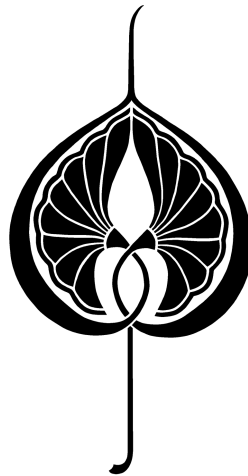


PACIFIC WORLD

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**



PACIFIC WORLD

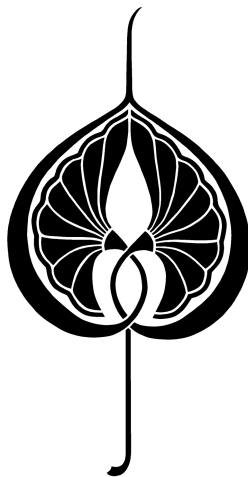
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Editorial Preface: Special Issue on T'an-luan (traditional dates: 476–542, current scholarship suggests, c. 488–554)

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

The Enduring Significance of T'an-luan

Roger Corless

Professor of Religion, Duke University

T'AN-LUAN IS THE SLEEPER of Pure Land Buddhism, perhaps even the sleeper of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a whole. The official biographies record that he had lay disciples while he was alive, but no-one seems to continue his lineage. Tao-ch'ō regarded himself as T'an-luan's disciple but, if we accept his traditional dates (562–645), he was born twenty years after T'an-luan had died (476–542). Chia-ts'ai (c. 620–680) knew of T'an-luan, and reports miracles which were said to occur at his death, but he does not seem to be influenced by him. T'an-luan's writings are referred to by Shan-tao (613–682) and, to a lesser extent, by Ching-hsi Chan-jan (711–782). This spotty attention by his countrymen is repeated in Japan, until he bursts into prominence when Shinran, writing half a millennium after T'an-luan's death, quotes him extensively and regards him as so important that he adopts the second character of T'an-luan's name (pronounced *ran* in Japanese) as the second character of his own name.

It is not my intention here to investigate why T'an-luan has been so neglected or to attempt a summary of T'an-luan's writings,¹ but to select a limited number of aspects of his teachings from his major work, *Wang-shêng Lun Chu* (A Commentary on the Treatise on Birth [in Sukhāvati]) and attempt to demonstrate that he was one of the greatest Dharma Masters of the Mahāyāna and that his message endures to this day.

In order to do this I will go straight to T'an-luan himself and present him in his own light, as a Chinese of the fifth to sixth century CE.² Then I will seek to extract his teaching from its cultural context and suggest what elements of it might be relevant to us today, as the Dharma continues to become established in the west.

I believe that T'an-luan is of continuing importance first of all because of his Dharmological sophistication. His explanation of how the "easy practice" of trust in Amita Buddha³ is consistent with the great philosophical systems of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra is intellectually satisfying and has yet to be surpassed.

Second, he records, apparently from his own experience, that the power of pure mind, manifested in Amita Buddha, is so great that we can trust it to work in us, we do not have to struggle and claw our way up the mountain of the Bodhisattva levels, as the Mahāyāna normally instructs.⁴

This teaching, which T'an-luan calls Other Power (C. *t'o-li*; J. *tariki*), a term which has been misunderstood in the West as quasi-theistic, is once again presented by T'an-luan in sophisticated dharmological terms.

Third, T'an-luan offers a comprehensive program of practice, involving the whole person in body, speech, and mind. Later Pure Land Buddhism, especially in Japan, not only concentrated on a single practice, that of invoking the name of Amita Buddha (*nembutsu*), it restricted itself to it. When this narrowing of the practice is unsupported by philosophical demonstration it may leave the reader with the mistaken impression that a grandly simple practice is merely simplistic.

Finally, T'an-luan's teaching about the double dharmakāya, compressed into a few densely argued lines, is a masterly insight which proposes a solution to the ultimate dilemma not only of Buddhism but, I believe, of all spiritual and religious systems. The dilemma is this: if the realm of liberation from suffering is the same as, or continuous with, the realm of suffering, there is no true liberation from suffering, only a temporary surcease. On the other hand, if the realm of liberation from suffering is different from this realm of suffering, there cannot be any liberation because there is no way to get from here to there. But if, as T'an-luan says, the two realms are non-dual, there is both the necessary connection and the necessary separation. Other dharma-masters, and teachers of other traditions, have said something like this, but none, I dare to claim, have said it in a way that so powerfully and neatly joins our ordinary world of suffering both to the world of uplifting myth and temporary bliss, and to the unconditioned reality of pure mind.

DHARMOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION

The two great philosophies, or explanatory systems, of Mahāyāna are Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. They developed separately, one after the other, and Tibetan Buddhism, especially the Gelugpa lineage, keeps them separate, balancing them as the systems relevant to, respectively, *prajñā* (wisdom) and *karuṇā* (compassion). Chinese Buddhism has favored a blending, although the connection of Mādhyamika and *prajñā*, and Yogācāra and *karuṇā*, is still discernible.

T'an-luan is thoroughly versed in Mādhyamika. His major commentarial source is the *Ta Chih Tu Lun* (J. *Daichido-ron*, S. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*) and he makes frequent and intelligent use of the Chinese Mādhyamika Master Sêng-chao (374?–414).⁵ His connection with Yogācāra is less clear. He does not seem to refer specifically to known Yogācāra texts. He does indeed regard the Treatise on Birth, the text on which his commentary is based and which is composed of verses (*gāthā*) with an

autocommentary in prose (*upadeśa*), as having been written by Vasubandhu—after, we are no doubt supposed to assume, his conversion to Yogācāra—yet the *gāthā* and *upadeśa*, whoever wrote them, do not strike us as Yogācārin. There are many allusions in his work that suggest that he was familiar with some of the central doctrines of Yogācāra such as the store consciousness (*S. alayavijñāna*), although one might perhaps just as well argue that he is thinking in terms of tathāgatagarbha theory.

Be that as it may, the point is that T'an-luan's commentary is not a treatise on blind faith and mushy sentimentality, as the Pure Land tradition has sometimes been misrepresented in Western scholarship. His devotion to Amita and his belief in the efficacy of rebirth in Amita's Pure Land is strong, but, whereas the sutras merely assert the power of Amita and Sukhāvati, T'an-luan explains and defends the power on rational grounds.

For example, the Bodhisattva Dharmākara, he says, made his forty-eight resolutions (*S. praṇidhāna*) when he had attained to the eighth level (*S. bhūmi*) in the ten-level scheme of the bodhisattva path. At that level, it is taught, the practitioner realizes that all phenomena are originally unarisen.⁶ The view that all phenomena are originally unarisen (*S. anutpāda*) is a major teaching of Nāgārjuna and one of the foundations of Mādhyamika. In the full knowledge that nothing ever really arises, T'an-luan says, Dharmākara resolved to cause, as the fruit of his karmic activity, Sukhāvati to arise. T'an-luan sees this moment of consciousness as establishing the nature (*C. hsing*) of Sukhāvati as unarisen. Playing with the ambiguity of the Chinese character *shêng*, which can mean both the birth of a being as well as the arising of an object, he calls Sukhāvati the Realm of Non-Arising (*wu-shêng chih chieh*) and draws the conclusion that beings who go to birth there attain to no-birth, since the nature of Sukhāvati must, being consonant with pure mind and which therefore cannot be sullied, purify the impure mind of the practitioner. That is, beings in this world of suffering make an aspiration to be born in Sukhāvati, thinking that they will really be born there, but in fact, through the power of the nature of Dharmākara's consciousness at the time that he made the resolution, they are "not-born" and they lose all notions of coming and going, of leaving this world of suffering and arriving in the Pure Land. This is a very high realization, and it is attained by the Pure Land practitioner merely through concentrated faith.

In many similar ways T'an-luan shows how a simple practice has powerful results. The practitioner need know nothing about the mechanism of this liberation, just as the operator of a complicated machine need know nothing about the inner workings of the machine. It is sufficient to have learnt which buttons to push in order to have the machine perform various tasks. Many Buddhists are satisfied with this level of practice, of just saying the nembutsu, and at that level it certainly appears simplistic.

But if we want to open the box, as it were, and inspect the mechanism, T'an-luan shows us how it works. When we do, we find that the mechanism underlying the simple practice is anything but simplistic.

ENLIGHTENING POWER

T'an-luan writes that merely by repeating the name AMITĀBHA the confusion and darkness of the practitioner's mind is cleared.⁷ Wisdom comes into the practitioner's mind through the intrinsic power of the name, which not only means immeasurable light and wisdom but actually *is* immeasurable light and wisdom. "How could this be?" he allows himself to ask. T'an-luan imagines a questioner objecting that a name is just an arbitrary label for something and that it is powerless to do anything of itself. The questioner compares words to fingers pointing at the moon and accuses T'an-luan of claiming that it is the finger, not the moon, that gives light. T'an-luan's reply moves the question to a different level by offering a theory of language which recognizes the existence of what we might call efficient words or power words.

There are, he says, two sorts of names (words or nouns, *ming*)—those which are different from things (C. *ming i fa*) and those which are the same as things (C. *ming chi fa*). The first sort of names are found in language as we ordinarily use it. They are indeed merely indicators and can be compared to fingers pointing at the moon. But, he says, we know that there are other sorts of words, words which have power in themselves. Taoist texts such as the *Pao P'u-tzu* are full of spells which, T'an-luan reminds his Chinese audience, we have all used and found to be effective—and what is a spell but words which make something happen merely by being recited? Even more powerful than Taoist spells, which can at most relieve intrasamsaric troubles, are the Buddhist mantras which lead us to liberation. The names of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and therefore especially the name of Amita, is such an efficient name or power word.

We can, I think, appreciate the force of what T'an-luan is claiming without accepting his belief in the power of spells. The arbitrary nature of words is obvious, particularly when we acquire another language, in which we learn to use a new label for a familiar object. Whether we allude to *a dog* or *un chien*, our Anglophone or Francophone listeners will understand that a canine is in question. However, the arbitrary nature of words is not an adequate understanding of language as a whole, despite what we are told by many theorists. Poetry explicitly tries to break out of the univocal prison of plain, descriptive prose. It is meant to be evocative, calling up a feeling or a vision, often enough by the use of neologisms and onomatopoeia. Song, or poetry set to music, is even more evocative. Instrumental music is evocative without having any clear relationship to

words—we even call some pieces songs without words. Music can stimulate the emotions in many different ways, and it can make us think differently. Confucius knew this long ago, but now at last it has been proved by science and it has been given a trendy name—the Mozart Effect.

What T'an-luan seems to be saying is that mantras are closer to music than to descriptive prose. Mantras are, in any case, an irritation to grammarians. They seem to be on the verge of making sense but they are very bad Sanskrit. For example, the mantra of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion—OMANĪPADME HŪṂ—is gibberish. It cannot mean, as many textbooks solemnly assure us, “Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus.”⁸ However, when recited, it has a rippling, smooth sound with a calming effect that very well may, as it is claimed, resonate with, and therefore stimulate, the compassionate aspect of the practitioner's Buddha Mind.

This, then, is what the sound AMITĀBHA does. It is an *invocation* which is not only an *evocation* of the light and wisdom of the Buddha, it also *actualizes* it in the speaker.

