

## **Pure Land's Multilineal Ancestry: A New Metaphor for Understanding the Evolution of "Living Religions"<sup>1</sup>**

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ALL STUDENTS OF BUDDHISM know that its East Asian branches developed in ways that often make them seem quite different from their South Asian antecedents. Most students of East Asian Buddhism also know that from time to time some of its great historical expositors tried to make it clear that their distinctive emphases in doctrine or practice were actually well-grounded in Buddhism's earlier forms. In medieval Japan, for instance, such assuring explanations sometimes seemed necessary because the representatives of such emerging traditions as Pure Land and Zen had come under criticism from representatives of other Buddhist schools, who alleged that such emerging traditions deviated from the standards of earlier, "more authentic" Buddhist traditions. Comparable debates and contention had, of course, also been taking place in China, and even Tibet, for hundreds of years.

Over the generations, the responses by representatives of Zen and Pure Land came to satisfy many in their own land, but do not always satisfy modern scholars. Modern scholarship, throughout the world, is grounded in a critical questioning of tradition, and twentieth-century scholars often took great interest in various old charges that had been levied against one Buddhist school by someone who had some interest in casting doubt upon its value or authenticity. Some such scholars even weighed in on those sometimes centuries-old "issues," as when the British writer Christmas Humphreys asked, for instance, whether Shinran's teachings had not "discarded three-quarters of Buddhism."<sup>2</sup> Others, meanwhile, uncritically perpetuated, and further disseminated, very partial and misleading ideas about Zen.

In recent years, more knowledgeable scholars—both scholars working within the traditions themselves, and scholars outside the traditions who seek greater accuracy in our understanding of the development of Buddhism—have worked to correct such mistaken claims.<sup>3</sup> Both those who study these traditions and those who practice them have benefitted from such new turns in recent scholarship. All who work to explain these

forms of Buddhism accurately now seem to have passed the “apologetic stage,” when it seemed necessary to justify such traditions in the face of misunderstandings and attacks. As the world begins to reach a point when everyone can recognize and appreciate such traditions as Pure Land and Zen as “authentic” versions of the *Dharma*, scholars may now be in a position to help clarify some of the subtle, but sometimes far-reaching, influences that other Asian traditions, like Taoism or even Confucianism, may have had upon certain elements of Zen or Pure Land beliefs or practices.

To suggest the possibility of such influences is certainly not to draw those beliefs or practices into question, nor to challenge their authenticity. Rather, it is to acknowledge that Jōdo leaders like Hōnen and Shinran were interpreting Buddhism for a Japanese audience, just as their predecessors in China—people like T’an-luan (488–554), Hsin-hsing (540–594), and Tao-ch’o (562–645)—had been interpreting Buddhism for a Chinese audience. In modern eyes, those men’s interpretive efforts, like those of centuries of Zen expositors, sometimes seem to contrast sharply with earlier interpretations of the *Dharma*. That is because when one presents a message to a new audience, it is generally necessary (1) to give emphasis to certain elements of that message that the audience will best be able to understand and appreciate, and (2) to speak less often, or less forcefully, about other elements, which the audience might find more difficult to understand or accept. Hōnen, for instance, believed that his contemporaries would be more likely to respond to the Pure Land message if he stressed the facts that suggested that his society was beginning to enter the age of *mappō*, when Amida’s offer to convey believers to the Pure Land might seem more compelling than it had to people of earlier times. Most scholars today are well aware that Hōnen’s teachings concerning *mappō* were actually a continuation of Buddhist teachings that reach back not just to his Pure Land forebears in China, but to a variety of older Indian texts that expressed earlier versions of that teaching.<sup>4</sup> Because scholars have now gained acceptance for such facts, we can better appreciate Shinran’s efforts to demonstrate in his *Kyōgyōshinshō* that the idea of *mappō* was well established in the Buddhist scriptural tradition.

