rising sun), and so by this obtains a great benefit. The sun (= the Buddha) first shone and so enlightened all beings of various capacities. Nevertheless, those beings of small (=
Hinayāna temperament could not bear to hear this profound dharma. So the Tathāgata distinguished some three vehicles within the one vehicle, and gradually induced those of shallow capacity, that they were caused to follow the great path (= the Mahāyāna). In this then the Hinayāna teachings are a teaching that are provisionally established, a temporary expedient of the Tathāgata. He temporarily gave to these beings sheep and deer (= the vehicles of the śrāvakas and of the pratyekabuddhas) in order to induce those of small temperament; he temporarily set up a magic city in order to give rest to those exhausted by their labors. For this reason then the principles elucidated in this teaching are in accord with those of shallow and superficial capacities, and the resultant, enlightened state to which these beings progress lies only within the scope of the narrow and the inferior. In this manner they are induced and embraced, and are caused to progress towards the Mahāyāna.

Question: What are the characteristics of the teachings elucidated within these scriptures (= the Hinayāna Canon)?

Answer: The teachings as taught are many and numberless. But to now only give one or two of them, we would say that there are some seventy-five aspects of the dharmas, and the marks of the conditioned and the unconditioned are clear and obvious. When they speak of the origins of the dharmas, they teach that these lie in the six consciousnessess and in the three poisons (= greed, anger, and ignorance), and in this the principles of defilement and of purity are clear and obvious. The four fruits of enlightenment are all of them merely an entering into total extinction, and the spiritual progress carried out for three asamkhyeya kalpas lies exclusively within the five-fold dharmakāya.

The banners of the non-Buddhists and of their perverse views are crushed like dust, and the numerous defilements of views and of thoughts, which lead to different types of rebirth within the three realms, vanish like the clouds. Nevertheless this teaching does not yet comprehend the origins of the dharmas, and so its contentions and disputes are very many, leading to the twenty sectarian groups. These are the marks of this teaching.

Next there is the initial teaching of the Mahayāna. This teaching has already left the Hinayāna and now for the first time enters into the Mahāyāna. Thus although it slightly resembles the Hinayāna teachings, it frequently speaks of the profound teaching of immediate penetration, of spiritual progress lasting for three asamkhyeya kalpas, and of attaining to the great result of total enlightenment. The manifest enlightenment of the two types of emptiness far transcends the natures of those who one-sidedly cling to the Hinayāna. The one hundred dharmas are as clear as a mirror, and they are clearly and definitively distinguished. For this reason then contention and discussion come to an end here, and all
is at peace in the garden of the Dharma. The four wisdoms and the different categories of the mind, and the self functioning (of the enlightened state) are as clear as the moon. The marvellous result is the three bodies, and cutting off and attainment are as perfect as light. In the establishment of the eight levels of consciousness, the marks of the dharmas are widely laid out, and the teachings of the two truths are ever more profound in their various layers. The two hindrances are put down and are cut off, and the various defilements melt away like ice. The cultivation of the six pāramitās, the carrying out of the benefiting of oneself and of others, and the depth of its marvelous principles are truly something not even glimpsed within the Hinayāna. The profundity of the Mahāyāna far transcends the provisional vehicles of the sheep and of the deer.

However, the absolute (of this teaching) is unknowing, and this teaching has not yet penetrated to the path of dependent arising. Phenomenal matter and principle are not seen as identical, and the gate of the mutual interfusion of external characteristics is not yet opened. Thus, this teaching divided individual capacities into some five natures, and it posits that some do attain the trans-worldly goal, while some do not. There are real differences between the two vehicles, and with respect to the resultant state of Buddhahood, it posits that there are some who will attain it, and that there are some who will not attain it. This then is the distinction between those who have the nature and those that do not have the nature (for Buddhahood), the difference between those who have set natures and those that do not have set natures. Thus this teaching holds that those without the natures do not depart from out of the round of birth and death, and those with set natures are never converted (to the Mahāyāna). This then is the purport of this teaching.

Even though this teaching may be an advance from the Mahāsāṃghikas and the Sthaviraśāṅkya, it does not yet discuss “arising from dependent origination” and the universal attainment (of Buddhahood). This is why this teaching is termed “the initial teaching of the Mahāyāna.”

Next there is the final teaching (of the Mahāyāna). In this teaching all of the various external characteristics are taught to mutually interpenetrate, and so one enters into the teaching of non-dual samādhi. The absolute arises in accord with dependent arising, and flourishes in the luxuriant dharma garden. The ocean-like Tathāgata store permeates the eight levels of consciousness, and these are like ice and water. It is taught that both those with natures and those without natures all attain to Buddhahood, and are thus like space. Dependent arising (paratantra) and those without nature are identical to the perfected state (parinirvāṇa); all of the defilements of living beings are identical to nirvāṇa.
The absolute level of the truth of emptiness embraces both the true and the deluded in perfect stillness. Arising, abiding, change, and extinction are ultimately far apart from the three times (= past, present, and future). The profound teachings of the Mahāyāna are all included within this teaching. This teaching exhausts the positings of the dharmas.

However, this teaching does not discuss the unhindered interpenetration of the various aspects of phenomenal things, and it does not elucidate the inter-relationship of subject and object. The teaching that dispenses (with conceptions and with words) is not set up, and this teaching sets up grades in the marks of one's spiritual progress. It is for these reasons then that this teaching is termed the gradual teaching.

Lastly, there is the perfect teaching. This teaching elucidates the unhindered interpenetration of all items of phenomenal existence, it comprehends the natures and the marks of all dharmas, it discusses the inexhaustible relationships of subject and object, and it reveals the perfection of the state of enlightenment. Thus, it propounds the ten types of profound dependent arising which interfuse with all of the various dharmas and is identical with (nature) and which penetrated (activity). The six characteristics perfectly interfuse, and permeate all marks without hindrance. The one is identical to the many, there being no difference between them, and the many are identical to the one in perfect interpenetration.

The nine time periods are embraced and enter into one kṣāṇa, and one moment of thought is unfolded and embraces many long kalpas. The attainment of enlightenment through three lifetimes reveals, rather, one's original attainment of Buddhahood. The path of the ten levels of faith is perfect, and is subsumed into the ocean-like state of enlightenment. The provisional establishment of the spiritual path fully traverses many kalpas, and the marvelous teaching of perfect interpenetration teaches the attainment to Buddhahood in this very body. The spiritual path does not hinder this perfect interpenetration, and this perfect interpenetration does not hinder the spiritual path. By this then one attains identity and interfusion with all tangible marks. This is the purport of this teaching.

Although the words of the teachings elucidated by the Tathāgata during his one lifetime of teaching may differ in their shallowness or profundity, they do not exceed these five (teachings). Truly this evaluates all of the dharmas, and omits none; it embraces all teachings and leaves none out.

Of these five teachings, the first one is Hinayāna, and the last one is the one vehicle (= ekayāna) teaching; the middle three are all teachings of the three vehicles. The initial teachings and the final teachings (of the Mahāyāna) are both gradual teachings, and together (with the above) they form the two, the gradual and the sudden,
teachings. The gradual teaching is divided into the initial and the final teachings, and so form three. These five taken together constitute one, great, expedient and skillful teaching.

This broad net of the *Dharma* embraces all divisions of the *dharmas*; it is the perfect teaching, which is complete in itself, because it embraces and exhausts all things within all of the four *dharma-adhatus*. In all there is nothing like this perfect teaching in all of the outstanding teachings of the one lifetime teaching of the *Tathāgata*, nor in all of the profundities of any of the various sectarian traditions. It is only this (perfect) teaching that comprehends all things. The *Kegon* is like Mt. Sumeru, and all of the other teachings are like the hills grouped around it. All teachings merge into the great sea which is the *Kegon*, and all of the three vehicles emerge from out of the vast garden which is this scripture. For this reason then this teaching is called, the basic, fundamental *dharma-cakra*, the teaching of exceedingly perfect sovereignty.

Next there are the ten traditions. This is a division of the above five teachings on the basis of the sectarian traditions (of Buddhism), and they do not exceed ten traditions. First, there is the tradition that affirms the existence of both the *atman* and the *dharmas*. Second, there is the tradition that affirms the existence of the *dharmas* but denies the existence of the *atman*. Third, there is the tradition which affirms that the *dharmas* do not have a past or a future existence. Fourth, there is the tradition that affirms that present *dharmas* have both a provisional existence and a real existence. Fifth, there is the tradition that affirms that the relative level of truth is false, and that the absolute level of truth is real. Sixth, there is the tradition that affirms that all of the *dharmas* are merely names. The above traditions are all elaborations of the *Hinayāna* teachings.