T'an-luan goes further and attributes transformative power not only to the name of Amita but to Sukhāvātī in general for, as we saw above, being the non-product of the pure mind of non-production it has the nature of purity. The underlying assumptions are that pure mind cannot be defiled and that, further, pure mind is purifying. These assumptions, although often overlooked, are found in all Mahāyāna lineages (and even, to an extent, in Theravāda), and are given special emphasis in Vajrayāna lineages. In general Mahāyāna, pure mind has a unique and privileged status. It is intrinsically pure and totally unmixed with the defilements of saṃsāra, therefore, it can never be defiled. Even when it is taught that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are non-dual it is never said that pure mind, *bodhi* mind, or Buddha Mind (as it is variously called) is in any way mingled with the defilements of saṃsāra. Certain texts, such as the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Ta-ch'êng ch'i-hsin Lun*) teach the “mysterious pervasion” (and therefore purification) of saṃsāra by the dharmadhātu (as it calls the realm of pure mind). Again, the doctrine of the triple body of the buddha (S. *trikāya*), which is taught in all lineages of the Mahāyāna, holds that the human manifestation of a buddha is an emanation of his essential purity.⁹ In Vajrayāna lineages, the teaching on the purifying effect of the properly visualized *maṇḍala* or the correctly performed *sādhana* is so common it is almost a cliché.¹⁰ For T'an-luan, these assumptions form a rational basis for the demonstration of other power.

A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF PRACTICE

T'an-luan does not restrict his attention to the practice of the recitation of the name of Amita. Expanding on a structure in the *Treatise on Birth*, he

proposes a comprehensive program of practice called the Five Gates of *Nien* (C. *wu nien-mên*). *Nien* is a complex term which he explains as meaning meditation or mindfulness (corresponding to the Sanskrit term *smṛti*), recitation or invocation (corresponding to the Sanskrit term *japa*) and a very short interval of time (corresponding to the Sanskrit term *kṣāṇa*). Only the first two meanings are relevant to T'an-luan's Pure Land practice. I will here translate *nien* as *mindfulness* which, although not really satisfactory as a single equivalent for both *smṛti* and *japa*, seems to come closest to T'an-luan's general meaning. Gate (C. *mên*) means a teaching (as in the stock phrase "the Dharma Gates, i.e. the teachings, are numberless") but I keep the literal translation since T'an-luan explicitly plays with that meaning—the Five Mindfulness Gates are portals through which one approaches the Pure Land and then leaves it to re-enter *samsāra* so as to continue the bodhisattva practice of liberating all beings.

The Five Mindfulness Gates may be translated into English as nouns or, since they are activities, as verbs. Suitable noun equivalents might be: Worship, Praise, Resolution, Visualization, and Distribution (of merit). As verbs we might translate: Bowing, Chanting, Resolving, Visualizing, and Distributing (of merit). Because of a special meaning that T'an-luan gives to the word that normally means the distribution of merit, I translate the last practice, as explained below, as the Gate of Turning Towards.

The First Mindfulness Gate, Worship or Bowing (C. *li-pai*), relates to a practice of some antiquity that continues to the present day in most monasteries of the Mahāyāna tradition. Tibetans and those influenced by Tibetan culture tend to favor bowing as an individual practice and to perform full prostrations, whereas the Chinese (and therefore the Koreans and the Vietnamese) prefer communal bowing sessions and use a form of the kowtow, but in either case, the bowing is repetitious, prolonged, and strenuous. The Japanese are perhaps the only major Mahāyāna group in which bowing as a spiritual practice (rather than a social courtesy) has largely died out. The effect of so much bowing is to bring the body into the Way in no uncertain manner. The mind resists, the body protests, but, in time, body and mind accept each other and realize their interdependence.

The Second Mindfulness Gate, Praise or Chanting (C. *tsan-t'an*) is intimately connected with the First Gate. Whenever Buddhists use bowing as a practice they recite an appropriate text, phrase, or mantra. Chanting, whether or not connected with bowing, is common in all monasteries and temples, both Mahāyāna and Theravāda, and it survives in Japan. Chanting for T'an-luan means the recitation, or invocation, of the name of Amita. In his liturgical text, *Canticles to Amita Buddha*,¹¹ T'an-luan presents us with a series of stanzas with invocations of Amita under terms such as Immeasurable Light, Boundless Light, Unhindered Light. All of the stanzas contain some mention of bowing, either implicitly or explicitly. It seems

clear that he wrote the *Canticles* to be used in a combined practice of bowing and chanting, joining the First and Second Gates.

The Third and Fourth Mindfulness Gates, Resolution or Resolving (C. *tso-yüan*), and Visualization or Visualizing (C. *kuan-ch'a*), are given a special twist by being linked with the meditative practices of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. These terms, which we might translate into English as *calming* and *insight*, usually refer to stabilizing the mind and then using the stable mind to inspect and clearly see a selected phenomenon. In Chinese they are translated respectively by *chih* and *kuan*, characters which literally mean "stop" and "look," and which form a general word for Buddhist meditation when used together as a compound.

T'an-luan's explanation of *chih*, "stop," is distinctive—even, perhaps, unique. After dismissing its general meanings concerned with *śamatha* (calming or stabilizing meditation) as insufficient he says that, in Pure Land practice, *chih* refers to the power of Amita and Sukhāvati, which *stops* the impure actions of body, speech, and mind, along with the deficient aspiration for Hīnayāna liberation, i.e., liberation of oneself only without making the bodhisattva resolve to liberate all beings. He is able to make sense of *chih* as relating to the Gate of Resolving by emphasizing that the practitioner's resolution to be born in the Pure Land is done, as he shows in his *Canticles*, by singlemindedly and repeatedly calling on Amita and Sukhāvati, thus, as explained above, drawing their pure power into the practitioner's impure mind such that the purity stops, or overwhelms, the impurities of the ordinary mind.

T'an-luan's explanation of *kuan* is more traditional. He knows that it is used in general Buddhism to refer to analytic meditation on intra-samsaric phenomena, by means of which one can, for example, experientially realize that the body is marked by the four signs of being (impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and not-self) but, as in the case of *chih*, he says that such a meaning is incomplete. He wishes to redirect, or perhaps we can say restrict, its meaning in Pure Land practice to gazing on, or visualizing, the Pure Land and its inhabitants, Amita Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. Visualization is uncommon in Theravāda but is a prominent feature in many forms of Mahāyāna (with the notable exception of Zen) and it is even more prominent in Vajrayāna, with which Pure Land Buddhism has many similarities.¹² It is so important for T'an-luan that he devotes far more space to it than any other practice, so much so, in fact, that one could almost regard his *Commentary* as a treatise on visualization. He adds his own touch by dividing up the visualization practice into a "before" and an "after." Before one attains birth in the Pure Land one visualizes it and its inhabitants mentally, gains merit by the practice, and thus becomes assured of being born there. Having attained birth there, one sees Amita and the Bodhisattvas actually, no longer as mental representations (S. *nimitta*),

and as a result one reaches “the quiescence which is always-so” (C. *chí mieh p’ing têng*) along with Bodhisattvas of the highest attainment.

The Fifth Mindfulness Gate is called *hui-hsiang*. This is the Chinese term regularly used to translate *pariṇāma*, distributing (literally, turning over) any merit (S. *punya*) gained from a practice to aid in the welfare and the liberation of all beings. T’an-luan accepts this meaning, but only for practitioners in this life, before birth in Sukhāvati. After birth in Sukhāvati, he says, the meaning changes. Having been liberated oneself, one turns around and re-enters saṃsāra so as to aid all beings directly. He calls these two meanings the going (into Sukhāvati) and the returning (into saṃsāra) aspects of *hui-hsiang*. Because of the way he plays with the characters in Chinese, which mean, separately, *turn* and *towards*, an elegant English equivalent is difficult to find. I suggest the rather cumbersome and literalistic “turning towards” as a phrase that carries some of the richness of T’an-luan’s understanding of *hui-hsiang*.

Taken as a whole, the five practices are time consuming and are only really suitable for monastics and those laypeople who are relatively free of everyday duties. The rest of us might find ways that we could borrow some features of some of the practices, perhaps a little from each or a fair amount from two or three. If we are physically able, we could find a way to combine some sort of bowing with chanting the Name of Amita, perhaps using T’an-luan’s *Canticles*. The Gate of Resolution will take care of itself so long as we are persistent and concentrated in our practice. Instead of the detailed visualizations of every aspect of the Pure Land, Amita, and the Bodhisattvas, we might use a reproduction of a great work of Pure Land art and place it on our shrine as the focus of our chanting and bowing. The art work that we choose could range all the way from single figures of Amita and his attendant Bodhisattvas to complete representations of the Pure Land such as the Taima maṇḍala.¹³ Gazing at these pictures combines the fourth practice with the “going” aspect of the fifth practice.

T’an-luan’s recommendations focus on meditation (*samādhi*), one element of the Triple Practice (S. *trīśikṣā*). The elements missing from the Five Gates are conduct (S. *śīla*) and study or wisdom (*prajñā*). Although T’an-luan does not discuss these he clearly expects them to be present. As a monk, he was required to control his conduct, and his writings show him to be a man of great learning. All three elements of the Triple Practice are assumed, and we need not omit them simply because of T’an-luan’s silence. Pure Land Buddhism has been accused, at various times, of antinomianism and anti-intellectualism, especially when it has concentrated on the invocation of Amita as the sole practice and as the only efficacious practice. When the invocation of Amita is central, but positioned explicitly in the context of T’an-luan’s other four practices, and within Buddhist practice as a whole, neither accusation has any force.

A SOLUTION FOR THE ULTIMATE PROBLEM

Buddhism is one of a number of religions which hold that our present reality is profoundly problematic and that true happiness can only come by escaping from this reality. Such religions may be called soteriological (religions of salvation) or, to use a less Christian term, lysiological (Greek *lysis*, liberation).¹⁴ Lysiological religions ask, and then proceed to answer in their different ways, three questions: What is the problem? What is the solution? What is the way from the problem to the solution? In Buddhism, these questions are formulated as *duḥkha* (suffering), *nirodha* (the extinction of suffering), and *mārga* (the path to the extinction of suffering). In the familiar set of the Four Noble Truths, *samudaya* (the arising or origin of suffering) is inserted between *duḥkha* and *nirodha*. This adds precision but does not affect the general threefold outline.

Early Buddhism seems to have taught a strict and real separation of *saṃsāra*, the realm of *duḥkha*, and *nirvāṇa*, the realm wherein *duḥkha* is extinguished. That *nirvāṇa* was regarded as in some sense a place is shown by the use in the Pāli texts of the term *nibbāna-dhātu* (realm of *nirvāṇa*). With the rise of the Mahāyāna, this separation was called into question. The extended and sophisticated critique can be summarized as follows. If a realm of no suffering exists it must have no admixture of suffering at all, and in order to have no admixture of suffering at all it must exist as a separate reality absolutely unconnected with the realm of suffering, but if there is no connection, how can beings leave the realm of suffering and go to the realm of no-suffering? If, on the other hand, there is a connection, a bridge between them, the realm of no-suffering is part of the realm of suffering and there can be no true liberation. The bold solution which the Mahāyāna advanced to solve this dilemma was to assert both propositions and their opposites—that the two realms are separate but not different, and that the two realms are the same but not identical. They must be separate for a place of true liberation to exist, but they cannot be different or there is no way to get from one to the other. They must be the same for it to be possible to go from one to the other, but they cannot be identical or there is no realm of liberation outside of the realm of suffering. This teaching was proclaimed as a middle truth (S. *madhyama-satya*) which simultaneously rejects and accepts the rival views of the identity and difference of the realms of suffering and liberation. The term “non-duality” is used to deny a separation (the philosophical view of dualism) without affirming an identity (the philosophical view of monism). Under the name emptiness (S. *śūnyatā*) this view became established as the foundation of all later Mahāyāna teaching.

Philosophically, the standard Mahāyāna teaching on emptiness (or transparency as I prefer to call it) is elegantly simple and logically compel-

ling, but it hardly stirs the blood. It has indeed often been mistaken, both inside and outside of Buddhism, for nihilism. In order to correct this mistake, some forms of Mahāyāna, especially in Tibet, have sought to balance the raw teaching on transparency, which they identify with the Mādhyamika school, with teachings on compassion, which they ascribe to the Yogācāra school. The buddha-mind in its fullness is completely wise and perfectly compassionate, and an overemphasis on transparency is criticized as an overemphasis on wisdom.