Because of recent scholars’ successes in clarifying the historical and doctrinal continuities between such “new” traditions as Pure Land and earlier continental Buddhist traditions, I would like to examine such matters from a different perspective. I wish to propose new ways of thinking about how Chinese and Japanese Buddhists worked to make sense of Buddhist teachings (for newcomers, if not indeed for themselves) in terms of elements of their indigenous cultural traditions. I do not mean to retreat into outdated interpretive approaches that often assumed that Buddhism and native traditions were intrinsically separate and mutually exclusive. As I noted earlier, such arguments were often grounded in age-

old sectarian disputes within East Asian Buddhism, and were perpetuated by earlier generations of scholars who often had a very incomplete knowledge of the pertinent texts, and of the pertinent facts of East Asian history. As scholarship has advanced—and as expositors of such traditions as Pure Land have more successfully explained their tradition to modern audiences—we should now at last be able to look at such issues with greater accuracy and sensitivity, and leave behind outdated interpretive models that were rooted in the real or perceived need to refute charges that were ultimately grounded in sectarianism and ignorance.

What I wish to suggest here is a new interpretive metaphor, which might help enrich our efforts to make sense of how centuries of Buddhists, in China and Japan alike, successfully made Buddhism their own. This metaphor will, I believe, help us understand not only the distinctive Buddhist message of Pure Land, but also of certain other “new” forms of East Asian Buddhism, particularly Ch’an/Zen.

#### THE METAPHOR OF “MULTI-LINEARITY”

The metaphor that I wish to suggest is a metaphor based upon the simple fact that each human being is the product of the fruitful interaction of two pre-existing human beings. Each of us is a complex and subtle outgrowth of the physical and experiential contents of the lives and history of each of those pre-existing beings. On one level, the “individual” can meaningfully be viewed as a “product” of two separate streams of distinct—though ultimately compatible—genetic material. Just as Zen is clearly distinct from Pure Land, a person with blue eyes is clearly distinct—both in appearance and in genetic detail—from a person with brown eyes. And yet, two such persons are, more fundamentally, members of the same ancient and variegated species, and can, with little difficulty, interact in such a way as to produce a child. That child will share the genetic details (and perhaps elements of the appearance) of each parent, yet will not be identical to either. And on a deeper level, each of the parents is her/himself the end-product of a multi-generational stream of precisely such combinatory unions. Hence, “Jane” is the product not only of her mother and her father, but of both of her mother’s ancestral lineages (maternal and paternal) and of both of her father’s ancestral lineages (maternal and paternal). And yet (in such cultures as China and Japan as in most other lands) Jane will carry only one surname, a surname that identifies her as the scion of one of those lineages, and does not explicitly acknowledge the equal contribution that the other lineage(s) had in the eventual production of the complex reality that is “Jane.”

The fact that Jane carries her father’s surname is a due and appropriate acknowledgement that she is indeed his child, and is fully representative

of the Doe “family”—itself not a singular bio-historical entity, but rather the result of a rich interplay of multifarious elements of earlier lineages, reaching back into pre-recorded times. Pure Land Buddhism is, like Zen, of the “house and lineage” of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is true that (1) in earlier ages, sectarian critics sometimes disputed the legitimacy of Pure Land’s Mahāyāna “bloodline,” and that (2) twentieth-century writers and teachers, often ill-informed about the realities of Pure Land teachings, sometimes echoed such charges, alleging—in the terms of my metaphor—that Pure Land is so unlike its paternal ancestors in earlier Buddhist traditions that it must be branded, metaphorically, as a bastard child, if not, indeed, as a mutant—a genetic oddity.

But I contend that such charges may be easily and effectively answered by adducing the metaphor of every individual’s multi-linear ancestry. For instance, to affirm that Pure Land is indeed the “legitimate” outgrowth of Mahāyāna Buddhism is not to deny the fact that it is distinctive from earlier forms of that tradition, any more than to affirm Harry Doe’s parentage of Jane would be to assert that Harry and Jane are “the same.” Rather, guided by this metaphor, we can affirm three related claims concerning the status of Pure Land, claims which also apply equally well to Ch’an/Zen. First, Pure Land is a natural and logical product of its “paternal” Buddhist ancestry—itsself, a very rich and complex heritage. Second, Pure Land is a natural and understandable product of its Chinese, and Japanese, cultural heritages—its “maternal” heritage, as it were. And, third, Pure Land is, like any individual person, a new and valuable reality in its own right, a reality that ought never be misunderstood as “merely” the combination of earlier cultural traditions—any more than Jane’s realities can legitimately be explained as merely an extension or continuation of those of her father or her mother. Jane is a distinctive and valuable person in her own right, not because she is “other” than each of her parents, but rather because she inherits and perpetuates many elements of each parental lineage, yet adds to each heritage something distinctively new—her own individual human reality.