Seventh, there is the tradition that affirms that all of the *dharmas* are empty. This is the initial teaching (of the *Mahāyāna*). Eighth, there is the tradition that affirms that absolute qualities are not empty. This is the final teaching (of the *Mahāyāna*). Ninth, there is the tradition that discards both (external) marks and (internal) thoughts. This is the sudden teaching. Tenth, there is the tradition that perfectly explains innate qualities. This is the perfect teaching.

*Question:* What are the characteristics of the stages of spiritual cultivation within these Five teachings?

*Answer:* The delineation of the stages of spiritual cultivation, as taught in the *Hinayāna* teachings, are as given in the *Hinayāna* commentaries.

The initial teaching (of the *Mahāyāna*) also elucidates stages within the teaching of the two vehicles.

The vehicle of the *bodhisattva* sets up some fifty-one stages, as the ten stages of faith are set up as a (separate) stage. This delineation is given
for those with the capabilities of direct and immediate religious progress. Otherwise it sets up the ten bhūmis, etc., which are held in common by all of the three vehicles. This delineation is given for those with the capacities for conversion to the Mahāyāna. In the final teaching (of the Mahāyāna), all living beings can attain to the path leading to Buddhahood (= attain to Buddhahood), and in this teaching some forty-one stages are set up. This is because the ten stages of faith do not form a (separate) stage. There is only this one difference that the one stage, the stage almost equal to enlightenment, may or may not be divided into two stages. The sudden teaching abolishes and transcends all abodes, and so it has never set up any stages.

There are two divisions to the perfect teaching. First, there is the similar teaching of the one vehicle. This teaching is exactly the same as the final teaching (of the Mahāyāna). Second, there is the separate teaching of the one vehicle. This teaching is totally separate from the three vehicles, and has nothing in common with them.

There are two teachings in this (separate teaching of the one vehicle). First, there is the teaching of the gradual cultivation of the spiritual path. Cause and effect are gradual, as are spiritual progress and the entering into of enlightenment. Second, there is the teaching of the perfect interfusion and embracing of the external, tangible characteristics of things. In this teaching cause and effect interfuse and embrace one another, and there is unhindered identity and interpenetration of these two. Because there is the delineation of a course of spiritual cultivation, one traverses kalpas equal in number to unspeakable, totally unspeakable numbers of particles of dust. But because there is the perfect interfusion (of cause and effect), one rapidly attains the fruits of Buddhahood in one moment of thought. This teaching posits the attainment of Buddhahood in three lifetimes, that of seeing and hearing, of understanding and practice, and of enlightenment and entering into (Buddhahood).

The principles of the perfect teaching embrace all things within the four dharmadhātus, and omit nothing. (These four dharmadhātus are:) first, the dharmadhātu of phenomena; second, the dharmadhātu of principle; third, the dharmadhātu of the unhindered penetration of phenomena and of principle; and fourth, the dharmadhātu of the unhindered penetration of all items of phenomena. 

**Question:** How many different bodies of the Buddha, and how many different Buddha lands are posited in this tradition?

**Answer:** The five teachings differ with respect to this.

The perfect teaching posits some three lands. All three are the lotus store adorned world, where the pure and the impure interfuse and are identical, and where the one and the many are unhindered. The Buddha has some ten bodies: the body of living beings, the body of lands,
the body of karmic retribution, the body of a śrāvaka, etc. There is no dharma that is not the body of the Buddha, adorned with the ten thousand qualities, all embracing and inexhaustible. When (this tradition) speaks of cutting off, then the cutting off of one is the cutting off of all. When it speaks of attaining enlightenment, then the attainment of one is attainment by all. Rocana, who fully possesses the ten bodies (of the Buddha) initially revealed the inexhaustible and profound tradition, which totally embraces all dharmas. For beings with shallow capacities he gradually divided (this teaching), until he preached the Lotus Sūtra, which reconciles the three vehicles into the one vehicle, and he finally caused beings to enter into, and to become enlightened to the one vehicle of the Kegon. The purpose of his one lifetime of teaching was only to present this scripture. His final and ultimate subsuming (of all other teachings) is to be found only in this scripture. Unfolded, the eighty thousand (teachings) of the lifetime of the Tathāgata are luxuriant and profusely intertwined; folded up, the teaching of the nine assemblies (= the Kegon-kyō) is vast and all embracing.

The Dai Hoko Butsu Kegon gyō signifies the interfusion of principle and wisdom, as the name of the title has already revealed. Prince Sudhana, in the ocean-like assembly of the Kegon, attained to Buddhahood in one lifetime, as the last assembly of the scripture clearly states. If one wishes to speedily attain to the great result, then nothing can surpass this scripture. In the profundity of its teachings, what tradition can match this one? The flowers of the ten profoundities and of dependent arising are ever fresh, and the moon of the perfect interpenetration of the six marks is ever bright. This is the chief of all scriptures, the most venerable leader of all of the various traditions. How grand it is, how vast it is! It is only this scripture and this tradition that cannot be adequately described in words!

Shingon-shu, the Mantrayāna Tradition

Question: Why is this tradition termed the tradition of mantras?
Answer: It is termed this because it takes as its basic teachings the secret, mantra teachings of the Dainichi-kyō (= Mahāvairocana-sūtra), the Soshitsuji-kyō (= Susiddhikara-sūtra), and of other scriptures.

Question: Who transmitted and propagated this tradition?
Answer: In a period seven hundred years after the parinirvāṇa of the Tathāgata Śakyamuni, the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna opened the Iron Pagoda in South India. Here he encountered Vajrasattva, and received from him the abhiśekha, confirming him in the succession. Nagarjuna then widely diffused these teachings. Vajrasattva had personally received these teachings from the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, and so Mahāvairocana is the ultimate source of these teachings. Nagarjuna
transmitted these teachings to the Bodhisattva Nagabodhi. From this
time onward, the Tripitaka Master Subhakarasimha, the Tripitaka
Master Vajrabodhi, the Meditation Master I-hsing the Tripitaka Master
Amoghavajra, the Upadhyaya Hui-kuo transmitted this teaching from
one to the other, in an uninterrupted succession.

Regarding the transmission of this tradition to Japan, the Great
Master Kōbō (Kōbō-daishi, Kukai) crossed the seas (to China), and there
met the Acarya Hui-kuo. This tradition's teachings were transmitted in
toto to Kukai and eventually he returned to Japan, where he introduced
this tradition with great success. From that time onward throughout all
of Japan, both in the capital and in rural areas, there was no place where
this tradition was not studied. Up to the present time, this teaching has
flourished without interruption in Japan. All this has been due to the
influence of Kōbō-daishi.

Kōbō-daishi was a manifestation of a bodhisattva of the third
bhūmi. His virtues excelled those of average men, and his deeds have no
equal. He thoroughly fathomed all of the various traditions of Bud-
dhism—the exoteric and the esoteric teachings, and the scriptures of the
Hinayāna and the Mahāyāna—without any exception. In his defense of
the Buddhahadharma, in his spiritual attainments, in his miracles, and in
his artistic and literary talents, is there any man who can surpass Kōbō-
daishi. Truly, Kōbō-daishi is a bright beacon of remote antiquity, and he
is as the sun and the moon in his illuminating of our later ages. Finally
he entered into samādhi on Mt. Koya, revered by both gods and men, and
venerated by all of the eight types of beings. For neither his inner
awakening nor his outward actions can be adequately conceived by man.

**Question:** How many teachings does this tradition recognize within
Buddhism?

**Answer:** This tradition sets up the ten stages of religious consciousness,
and so completely exhausts all of the various teachings of the Mahāyāna
and the Hinayāna, and the exoteric and the Esoteric teachings.

**Question:** What are these ten stages of religious consciousness?

**Answer:** They are 1) the goat-like consciousness of common, ignorant
people, 2) the consciousness of those who, like foolish children, hold to
unnecessary precepts, 3) the childlike consciousness of those who have
no fear, 4) the consciousness that knows that only the skandhas exist,
and that there is no ātman, 5) the consciousness that has rooted out the
causal-seeds of karma, 6) the Mahāyāna consciousness that feels a
relationship with others, 7) the consciousness that knows (the true
nature of) the mind, and that knows (that the dharma are) unarisen,
etc., 8) the consciousness that knows that there is only the eka-yāna, and
that (the truth underlying reality is essentially) uncreated, 9) the
consciousness that knows that ultimately there is no self nature, and 10)
the secretly adorned consciousness. This is that is termed the ten stages
of religious consciousness.

The first three stages of these consciousnesses are *samsaric*, worldly teachings. Of these three, the first leads to rebirth into any of the three painful realms of rebirth, the second is a teaching leading to rebirth in human realms, and the third is a teaching leading to rebirth in heavenly realms of rebirth. The last seven stages of these consciousnesses are all teachings leading one out of *samsaric* existence. Of these seven, the fourth is the teaching of the *śrāvakas*, and the fifth is the teaching of the *pratyekabuddhas*. Both of these are Hinayāna teachings.