T'an-luan, as we have seen, is at home in both the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools, and he balances their teaching in a unique way in his short but very significant teaching on the double dharmakāya. Standard Mahāyāna maintains the doctrine of the trikāya or triple embodiment of the buddhas—the formless dharmakāya, the gigantic and glorious sambhogakāya, and the human nirmāṇakāya. T'an-luan is writing before the general acceptance of this formula and he seems to be aware of many different views on how the formless dharmakāya manifests in the world of suffering.¹⁵ His most distinctive view is that all buddhas and bodhisattvas have a dharmakāya which is composed of an unmanifest aspect called the dharmatā dharmakāya (*fā hsing fa shên*), and a manifest aspect called the upāya dharmakāya (*fang pien fa shên*). "These two," he says, "are different but indivisible, one but not the same."

The dharmatā dharmakāya, which we might translate as the essential dharmakāya, is mentioned in the upadeśa of the *Treatise on Birth* as "the unconditioned dharmakāya of true knowledge" (*chên shih chih hui wu wei fa shên*) and so it is clearly associated with the wisdom aspect of buddha-mind. The upāya dharmakāya is not mentioned in the upadeśa and so, therefore, neither is the double dharmakāya. T'an-luan states his view without reference or support, as if it were well known, but we have no record of it elsewhere. The upāya dharmakāya appears to be related to the compassion aspect of buddha-mind. So far, so good, and, in fact, rather unremarkable. But then T'an-luan surprises us. It is best to quote him in full and then unpack his dense logic.

True knowledge is knowledge of the true marks. Because the true marks have no marks, true knowledge has no knowing. The unconditioned Dharmakāya is the Dharmatā Dharmakāya. Because Dharmatā is quiescent, the Dharmakāya has no marks. Because it has no marks, there is nothing which it does not mark. Therefore, the Dharmakāya is none other than that which is adorned with the Marks and Signs. Because it has no knowing, there is nothing which it does not know. Therefore, true knowledge is the same as omniscience. If knowledge is classified as true, it is clear that knowledge is neither created nor uncreated. If the Dharmakāya

is categorized as unconditioned it is clear that the Dharmakāya is neither with form nor formless.

The structure of T'an-luan's argument here is that of the Mādhyamika master Sêng-chao, but the content is Yogācāra, or at least quasi-Yogācāra.¹⁶ First, following Sêng-chao, he establishes the nature of true knowledge, or wisdom. Things are known to be what they are because of certain distinguishing characteristics or marks (*lakṣaṇa*). The Abhidharma schools generated elaborate lists of such marks so that the practitioner could understand reality and escape from suffering. Mahāyāna, especially the Mādhyamika school, reduced all marks to one—transparency. The true marks are then no-marks, and when true knowledge inspects these no-marks it finds no inherently existing objects. Consequently, says Sêng-chao, because true knowledge knows nothing, there is nothing which it does not know. This is not verbal legerdemain. Ordinary, or false knowledge, knows things as they are conditioned by other things, and so it is restricted to particulars. Wisdom sees without conditions, and so its knowledge is unrestricted or universal.

T'an-luan then applies this epistemological structure to the ontological question of how Buddhas manifest in our suffering reality, that is, he moves from Mādhyamika to Yogācāra mode. If the dharmakāya is identified with unconditioned wisdom then it has no marks and, as a consequence, nothing which it does not mark. This means that the unmanifest dharmatā dharmakāya is the same as "that which is adorned with the Marks and Signs," i.e., the form body (*rūpakāya*) of the Buddhas which exhibits, by tradition, thirty-two major distinctive characteristics or marks (*lakṣaṇa*) and eighty minor distinctive characteristics or signs (*anuvyañjana*). Thus the dharmakāya can be neither formless (as traditionally taught) nor with form. It must, in fact, be both as well as neither, for it maintains a unity-in-difference with the upāya dharmakāya.

T'an-luan has established the non-duality of the wisdom and the compassion aspects of the buddha-mind, but he has one more trick up his sleeve. The dharmatā dharmakāya, he says, produces or generates (*shēng*) the upāya dharmakāya, while the dharmatā dharmakāya emerges from (*ch'u*) the upāya dharmakāya. T'an-luan relates the two aspects of the dharmakāya to a feature of the text on which he is commenting. The upadeśa states that the adornments of Sukhāvati and its inhabitants are "the marks of the wonderful realm of ultimate truth" which are "here explained one at a time in sixteen lines and one line." The "one line" is the stanza in the gāthās which runs:

Thus, I gaze on the marks of that Realm
which surpasses the triple-world's Way.

In this stanza, the author (putatively Vasubandhu) is visualizing the distinguishing characteristics or marks (*lakṣaṇa*) of Sukhāvātī which surpass, or transcend, the conditions or understanding (way, tao) of saṃsāra. Saṃsāra is conventionally referred to as the triple-world (*trailokya-dhātava*) since it is composed of the three realms of sensual desire (*kāma-dhātu*), form (*rūpa-dhātu*) and formlessness (*arūpya-dhātu*). “This couplet” says T’an-luan earlier in his commentary “concerns the most important point...the *purity* of the adornments. This purity is a feature of all [the adornments].” This, indeed, is why Sukhāvātī is called the *Pure Land*. It is unmixed with any of the impurities of body, speech, and mind which are inescapable as long as we continue to be reborn within the triple-world.

This “one line” concerning the primary and universal feature of purity is then described in detail in the gāthā and upadeśa in “sixteen lines,” each concerned with a specific adornment of Sukhāvātī, Amita Buddha, and the Bodhisattvas. Through all of this the patient reader has worked, and now we are told that this “line about purity” is a summary of the “sixteen lines” which are an amplification of the “one line.” The terms he uses for summary (*lüeh*) and amplification (*kuang*) make it fairly clear that he is thinking in terms of an important feature of indigenous Chinese cosmology, essence and manifestation, *t’i* and *yung*, according to which everything that a phenomenon (a text, a living being, or whatever) manifests is contained *in potentia* or *in parvo* in its essence. This is a thoroughly un-Buddhist notion but it is so basic to the Chinese worldview that it turns up in Chinese Buddhist texts quite frequently, albeit surrounded by caveats so as to remove the suspicion that a version of inherent existence is being taught. By relating the two dharmakāyas in this way T’an-luan subtly preserves the ontological primacy of the dharmatā dharmakāya without jeopardizing its identity with the upāya dharmakāya.

This densely argued philosophical point has a practical value. T’an-luan states that “if Bodhisattvas do not understand the mutuality of the Amplification and the Summary, they can neither benefit themselves nor others.”

This is to say, surely, that if Pure Land practitioners do not live in the conscious awareness of the unity-in-difference of wisdom and compassion, form and formlessness, suffering and liberation, their practice will be ineffective. The balance of wisdom and compassion is a general Buddhist teaching. T’an-luan’s distinctive contribution is that he not only makes them non-dual, he makes them non-dual as Amita Buddha. The universal buddha-mind thus has a particular face. T’an-luan gives us a way in which we can relate to the wisdom of the buddha-mind as a loving and compassionate parent who embraces each of us individually. This is a transparency which is not only philosophically satisfying but which stirs the blood.

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NOTES

1. For that, see my "T'an-luan: The First Systematizer of Pure Land Buddhism," *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, edited by James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, number 3 (Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, 1996), pp. 107–37.
2. In doing so I am of course setting aside the interpretations of him by Shinran and the various branches of Shinshū. Readers interested in this question may wish to consult my "Shinran's Proofs of True Buddhism," *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 6), edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), pp. 273–289.
3. In this article I use the Sanskrit spelling, *Amita Buddha*, in preference to Chinese, Japanese, Korean or Vietnamese spellings, all of which are merely attempts to reproduce the sound of the Sanskrit syllables.
4. Mahāyāna in general, and East Asian Buddhism in particular, exhibits a tension between sudden and gradual teachings, or subitism and gradualism. According to gradualism, which is favored in Tibet, there is progress along a path, usually the ten stage or ten level path of the Bodhisattva, from suffering to liberation. Subitism regards such progress as wholly or partly illusory, and maintains that liberation is a sudden realization of our already existing nature. There is a great amount of literature in this topic.
5. For a detailed discussion of T'an-luan's textual sources see my "T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1973), pp. 43–46.
6. Technically, the practitioner attains *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, the "serene acceptance of non-arising."
7. For T'an-luan it is the *name* AMITA itself which is effective. The invocation formula *Nan-mo A-mi-t'o Fo* and its variants in Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, which have become standard, is not found in his writings.
8. For the serio-comic story of how this mantra has been richly misunderstood by Western researchers see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), chapter four, "The Spell."

9. For a discussion of the implications of “mysterious pervasion,” the *trikāya*, and similar doctrines, see my “Self-Power Practice with Other-Power Attitude: An Interpretation of Mind in Shin Buddhism,” *The Pure Land*, n.s. 8 and 9 (December 1992): pp. 166–205.
10. I attempt to relate purification in Vajrayāna and Pure Land Buddhism in my “Pure Land and Pure Perspective: A Tantric Hermeneutic of Sukhāvati,” *The Pure Land*, n.s. 6 (December 1989): pp. 205–217.
11. For a translation, see my “T’an-luan’s Canticles to Amita Buddha,” *The Pure Land*, n.s. 6 (December 1989): pp. 262–278, and 7 (December 1990): pp. 124–137.
12. See, for example, my “Pure Land and Pure Perspective: A Tantric Hermeneutic of Sukhāvati.”
13. Much of this art is available cheaply in poster format or can be downloaded from the world wide web. For example, the magnificent sequence of images of the Pure Land maṇḍalas by Hisao Inagaki is available, with English or Japanese text, at www.net0726.ne.jp/~horai.
14. Traditional religions (those which we used to call “primitive”) are, as a rule, more accepting of the world as we find it and less concerned, or entirely unconcerned, with release from it. The afterlife, for most traditional religions, is a more glorious continuation of this life.
15. See the discussion in my Ph.D. dissertation, pp. 61–65.
16. See Sêng-chao’s essay “Prajñā Has No Knowing” translated by Richard Robinson in *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), pp. 212–221.

Shinran's Indebtedness to T'an-luan

Bandō Shōjun

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SHINRAN'S POSITION IN PURE LAND TRADITION

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF Hōnen's appearance in Japanese Buddhism lies in his epoch-making task of achieving the independence of the Pure Land school, which had long been regarded merely as a by-stream of Mahayana Buddhism. From various Buddhist disciplines he adopted the Nembutsu practice, insisting that in the latter days of the Dharma, Nembutsu practice is the only way through which all people, men and women, young and old, noble and mean, may equally be saved by virtue of the great saving power of Amida's Original Vow. As his teaching spread rapidly to all parts of Japan, a strong reaction to it arose. Myōe Shōnin (1173–1232) of the Keron Sect was a representative of the older sects. He published a work entitled *Zaijarin* ("Smashing a Heterodox Dharma-Wheel"), in which he severely criticized Hōnen's radical standpoint. By and large, his criticisms against Hōnen centered round the question of *bodhicitta*. Myōe held that whereas the position of *bodhicitta* (man's aspiration for Enlightenment) in the Way of the Buddha is crucial, Hōnen totally neglected its importance, replacing it by Nembutsu, and therefore that Hōnen's doctrine could not possibly be called Buddhism. As Myōe was one of the most revered Buddhist priests of his time, a strict follower of Buddhist discipline himself and free from any sectarian or political prejudices, the penetrating question he raised was thought deserving of serious consideration. As Hōnen passed away immediately after he was released from exile on the island of Shikoku, it was only natural that Shinran, who inherited Hōnen's teaching, should have felt obliged to answer Myōe's crucial question. The situation in which Shinran thus found himself became one of the main motives for his *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*.