I propose that we apply such a metaphor to the study of Pure Land’s rich “evolutionary history.” I suggest that it may be useful for better appreciating, on one level, the broad cultural changes that naturally occur at two moments in a religion’s history. The first is when any religion endures into a distinctly new temporal phase. For example, when any tradition, Buddhist or otherwise, finds itself trying to survive the accession of a hostile government, or trying to serve people’s needs in the newly industrialized economies of modern times. The second historical moment is when any such religion is transmitted from one socio-cultural environment to another. For example, when the one-time “Jewish sect” called Christianity was carried into pagan Europe; or when Indian Buddhist traditions were carried into Tibet, or China, or Japan.

Moreover, on a more particularized level, this metaphor can help us better appreciate the specific motives, perspectives, and actions of important historical individuals, people like T'an-luan, Hsin-hsing, and Tao-ch'ō in Six Dynasties China, or Hōnen and Shinran in later Japan. We can understand how each of those individuals lived and taught the way he did in terms of three different ways of thinking about them: as a Buddhist, as a Chinese or Japanese person, and as an individual. As a Buddhist, each saw life as most clearly understandable in that tradition's terms. As a Chinese or Japanese person each inherited the historical, social, and intellectual realities that were his nation's indigenous heritage. Finally, as an individual each has his own personal realities, distinct even from his friends and colleagues, who may have lived in the same community, at the same time, and treasured the same truths. People like T'an-luan, Hōnen, and Shinran can be understood neither merely in terms of the Buddhist heritage that he sought to preserve and propagate, nor merely in terms of his need to make sense of that heritage for the hearts, minds, and lives of sixth-century Chinese or twelfth-century Japanese individuals. Rather, to explain such a person's Buddhism requires thoughtful and sensitive attention to all those realities, and to the specific life-realities that made Tao-ch'ō's Pure Land quite distinct from that of T'an-luan, or Shinran's Pure Land quite distinct from that of his esteemed teacher Hōnen.

#### THE "MATRILINEAL" CHINESE ANCESTRIES OF THE CONCEPT OF *MAPPŌ*

As one means of exploring this metaphor, I will focus upon the Pure Land concept of *mappō*. In a very important sense, the specific contours of the Shin concept of *mappō* evolved within the historical context of Japanese Buddhism: (1) it was an element of Heian Buddhist beliefs, back to the days of Saichō;<sup>5</sup> (2) it was sharply refined and emphasized by Hōnen, for reasons that were, in themselves, a combination of personal, political, doctrinal and cultural factors; and (3) it culminated in the thought of Shinran, where a quite different combination of quite similar factors gave it a distinct new meaning for his heirs and followers. It ought not surprise us that Shinran's teachings were distinct from those of his teacher, for just as two sisters are each the combination of the genes, and the instruction and guidance, of each of their parents, those sisters are never entirely the same as each other, for each is a different combination of such factors, responding to a different set of life-realities.

In another sense, the Shin concept of *mappō* was mapped for men like Hōnen by Chinese Buddhists like Hsin-hsing and Tao-ch'ō, centuries earlier. It is indisputable that Hōnen's concept of *mappō* was shaped by the realities of his own age and culture, as well as by his own original reflection

upon the relevance of such teachings to people of his age. But it also revived, and on certain levels reflected, the parallel thought and teachings of his Chinese predecessors. And those individuals were themselves an evolutionary product of earlier cultural and religious lineages—some tracing back to Mahāyāna texts and teachings in their earlier Indian setting, and others reflecting the various streams of their indigenous Chinese cultural heritage.

No one today would be likely to argue that China's indigenous culture could provide a full or exclusive explanation of the Pure Land concept of *mappō*.<sup>6</sup> Such concepts were also formed (1) out of the scriptural and intellectual realities of their Indian Buddhist ancestry, and (2) out of the specific socio-cultural context within which men like Hsin-hsing and Tao-ch'ō lived and taught. And yet, if we look further into the rich interplay of intellectual and cultural heritages that contributed to the evolution of the Pure Land tradition, we find that the general idea that "we live in a degenerate age" actually had broad and ancient roots in indigenous Chinese traditions, quite distinctly from the lives or thoughts of any East Asian Buddhist. It is those indigenous roots that I wish to explore briefly here. I shall argue that while we must give full and due attention to the Buddhist ancestry of the concept of *mappō*, we should also give due attention its other cultural ancestry, to which we might refer, metaphorically, as its maternal heritage.