The last five stages are all Mahāyāna teachings. The Mahāyāna consciousness which feels a relationship with others, and the consciousness that knows (the true nature of) the mind, are both *trīyāna* teachings. The consciousness that knows that there is only the *ekayāna*, and the consciousness that knows that ultimately there is no self-nature, are both *ekayāna* teachings. The tenth is the teaching of the *vajrayāna*. This is the true teaching, the most venerable and the ultimate of all these teachings. The (first) nine types of religious consciousness are all provisional teachings, and deal only with the stages (on the path to enlightenment). The tenth stage of religious consciousness alone is the true result (enlightenment).

The Tathāgata Mahāvairocana is the awakened nature of our minds, and all of the various deities—as numerous as dust particles—are his attendant mental states, created through the five wisdoms. (These five wisdoms which) make up the physical worlds and all of its inhabitants are termed 1) the basic diamond realm, 2) the sovereign, *mahāsamaya*, 3) the understanding that all dharmas are basically unarisen, 4) the great Bodhi Mind, and 5) the palace-like mind illumined by the light of an indestructible vajra. These are all the physical worlds. The thirty-seven deities, and the nine *māṇḍalas* (of the *vajradhatu māṇḍala*), and the thirteen great assemblies and the four-fold *māṇḍala* (of the *garbhadhatu māṇḍala*) interpenetrate one with another, like the heavenly net of Śakra (=Indra), and possess saintly hosts, in lands as numerous as grains of sand. These are the creatures dwelling within these physical worlds. Both the physical worlds and the creatures therein are endless, and they are both sovereign and perfect.

(This tradition) soars high above all other schools, and it embraces within itself all other scriptures. The enlightenment taught by the various revealed teachings do not even enter into the temple (of this tradition’s understanding), so how could any Hinayāna saint enter into the sanctuary (of this tradition’s doctrines)! The four Mahāyāna traditions regard emptiness as an absolute principle.

The defilements and clinging of all creatures within the nine realms obscure their minds, and (the truth) has not yet been revealed to
them. It is only these secret teachings which clearly manifest the absolute truth, and which deeply enter into (the nature of) the mind. The secretly adorned lotus-like realm, and all of its various deities—as numerous as dust particles—all dwell (in this mind) in all their profusion, and all the qualities and all the deeds of all living creatures are perfectly embraced (within this mind). Thus all living creatures are Mahāvairocana, and all the various external, tangible characteristics are themselves the cognized sphere of Him, the Lord of Enlightenment.

This tradition posits six primary elements which illustrate the total nature of Buddhahood. The four types of mandalas are its external appearance, and when the three secret (actions of the body, speech, and mind of the devotee) are in union (=yoga, with the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha), then this is the active, functioning aspect (of Buddhahood). The first five (of the six primary elements: earth, water, fire, wind, and ākāśa [empty space]) are inert, physical principles, whereas the sixth, the primary element of consciousness is the active, mental element of wisdom. Now both principle (= physical matter) and wisdom have both an external appearance and an active, functioning aspect, and it is this that goes to make up the four types of mandalas and the three secret (actions of mudrās, mantras, and the secret objects of meditation). Wisdom is identical with the vajradhātu, and principle is identical with the garbhadhātu, and together they are termed the Mahāvairocana of both mandalas, of both dātus. This is the reason why the six primary elements are held to be identical to the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana.

All of the various dharmanas are one with these six primary elements. The nature of these six primary elements permeates all dharmanas. Thus, of all the various dharmanas, there are none that are not themselves Mahāvairocana, and so the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana totally permeates the universe (dharmaḥdhātu). Know then that the two mandalas are the qualities (= guna) of principle and of wisdom of the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana.

Because his qualities of principle (= physical matter) are numberless, the garbhadhātu has the four-fold group of saintly beings, and because his qualities of wisdom are numberless, the vajradhātu has some thirty-seven deities. These two mandalas are united, bringing about the union of principle and wisdom.

This tradition posits four modes of existence of Buddhahood. These are: 1) the mode of self-nature, 2) the mode of experiencing, 3) the mode of changes, and 4) the outflowing mode. These are termed the four-fold dharmaṃkāraya. The five directions, as well as the five wisdoms, go to make up these four modes of existence.

When we attain to Buddhahood in our present existence, then we, as the Lord of Enlightenment, Mahāvairocana, shall speedily attain to this great awakening; rising to this state we shall attain to the ultimate. (We
will understand that phenomena is itself the truth, that the multiplicity of all the various external characteristics, and all the various dharmas, just as they now are, are the absolute.

The exoteric teachings were taught by Śakyamuni, and the esoteric teachings are taught by Mahāvairocana. In this manner, these two Buddhas are clearly and definitely separate one from the other. However, from the absolute point of view, these two Buddhas are not two (separate entities, but one), for apart from Śakyamuni there exists no separate Mahāvairocana.

The steps in the ten stages of religious consciousness (are a progression upward, each step) rejecting the inferior, and being superior (to each previous step). This is a delineation established for the purposes of putting down individual defilements. But to understand that all of the various dharmas of these same ten consciousnesses are entirely the same is the teaching which presents all the qualities (of Mahāvairocana).

There is thus a teaching of eternal differentiation, and a teaching of eternal sameness. These are one but are dual, two but yet one. Because of the aspect of the teaching which presents these qualities, not one particle of dust is omitted, and all is seen as but the marvellous qualities of Mahāvairocana.

That aspect of the teaching which is intended to put down individuals’ defilements applies to all of the exoteric teachings, whereas that aspect that manifests the many qualities (of Mahāvairocana) is limited to the esoteric teachings. The purport of this tradition’s teaching is that all of the various dharmas are, all of them, Mahāvairocana. The absolute is identical to our own bodies, and the Buddhadharma is identical to our own forms. The four-fold secret interpretation increases in profundity the one after the other, and the three secret actions (of body, speech, and mind) are evermore secret in their profundity.

Apart from this teaching, there will almost never be any path to Buddhahood: how can those creatures who strive for deliverance not believe and practice these teachings! In outline the esoteric teachings of the Mantrayāna are as given here.

Zen-shū and Jōdo-shū

The principles and truths of the various traditions are vast and profound, and are hard to fathom. At the present time we have but dipped one hair into their waters, in order to moisten the minds of beginners. From ancient times up to the present only these eight traditions have been commonly recognized and have been studied in Japan. However, in addition to these eight traditions the Zen tradition and the Jōdo teachings flourish and have been widely disseminated.

The Zen tradition is the most profound basis of the
Buddhadharma, for it is very deep and most subtle. Basically there is not any one thing that exists. From the very beginning there are no defilements; originally (all) is bodhi.

Bodhidharma came from the West; (this tradition) does not posit any written authority; it points directly to the mind of man; (it teaches) the attainment of Buddhahood by seeing into one's nature. This is not like the other traditions, which distinguish various principles in respect to a vast multitude of dharmas, and which repeatedly debate them. In India this tradition has some twenty-eight patriarchs, who transmitted (this teaching) from mind to mind. The Twenty-eighth Patriarch, the Great Master Bodhidharma, transmitted this tradition into China during the period of the Liang Dynasty, and it was successively transmitted from generation to generation down to the Sixth Patriarch. Among the disciples of the Fifth Patriarch, this tradition first divided into two schools, the Northern School and the Southern School. Among the later disciples of the Sixth Patriarch of the Southern School, the tradition gradually divided into some Five Houses.

The Vinaya Master Tao-hsüan received the Zen (tradition) of the Northern School, and he transmitted it to Japan. Also the Great Master Dengyö (= Saicho) transmitted this tradition from the China of the Great Tang Dynasty; he termed it the tradition of the Buddha's Mind. In more recent times eminent worthies have come to Japan from the Sung Dynasty, and have transmitted this teaching. Now in every place in Japan this tradition has been widely disseminated and is flourishing.

Also the teachings of the Jodo tradition are widely practiced in Japan. Now the purport of this teaching is that ordinary persons are totally bound (by the defilements); but, desiring (rebirth in) the Pure Land, they are reborn into the Pure Land by means of the karmic actions that they have cultivated. The Pure Land of the Western Direction has a deep affinity with this world. Persons of inferior capacity who cultivate the nembutsu practice find it especially easy to be born into the Pure Land, and later they attain to Buddhahood.

Broadly speaking (i.e., with reference to the other traditions of Buddhism when the merits of all of the various religious practices are transferred to (rebirth in) the Pure Land, this is called the teachings of the Pure Land.

When one cultivates all of the myriad other practices, and when one looks to the attainment (of Buddhahood) in this world, this is called the teachings of the path of the holy ones. All of the various other traditions and all of the various other teachings are all the path of the holy ones. To desire (rebirth in) the Pure Land is called the teaching of the Pure Land.