According to the Mahayana conception of a bodhisattva (*bodhi-citta*-inspired man; a seeker of Enlightenment), arising of *bodhi-citta* is regarded

as the starting point of the bodhisattva's career. There is no bodhisattva apart from *bodhicitta*: *bodhicitta* is what makes a man a bodhisattva. In Nāgārjuna's *Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra* is a statement, "When *bodhicitta* arises in man, at that very moment he attains Enlightenment." The first movement of *bodhicitta* in man's mind is a crucial moment, at which a bodhisattva is born out of an ordinary man. A bodhisattva is a man who is *bodhi*-centered, and no longer ego-centered. His mind is now oriented towards benefitting others rather than himself; he is ever ready to devote himself for the benefit of all the other beings, even at the cost of his own life. A bodhisattva embodies altruism. He identifies his own destiny with that of all sentient beings to the extent he feels, in Vimalakīrti's words, "A bodhisattva is sick because all sentient beings are sick." Therefore the appearance or presence of *bodhicitta* should be the central concern in all ages for all people who would call themselves Buddhists, not to mention the eminent figure Myōe of the Kamakura Period. It was no wonder, therefore, that Hōnen's insistence upon the Nembutsu practice as the only means for securing the ideal of universal salvation should have aroused in the minds of his contemporaries a grave doubt as to the authenticity of his doctrine. It was under such circumstances the question was raised as to whether the Nembutsu teaching expounded by Hōnen denied *bodhicitta* or not. Shinran's life-long task was to inquire into what Hōnen had actually intended to reveal, and to express his own conviction in his own terms. His main work *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* is none other than the outcome of his spiritual inquiries into the teaching of salvation through Nembutsu alone.

Shinran's *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* is made up of six chapters. It is written in Chinese. It was customary for Buddhist scholar-priests at that time to write in Chinese since all the sources from which they quoted were Chinese. In view of the fact that Shinran left a number of writings in Japanese, clearly meant for the generally illiterate common people, it may safely be said that his main work was addressed to his contemporary scholar-priests who were able to read classical Chinese. He purposely accommodated himself to this style of writing in order to appeal to the understanding of the educated Buddhist circle of his age to make his standpoint more readily understandable. In any case, there is no doubt that Chinese in his time was not only literary and formal but a means of communication and a common language among intellectuals. He entitled his main work, "A Collection of Important Passages Revealing the Truth of the Pure Land Teaching, Practice, and Attainment." In spite of this title, we find in this work a lengthy volume on "Faith" in its own right which is divided into two parts. He, nevertheless, did not mention "Faith" in the title of his work. Herein also we find a clue to his motive of addressing it mainly to learned Buddhists such as Myōe, for he was fully aware of his position and of his responsibilities to his age, since "Teaching, Practice, and Attainment" are traditional categories of the way of a Bodhisattva. Namely, a Way-seeker is first of all expected to listen

to the 'teaching,' and then 'practice' it faithfully, so as to reach the final 'Attainment' or Enlightenment. Shinran tried to transcend tradition by first accomodating himself to it.

In order to show that Pure Land Buddhism is truly Mahayana and not his own arbitrary invention, in his main work, *Senchaku Hongan Nembutsu Shū*, Hōnen quotes extensively from a number of sutras and commentaries in addition to the Five Eminent Pure Land masters. Shinran followed the pattern of his predecessors in his main work, in which he mentions the Seven Pure Land Patriarchs including Hōnen. How highly both Hōnen and Shinran regarded the tradition, rather than neglecting it, may be seen from the above-mentioned facts. One important fact to be remembered in this connection is that in the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* Shinran's own words amount to no more than one tenth of the whole volume, showing that Shinran thereby intended to make the centuries-old tradition speak for itself. Both Hōnen's *Senchaku Hongan Nembutsu Shū* and Shinran's *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* adopt the form of *monrui* (collected passages), derived from Sung Dynasty China, which serves to demonstrate that one's opinions are not arbitrary but are based upon scriptural evidence. As it is customary for Buddhist scholars to argue in a dual form of theoretical reasoning and textual evidence, *monrui* was the form commonly adopted by Buddhist scholars, progressive and conservative.

Though Shinran was traditional in his outward forms, his thought was, in reality, drastically revolutionary. His way of reading scriptural texts was highly characteristic of this. For example, he construed a passage in the Larger *Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra* related to 'merit transference' (*pariṇāma*) to refer to Amida and not man as had been interpreted by all his predecessors. Shinran was firmly convinced that his way of reading best revealed the profound implications of the text. In the selected texts of the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* we find not a few similar examples.

Indeed, Shinran wrote the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* out of devotion to Hōnen, his spiritual master, as an expression of his gratitude for the latter's religious guidance. It is also true that it was Shinran's formal answer to the established sects with his scathing criticisms of heretical views outside as well as inside of the Pure Land School. But it is above all the first systematic exposition of Pure Land teaching ever attempted. Shinran's mission after his master's death was to make explicitly clear the quality of Nembutsu 'Faith' accorded by Amida and not created by man. This quality of Nembutsu 'Faith' was expressed by Shinran as being *tariki ekō* 他力回向 ('accorded by the Other Power' or 'motivated by Amida'). In this way Shinran proceeded to demonstrate the fact that Nembutsu 'Faith' is none other than the genuine *bodhicitta*, because of its freedom from man's agency motivated by self-will (*jiriki*). In the following, I should like to delineate in what manner Shinran tried to demonstrate the intrinsic nature of 'Faith' implied

in Nembutsu practice, with special regard to his indebtedness to T'an-luan's thought.

SHINRAN AND T'AN-LUAN

Throughout his life Shinran was possessed of four names: Hannen 範宴, Shakkū 綽空, Zenshin 善信 and Shinran 親鸞. He named his first son Zenran 善鸞. Seeing these names, we are naturally reminded of the Seven Pure Land Patriarchs to whom, by his own acknowledgment, he was indebted for the formation of his thought. They are: Ryūju 龍樹 (Nāgārjuna), Tenjin 天親 (Vasubandhu) of India; Donran 曇鸞 (T'an-luan), Dōshaku 道綽 (Tao-ch'ō), Zendō 善導 (Shan-tao) of China; Genshin 源信 and Genkū 源空 (Hōnen) of Japan. Apart from 'Hannen,' the names of Shinran and his son are formed from characters used in the names of those eminent masters. However, when we focus our attention on the two characters that form the name Shinran 親鸞, we realize that they derive from Tenjin and Donran, and this not without reason in view of the fact that in *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* Shinran shows his special reverence for T'an-luan by designating him as a bodhisattva. Shinran was strict in his use of the three Chinese characters which denote 'to say or state': 言 [*notamawaku*], 曰 [*iwaku*], and 云 [*iwaku*]; using 言 for sutras, 曰 for commentaries and 云 for sub-commentaries. Despite the fact that T'an-luan's commentary on Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land* (which is a commentary on the Larger *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra*) is a sub-commentary, to which he should have applied the character 云, he used the character 曰, which is only used for a commentary. Thus it is clear that Shinran equated the value of T'an-luan's thought as expounded in his main work, *Jōdo Ronchū* (*Wang-shêng-lun Chu*) with the thought expressed in Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land*, upon which T'an-luan commented. Elsewhere in the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* we notice Shinran extensively quoting from T'an-luan's *Jōdo Ronchū*; the chapter on 'Faith' in particular is occupied mostly by quotations from the *Jōdo Ronchū*. Above all, we find that at the very beginning of the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* Shinran introduces the key term of *ekō* in its dual aspects, going and returning, which is none other than Shinran's inheritance from T'an-luan. All these facts are clear evidence that T'an-luan's position in Shinran's thought is predominant. Undoubtedly in Shinran's case, the name does show reality.

It was Hōnen who designated the three sutras and one commentary as the most revealing of the truth of salvation through Nembutsu. They are the Larger *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra*, the *Meditation Sūtra*, the Smaller *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra*, and T'an-luan's *Jōdo Ronchū* (Commentary on Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land*). Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land* is a product of his devotion to Amida Buddha and is character-

istic of his systematic representation of the Pure Land, the detailed description of which is found in the Larger *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra*. It might be said that both Hōnen and Shinran are indebted to Vasubandhu and T'an-luan for a full appreciation of the purport of the Larger *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra*. While Shinran was among the disciples of Hōnen at Yoshimizu in Kyoto, he made an assiduous and extensive study of those scriptures. Among the documents now preserved by Nishi Honganji in Kyoto is a one-volume copy of the *Meditation Sūtra* and Smaller *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra* that was apparently used by Shinran at Yoshimizu. Tiny characters are written on the page margins, and among them is found the name of *Jōdo Ronchū*, clear evidence that in his early thirties Shinran was already acquainted with T'an-luan's thought. Therefore, it is highly probable that Shinran was introduced to T'an-luan by his master Hōnen. After Hōnen's death, it was mainly through the guidance of T'an-luan's thought that Shinran succeeded in making clear what was left unclarified by his master as to the true significance of 'Faith' in Nembutsu practice originally expounded in the Larger *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra*. Before going into an analysis of Shinran's indebtedness to T'an-luan, let us consider two important factors: the nature of Shinran's life-long mission, and T'an-luan's contribution to Pure Land Buddhist thought.

THE ROLES OF SHINRAN AND T'AN-LUAN

As the founder of an independent Pure Land sect, Jodo Shu, Hōnen occupies a prominent position in the history of Japanese Buddhism. The leader of a newly established sect, he was naturally preoccupied with the task of defending the doctrine of his sect as well as his political stand besides being engaged in his authentic mission of expounding among the masses the doctrine of salvation through Nembutsu only. He had to face violent attacks from conservative minds belonging to traditional sects jealous of his popularity. However, for his successor, Shinran, it was only natural that the nature of his mission should differ somewhat from Hōnen's. After Hōnen's death, there appeared among his disciples a variety of views or different interpretations of his teachings. Some insisted that for a man to be saved, incessant recitation of Nembutsu was necessary, while others insisted that faith mattered rather than the reciting act. Shinran thus keenly felt the need for clarifying the true meaning of Hōnen's Nembutsu teaching. The *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* is nothing less than the fruition of Shinran's life-long endeavor. It might be said that Shinran's task consisted of the critical examination of the quality of 'Faith' in Nembutsu practice.

It is certain that Hōnen's definition of Nembutsu was comprehensive. Therefore his Nembutsu was inclusive of all levels, motivated by *tariki* or by *jiriki*. Hence his disciples' confusion regarding 'Faith,' with all manner

of interpretations presented. In Hōnen's eyes, there were two categories of practice: Nembutsu and all other miscellaneous practices. In his main work, he declared that all practices other than Nembutsu are not efficacious for attaining salvation in this latter age of Dharma, since they are not in accordance with the spirit of the Original Vow of Amida. His typical attitude toward the problem of Buddhist practice was obviously that of "Either-Or." This attitude is widely known as *Senchaku* 選択 (to select and to discard). In his lifetime, critical examination of Nembutsu had not been thoroughly undertaken. This task was consequently taken up by Shinran.

There are two main Pure Land streams in China, Shan-tao's (A.D. 613–681) and Hui-yuan's (A.D. 334–416). The former is based upon the *Meditation Sutra* and the latter upon the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*. T'an-luan, Hōnen, and Shinran belong to the former stream. Although Nembutsu recitation is common to both traditions, the former saw a harmonious unity of the thoughts of Non-being (*prajñāpāramitā* philosophy based upon the principle of *śūnyatā*) and Being (Yogācāra or *vijñaptimātratā* philosophy based upon the principle of *prajñapti* or phenomenal being), while the latter was more inclined to emphasize the principle of *śūnyatā*. Therefore the ultimate source of their teaching differed: for the former it was the three Pure Land sutras and T'an-luan's *Jōdo Ronchū*, for the latter it was the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras. The former spread among the common people while the latter remained confined to a small minority.