Long before Buddhism arrived in China, Chinese thinkers had been deliberating upon the deeper meanings of history. For Confucians, in particular, pondering the workings of life's stream of events had been at the core of Confucian consciousness right from the time of Master K'ung himself. It is easy to explain such concerns simply in terms of social and political issues. Confucius identified his own moral ideals with the social, moral, and religious ideals of the Chou ruling house, which had come to power half a millennium earlier. He gave credence to those who believed (1) that the Chou had once been mighty, effective, and wise rulers; (2) that Chou political power had declined appallingly in recent ages—indeed, in his day, rulers of feudal statelets, once Chou tributaries, had begun to act quite independently of the Chou "king"; and (3) that the decline in Chou power could be traced to a distressing deviation from the values and ideals that had—at least in Chou political texts and in some subjects' minds—been the underlying source of the dynasty's power and effectiveness. Confucius, like many others in classical China, believed in the efficacy of a good and great man to exert a transformative power, a power that could not only inspire others to follow his moral lead (like grass bending beneath the wind), but could also, ultimately, restore the entirety of society, through restoring the active power of Chou socio-spiritual traditions (*li*, "ritual" / "propriety").<sup>7</sup>

The problem for Confucians, however, is that “recent history” (i.e., in what we call the classical period) seemed to provide distressing evidence that Confucius’ idealistic faith in the reversibility of his world’s moral and political decline was not substantiated by the actual course of events. His famous “successor” Mencius continued to argue for something close to Confucius’ own position, but by the time of the next best-known Confucian expositor, Hsün-tzu, the idea that it is possible to reverse the world’s decline through individual moral self-perfection could no longer reasonably be held, even by Confucius’ own defenders. These concerns—concerns which, I shall argue, formed the soil in which the idea of *mappō* would eventually grow in later China—remained painfully acute for Confucians as the classical period ended and the imperial era dawned. Despite the efforts of all manner of Confucians, not only was the Chou never restored, but by the time the “Legalist” First Emperor, Ch’in Shih Huang-ti, had come to power (221 B.C.E.), all manner of Confucians were being executed, and their writings burnt. That event, I propose, permanently undermined the “naïve confidence” of earlier Confucians that history’s decline can be happily halted.<sup>8</sup>

A complete analysis of the historical evolution of Confucian attitudes through Han times into the Six Dynasties is not necessary here. But I will suggest that there is one element of that evolution that had an enduring legacy among Chinese Buddhists. After the fall of the Han (ca. 200 C.E.), Confucians had to choose between two options. One was to assimilate themselves to the new developments in Taoism (like Ko Hung [fl. ca. 300], a maverick Confucian who labored to demonstrate that the pursuit of “immortality” was a good pursuit for literati “gentlemen”). The other was to submerge themselves in self-pity, because they could see no hope for redemption of the social-political order (i.e., in Confucian terms, “the world”) by means of the programmatic values of classical Confucianism. Twentieth-century writers, blinkered by such perceptions among the next 1500 years of Confucians, frequently portrayed the Six Dynasties as a “dark age.” In reality, it was generally a time of cultural efflorescence—for everyone except those who identified themselves exclusively as Confucians.

In sum, many thinkers in classical China—including Taoists as well as Confucians—had looked back to an ideal “golden age,” but never with any sense of hopelessness or despair regarding the present or future. (Indeed, among all such thinkers, the primary goal of life was to effect a return to that “golden age,” according to such thinkers’ own values and principles.) Nor is any sense of “eschatological despair” perceptible in the Confucian thought of Han times. It is only after the Han dynasty had fallen—and many new forms of Buddhism and Taoism had begun finding true acceptance at all levels of society—that the now-disenfranchised Confucians began to wallow in despair and self-pity. Extending the ideas of worldly

decline that they had inherited from their classical forerunners, they began to see themselves as occupying the nadir of a universal decline of all that is good and worthy. It was, I suggest, such feelings—grounded deeply in Confucian traditions—that provided fertile ground for the Buddhist seeds that would sprout into the Pure Land concept of *mappō*.