This teaching has its origins in the (Daijo) Kishin-ron (= "The
Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna”). Following upon this there are the teachings of the treatises of Nagārjuna; then (such masters as) the Bodhisattva Vasubandhu, Bodhiruci, T’an-luan, Tao-ch’o, Shan-tao, Huai-kan, and others. This teaching came to Japan, where all persons composed explanations and commentaries on it, and where all competed with one another for its widespread dissemination. From the present time onward this teaching has especially flourished in Japan.

If we add these two traditions (to the above eight), we have ten traditions. However, relying upon what is usually spoken of, there are only eight traditions. The order of the traditions as arranged above is not in a progression leading from the shallow to the profound. Rather, they have been arranged according to popular parlance. Any order would be permissible. Thus we have provisionally arranged them as given above.

A human body is difficult to obtain, and the sacred teachings are difficult to encounter. By chance however, we have obtained (human form) and have encountered (the teachings). How can we remain silent at this? Thereupon I have presented my limited views, in order to bind (those who read this work) with some future affinity. May my humble efforts not wither away, and may we all with a certainty attain to bodhi.

Written on the twenty-ninth day of the first month, of the fifth year of Bun’ei (= A.D. 1268), tsuchino-e-tatsu (a year of the dragon), in the Nishidani (section of the) Emmyōji monastery, in the province of Iyo.

I am not yet an authority in the teachings of (my) one tradition, and I do not know even one thing about the teachings and the meditation practices of other traditions. I have done no more than present a list of terms, and in some manner narrated my own views with respect to them. There are many mistakes in this work, and the correct interpretation (of these teachings) is totally lacking. May those with knowledge and insight correct these errors.

Gyōnen, a Śramana of the Kegon tradition; age 29

The First Buddhist Women: Translations and Commentary on the Therigāthā is a study of the Therigāthā, a collection of the poems or verses of elder enlightened nuns. The Therigāthā is included in the Khuddhaka Nikāya, the fifth part of the second “basket” of the Pali canonical scriptures, the Sutta-piṭika. According to Susan Murcott, Therī means “women elders,” or “women who have grown old in knowledge,” and gāthā means “verse,” “stanza,” “song.” The Therigāthā are the enlightenment poems or verses of the first Buddhist nuns in the sixth century B.C.E. in ancient India.

In the preface of the book, Murcott mentions that she spent fifteen years researching and retranslating the text. The book reflects the author’s considerable efforts. It is valuable for contemporary readers, and is easily accessible for general readers as well as academic readers. The chapters follow arrangement of poems and stories according to the roles and relationships of the women in the Therigāthā.

In the introduction, Murcott provides an overview of the Therigāthā, the sangha of nuns, the oral tradition of the Therigāthā, Dhammapala’s commentary on the Therigāthā in the fifth century C.E., the translations of the Therigāthā into English, and the question regarding authorship of the poems. She also explains that her book contains sixty-one of the seventy-three poems from the Therigāthā. Twelve poems are excluded for various reasons: several of the twelve poems are tedious and mechanical in the original and in the translation. Two of the twelve seemed almost identical, and two very long poems of the
**Therigathā** are generally said to be later compositions from the third century B.C.E.

In the first chapter, “Mahapajapati Gotami and Her Disciples,” Murcott presents the life-story and poem of Siddhartha Gautama’s foster mother or the first Buddhist nun, and the establishment of the *sangha* of nuns. This chapter also includes stories and poems of Gotami’s followers, the “Five Hundred.” Seven poems are by the seven nuns who had been members of Siddhartha Gautama’s harem. The last section in this chapter provides stories and poems of Gotami’s daughter, Sundari-Nanda, and Gotami’s nurse, Vaddhesi.

Chapter Two, “Patacara and Her Disciples,” considers stories and poems of Patacara, the finest teacher, and her disciples. In chapter three, “Wanderers and Disciples,” Murcott selects stories and poems of a unique group of Buddhist women of the Therigathā: wanderers, ascetics, novices, ordained nuns, hermits, almswomen, and disciples. In this chapter the author briefly discusses the ancient tradition of the wanderer, the ordination of women, and the discipleship of women in the *sangha* of nuns.

Chapter Four, “Wise Women and Teachers,” deals with stories and poems of three renowned and wise nuns: Dhammadinna, Khema, Uppalavanna. Chapter Five, “Mothers,” offers stories and poems of five women who became Buddhist nuns due to grief over the loss of their children. These poems show that the mothers did not see themselves as victims, but turned their tragedies into steps towards spiritual understanding and freedom after meeting the Buddha. Chapter Six, “Wives,” contains stories and poems of enlightened nuns who had failed at their marriages or had become disgusted with their domestic lives.

Chapter Seven, “Old Women,” provides stories and poems of Buddhist nuns who joined the *sangha* of nuns because of their friendship. This chapter also includes poems of three women who were biological sisters: Cala, Upacala, Sisupacala. Chapter Ten, “Buddhist Nuns and Nature,” presents stories and poems which show some kind of association between a nun and a tree, or a nun and the moon. The author says that there are few nuns’ poems related to nature because nuns lived near villages in order to observe the rules prohibiting nuns’ independent wandering.

Chapter Eleven, “Dialogue Poems,” gives beautiful examples of the Pali Buddhist dialogue poems from the *Therigathā*. The first poem is a conversation between Mara and Vijira. The second is a dialogue between the enlightened nun, Subha, and a lecherous man. The last poem of Sundari in this chapter is the most elaborate example of a dialogue poem including several of the seven speakers.

In Chapter Twelve, “The Legacy of the First Buddhist Women,” and the Appendix, “Rules of the Nuns’ *Sangha*,” Murcott discusses the legacy of the first Buddhist nuns’ life-stories and poems 2,500 years
later. In the appendix she briefly provides discussion on the eight extra rules and the precepts for nuns.

As mentioned in Murcott’s introduction, there are two complete English translations of the *Therigāthā*. Caroline Rhys Davids' translation of the *Therigāthā* was published in London in 1909 as *Psalms of the Sisters*, and the English is quite outdated. Another version in English of the *Therigāthā* was a translation by K. R. Norman, issued as a part of the Pali Text Society's translation, *The Elders' Verses II, Therigāthā*. Both translations are hard to understand for the general reader because of the inaccessibility of the language and the intensive scholarly work. As Norman points out in his introduction to *The Elders’ Verses II, Therigāthā*, he has “produced a literal, almost word-for-word translation” to convey his understanding of the Pali. Although I cannot check the original Pali *Therigāthā* because I do not know Pali, I feel that these two translations of the *Therigāthā* are too inaccessible for general readers.

However, in *The First Buddhist Women*, Murcott attempts to break the boundaries of the language and deliver the messages of the *Therigāthā* poems to a wide audience rather than just the scholarly reader. In her commentary, she also brings to light many women’s issues, as vital today as they were twenty-five hundred years ago during the time of the Buddha.

On the whole, this book is very highly recommended. As Murcott writes, it is “a labor of love” and “a record of my discovery.” Through her commentary and skillful translation of the *Therigāthā*, Susan Murcott succeeds in sharing with today’s readers “how one world religion acknowledged from its very beginning the authority and equality of women in spiritual practice” (p. 10).

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*Contentment and Suffering: Culture and Experience in the Toraja*


Embarking upon an exploration of the eastern Indonesian Sa’dan Toraja, Hollan and Wellencamp employ a “person-centered” ethnographic approach in their quest to describe a unique highland Southeast Asian culture. Drawing broadly upon a substantial ethnographic literature, a cursory examination of local ritual, and in-depth interviews with eleven respondents, the authors seek to elicit the structure of Toraja
culture as mirrored in the perceptions and experiences of their informants. *Contentment and Suffering* only partially achieves its ambitious goals. In discussing the Toraja penchant for order, concern for transgression as the trigger for community misfortune, and conceptualization of the importance of ancestors in the life of the living much of the core of Toraja culture is thoughtfully elicited. Often, however, the reader senses a greater distance between the investigators and the culture under study than is often the case with standard ethnographic methodology. Subjects are interviewed at length and in private suggesting an extrinsic analysis in the midst of a symbolically vital ritual, robust subsistence farming, and symbolically laden art and architecture. In analyzing the local penchant for order (pp. 45, 207), concern with reciprocity (p. 47), and avoidance of moral error (p. 141) the book strikes to the core of local culture. Yet with its titular focus on suffering, the authors' configuration of a dour, repressive Toraja culture does not ring true. Contemporary Toraja energetically pursue wealth, status, and educational achievement with a passion and exuberance that suggests neither passive contentment nor resigned suffering.