T'an-luan was most instrumental in clarifying and systematizing the doctrinal points in the former tradition of unifying the principles of Being and Non-being. His contribution to Pure Land thought in general is so enormous that it is extremely difficult for us properly to assess it. However, the following points may be mentioned as they seem to have special bearing on Shinran's thought: (1) A harmonious combination of Nāgārjuna's *śūnyatā* philosophy and Vasubandhu's *Vijñaptimātratā* philosophy, (2) the concepts of *jiriki* and *tariki*, (3) the idea of *ekō*. In the following let us examine, mainly from the above-mentioned points, Shinran's indebtedness to T'an-luan's thought.

(1) Unity of Being and Non-being

The state of enlightenment is beyond man's descriptive power. Yet nothing is more real or affective than enlightenment, for once we are actually faced with a man of enlightenment, his spiritual radiance is unmistakably felt and its effect is overpowering. Since ancient times, this indescribable experience of enlightenment found various ways of expression. An Upanishadic philosopher refused to express it in terms other than "*n'eti, n'eti*." Nāgārjuna contended that the ultimate reality can only be expressed in negative terms, and revealed his famous categories of eight-fold negation. In the Upanishadic tradition itself, however, there did

appear the attempt to express the transcendental experience of salvation or deliverance (*vimukti* or *mokṣa*) in such positive terms as *sacchidānanda* (*sat*, substance; *cit*, consciousness; *ānanda*, joy). These terms may be said to be aspects of the experience of *mokṣa*. In the Mahayana *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, along with a number of negative expressions, we find an equal number of positive expressions of the state of enlightenment: "refuge," "cave," "light," "lamp," "Other Shore," "Peaceful Place," "Serenity," "vastness," and so forth. The term "Pure Land" is obviously one such expression, that points ultimately to the state of enlightenment, or *nirvāṇa*. In other words, "Pure Land" is a positive concrete expression of "*nirvāṇa*." The reason the term "Jōdo" (Pure Land) has survived to this day may be due to the Chinese mentality which favors concreteness over abstraction. Vasubandhu was the first in the history of Buddhism to show the structure of the Pure Land. This he did in terms of 29 categories, a result of his encounter with the Larger *Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra*. He did not come to this sutra out of mere intellectual curiosity. He existentially encountered the spirit expounded in this sutra upon his conversion. This encounter constituted the motive for his *Treatise on the Pure Land*, at the very beginning of which we find his famous words of confession in praise of Amida: "O, Bhagavat, I take single-hearted refuge in the Tathāgata of unobstructed light penetrating through ten directions!" As is known, a detailed description of Amida's land of bliss (*Sukhāvatī*) is unfolded in the Larger *Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra*. From devotion to Amida, Vasubandhu attempted to systematize the main features of the Pure Land that are described in detail in the *Larger Sutra*. He classified all Pure Land constituents into three categories: land, buddhas, and bodhisattvas. The first refers to the place itself, and the second and the third refer to the beings who dwell therein. As to each category, he mentions 17 qualities (*guṇas*) for the land, 8 for the buddha and 4 for the bodhisattvas. Altogether he mentions 29 qualities for the whole of the Pure Land, thereby delineating the Pure Land's content. T'an-luan inherited Vasubandhu's Pure Land ontology. This was accepted in turn by Shinran.

Vasubandhu's inclination towards something concrete and objective, as is exemplified by his acceptance of the substantive description of Pure Land in the *Larger Sutra*, may easily be understood by looking into his philosophical background. Although Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika philosophy refuses to represent *nirvāṇa* in positive or material terms, Vasubandhu's Yogācāra philosophy makes allowances for doing so. This accounts for the basic feature of Pure Land Buddhism which, embracing the Yogācāra standpoint through Vasubandhu, has held a wide following among the common people in the course of history, in sharp contrast to Zen Buddhism which, adhering throughout to Mādhyamika philosophy, has remained a religion for a relatively small minority.

On the other hand, T'an-luan, with a background of Mādhyamika philosophy, attempted to re-interpret Vasubandhu's interpretations of the Pure Land. Thus the unity of two opposing philosophical streams comes to be realized in the thought of T'an-luan. T'an-luan had submerged himself in the study of Mādhyamika philosophy with Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Dvadaśani-kāya-śāstra*, *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, and Āryadeva's *Śataśāstra* before his conversion to Pure Land Buddhism. If supra-experiential reality is to be expressed, it must inevitably take the form of "Being." This "Being" may be said to be the essence of the so-called "mythology." Mādhyamika philosophy refused to resort to the *upāya* of mythology. T'an-luan found himself in a position to deal with the "mythological expressions" resorted to by his predecessor, Vasubandhu. Thus, it could be said that he performed the task of demythologizing the Pure Land so as to bring all those who are faced with this mythology into direct contact with its inner spiritual meaning on an experiential level. T'an-luan executed this epoch-making task resolutely, and the result of his efforts bore fruit in his *Jōdo Ronchū*.

It is noteworthy that T'an-luan, who had once encountered the depths of Mādhyamika philosophy, is seen positively affirming the 'Being' of the Pure Land with its various adornments. T'an-luan says:

Since Suchness is the state in which all illusions have disappeared, Dharmakāya is formless. Because of its very formlessness it can take all conceivable forms. Therefore, all the adornments of the Pure Land with various qualities are Dharmakāya itself [*Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 841b].

These lines have a Lao-tzean tone. It is quite obvious that here T'an-luan is seeing oneness amidst diversity. After touching upon the relationship between the oneness of Enlightenment and the diversity of the adornments of Pure Land specified by Vasubandhu, T'an-luan says:

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are made up of two-fold Dharmakāya: Dharmakāya in its aspect of suchness, and Dharmakāya in its *upāya* aspect. Out of the former the latter appears. By way of the latter is the former realized. Though distinct from each other, these two aspects of Dharmakāya are inseparable. Though they are one, they should never be confused [*Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 841b].

T'an-luan is trying to say that although buddhas and bodhisattvas are mentioned together with the land among the 29 adornments of Pure Land as if they were separate entities in their own right, they are simply a part of Dharmakāya itself. In other words, he points to the fact that they are

authentic manifestations of the same Enlightenment that constitutes the essence of the Pure Land. To T'an-luan's enlightened eye the diversity is by no means a hindrance to his vision of the true essence of the Pure Land.

With regard to the Pure Land expressed in objective terms, T'an-luan declares:

The so-called Pure Land is none other than a path which leads ultimately to Buddhahood; it is a supreme *upāya* [*Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 842a].

Shinran quotes these statements in the Chapter on Attainment of the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*. Therefore, as the other important statements, these may be taken as Shinran's own views.

We cannot help but be amazed at the boldness of these words. For when we hear the word *upāya*, we are unreasonably annoyed by a suggestion of something adulterated or superficial. But essentially *upāya* is not a synonym for falsehood. Rather it belongs, in its essence, to truth. In other words, *upāya* is none other than the dynamic aspect of truth. The activity of transcendental wisdom (*prajñā*) itself is *upāya*. However what interests us most in this context is that T'an-luan did not hesitate to make such a statement. Through this statement it is apparent that he wanted to express the essentially non-dual relationship between *nirvāṇa* or ultimate state of enlightenment and the so-called Pure Land. For he was firmly convinced that once one is in touch with *upāya*, somehow or other he is already in contact with truth because of the intrinsic solidarity of the two. To attempt to objectify what can never be objectified—this is one of the characteristics of Pure Land Buddhism.

As to the soteriological problems, T'an-luan makes, among others, the following statements:

Among a number of passages in the Mahayana sutras and commentaries, we often see the statement, "Sentient beings are after all 'non-arising' just like vast space." Why is it, then, that Vasubandhu Bodhisattva spoke of 'desiring birth [in the Pure Land]'?

All such things as the substance of sentient beings as imagined by an ordinary man, and the substance of 'birth-and-death' as seen by an ordinary man, are in the last analysis unreal, like the hair of a tortoise or vast space. What is meant by 'Birth' that was sought for by Vasubandhu Bodhisattva is 'dependent arising,' and so it was only tentatively so called [*Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 827b].

In these lines T'an-luan is discussing in the form of question and answer the question of who it is that desires birth in the Pure Land. By his question and answer T'an-luan suggests that there is no substance in the abstract concept

of 'sentient beings' who are supposed to be leaving this world and going to the other world desirous of birth in the Pure Land. In these lines we can clearly see T'an-luan's rootage in the soil of *śūnyatā* philosophy. T'an-luan further states:

Why is birth in the Pure Land expounded? When the Five-fold Path of Nembutsu is practiced by the so-called human beings of this world, a fore-thought becomes the cause of an after-thought. The so-called human beings of the defiled land and those of the Pure Land are neither decidedly identical with each other nor decidedly different from each other. The same holds true with the fore-thought and the after-thought. Why?

Because if they were identical, there would be no law of cause and effect; if different, there would be no continuity between them [*Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 827b].

This two-fold question and answer is highly significant in that T'an-luan is suggesting that 'birth' ultimately means 'conversion.' "The so-called human being of the defiled world" is an unenlightened man and "the so-called human being of the Pure Land" is an enlightened man. The relationship between these two types may be compared to that of Saul and Paul. Saul was a man bent on persecuting Jesus, Paul was a man who faithfully followed the footsteps of Jesus. Are these two men different or the same? The same relationship is seen in the life of Shinran. Yamabushi Bennen may correspond to Saul in that he was bent on persecuting Shinran. Myōhōbō, known as Bennen before he was converted by Shinran, would thus correspond to Paul. Is Bennen different from Myōhōbō or is he the same? In answering such a question, T'an-luan resorted to the typical dialectic of Mādhyamika logicians. In these particular passages, we must not overlook that T'an-luan has drawn out the innermost meaning of 'birth' (*ōjō*) by suggesting the spiritual transformation that takes place in man's mind at the experience of conversion. The above shows clearly that T'an-luan interpreted the religious experience of 'birth' not in terms of actually leaving this world and going to the other world, but in terms of the inner experience of man's mind. This might be said to be another example of T'an-luan's version of demythologization.

(2) Ideas of *jiriki* and *tariki*

We have seen in the above how T'an-luan made a great contribution to the Pure Land ontology and soteriology through his characteristic interpretations. Shinran understood the experience of enlightenment or salvation in terms of "birth in the Pure Land," mainly through T'an-luan's dialectical exegesis. Shinran thus had through T'an-luan's exegesis a great

deal to learn from Vasubandhu's presentation of the full significance of "Pure Land." T'an-luan, while standing upon *sūnyatā* philosophy, positively accepted the schematized representation of the Pure Land, in full recognition of the *raison d'être* of Pure Land Buddhism which arose in defense of the cause of universal salvation. Nevertheless, T'an-luan was well aware that the ultimate meaning of "birth in the Pure Land" consisted not in the matter of geography or physical movement but in spiritual birth or conversion, which he clearly expressed in Mādhyamika terms as "birth of non-birth." On the other hand, the final realization Shinran attained was that the essence of Nembutsu is none other than the whole connotation of "Pure Land," for the essence of Pure Land is *nirvāṇa* itself. Pure Land is not a static or physical place but a dynamic reality or a ceaseless functioning of *satori* itself. It is not only a place all men are expected to reach, it is something to be realized amidst the actual human existence beset with all forms of predicament and suffering.