For these reasons, I wish to suggest that besides recognizing the “Buddhisticity” of those seeds, and the Buddhist identity of the “fathers” who planted and cultivated them, we should also recognize the “maternal” heritage that derived from the thought and experiences of centuries of Confucians. Better, therefore, than the metaphor of “soil” would be the metaphor of a “womb”—a living part of a living being, whose participation is essential for any germination of new life. The concept of *mappō* was indeed latent within Indian Buddhism, just as genetic seeds are carried within a future father even before he meets the eventual mother of his offspring. But in acknowledging such “patrilineal” elements of the process, we should not overlook the essential, perhaps equally important, “matrilineal” contributions.

#### THE CHINESE “MATRIX” OF THE PURE LAND CONCEPT OF *MAPPŌ*

I propose, therefore, that we should explore much more fully the Chinese “matrilineal heritage” for the Pure Land concept of *mappō*. The need for such new perspectives can be argued from such facts as the following:

- (1) the relative marginality of such ideas within the “patrilineal” heritage (i.e., most of Indian Buddhism);
- (2) the long Chinese heritage of such ideas within Confucianism, all the way back to Confucius himself;
- (3) the Taoist Ling-pao revelation of the late 4th-century—offering “salvation” to all by a great loving “deity” in lieu of the world-renewal by a “messiah” who had failed to appear; and
- (4) the centrality of the Six-Dynasties Confucian sense of despair over the perception that we are living in a degenerate age—a despair seldom attested in any other element of earlier Buddhism, or even earlier Chinese traditions.<sup>9</sup>

Though the idea of “degeneration of the Dharma” had a fairly long history in Indian Buddhism, it does not seem to have played a role there comparable to the central role that it came to play in the lives and thought of certain Pure Land Buddhists of China and Japan. It does not seem to have

held a fundamental place in how most Indian Buddhists understood the religious options that were available to them, or to have often engendered an "eschatological" sense that the world is approaching such a dreadful state that one's own conscientious practice can never have the necessary efficacy. Such ideas do not seem to have been really central to most Indian Buddhist traditions, any more than they were to any other form of Indian religion: generally speaking, Hindus and Buddhists alike looked at history as a cyclical process, wherein a new beginning would eventually follow the end of every age. The Indian Buddhists who held such views did often share with Pure Land Buddhists the notion that "we today" are living at the end of a cycle, a time when the world is in its worst condition. But outside of Pure Land, most Buddhists—in South and East Asia alike—felt little despair over such a fact, for they—like, indeed, some Taoists in Six Dynasties times—believed that a cosmic change for the better was in the offing. Buddhists throughout Asia, for instance, often looked forward with expectation to the imminent arrival of Maitreya (Chinese, "Mi-lo"), the Buddha of "the next age." If Maitreya's advent into our world is about to take place even now, as many Buddhists in first-millennium China (and later) believed, we certainly need feel no despair or self-pity about the present or future condition of the world.

That dynamic was shared also by millenarian Taoists, most notably (1) in Han times (e.g., in the *T'ai-p'ing ching's* promise of a coming "Celestial Master," *T'ien-shih*); (2) toward the end of the fourth-century (when the Shang-ch'ing "Perfected Ones" promised an imminent "Sage of the Later Age"); and (3) even into the early decades of the Tang dynasty (7th century).<sup>10</sup>

In the present context, perhaps the most important such belief was one that was current in the latter part of the fourth century. At that time, some people in China—we know not how many—placed faith in a prophecy that the new millennium would arrive in the year that we date as 392 C.E. Such hopes were dashed, however, when the "Sage of the Later Age" (*hou-sheng*) failed to appear at the expected time. Some people thereupon turned their hopes to a new set of scriptures, which told of a great loving deity who offered salvation freely to all who would accept it—most prominently, the Ling-pao "Scripture for Human Salvation" (*Tu-jen ching*).<sup>11</sup> It has been conclusively shown that the Ling-pao texts of Taoism were directly influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism.<sup>12</sup> The universalistic ideals of Ling-pao Taoism—manifested in public liturgical rites, universal ethical ideals, and even implicit justification for greater women's participation—deeply influenced "mainstream Taoism" of the fifth to eighth centuries, and even beyond.<sup>13</sup> There has not yet been sufficient research into whether or how such traditions might have indirectly influenced Chinese of that period who wished to live their lives on Buddhist terms. But we should note that those Ling-pao traditions—which might have helped

such Buddhists find meaning and value in the Pure Land Scriptures—seldom suggest any concept like *mappō*. They may even be better explained as Taoism’s response to ideas like *mappō*, ideas that had in fact been present in several earlier strands of Chinese thought and religion.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, a Chinese argument for world-cycles, into each of which a being of great wisdom comes to lead us, can even be traced back into classical Confucianism. The classical Confucian thinker Mencius (*Mencius* 7B. 38) maintained that a true “Sage” appears only once each 500 years, and that we are now (i.e., in the third century B.C.E.) long overdue for one.