*Contentment and Suffering* makes little reference to considerable work on nearby Bali, where Mead and Bateson in pre-war years and Suriyani and Jenson (1991) have related child-rearing techniques to cultural configuration and ritual performance. Manifesting a unique approach to the study of a distant culture, this book elicits much that is essential in the life and thoughts of the inhabitants of the Toraja highlands. Yet the methodology employed seems at times to interfere with rather than illuminate the depiction of local society. The reader remains inevitably distanced from Toraja village culture, which is refracted through a series of key interviews. We never really find the opportunity to meet the informants, who provide answers to questions, but never emerge as discrete individuals. *Contentment and Suffering* effectively explores many important aspects of Toraja culture, such as the significance of dreams, inclination towards dyadic reciprocity and implications of personal transgression for community well being. Yet the experience of culture, either through the lives of the eleven key informants or the perceptions of the authors, remains elusively beyond our grasp.

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Thich Nhat Hanh’s *The Blooming of a Lotus: Guided Meditation Exercises for Healing and Transformation* is spiritually refreshing. Soaking up the wisdom of the thirty-four guided meditation exercises was truly joyful. To my surprise, I discovered that the technique of guided meditation was advocated by the Buddha. In the *Sutra for the Sick and Dying* (Majjhima Nikaya, sutta 143), Śāriputra used guided meditation to console the dying Anāthapiṇḍika. Thus, it has a long, reliable tradition. What is most appealing about Nhat Hanh’s style of writing is his lucid presentation of elusive Buddhist concepts in everyday language. In his skillful hands, the subtle doctrines of *anatta*, *anicca*, and *paticcasamuppada* are easily grasped. Perhaps the book resonates with ordinary people because the author conveys the Dharma through the idiom of songs and poems. The structure of the meditations themselves is simple. There are “Guiding Sentences”, “Key Words”, and “Commentary” by Hanh. Keeping the lines brief and the images sharp, Hanh achieves both a mnemonic device and internalization of the content.

Thematically, the meditations concern largely the basic Buddhist notions of no self, impermanence, and inter-causality. Without a context, these concepts are too abstract to be understood. However, Hanh makes them intelligible by applying them to concrete situations involving one’s self, parents, and couples. Hanh concentrates on the three unskillful roots or poisons that lead to non-beneficial acts: ignorance, anger, and greed. In particular, the specific meditations prescribed for the reduction or elimination of anger, fear, and sexual craving, are down-to-earth and immediately applicable.

Thich Nhat Hanh’s observations about no abiding self are very relevant. It is a mistake to think of *anatta* as a metaphysical quibble that preoccupies daydreaming philosophers. The essential point of the truth of no self is to enable one to transcend ego in order to escape suffering. For Hanh, the simple act of full prostration demonstrates this profound reality: “In this position (prostration), it is very easy to surrender all thoughts. You can surrender yourself and every thought about yourself. Surrender yourself until you are nothing.” In the act of full prostration, one is overwhelmed by a sense of deep humility, so much so that one forgets one’s self, if only for a short while, and all the troubles inflicted by ego-clinging recede. Thus, the teaching of *anatta* is not an axiom, but an actual, lived experience.

Hanh’s handling of the problem of impermanence is revealing. For the enlightened, the transiency of all things is liberating. Hanh discusses the instability of sensations and emotions. Three sensations are possible: unpleasant, neutral, and pleasant. With mindfulness, one is not con-
trolled by these sensations. For example, “when (neutral) feelings are recognized in mindfulness, they usually become pleasant feelings.” One of the most common complaints of today’s Americans is malaise or ennui. Could this not be a potential remedy? Also, emotional states change drastically. Happiness disappears as rapidly as it arises. Why be attached to something so fleeting? Hanh says, “we are not just our emotions. Emotions come and go, but we are always here.” The solution to emotionalism is upakka, or equanimity. Only with mindfulness can one be emotionally balanced and serene.

Interdependence is given a thorough treatment. The inspiration stems from the expansive vision of the Avatamsaka Sutra. Eschewing arid logic, Hanh invigorates interdependence with poetic imagery. Identification of phenomenon with phenomenon is creatively captured as being “in touch with the cloud in the flower/...knowing that without the cloud/there would be no flower.” Perhaps the all-embracingness of Hua-Yen Buddhism could contribute to the Deep Ecology movement. Indeed, there is no trace of speciesism in the statement “No human species/without other/species.” Actually, Hanh urges that environmentalists use the Diamond Sutra as their Bible.

Giving his book a contemporary feel, Hanh includes meditations on interpersonal encounters, whether it be with one’s self, one’s parents, or one’s lover. Beginning with ourselves, Hanh exhorts us to direct metta to our own bodies, for “our own skandhas must be in harmony before we can live in harmony with others.” This insight is consonant with the latest self-esteem raising movement, for how can we be compassionate to others if we loathe ourselves? Another facet Hanh discusses is anger against parents. This is removed by imagining one’s parents as vulnerable infants. Moved with pity, one’s remorse and anger diminishes. We are told that “When we truly see and understand someone’s suffering, it is impossible not to accept and love them...Tolerance and calm are two signs of authentic love.” This theme is reinforced in the grief one experiences when one’s spouse dies. One succumbs to anger and accusation out of selfishness. However, understanding acceptance is more wholesome. Contemplating one’s “Beloved alive/smiling” then “Seeing beloved/dead/Smiling,” one is awakened to impermanence and to a sense of deep appreciation for the present moment.

In addition, Hanh has practical strategies for coping with anger, fear, and lust. Contrary to conventional thinking, anger is not externally induced. From a Buddhist viewpoint, “the main root of our suffering is the seed of anger in us.” That is, anger is not an outside force, but rather lack of mindfulness. This is no less true of doubt or fear. Denial and repression do not work. Realistic grappling with them is the only solution. “Buddha taught that rather than repressing our fears and anxieties, we should invite them into consciousness, recognize them,
welcome them." Practicing meditation empowers one to overcome one's entangled thoughts. Thoughts of sexual craving would be an illustration. Sexual excess damages everybody involved. In the words of the meditation, "Suffering from/craving sex/Letting go," and "Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I vow to cultivate responsibility." Against sexual licence, Hanh reminds us that too much lust hurts ourselves, as well as others.

In conclusion, The Blooming of a Lotus is a valuable guide book for spiritual integration. The guided meditations exemplify important Buddhist themes that illuminate one's life situation. Thich Nhat Hanh continues to make the ineffable wisdom of 2,500 years of Buddhist awareness available to us all. For this kindness we are most grateful.

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When Stanley N. Kurtz, then a Harvard doctoral candidate in anthropology, set about trying to understand the recent emergence in India of a new goddess called Santoshi Ma, he was at first stymied. The Western scholarly tools of historical and soteriological analysis, the very lens through which he at first attempted to comprehend Santoshi Ma worship, kept leading to exasperating anomalies.

For example, when Kurtz asked one woman informant about her worship of Santoshi Ma (which means "Mother of Satisfaction" or "Mother of Contentment"), he was given a vivid description of what the informant claimed was a Santoshi Ma shrine in Jammu in North India. He soon discovered, however, that this shrine was in fact the chief pilgrimage site of another goddess, Vaishno Devi (p. 3). Many similar anomalous responses to his straightforward queries continued to thwart Kurtz's investigations into the worship of Santoshi Ma. Nevertheless, like any good doctoral student anxious to lay claim to some new piece of yet-to-be-plumbed subject area, he doggedly persisted in search of the precise social and historical conditions out of which the "new" goddess arose. Then, finally, in the manner of the poor ignorant farmer fervently worshipping a simple stone until the hidden god of the stone was compelled to emerge (pp. 1-2), Kurtz had his epiphany.
The reason I could not distinguish a specific social or ideological identity for Santoshi Ma is that she is not in fact a separate and distinct divine being. Although she has a particular name and form, these things are of limited significance and do not correspond—as Western thought usually takes them to—to a unique and stable identity.

It was only after having seen and thus dissolved Santoshi Ma back into her source that I was able to make sense of her... I realized that my real problem was the classification of all goddesses—or rather, the classification of the everchanging manifestations of the single great Goddess (pp. 4-5).

Strangely enough, after realizing the inadequacy of historical and sociological analysis for comprehending Santoshi Ma worship, Kurtz settled upon the equally Western analytical tools of structuralism and psychoanalysis! He defends his choice of methods by arguing that one cannot realistically hope to fully take over the “native point of view”; nor, on the other hand, can one force the native view into one’s own, culturally-biased theoretical structures. Rather the investigator must acknowledge and play out “the genuine tensions and contradictions between the points of view of observer and observed” (p. 6). Hence, Kurtz claims that his “structuralist psychoanalysis,” for all its admitted Western biases, is capable of being reformulated by what is learned in the field.