Shinran was perceptive enough to see the essence of Nembutsu practice in Vasubandhu's "single-mindedness," which was expressed in his confession in praise of Amida. He reached the conclusion that Vasubandhu's "single-mindedness" was the key to unlock the mystery of Nembutsu practice. With his keen insight, he perceived that it did not in fact belong to Vasubandhu as a man, but that it was Amida's Original Vow materialized as Vasubandhu's aspiring heart. Shinran also perceived in the "single-mindedness" a unity of the so-called three minds—sincerity, faith, aspiration for birth—contained in Amida's Eighteenth Vow. In other words, he discerned the essence of the Eighteenth Vow realized in Vasubandhu's "single-mindedness" led by his insight that Vasubandhu achieved the unity in order to enable unenlightened sentient beings to acquire understanding, since although Amida put forth the three minds as a prerequisite insuring the efficacy of Nembutsu, there is no other authentic cause for attaining *nirvāṇa* than "Faith." Shinran's contention was that Nembutsu can be a right cause for all people to attain *nirvāṇa* because the Faith in Nembutsu is essentially not man's but Amida's. He used the term '*tariki*' (Other Power) in order to express this. Defining '*tariki*' in the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* chapter on Practice, he states: "The 'Other Power' is none other than the Power of Amida's Original Vow." Hōnen was also, of course, fully convinced that the practice of reciting Nembutsu was effective for all people of the latter day as the sole cause of attaining *nirvāṇa*; that it was not because Nembutsu is sincerely recited by men, but because Nembutsu was in accordance with the spirit of Amida's Original Vow. This is the very reason why he could be so emphatic in expounding the teaching of Nembutsu as the founder of the Jōdo Sect. However, he did not distinguish precisely enough the two aspects of Nembutsu: *jiriki* and *tariki*. For Hōnen all Nembutsu was, so to speak, *tariki*, because Nembutsu itself, as the sacred practice selected by Amida's Compassionate Vow, was superior to

all other practices. On the other hand, Shinran's historical mission was to scrutinize the inner motive of Nembutsu practice. He made a minute examination of the sacred practices leading one to birth in the Pure Land, which he recorded in the "Faith" Chapter of the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*. In the course of this process, the ideas of *jiriki* and *tariki* played a vital role. The examination of "Faith" cannot help but lead to the examination of the vows and sutras from which it derives and the modes of birth which it gives rise to. For vows are the basic principle or the prime, spiritual force of which the sutras are the expressions, and the ensuing modes of birth are an indication of the quality of faith which produced them.

The terms *jiriki* and *tariki* Shinran adopted from T'an-luan can of course be traced to their popular usage. Ordinarily *jiriki* stands for "self-power" or "self-effort," and *tariki* for "Other Power" or "external help." It was T'an-luan, however, who gave a religious significance to these popular terms. For T'an-luan, *tariki* was not simply an antonym to *jiriki*, but moreover it covered the transcendental extension of the term. It is not that he totally discarded the popular, relative meaning of *tariki*, but that he added to it a transcendental meaning to make it a religious term. T'an-luan transformed a popular term into a religious one. So the term *tariki* itself was not created by T'an-luan. It had existed far prior to him, and it can even be found in Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land*.

In the following let us look into the significance of the task T'an-luan performed in clarifying the dual meaning of *tariki*. When *tariki* means simply a dependence upon something else, and as long as the "faith" is characterized as such, such a "faith" is not instrumental in leading to one's enlightenment, to his true independence from all external things. By *tariki* "Faith" T'an-luan meant the establishment of the True Self, while by *jiriki* "faith" he meant our enslavement to our self-power, our limited, relative human power. *Tariki* "Faith" must be something that enables man to establish his True Subjectivity. The establishment of True Subjectivity is none other than salvation, *nirvāṇa*, *mokṣa* or "birth in the Pure Land." Only the *tariki* "Faith" in its religious sense makes man truly autonomous or sets him free.

It is generally believed that when we embrace the faith of *tariki*, we lose our subjectivity. In such a case, *tariki* means not Vow Power but simply dependency upon something else. Such a faith enslaves man rather than sets him free. When we accept Vow Power through Nembutsu, Vow Power is realized in us. Then it is Vow Power that is our real Subjectivity. As long as faith remains *jiriki*, our subjectivity also remains relative, enslaved, limited and dependent. It is at this moment a transformation takes place. Furthermore, T'an-luan went so far as to see *tariki* Faith as the effect rather than the beginning of the Vow. In other words, he considered that the fact of man's embracing *tariki* Faith is the realization of the Original Vow of Amida, and not the beginning of man's religious life. He saw the effect

(realization or accomplishment) in the cause where an ordinary man would see merely the beginning. To the eyes of an unenlightened man, our act of believing is the start of religious life. For T'an-luan, however, our belief was none other than the realization of Amida's Original Vow. This interaction between Amida and man (though, essentially, they are not necessarily distinct from each other as between God and man) was called by T'an-luan "*ekō*." This Shinran inherited from him.

(3) The Idea of *Ekō*

We have seen in the above that the term *ekō* has an important bearing on the event of "transformation" or the moment of birth in the Pure Land. As with *tariki*, *ekō* was a common term in India. It meant either "transformation" or "transferring of merit accumulated by someone for the benefit of others." In this case, too, everyday language came to be given a religious meaning: *pariṇāma* which in Sanskrit originally meant a "change" or a "transformation," came to be used by Buddhists as "merit-transference." At least up until the time of Hōnen, *ekō* invariably meant man's act of transferring merit to others. But for the first time in Buddhism, the term *ekō* was given to mean Amida's transference of merit towards men. For Hōnen Nembutsu was always man's *ekō*, while for Shinran it was always Amida's. It was Vasubandhu who used the term *ekō* for the first time, presenting its two directions: going and returning. He meant by "going *ekō*" a Pure Land aspirant's direction from the defiled world to the Pure Land, while by "returning *ekō*" he meant an enlightened bodhisattva's direction from Pure Land to the defiled world. That is to say, for Vasubandhu there were two directions of *ekō*: one from the realm of *mayoi* (illusion) to the realm of *satori* (enlightenment), the other from the realm of *satori* to the realm of *mayoi*. T'an-luan accepted Vasubandhu's conceptions of the two directions of *ekō* and developed them further. T'an-luan, while accepting the ideas of the two directions of *ekō* shown by Vasubandhu, finally concluded that they were in fact reducible to one, the "returning *ekō*" alone, the direction of *ekō* from *satori* to *mayoi*. He showed it to be Amida's and not man's, and he qualified it as *tariki ekō*, the *ekō* motivated by the Power of Amida's Original Vow.

It was accordingly thought to be Amida's working itself that man acquires Faith, for essentially there is only one *ekō*. It is now apparent that Shinran's well-known teaching of "Faith in the Other Power" is thus indebted to this insight of T'an-luan into the nature of *ekō*. In the *Jōdo Ronchū* T'an-luan declares:

If we clearly look into the source of this idea, Tathāgata Amida is the promotive agent [*Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 843c].

This declaration was quoted by Shinran in the Chapter on Practice of the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* [*Shinshū Shogyō Zensho* (hereafter *SSZ*), vol. 2, p. 36]. T'an-luan pointed out that ultimately our aspiration for the Pure Land itself originates from Amida. He then continues:

Of all things our birth in the Pure Land and the works of the bodhisattvas of other lands, arise from the power of the vows of Tathāgata Amida. Why is it so? Should things not arise from the power of the forty-eight vows of the Buddha, they would have been taken in vain [*Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 843c].

Shinran expressed the meaning of *tariki ekō* in his own words as “*fu-ekō*” (“*non-ekō*”). *Fu-ekō* means “not man’s *ekō*,” hence Amida’s. He states in the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*:

Therefore it is clearly known that this Nembutsu practice is not the practice of self-power by common men and sages. Therefore it is called the practice of *fu-ekō* [Chapter on Practice, *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 33].

Again, Shinran reversed the meaning of the expression “*Hotsugan ekō*” (To aspire for birth and transfer the merit) that had invariably been taken as man’s action toward Amida, and says:

Hotsugan ekō refers to the Tathāgata’s (Amida’s) aspiration, in which he, having already taken the Vow, endows sentient beings with their Practice [Chapter on Practice, *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 22].

In this way Shinran’s *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* might be said to be permeated throughout by the insight of *tariki ekō*. In this respect T’an-luan’s influence upon Shinran’s teaching is indeed considerable. In conclusion, it may be said that in the light of T’an-luan’s insight, Shinran executed the task of examining the quality of Nembutsu Faith mainly from the view-points of *tariki* and *ekō*, and clarified that the Original Vow of Amida, that is usually regarded as the Other Power by man, realized itself in man’s Faith, thus truly establishing his Subjectivity. That Amida’s Vow realizes itself as man’s Faith and at the same time Faith proves the presence of the Vow, and that the evidence of the realization of the Vow is none other than man’s Faith—all this was the central theme of the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*. Without T’an-luan’s genius Shinran could not have succeeded to the extent he did in making this clear.

The Theoretical Structure of “Birth in the Pure Land”: Based on the Meaning of T’an-luan’s “Birth through Causal Conditions”¹

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I.

IN THE PRESENT DAY, religion itself has become a question mark. That is to say, the very foundation upon which religion is established has itself come into question. No longer can any discussion of religion take place in the absence of a harsh realization of its present situation.² Of course “the present day” does not refer to some generalized period of time as an “entity” (*das Ding*), which can be coolly objectified in a manner unrelated to one’s own presently existing self.³ Rather, the “present” of this presently existing self must become none other than the “present” of the present day. Only in this way will we truly be able to speak for the first time of the “present day.” Thus, to say that in the present day religion is being brought into question from its very foundations means that religion itself is becoming a fundamental question mark at the locus of one’s own present existence.

Furthermore, such a situation inevitably implies the need to inquire into the bases of various traditional religious ideologies. This is because the very fact that religion is becoming a fundamental question mark connotes an inquiry into what the essence of religion is. The manner in which various religious ideologies have been traditionally understood must also be brought into question⁴ through an inquiry into their essential core. This questioning of the ideological essence must also, at the same time, unflinchingly illuminate and reveal the basis of the present existence of this self. Only in this way can the inquiry become a fundamental question.

The concept of “birth in the Pure Land” (*ōjō*), long considered to be one of the principal ideas in the study of the Pure Land teachings, must also be re-examined in this manner. That is to say, one must inquire into “birth” from within the situation of the present day and in a way that brings the essence of religion into question. In such a way the true state of one’s own present existence will naturally and clearly come to be revealed. I believe

that this is the very question regarding "birth in the Pure Land" that T'an-luan raises, based on Nāgārjuna's philosophy, in his *Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land*.⁵ That is to say, his question as to "birth," which he sought to explicate from the standpoint of Nāgārjuna's philosophy, is imbued with the power to overcome the present situation in which religion itself has become a question mark at its very foundation.

It has been said that T'an-luan's interpretation of birth did not receive sufficient doctrinal development in later Pure Land teachings, particularly in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism.⁶ As Ishida Mitsuyuki has pointed out, in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism "there were all too few occasions in which consideration was given to the most important and fundamental ideological and creatively fulfilled point of the Pure Land teachings."⁷ In that situation, T'an-luan's interpretation of birth bore the key that might have been able to provide its fundamental ideological and creative fulfillment.

In this article, I will attempt a "creative fulfillment" of the meaning of birth in Pure Land Buddhism, based on an examination of T'an-luan's interpretation of it. This will probably be criticized as being some kind of reckless radicalism that deviates from traditional understandings. However, for my present self, further developing T'an-luan's interpretation of birth will for the first time approach the very brink of my own birth (and life) in a manner that can relate directly to the present existence of this self.

Today in Japan, the word "ōjō" (birth in the Pure Land) has come to stand for death or to mean being at a standstill. Traditionally, the teaching, "abandon this world, go to that world and be born transformed within a lotus blossom"⁸ was interpreted only to mean that one dies in this world and then is born in that world beyond. However, in the present situation, as long as this interpretation of birth remains, then even modern, secular explanations will not bear any greater religious significance for modern persons. That is, as long as "birth in the Pure Land" is comprehended as taking place somewhere along a straight line upon which one dies in this world and is then born in that world, it could not possibly mean anything within the religious existence of modern persons. Of course, I do not entirely deny that there is a linear aspect to the idea of birth.⁹ However, ultimately that represents nothing more than just one aspect of it. In the present situation, we cannot help but think that such a linear aspect, as it verges upon the locus of the religious existence of modern persons, can no longer display the power to bring about a conversion¹⁰ (*die Kehre*) of that existential structure.