So a sense of imminent renewal of a great world-cycle—issued in by a wise and holy being (whether Buddha or “Sage”)—was present both in Pure Land’s “patrilineal” Buddhist heritage, and in not just one of its “matrilineal” Chinese traditions—Confucianism and Taoism—but within both of them.

And yet, a sense of “eschatological despair”—a sense that world-renewal is *not* imminent, so that we must look to some “external power” to “save” us in an individual or spiritual sense—is seldom perceptible in the religious or cultural traditions of any of those traditions during the period in which Buddhism was becoming deeply ingrained in Chinese society. I propose, therefore, that it was the despair about history among Six-Dynasty Confucians (the literati who deemed it their duty to shape their society’s values and perceptions) that provided the stimulus that was essential for germination of the concept of *mappō* that Chinese Buddhists found in elements of that religion’s earlier heritage. The cultural traditions of China—which, in Confucianism and Taoism alike, focussed on the meaningfulness of this moment in history, and the challenge that this moment poses for our spiritual decisions—constituted, in this metaphor, the matrix (Latin, “womb”), within which the idea of *mappō* could be conceived. The pertinent Buddhist concepts that had arrived from India provided, figuratively, the “seed” that would come to life within that cultural matrix, leading eventually to a birth of new religious perspectives among some of the leading figures of Pure Land Buddhism in East Asia.

#### THE PIVOTAL JUNCTURE: THE INDIVIDUAL HUMAN LIFE

Yet, all such metaphors can be misleading, if we used them reductionistically, i.e., to reduce any person’s religious beliefs and teachings to no more than the merging of certain pre-existent cultural or religious streams. Clearly, certain leading Buddhists of sixth and seventh century China, like Hsin-hsing and Tao-ch’o, (1) were “the product” of centuries of Chinese traditions, which subtly influenced their thought, and (2) consciously based their belief in *mappō* upon Buddhist scriptural traditions concerning

the eventual degeneration of the Dharma and the sangha. And yet—in any age or culture—any human being ultimately cherishes a given religious belief for one implicit reason: because that belief makes sense in terms of that person's own life experience. The Buddhists of early medieval China encountered a wide variety of religious concepts in the traditions that they had inherited—Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian alike. But some of those concepts made more sense to them than others, and became more central features of their teachings as well as of their lives. What I wish to suggest here is merely that the Buddhists among whom the Pure Land tradition evolved in China saw the scriptural doctrines concerning *mappō* as being true and important because such ideas fit in well with their own conceptions of History and their own perceptions of contemporary reality. The idea that the present age is a degenerate one made eminent sense to a number of thoughtful Chinese Buddhists of the sixth and seventh centuries because many thoughtful Chinese, including Confucians and Taoists, had felt—for a thousand years or so, at least—that “we are currently living in a degenerate age,” and that “we need to ponder the implications of that fact for our own lives.”

Perhaps what was unique in the experience of early Pure Land Buddhists in China was the intensity with which they wrestled with that feeling, and the need that they felt to address fully and directly the soteriological implications of the idea of *mappō*. Unlike the Confucians or Taoists of Six Dynasties China, the Pure Land Buddhists of that society turned to Buddhist tradition (1) to help them understand the realities of the world in which they lived, and (2) to help them decide what views to adopt, and what actions to take, in order to help themselves, and others around them, cope with those realities. I believe that it is here that we may gain a heightened sensitivity to the fact that religious individuals, in any age or culture, frequently find themselves at a subtle and delicate juncture—a crux between received doctrine and one's own perceived reality, each of which, to some extent, reflects the shared reality in which individual and society participate together. It is the extent to which “received doctrine” and “perceived reality” harmonize and resonate together that helps the individual find strength in the tradition, and find his or her opportunity to reimpart new strength into that tradition, by means of his or her own contributions. It is in such individuals' own spiritual efforts that religious traditions are both re-shaped—to keep in tune with changing times, and to accommodate challenging new perspectives from other cultural sources—and re-invigorated.