And this is what he sets out to do in this book which encompasses Hindu childrearing practices (Chapters 3 and 4); the relationship of these practices and the kinship system in which they are embedded to Hindu myths and rituals (Chapter 5 and elsewhere); a new classification system of Hindu goddesses (Chapters 2 and 5); and the positive formulation of a uniquely Hindu developmental psychology (Chapters 5 and 6). The last three chapters are applications of the Hindu psychology developed in the first six chapters and include: (1) a reinterpretation of five previously published clinical case histories (Chapter 7); (2) a critique of earlier cross-cultural uses of psychoanalytic theory by Obeyesekere and Spiro (Chapter 8); and (3) a general statement of the principles of a new, culturally sensitive comparative psychoanalysis (Chapter 9). All of these matters, the theoretical discussions as well as their practical applications, are discussed with constant reference to previous psychoanalytic literature on Hindu culture from which Kurtz attempts to ferret out the Western biases that, as he contends, subtly, or not so subtly, have colored the interpretation of the data.

The primary bias Kurtz discovers in these previous studies is Western individualism. Although this reviewer is not familiar at first
hand with the literature upon which Kurtz attempts to build, and, when necessary, reformulate a "non-ethnocentric, broadly psychoanalytic theory of Hindu development" (p. 60), his arguments concerning the bias of individualism are persuasive.

According to Kurtz, several psychoanalytic investigators have maintained that Hindu biological mothers are "overindulgent" in their physical ministrations to their children, leading to the child's prolonged "narcissism," which, in turn, is sustained by the larger group of in-law mothers. But in Kurtz's reading of the data, "Full participation in the group...is not a narcissistic union with the mother writ large. Rather, it is a developmental achievement that signals the abandonment of early pleasures" (p. 75). (Emphasis added.)

Kurtz reinterprets the Hindu mother's constant, supposedly "overly indulgent" physical contact with her child coupled with her emotional distance as a key mechanism by which the child is pushed towards the larger group of in-law mothers (p. 41). When, for example, the child's paternal grandmother enters the room, the biological mother defers to the in-law mother as the child's primary caretaker. Teasing is also frequently used by the biological mother so as to prod the child to forego exclusive fixation upon her and to begin instead to participate more in the group. These culturally distinctive kinds of interaction serve to lead the child, in Kurtz's view, toward a voluntary sacrifice or renunciation of purely selfish desires (pp. 80-81). In this manner, the child becomes "incorporated" by the larger group and, in turn, incorporates the group's identity into himself. (It should be noted here, as will be discussed below, that Kurtz writes almost exclusively about the male child.)

Kurtz argues that this voluntary renunciation, or, psychoanalytically speaking, symbolic self-castration, is the Hindu counterpart of the Western defense mechanism of repression (p. 179). Moreover, this specifically Hindu form of sublimation leads, in the normal course of maturation, to the establishment of "an ego of the whole" (p. 101), and not to the specifically Western form of individuation. Individuation, he contends, is based on a process of mirroring and empathy between mother and child, as these processes typically play themselves out within the Western nuclear family (pp. 283-284).

But the situation is quite different in Hindu India. Instead of a pre-Oedipal phase, Kurtz discovers an "ek-hi" phase (deriving from the Hindu phrase, "Ma sab ek hi hai," meaning, "All the mothers are simply one and the same") in which the child begins to move "away from the natural mother and toward a more mature immersion in a larger and fundamentally benevolent group of mothers, a group in which all the mothers are, ultimately, just one (ek-hi)" (pp. 92-93)." Instead of a "negative Oedipus complex" fraught with homosexual implications, he discovers a "Durga complex," in which the male child's identification
with (and incorporation by) the group of women caretakers is later transferred to the group of men (pp. 168-169). The ek-hi and Durga phases are explicated in some detail with respect to Hindu childrearing practices, the kinship system, the pantheon of Hindu goddesses and their interrelationships, myths and rituals, clinical case histories and previous psychoanalytic literature. While much of this material will be of specific interest to the specialist, Kurtz deserves praise for the accessible way in which he organizes and analyzes this vast array of multifarious information.

In short, where previous psychoanalytic investigators found Hindu childrearing practices to be pathogenic—involving an undue prolongation of primary narcissism, contradictory messages from the natural mother (physical closeness combined with emotional distance), and an "abrupt" and "traumatic" immersion into the group of men—, Kurtz discerns a uniquely Hindu path of development by way of the caretaking of multiple mothers in an extended family and leading to a voluntary sacrifice of selfish (kām) love as the child moves toward a selfless of divine love (prem). In one of the clinical cases, Kurtz in fact argues that the psychological maladjustments of the client, a forty-year-old lecturer in philosophy, may well have been accentuated by the absence of in-law mothers to counteract the "intrusive seductiveness" of his mother (p. 214). In other words, the client's problems, Kurtz contends, were accentuated by the deviations in his upbringing from the normative Hindu extended family and from the expectation of caretaking by many "mothers".

All of these points are cogently set forth by Kurtz. However, his use of psychoanalysis, even in the flexible form which it assumes in his hands, may be uncongenial to some readers. There are, however, several aspects of psychoanalysis that may explain its continued usefulness in the field of psychological anthropology: (1) it is a dynamic psychology, capable of explicating psychic processes; (2) it is well-suited to explaining intra-psychic conflict; (3) it posits a specific series of psychosexual developmental stages that can be applied cross-culturally, e.g., as Kurtz applies them to Hindu childrearing practices; (4) it gives prominence to the concept of the unconscious; (5) the individual psyche and culture are placed in a dynamic relationship to one another, these two being the key terms of psychological anthropology; and, as a more specific application of this dynamic relationship, (6) the meaning of symbols is centrally emphasized, such that private meanings can be linked to the myths and rituals of a culture. It so happens that there are few psychological systems that are so readily adaptable to the purposes of psychological anthropology.

Although Kurtz's use of psychoanalysis is admirably free from jargon and draws freely upon the latest developments in psychoanaly-
sis, one cannot help but sense the revenant of the progenitor of this
dynamic psychology, Sigmund Freud, hovering about the periphery of
this investigation and making its lingering presence felt in at least two
ways: (1) Although the work deals largely with the reclassification of
Hindu goddesses, the childrearing practices, clinical data, and Hindu
myths and rituals Kurtz draws upon almost exclusively concern Hindu
boys and/or the male point of view, and, specifically, the issue of sym-
\[\text{bolic self-castration (so much so the this writer kept looking back at the}
\text{title of the book to see if it was in any way qualified by the words “boy”}
\text{or “male”; and (2) there is also the unspoken but clear implication of}
reductionism, namely, that divine images, rituals, and myths of Hindu
culture are not just analogous to Hindu childrearing practices but are
generated directly out of the latter.

Kurtz is aware of the first limitation and puts it down to the fact
that psychoanalysis of Indian culture has hitherto almost exclusively
focused on the male child and it is, after all, this previous literature he
must draw upon in order to “culturally reshape” psychoanalysis (p. 175).
He consciously attempts to overcome this bias, Kurtz explains, by
including two women clients among the five clinical case histories eval-
\[\text{uated in Chapter 7. But these two case histories are largely overshad-
\[\text{owed by the male perspective that otherwise dominates this book, e.g.,}
\text{by the myriad theoretical discussions of symbolic self-castration (see}
\text{pp. 10, 135-143, 150-169, 216-219, 236, 279-280). Consequently, there}
\text{is an enormous gender gap in the Hindu developmental psychology}
\text{presented here.}

As to the specter of reductionism, Kurtz has nothing specifically
to say. But this work, after all, is one of psychological anthropology,
and the author need only, for the purposes at hand, cursorily discuss
Indian philosophy and theology, e.g., the typically Indian theme of unity
within diversity, as it

\[\text{recapitulates, reinforces, affirms, and celebrates an earlier process}
\text{in which the Hindu child moves beyond an exclusive attachment to}
\text{the natural mother and toward a mature sense of the immersion in}
\text{a diverse, yet unified, group of mothers in the Hindu joint family (p.}
\text{12).}

The specter of reductionism can only be dispelled, then, if at all, by
directly engaging Hindu philosophy on the level of its truth claims. But
this is the separate and distinct task of those who would make use of
Kurtz’s study, e.g., for the purposes of inter-religious dialogue. While it
is not the task of the psychological anthropologist to do so, without such
parallel investigations, the overall impression of this study is psycho-
analytic and/or structuralist reductionism.
Kurtz admits that many of his conclusions are tentative and subject to revision (pp. 60, 175). One cannot help but feel, moreover, that a further step might yet be taken beyond the peculiar, if intriguing idiom of psychoanalysis. Kurtz accepts the main contours of the psychoanalytic language: the dichotomy between the pleasure and the reality principles; the concept of sublimation; the Freudian psychosexual stages of development; and the symbolic equivalences between stages of psychosexual development, on the one hand, and culturally-rooted myths and rituals, on the other. It is, in particular, these symbolic equivalences—even when carefully adapted by Kurtz to his Hindu context (p. 141)—that, in the final analysis, can never be proven and will only completely convince those already converted to the Freudian canon and its commentarial literature, or else to one of the canon's various modifications, extensions, or reformulations.

