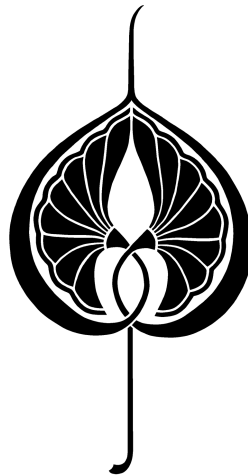


# PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

Third Series Number 2  
Fall 2000

**SPECIAL ISSUE ON T'AN-LUAN AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF SHIN BUDDHIST THOUGHT**



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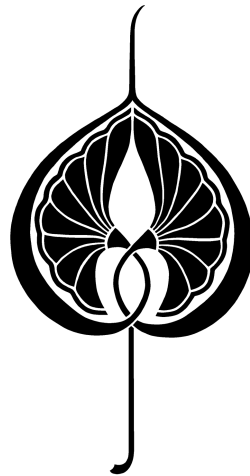


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## **Editorial Preface: Special Issue on T'an-luan (traditional dates: 476–542, current scholarship suggests, c. 488–554)**

Although there is still relatively little focused study of T'an-luan in Western Buddhist Studies scholarship, he is important both in the development of Shin Buddhist thought, and in understanding the complexities of Chinese Buddhist history. Out of the variety of works attributed to T'an-luan, the two which are considered unquestionably authentic are both concerned with Amitābha and birth in Sukhāvati. One is a liturgical work known in English as the *Canticles on Amitābha* (T. 1978). The other is a commentary on a work traditionally attributed to the Indian Yogācāra master, Vasubandhu. This latter is known in English as the *Treatise on Birth* (T. 1524), and T'an-luan's work is known as the *Commentary on the Treatise on Birth* (T. 1819). It is this latter work that has been most influential on the development of Shin Buddhism, since Shinran drew on it quite extensively in composing his own masterpiece, *Teaching, Practice, and Realization*.

The essays published in this issue of *Pacific World* are intended to provide a deeper understanding of T'an-luan and his contribution to Shin Buddhist thought. Roger Corless' opening essay seeks to place T'an-luan in his Chinese context. This highlights aspects of T'an-luan in the historical development of Chinese Buddhism, e.g., the early importance of Madhyāmika. Bandō Shojun's essay, reprinted here by permission of The Eastern Buddhist, focuses on the influence of T'an-luan's ideas on Shinran, particularly the unity of being and non-being, jiriki and tariki, and the transfer of merit. Ryūsei Takeda examines T'an-luan's discussion of how birth in the Pure Land is brought about. Jitsuen Kakehashi discusses the very technical issue of T'an-luan's understanding of the concept of Other Power. One of the most important concepts that Shinran drew from T'an-luan is the idea of two different kinds of dharma-body, which is discussed by Yukio Yamada. A key concept in the development of Pure Land thought in general is the idea of "hearing of the Name," discussed by Rishō Ōta. The "hearing of the Name" not only influenced T'an-luan's understanding of the importance of the Name of Amitābha, but also contributed to the development of his theory of language. David Matsumoto's review essay discusses the importance of Hisao Inagaki's translation and study of T'an-luan's *Commentary*. Chapter Seven of Shinkō Mochizuki's *Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History*, translated by Leo Pruden, places T'an-luan in the Chinese development of Pure Land Buddhism. Wayne Yokoyama has translated the introduction to one of the most important

works of Japanese scholarship on T'an-luan's Commentary, an extensive set of lectures given by Kōgatsuin Jinrei. Closing this collection of works on T'an-luan, Russell Kirkland examines the implications of an alternative metaphor for conceiving of the history of religions, one which provides a response to those who have questioned the legitimacy of Pure Land Buddhism as part of the Mahāyāna tradition.

In addition, we are pleased to include a jointly-authored essay on engaged Shin Buddhism by Michio Tokunaga and Alfred Bloom, and the second part of Hisao Inagaki's translation of Shan-tao's work on contemplating the figure of Amitābha Buddha. Finally, we include several book reviews, including a group discussing recent critical reflections on Buddhism and Buddhist Studies.

As chair of the Editorial Committee, I want to express my deep appreciation to David Matsumoto, Harry Bridge, and Eisho Nasu for translating several of the essays in this issue, and to Eisho Nasu for his labors preparing the text for printing.

**Richard K. Payne**

Institute of Buddhist Studies, Dean  
and Pacific World Editorial Committee, Chair