## NOTES

1. Portions of this paper were first presented at the Fifth Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (Berkeley, California, 1991).
2. Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 164.
3. For instance, Yanagida Seizan's work showing that Zen had deep roots in the Māhāyana scriptural tradition, which is only now beginning to reach the educated public in the West.
4. See most especially Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991).
5. See Robert Rhodes, "Saichō's *Mappō-tōmyōki*," *Eastern Buddhist*, n.s. 13 (1980): pp. 79–103.
6. Of course, there was actually an array of distinct concepts of *mappō* throughout, and even prior to, the history of Pure Land Buddhism itself. For an introductory survey of such matters, see Taitetsu Unno's entry, "Mappō," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 9 (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 182–85. The idea of *mappō*, which was not prominent in the teachings of T'an-luan, seems to have been adopted by Tao-ch'ō in the early seventh century, inspired by the beliefs of the then-recently-suppressed "Three Stages" school that Hsin-hsing had founded. Cf. Miyakawa Hisayuki's entry on Hsin-hsing in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 6, pp. 478–79.
7. Such a belief in the transformative power of the wise man was not in any sense strictly Confucian: much of early Taoism displays precisely such a belief, not only in the *Tao te ching*, but even in the earlier *Nei-yeh*. See Kirkland, "Responsible Non-Action in a Natural World," in Norman Girardot, Liu Xiaogan, and James Miller, ed., *Taoism and Ecology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming); and "Varieties of 'Taoism' in Ancient China: A Preliminary Comparison of Themes in the *Nei yeh* and Other 'Taoist Classics,'" *Taoist Resources*, 7-2 (1997): pp. 73–86. Also, despite our late-modern/postmodern assumption that such a person could, naturally, be of either gender, there is little evidence that Confucius or his followers could have conceived of their ideal person, "the *chün-tzu*," as anything other than male. In the Taoist contexts, such matters are far more ambiguous.
8. In the early Han period, the Confucian theorist Tung Chung-shu was compelled to re-think the entire issue of "history" and its meaning. He came up with an apparently original argument that history consists of

cyclical patterns, which originate in the designs of "Heaven" (*T'ien*) but are concretized by the actions of rulers. See my article, "Dong Zhongshu / Tung Chung-shu," in Ian McGreal, ed., *Great Thinkers of the Eastern World* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995): pp. 67–70. Tung's perception of history, however, seldom reappears in later Confucianism, at least not until K'ang Yu-wei, at the very end of the 19th-century.

9. One might add that such ideas also seem rather alien to the cultural "heritage" of pre-Buddhist Japan.

10. See, e.g., Anna Seidel, "Taoist Messianism," *Numen*, 31 (1984): pp. 161–74; and Christine Mollier, "Messianisme taoïste de la Chine Médiévale: Étude du *Dongyuan shenzhou jing*" (dissertation, Université de Paris, 1986). The latest scholarship on all such aspects of Taoism can now be found in the authoritative reference work, *Daoism Handbook*, edited by Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

11. Until the final years of the 20th century, the very existence of the *Tu-jen ching* was unknown to all but a few scholars of Taoism. The first English translation appeared in Stephen R. Bokenkamp's *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 373–438. See also Yamada Toshiaki, "The Lingbao School," in Kohn, ed., *Daoism Handbook*, pp. 225–255.

12. See, e.g., Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures" in Michel Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, vol. 2 (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983), pp. 434–485.

13. Cf. my articles, "The Roots of Altruism in the Taoist Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 54 (1986), pp. 59–77; "Dimensions of Tang Taoism: The State of the Field at the End of the Millennium," *T'ang Studies* 15 and 16 (1997–98): pp. 79–123; and "Taoism," in *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religions*, II (New York: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 959–64

14. Roger Corless once wrote of "the close link that must have been popularly perceived between the soteriological goals of Taoism and some of the Buddhist traditions, a link that may have contributed to the rapid growth in popularity of the Amitābha cult in T'an-luan's time." See his entry, "T'an-luan," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 14, p. 270. Further research into such links remains to be done.