Further, T'an-luan attempted to clarify the principles of Mahayana Buddhism immanent in the idea of "birth in the Pure Land" from the standpoint of fundamental Mahayanistic ideology. In this respect, this explication of birth constituted the basis for the establishment of the Pure Land teachings. Clearly, this bears important, contemporary significance for us, who are directly confronted today with the encounter with world

religions in which there is a tendency to regard Pure Land Buddhist doctrine as identical, or at least analogous, to the theoretical structure of Christian salvation.

II.

T'an-luan attempts in his *Commentary* to explicate the idea of "birth in the Pure Land" from the standpoint of Mahayana Buddhist notions of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and interdependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). His explanation could be summarized as follows: birth through causal conditions is the same as being unborn; it cannot definitely be referred to as the same nor different, and so it accords with the principles of causality and continuity. This explanation appears once in both the first and second fascicles of his work respectively. In both places his discussion relates to the notion of birth in the context of the notion of "aspiration for birth," which is set forth in the opening verse of Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land*,

Single-heartedly I take refuge in the Tathagata of unhindered light
filling the ten quarters and aspire to be born in the land of happiness.¹¹

The two *Commentary* passages that pertain to birth are as follows, designated respectively as passage (A) and passage (B).

(A) First Fascicle: Section on the Overall Explanation, the Gate of Aspiration.

Question: In the Mahayana sutras and treatises it is frequently taught that sentient beings are in the final analysis unborn, like empty space. Why does Bodhisattva Vasubandhu express his aspiration for "birth"?

Answer: The statement, "Sentient beings are unborn, like empty space," is open to two interpretations. First, what ordinary people see—such as sentient beings, which they conceive as real, or the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real—is ultimately nonexistent, like imaginary "tortoise fur," or like empty space. Second, since all things are "born" from causal conditions, they are actually unborn; that is, they are non-existent, like empty space.

The "birth" to which Bodhisattva Vasubandhu aspires refers to being born through causal conditions. Hence it is provisionally termed "birth." This does not mean that there are real beings or that being born and dying is real, as ordinary beings imagine.

Question: In what sense do you speak of birth in the Pure Land?

Answer: For the provisionally-called "person" in this world who practices the five gates of mindfulness, the preceding thought is the cause of the succeeding thought. The provisionally-called "person" of this defiled world and the provisionally-called "person" of the Pure Land cannot be definitely called the same or definitely called different. The same is true of preceding thought and succeeding thought. The reason is that if they were one and the same, then there would be no causality; if they were different, there would be no continuity. The principle is the gate of contemplating sameness and difference; it is discussed in detail in the treatises. Here ends the explanation of the three gates of mindfulness manifested in the first stanza.¹²

(B) Second Fascicle: Section on the Explication of the Meaning, the Chapter on the Objects of Contemplation.

(a) A question arises concerning this remark: Birth is the origin of one's existence and of various afflictions; if one abandons this life to seek rebirth in another state of existence, how can one's series of births be terminated?

In order to clarify this doubt, one should contemplate the glorious merits of the Pure Land and clearly realize that birth in the Pure Land is the "birthless birth" brought about by Amida Tathagata's Primal Vow that is pure. This is not one of the delusory births as seen in the three worlds.

How can you say this? In the first place, the Dharma-nature is immaculate and is the state of ultimate non-birth. It is simply in accordance with the feeling of those who seek birth in the Pure Land that we speak of "birth." Since birth is non-birth, how can you deny such birth? Should you deny "birth," speaking with reference to a higher spiritual realization, there would be no Bodhisattva's body of activity which accords with inactivity; also, speaking with reference to a lower spiritual realization, there would be a danger of the disease of the threefold voidness, which is not the true voidness. The result would be that the root of Bodhi is destroyed forever and that the Theravāda cry out, shaking the entire universe. Since they could not turn around and convert to Mahayana, they would bring disgrace upon themselves. In order to make them realize the principle of birthless birth, the Pure Land has been established. The abode of the Pure Land is shown by the seventeen objects of contemplation.¹³

(b) Question: When you said above that “birth” in the Pure Land was “non-birth,” you must have been referring to the aspirants of the highest grade. In the case of those of the lowest level of the lowest grade, who are said to be born in the Pure Land through ten Nembutsu, do they not conceive of actual birth? If so, they meet with two difficulties: (1) they will, in all probability, not attain birth and (2) even if they are born in the Pure Land, they will continue to hold a delusory view of “birth.”

Answer: It is like putting a luminous mani-gem into muddy water; the water instantly becomes clear. If a person, though defiled with karmic evils which would cause him/her to transmigrate for countless births and deaths, hears the supreme, luminous gem of the Name of Amida Tathagata, which accords with the principle of “non-birth,” and holds it in mind, his/her karmic evils will be destroyed and his/her mind purified, and so he/she will quickly attain birth in the Pure Land.

Secondly, if a luminous mani-gem is wrapped in black or yellow cloth and put into water, the water instantly becomes black or yellow. In the Pure Buddha-land there is the most excellent gem of Amida Tathagata. If it is wrapped in the cloth of the immeasurable glorious merits and put into the water of the aspirant’s mind, how could the gem not turn his/her view of actual birth into the wisdom of non-birth? It is also like making a fire on ice. If the fire is fierce, the ice melts; when the ice melts, the fire is extinguished. Similarly, even though aspirants of the lowest level of the lowest grade are ignorant of the principle that the intrinsic nature of existence is non-birth, if they repeat the Buddha’s Name and aspire to be born in his Land while holding the view of actual birth there, the fire of the view of actual birth is spontaneously extinguished, because the Land is the realm of non-birth.¹⁴

From an overall perspective of these *Commentary* passages, it could be said that passage (A) sets out the theoretical structure of “birth in the Pure Land,” while passage (B) presents an explanation, based on that principle, of how birth is related to the dynamic working of Amida Buddha’s salvation.¹⁵ Further, when these two aspects—the theoretical aspect and the active aspect—are closely examined, the significance of birth, which brings about a conversion (*die Kehre*) within one’s religious existence, is revealed for the first time. In addition, the on-going relationship between these two aspects is such that each would lose all meaning if either of the aspects were to exist by itself. Further, even if one were able to separate the two aspects¹⁶ in order to clarify them by discussing each one individually, this would bring about the destruction of the true significance of the two and, ultimately, make both aspects and their establishment impossible.

Accordingly, the relationship between both aspects (this expression itself contains a contradiction) is that the active aspect is already discussed within the context of the theoretical aspect, while the theoretical aspect is always contained within the active aspect as its basis. When we examine the theoretical aspect, the active, essential cause of its activity must be found. If the active, essential cause could not be found it could not be regarded as the theoretical aspect of birth. Also, in order to establish truly the active aspect of birth, the theoretical foundation, which T'an-luan develops in (A), must lead to that activity. Accordingly, when experiencing the theoretical foundation, inevitably, the manifestation of the active aspect must come about as a result. One could say that the form taken by that inevitable manifestation was the historical reality (*Geschichte*) of the emergence of Pure Land Buddhism in Kamakura Japan.

For *nembutsu* practitioners like Hōnen and his disciples, many of whom were the so-called founders of various Pure Land schools, this kind of theoretical foundation was experienced as the basis for the arising of their religious existence. The active aspect, which was an historical and inevitable consequence of that experience, was driven forth, passing through the locus of the individual religious existence of those various founders. This was expressed in their religious declarations. Accordingly, it is natural that the active aspect was strongly manifested in their writings, which represented the crystallization of that activity. However, the point that must be considered here is the fact that these school founders had already come into possession of the theoretical foundation through their experiences of seeking the enlightenment of Mahayana Buddhism.¹⁷

However, in succeeding generations, it appears that the active aspect, which had been so clearly visible in the writings of these school founders, came to be removed from its theoretical foundation, which had completely pervaded and been embodied within their religious existence. It was just as if the basic essence of their assertions had been organized and systematized in that way. The most notable and typical feature of this doctrinal system has traditionally been referred to as "topics related to practice and faith" (*gyōshinron*).¹⁸ There the theoretical foundation was reduced and changed entirely into one involving "dharmic virtues," "endowed virtues," "virtues of that Land," as well as a focus upon the attainment to be realized in the Pure Land. It was as if it were confined within a secret chamber of true emptiness, which bore no relationship whatsoever to the foundations of religious existence. This could mean nothing other than an estrangement from and annihilation of that theoretical foundation. At the same time, it also brought about an estrangement from and annihilation of the active aspect as well.¹⁹ The fact that, in the present day, no form of active working seems able to arise from the traditional doctrinal studies (in spite of the fact that it originally represented the organization and systematization of the active aspect) speaks volumes regarding the matter.

III.

Anyone seeking to achieve a so-called “creative fulfillment” of the meaning of birth in Pure Land Buddhism on the basis of T’an-luan’s interpretation of birth would unavoidably have to move in the direction of arguing against a traditional understanding that has long been intractable. Of course, such an attempt at an overthrow must not itself succumb to dogmatism. The germination of such criticism must be guided to the very end by T’an-luan’s understanding of birth itself. However, it should not remain fixed upon T’an-luan either. Rather, such criticism must be meaningful for the religious existence of this currently existing self.

Because of limitations on the length of this article I will place the focus only on the question and answer portion of passage (A) above, which as I have mentioned sets forth the theoretical foundation of “birth in the Pure Land.” I will engage in an examination and criticism of the traditional understanding of that passage, and through that process attempt to clarify the theoretical structure of birth. I will attempt this examination and criticism by organizing the essential points of the question and answer portion of (A) into three areas:

1. T’an-luan’s purpose for developing the questions and answers.
2. The relationship between the two interpretations of the statement, “sentient beings are unborn, like empty space.” This includes the issues of “birth through causes and conditions,” “provisional” birth, and “the relationship between non-birth and aspiration for birth.”
3. Birth that cannot definitely be called the same nor different, and so accords with the principles of causality and continuity.

1. T’an-luan’s Purpose for Developing the Questions and Answers

There have been many different interpretations as to what T’an-luan’s purpose for developing the questions and answers in his *Commentary* might have been. As a result, interpretations of the meaning of birth have also greatly differed. Traditionally five different positions have been taken.²⁰ I will discuss the two of them that are the most relevant to this article.²¹

The first takes the position that, because T’an-luan’s explanation of birth is solely an explication with respect to the commentary master, Bodhisattva Vasubandhu, it rejects the feelings of ordinary beings. Hence, it is real birth, “not as ordinary beings imagine.” According to this view, birth is interpreted to be ultimately without form, that is, it is synonymous

with emptiness and interdependent origination. Since the discussion is framed in relation to practitioners of the highest stages of bodhisattva-hood, it refers to a realm that is utterly unfathomable by foolish, ordinary beings such as ourselves.

Certainly, the explications regarding birth in both passages (A) and (B) do refer to the "aspiration for birth" set forth by the commentary master, Vasubandhu. However, the words in the question, "sentient beings are in the final analysis unborn," surely reflect a standpoint that seeks to penetrate into the heart of the nature of "non-birth," which lies at the universal ground of existence of all sentient beings. Thus, it is not necessary to limit it to a discussion regarding this one commentary master. In addition, the words in the answer, "The statement, 'Sentient beings are unborn, like empty space,' is open to two interpretations," seek to explain that the nature of "non-birth" for sentient beings is of two kinds. One must not forget that this discussion is in regard to all sentient beings.²²

T'an-luan's statement that, "The 'birth' to which Bodhisattva Vasubandhu aspires refers to being born through causal conditions," might pose a problem. However, there is no need whatsoever to regard this as an assertion that the birth for which the Bodhisattva Vasubandhu aspires alone possesses the meaning of "birth through causal conditions." Rather, if one regards the teaching of the true state of "birth in the Pure Land" to be birth in accordance with the principle of interdependent origination—the fundamental idea of Mahayana Buddhism—then one must conclude that it seeks to explain the state of birth that is true and real for all sentient beings.