Given these reservations, this book is a noteworthy contribution to the fascinating way in which divine and human images of motherhood are dynamically related in Hindu India. The author is able to open a window upon a world view quite distinct from our own, yet cohesive, and in no sense "pathogenic," except to those investigators who have not yet clearly spied out the Western bias of individualism in their tacitly applied "universal" path to psychological maturity and wholeness. In contrast, by the light of his "epiphany," Kurtz suddenly became aware of his own bias, and this revelation enabled him and his readers to experience, however vicariously, a uniquely constructed human cosmos.

Don Plansky
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley

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"Turn adversity into the path." Cultivate a "warrior's attitude" towards spiritual transformation. Such virile interpretations of Buddhism, synthesizing the bodhisattva and the tantric paths, are sometimes surprisingly apt and up to date. They help to explain the attractiveness of Tibetan Buddhism to many Westerners.

The author, B. Alan Wallace, lived as a monk in the Tibetan tradition for fourteen years. He is trained in modern physics, and has studied Buddhism at Stanford University. This book is the expanded version of a series of lectures.

This is not a "contribution to scholarship"—in fact, as scholarship it lags well behind the field. Nonetheless, it has great value even for
someone well versed in buddhist doctrine. It contains advice for actual
education practice, and describes discursive exercises that would be
useful in the classroom. Clearly, the author knows that one cannot
understand buddhist topics—especially such topics as the nature of
mental mind—without sustained contemplation.

The book is especially good at explaining buddhist Dharma in
modern terms, with special reference to scientific theories. The prose is
clear, and the arguments well-reasoned in the traditional way. For
example (pp. 45-46): suffering comes from inside the mind, not from
the environment. Place a normal, healthy person in physical isolation.
Although the environment may be comfortable, even pleasant, the
subject will become bored, restless, frustrated, and eventually unhappy.
Then the author discusses his experiences in meditation retreat. I
especially appreciated the discussions of matter, energy, materialism,
nature, and consciousness, and the critique of materialistic science as a
good theory, but dogmatic in rejecting other possible explanations of
reality.

Other problems, however, are not dealt with satisfactorily. For
example (p. 78), what happens to the arhat after death? If he “simply
vanishes”—never being reborn—then Buddhism may be interpreted as
nihilistic. According to Tibetan Buddhism, the author says, the arhat is
no longer compelled to be reborn again, but he may do so out of compas-
sion. He may take rebirth in order to dispel the “final veils” that prevent
the complete awakening of a Buddha. This line of argument is mere
theology—and not very good theology, considering the subtlety of the
issues involved.

The work would gain greater precision by the study of a detailed
Abhidharma or “definitions” text. For example, the term that is
translated “laziness” (p. 171) should be “idleness”, according to the ex-
planation given.

Two chapters deal with Theravada, rather than specifically Ti-
betan Buddhism, and some of the Sanskrit and Pali words are mis-
spelled. The book contains a preface, notes, and a good index. The author
has also supplied helpful subheadings. The quality of the physical
publication is excellent.

Despite a slight lack of scholarly precision and maturity, this is a
fine beginning-level book, with sufficient substance and an approach
novel enough to interest the sophisticated reader.

Mark Tatz
Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley

This volume is one of the first series of translations of the Chinese Buddhist canon in the on-going project established by the late Dr. Yehan Numata, a Japanese industrialist. He devoted himself and his resources to a variety of efforts to support the propagation of Buddhism in the West. The translation of the Buddhist canon, expected to take many decades, will contribute to the increasing depth of knowledge of Buddhism for lay people, as well as scholars.

The present volume (Taishō 31. No. 1593) by Asanga (ca. 310-390) is a significant addition to the study of Buddhism by making available in English a very important text of the Yogācāra school. This stream of teaching, together with the Mādhyamika teaching of Nāgārjuna, provided the foundation for the philosophical and epistemological development of the Mahāyana tradition and its practices.

The Mādhyamika teaching works to overcome the human addiction and attachment to words and ideas through logical analysis. It uncovers the self-contradiction in all language, concepts, and assertions which purport to understand reality.

However, the Yogācāra approach investigates the nature and functioning of consciousness which underlies all expressions of teaching. It centers on the mind/consciousness by which we believe that we apprehend reality, and conduces to greater interiority or self-introspection through meditative practice and reflection. This approach enables the practitioner to realize that experience and the apprehended world are “mind only.” That is, by analyzing the nature of perception, the author Asanga shows how the mind constructs reality and points to what is called the “container consciousness” (alāyavijñāna) at the base of all knowing. Through this process, the effects of past karma interact with the active consciousness in a dynamic stream of co-arising that gives rise to the world of our experience. This world, therefore, is the result of fundamental ignorance which causes beings to misunderstand the true nature of reality. As a result, the projections of the consciousness appear as an external world dichotomized as the subject over against the world or object. The effort is to show that all perceptions and ideas are essentially empty, because the perceived objects have no self-existence or essence independent of consciousness.

The text in ten chapters treats the general sphere of perception and ideas in chapters I to III. Chapters IV through IX take up the training and development of the Bodhisattva, leading to the attainment of wisdom. There is a detailed presentation of the six perfections or virtues (pāramitā) which culminate in the perfection of wisdom. This wisdom comprises a full understanding of “conscious construction” and
thereby, control over “reality” with the purpose of embracing all beings in compassion.

Chapter X deals with the concept of the Three Bodies of the Buddha, i.e. Dharma, Enjoyment, and Transformation. Each body has its distinctive character and function for understanding Buddhist teaching as a means to enlighten beings. Nevertheless, though the bodies are differentiated, they are not different. While these concepts share in conscious construction, they arise from the pure aspect through a process of conversion within the container consciousness. This conversion and purification within the consciousness becomes the basis for the realization of compassion and wisdom. However, the bodies are not to be taken as objective existences and are themselves empty as constructs.

In their various manifestations all the Buddhas aim to bring the roots of beings to maturity and to bring them from the illusory imagination of subject-object polarity to non-imaginative awareness which is non-dual and empty, i.e. the illusory imagination is seen for what it is. Yet, when the Bodhisattva understands the true nature of things, he is able to work in the world without being attached or defiled. Through understanding the various aspects of the Buddha Bodies, their characteristics, functions and relation to the Dharma Body, the practitioners, by their cultivation of meditation and recollection of the Buddha, aim at the realization of the Dharma Body and never abandon their goal.

The text is interesting for its effort to demonstrate the superiority of the Mahāyāna over the path of the word-hearers or Hinayāna (lesser vehicle). Consequently, it has a polemical purpose. In addition, despite the abstruse analysis of consciousness and explanation of the training of the Bodhisattva, there is a constant and consistent emphasis on the altruistic aim of the teaching. The process of understanding and practice has the salvation of all beings in view. Asanga’s contention is that the Mahāyāna teaching is superior to all other teachings in accomplishing this goal. He asserts that the Mahāyāna teaching is the word of the Buddha, because its teaching is more profound and inclusive than the Hinayāna. Finally, the explication of conscious construction focuses on the process of thinking, thereby, looking inward and stressing experience and practice.

This translation is competent and clear. The introduction, glossary, and bibliography are helpful for those who may engage in deeper study. It is clearly a text designed by its author Asanga for study rather than general reading which the title in English may suggest. A careful reading of the text and reflection will permit the reader to catch the major thesis of the work and to appreciate its value as a summary of the Great Vehicle.

Alfred Bloom, Professor Emeritus in Religion
University of Hawaii
NOTES AND NEWS

The Tripitaka Translation Project and the BDK USA

Perhaps the greatest patron of Buddhism in modern times has been the Reverend Dr. Yehan Numata (1897–1994). Born in Hiroshima, he earned a B. A. and an M. A. from the University of California at Berkeley. In 1988 he received an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from the University of Hawaii. Yehan Numata, though born into a temple family, became a businessman. His motive was solely to raise funds for the propagation of Buddhism. His belief was that the Buddha's teachings, which are based on 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. In 1965 profits from the enterprise enabled him to found the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism, BDK). Under his guidance, this organization has sponsored many and various activities to share the teachings of the Buddha with as many people as possible. Late in life, Yehan Numata was ordained a Buddhist priest.

BDK USA. To supervise propagational activities outside Japan, Yehan Numata insisted that each country concerned should create a local organization, and be financially and operationally responsible for all propagational activities undertaken. Toward this end, affiliates of BDK Japan were formed in countries where branches of the Mitutoyo Corporation were located. To date, offices in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, West Germany, England, Taiwan, and Singapore further Mr. Numata's vision.

In the United States, the first such organization, called Buddhist Educational Studies, Inc., was formed in 1982 in Springfield, Virginia. It published Buddhist materials and conducted educational activities. In 1986, it was superseded by the Buddha Dharma Kyokai (Society) Inc. (BDK USA) in Emerson, New Jersey. Its first President is the Reverend Kenryu Tsuji, Resident Minister at Ekoji Temple in Springfield, VA, who is also a former Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America. The Trustees are Mr. Shigeru Yamamoto, a former Chairman of the Board, MIT Corporation of Mitutoyo U.S.; Bishop Seigen Yamaoka, the current Head of the Buddhist Churches of America; the Reverend Seishin Yamashita, President of the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research; and Mr. Noboru Hanyu, a former President of the National Council of the Buddhist Churches of America. This organization serves as the umbrella for all of the propagational activities in the U.S.
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 the journal 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. By 1928, the articles became predominantly related to Buddhism. 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 international institutions. The publication of the Pacific World ceased after Mr. Numata returned to Japan following completion of his studies in 1928. In 1982, the publication of the Pacific World was resumed, this time on an annual basis by the Institute of Buddhist Studies. Funds are provided by the BDK USA foundation. The 1992 autumn issue of the journal was distributed to 7,500 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 Teaching of Buddha. Another significant project undertaken by the BDK thus far has been the editing, publishing and distribution of The Teaching of Buddha. This small book contains the essence of the Buddhist Tradition. The book is an abridged translation of the Japanese work, Shinyaku Bukkyo Seiten (The New Translation of the Buddhist Scriptures). It was compiled and published by the Bukkyo Kyokai (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. To make it understandable and available to the peoples of the world, the book has been translated and printed in 35 different languages, and nearly five million copies have been distributed free of charge in 47 countries.

Distribution of The Teaching of Buddha. For this function, two organizations were formed in America. 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, 300,000 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 350,000 copies of The Teaching of Buddha in hotels, libraries, temples, prisons, and the military forces on the U.S. mainland.
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 second edition, complete with a section on Scriptural Sources, a glossary, and an index, is now being prepared.

Buddhist Studies Chairs. The next major project was the endowment of Numata Chairs in Buddhist Studies at leading universities around 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 six institutions in the U.S.: the University of California at Berkeley, Harvard University, the University of Chicago, the University of Hawaii, Smith College, and the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley. The University of Calgary and the University of Toronto in Canada, have also been awarded Chairs. In Europe three prestigious universities, the University of London, Oxford University, and Leiden University, now have Numata Chairs. Internationally renowned scholars, mostly Japanese, have filled them. Sufficient contributions to the endowed Chairs are made annually for up to twenty years, after which time each Chair will have become self-sustaining through the accumulated funds.

Numata Center. The Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, located in Berkeley, CA was established in November 1984. Its dedication and opening ceremonies were well attended. Many distinguished Buddhist scholars and guests participated. Leaders of BDK Japan, Dr. George Rupp, who was then Dean of the Divinity School at Harvard, and Provost Leonard Kuhi of the University of California at Berkeley, were also present. The Numata Center's principal mission is to act as the agent of BDK Japan in the Tripitaka Translation and Publication Project. It is also responsible for the publication of the BDK English Tripitaka. In general the Numata Center assists the BDK USA and BDK Japan in the accomplishment of their respective missions. Key staff members include Dr. Nobuo Haneda and the Reverend Seishin Yamashita.

Tripitaka Translation Project. Perhaps the most significant undertaking by Mr. Numata and the BDK is the translation into English, and publication of the voluminous Taisho Chinese Tripitaka. It was the desire of Yehan Numata to introduce the still largely unexplored Chinese Mahayana Tripitaka throughout the English-speaking world. Thus the BDK English Tripitaka Translation Project was born. The First Series
offers 139 original Tripitaka texts. The work then began in 1982 in Tokyo. A 13-member group of leading Japanese Buddhist scholars, headed by Professor Shoyu Hanayama of the Musashino Women's College, was formed as the Tripitaka Editorial Committee. It oversees the entire project of the translation and publication. Next in December 1991, headquartered in the Numata Center, came the Publication Committee headed by Professor Emeritus Philip Yampolsky of Columbia University. It is the task of the Publication Committee to produce the finished volumes. This committee, which consists of six Buddhist scholars and editors, is dedicated to lucid and readable works that will do justice to the Buddhist Canon, and Mr. Numata's dream of seeing them in English.

Publication of the English Buddhist Canon Has Begun!

The publication of the BDK English Tripitaka, well-edited and readable Buddhist texts, has been awaited by many Buddhist scholars and followers. This marks the start of the first complete English Buddhist canon. This is an unprecedented event started and sponsored by Mr. Yehan Numata, the founder of the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism (Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai). In his "Message" to the publication of the First Series of the BDK English Tripitaka, Mr. Numata says, "No one has ever attempted to translate the entire Buddhist canon into English throughout the history of Japan. It is my greatest wish to see this done and to make the translations available to the many English-speaking people who have never had the opportunity to learn about the Buddha's teachings." Approximately 10% of the Chinese Tripitaka is expected to be finished by the year 2010 A.D.

The Numata Center is now distributing the books. Concerning the Summary of the Great Vehicle, the first of the four published texts, Dr. Hajime Nakamura, a professor emeritus of Tokyo University and eminent Buddhist scholar, says:

The first-ever English translation of The Summary of the Great Vehicle has now been published. The work is a good compendium of the basic tenets of Buddhism, written by Asanga (4th century A.D.) in India. Although the original text (in Sanskrit) has been lost, four recensions in Tibetan and Chinese are extant. Of these, a Chinese translation by the Indian scholar-monk Paramartha (499-569 A.D.), has been the most highly regarded, being considered an accurate rendering of the original author's intent. It is this text which has most often been utilized in scholarly research, and it is this text
which has now been translated into English and published. The original work has been faithfully translated, yet the book is in easily readable form. The selection of words shows how difficult the translation must have been.

In the Editorial Foreword to the English canon, Dr. Shoyu Hanayama, the chairman of the Editorial Committee, talks about the enormity and purpose of the project, "Frankly speaking, it will take perhaps one hundred years or more to accomplish the English translation of the complete Chinese and Japanese scriptures and texts, which consist of thousands of works. Nevertheless, as Mr. Numata wished, it is the sincere hope of the Committee that this project will continue unto completion, even after all its present members have passed away...the final objective of this project is not academic fulfillment but the transmission of the teaching of the Buddha to the whole world in order to create harmony and peace among mankind."

The Numata Center in Berkeley, California, has published four Tripitaka texts: The Summary of the Great Vehicle, The Biographical Scripture of King Asoka, The Lotus Sutra, and The Sutra on Upasaka Precepts. At least four volumes are expected to be published every year. These are beautifully designed hard cover books, printed on heavy stock, non-glare paper. All volumes include academic citations.

The first book is, The Summary of the Great Vehicle by Bodhisattva Asanga translated from the Chinese of Paramartha. It is Taisho Vol. 31, No. 1593, and translated and introduced by Professor John P. Keenan of Middlebury College. There are ten Chapters to the text, and it is fully indexed. A Glossary and Selected Bibliography are also included. Following this is the list of the texts to be released in the First Series. In total, the volume is 147 pages long. It offers an overview of Yogacara and Mahayana thought.

The second volume is The Biographical Scripture of King Asoka translated from the Chinese of Samghapala. Professor Li Rongxi of the Buddhist Association of China translated the text. As Taisho Vol. 50, No. 2043, it comprises eight Chapters. There are 203 pages, with an Introduction, Glossary and Index. Like Mr. Numata, King Asoka was a great benefactor of the Buddhist Teachings. Here is a book for general readers and scholars alike.

Next is the Lotus Sutra translated from the Chinese of Kumaraśīva. Professors Kubo Tsugunari and Yuyama Akira of the International Institute for Buddhist Studies have translated Taisho Vol. 9, No. 262. In 363 pages are 28 Chapters, a Sanskrit Glossary, a Selected Bibliography, and an Index. This is a new and authoritative translation, applying the latest scholarship to one of the most important works in history.
Venerable Shih Heng-ching of the Fa-Kuang Institute of Buddhist Studies in Taipei is the translator of *The Sutra on Upasaka Precepts translated from the Chinese of Dharmaraksa*. The book is 225 pages long, with 28 Chapters, Glossary, Selected Bibliography, and Index. This is a significant text, as it gives the canonical guidelines for lay followers of the Buddha.

Now the Numata Center is offering a subscription to the entire First Series of the English Tripitaka. At least four books a year will be distributed. They will be shipped in protective boxes, international orders are welcomed. The subscription price as planned is $70 US for three books. This price includes shipping and handling. For more information, please contact the Numata Center at the below address and telephone number.

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