Also, what could be the meaning of the question in part (b) of passage (B)?

When you said above that "birth" (in the Pure Land) was "non-birth," you must have been referring to the aspirants of the highest grade. In the case of those of the lowest level of the lowest grade, who are said to be born in the Pure Land through ten Nembutsu, do they not conceive of actual birth? If so, they meet with two difficulties.

Does it really mean that the true meaning of birth as viewed from the standpoint of interdependent origination cannot be discussed at the level of the lowest grade of beings in the lowest level of birth? By no means could this be the case. No, rather, the meaning of birth that is "non-birth" is indeed being discussed at the foundations of present existence—at the level of the person who is at the lowest rank in the lowest level of birth. Here the discussion directly verges on the religious existence of the self, in a manner that is much more real than any discussion regarding the birth of the highest grade of beings. It is exactly because the meaning of birth as "non-birth" exists at the lowest level of existence that the three functions

concerning the Name—hearing the Name, the adornments of the Buddha's Land, and saying the Name—which is developed later in the text, can be established. These are authenticated by three metaphors: (1) the pure mani-gem that makes defiled waters pure; (2) the pure mani-gem wrapped in yellow or black cloth that turns the waters yellow or black; and (3) the fire burning fiercely on the ice. If the meaning of birth as “non-birth” were not to be established at the level of the lowest rank of beings in the lowest grade of birth, then what meaning would the Name hold?

However, a rebuttal from the traditional standpoint might be appended here. That position would be that the meaning of birth as “non-birth” is not established at the level of the lowest rank of being in the lowest grade of birth. Rather, it is simply that persons in the lowest rank of being in the lowest grade of birth can only rely upon the working of the Name, without having any understanding as to the meaning of “birth that is non-birth.” Yet, then, what could the meaning of the working of the Name possibly be? It would be that it lies directly beneath the present existence of the self amidst the immeasurable samsaric sins and defilements as the lowest rank of being in the lowest of grade of birth. Although such beings are not capable of understanding the “dharma-nature that is non-birth,” the working of the Name brings us to understand that “non-birth” is the true state of birth. Through that understanding, the nature of our sins and defilements, which are immeasurable within our samsaric existence, are revealed existentially. In this manner, such existential knowing itself signifies the simultaneous realization of knowing that one is oneself removed from sinfulness and defilement, and the existential transcendence of those sins and defilement.

According to the traditional interpretation, the working of the Name is explained in terms of the so-called “virtues of that Land,” or, virtues said to be attained upon realizing birth in the Pure Land, which is the realm of “non-birth.” In this view, such working of the Name does not become manifested in the state of beings in this life. Rather, it remains immanently possessed within the Name as “dharmic virtues” or “endowed virtues.” If that were so, however, then it could no longer be called “working” or “power.” Instead, its only significance would be to reveal our estrangement from or the annihilation of the Name. If that were so, T'an-luan's utilization of his three metaphors to reveal the reality (*sache*) of a singular non-duality and his efforts to stress the importance of it would have amounted to nothing.

Furthermore, we must speculate on how much authenticating, persuasive power the three metaphors must have had for persons living during T'an-luan's time. In the present day, aside from the metaphor about the bonfire burning atop the ice, the metaphors seem irrational and fail to exhibit any kind of persuasive power. Instead, they might even engender a counter-reaction. Today, we would relegate such metaphors, which

might have been able to reveal the greatness of the working of the Name during T'an-luan's time, to the place of irrelevance. (I have previously referred to this as "estrangement.") Or, we might even consider them to smack of superstition. It is likely that this estrangement would be deepened by the tendency to comprehend the Name in terms of "dharmic virtues," "endowed virtues" or "virtues of that Land." What we need to do in the present day is to inquire into how we could attain the same deep understanding of the real working of the Name at the locus of our religious existence that persons of T'an-luan's age were able to realize through those three metaphors. This realization must come about not by using the same three metaphors, but by encountering it at the locus of this self presently existing as the real working of the Name in the present day.

When one considers it from this point of view, any attempt to limit the meaning of "birth that is non-birth" to the highest rank of being in the highest grade of birth would provide it with no meaning whatsoever. It would make implausible the idea of the birth of persons in the lowest rank of being in the lowest grade of birth. To do so would amount to nothing more than exalting the principle of "birth that is non-birth" as some kind of false icon.

The second standpoint relevant to our discussion describes the basis for the formation of the essential meaning of "birth in the Pure Land." This stance is represented by Jinrei's consideration of the criticism directed against the Pure Land teachings during T'an-luan's time.²³ According to Jinrei, the criticism was based in the ideas held by teachers of the Path of the Sages in Mahayana Buddhist schools generally, and particularly in the San-lun school.²⁴

If this criticism were not thoroughly addressed in a general Buddhist manner, it might have resulted in the destruction of the teaching of birth in the Pure Land.²⁵

Jinrei's stance was not that T'an-luan was critical of the question for representing the false belief in nihilism arising from the deluded passions of sentient beings.²⁶ Instead, on the contrary, Jinrei believed that T'an-luan was deeply cognizant of the encounter between the Pure Land teachings and general Mahayanist schools. In his view T'an-luan was seeking to explain the way in which one could establish the "one great, essential" Pure Land Buddhist teaching of "aspiration for birth in the Pure Land," based on the doctrines of general Mahayana Buddhism. We might surmise that T'an-luan's attitude was that of seeking to examine thoroughly the truth and ultimacy of the Pure Land teachings from an even more universal and fundamental place.

However, unavoidably we must say that there is a sense that Jinrei's approach does not quite take the final step. By this I mean that the true basis

for the establishment of the essential meaning of "birth in the Pure Land" did not simply remain in the form of a defense against the criticism of general Mahayana Buddhist schools. It did not come about simply through a confrontation with general Buddhist schools (an opposition between general versus particular schools) or with the San-lun school (an opposition between sectarian schools). Rather, it must be said that the true meaning of "birth in the Pure Land" can become really established only when it is grounded in its most fundamental source (which precedes the division between the Path of Sages and the Pure Land path) that enables Mahayana Buddhism to be Mahayana Buddhism.²⁷

This is a locus that transcends T'an-luan. Implied in this locus of transcendence is a sense of history, which means we cannot be T'an-luan; nor can we be persons who lived during his time. However, although we cannot be T'an-luan, the locus of transcendence means that we must at all times be transcended by the line of T'an-luan's intent. The beginnings of this line of intention must always be found within T'an-luan. In the present case, this inception point can be found in his interpretation of birth as birth that cannot definitely be called the same nor different, and so accords with the principles of causality and continuity. The true meaning of birth reveals this most fundamental source, which precedes the division between the Path of Sages and the Pure Land path. At the same time, the true meaning of birth must ultimately bring about the manifestation of its most fundamental source within the ground of religious existence, which is this self. As a result of such manifestation, it might be said, the true meaning of birth reveals its fundamental source for the first time. In other words, the actual manifestation of this fundamental source is essentially none other than birth itself.

2. The Relationship between the Two Interpretations of the Statement, "Sentient Beings are Unborn, Like Empty Space."

In interpreting the relationship between the two meanings of "non-birth," we can point to three principal traditional standpoints. First is the view that, in accordance with the three natures in consciousness-only doctrine, there is a pair of meanings of "non-birth" as one aspires for perfection fulfillment: (1) "non-birth" in the sense that it is birth produced by one's feeling or imagination, and (2) "non-birth" in the sense that birth arises through interdependent origination. Thus, the conclusion that "sentient beings are like empty space."²⁸ One might expect, however, that there is some question as to whether T'an-luan's conception of "non-birth" may be understood through consciousness-only thought. One author states, "Non-birth that is dependent on others is without hindrance. How could (it be obstructed by the aspiration for birth?)."²⁹ Although this view seeks

to resolve the contradiction between “non-birth” and “aspiration for birth” with the concept of “non-birth that is dependent on others,” this seems to be quite superficial. I will further discuss the relationship between “non-birth” and “aspiration for birth” later on.

Secondly, there is a view that brings the notion of “non-birth” into consonance with the negations, “no permanence” and “no annihilation,” from the eightfold negation of the dedicatory verse at the outset of the *Mūla-mādhyaṃika-kārikā*.³⁰ The first meaning of “non-birth” is thought to be to remove the false belief in eternalism in which ordinary beings cling to the view that sentient beings are real and that being born and dying are real. The second meaning of “non-birth” is regarded as being to remove the false belief in nihilism through the teaching that birth exists because it is “birth from causal conditions.” One must lay stress upon the fact that this seeks to relate the two within the mutual correspondence of the two teachings of existence and non-existence. In this regard, Jinrei states that the mutual correspondence of the two teachings of existence and non-existence is synonymous with the mutual identity of the two-fold supramundane and mundane truths (*paramārtha-satya* and *saṃvṛti-satya*):

Because all things are born from causal conditions, they are provisionally said to exist: this is to establish all things by means of the mundane truth. *The substance of all things that are provisionally said to exist is empty:* this is at the level of the supreme principle—ultimate emptiness. The mundane truth and the supreme truth are mutually identical. Hence, existence is in itself emptiness; emptiness is in itself existence. This is the meaning of the teaching that “form is the same as emptiness; emptiness is the same as form.” All things and teaching of the dharma are always based on the two truths.³¹

Further, Jinrei discerns that the notion of birth from causal conditions exists within the first meaning of “non-birth.”

The meaning that “since birth occurs through causal conditions it is said to exist” is embodied within the supreme principle of non-birth as well.³²

Although he seems to take the standpoint in which he surmises that the two meanings of “non-birth” intersect and have some bearing on each other, it is difficult to say whether the relationship between the two meanings of “non-birth” has as yet been clarified.

In Jinrei’s view of the second meaning of “non-birth,” the teaching that birth exists because it is “birth from causal conditions” removes the false

belief in nihilism. Here, the term “exists” is completely different from “existence,” which is the content of the negation contained within the first meaning of “non-birth” (existence as “existence, which beings view as real”). This is not an “existence” that serves as the basis for removing the belief in nihilism, which simply stands in parallel counter-point with the false view of eternalism. We can say that, from Jinrei’s standpoint, it indicates that the two meanings of “non-birth” are viewed within a relationship of the mutual opposition of nihilism and eternalism.

However, the relationship between the two meanings of “non-birth” is not an oppositional or dualistic one. Rather, it is a relationship in which the locus of the establishment of the first meaning of “non-birth” is the basis from which ontological “existence” (indicated by the phrase “birth from causal conditions”) actually arises as this kind of “existence.” It is from this view that Jinrei could state, “The meaning that ‘since birth occurs through causal conditions it is said to exist’ is embodied within the first meaning of non-birth as well.”

In addition, in the *Commentary* are the passages, “sentient beings are unborn” and, “The statement, ‘Sentient beings are unborn, like empty space,’ is open to two interpretations.” Despite that, however, it would appear that the first meaning of “non-birth” concerns “ordinary beings,” while the second meaning of “non-birth” seems applicable to “all things.” Is the intended meaning here simply to eliminate one’s attachment to either person or things? That is not likely.

“All things” is a universal concept. “Ordinary beings” is a specific limitation of it. Accordingly, the negation of the universal “all things” is located at the base of the negation of “ordinary beings” in the first meaning of “non-birth.” Taking this universal negation as its direct basis, the negation of “ordinary beings,” or, “sentient beings, which they conceive of as real” is established. Further, through the medium of this negation of “sentient beings, which they conceive of as real,” “being born and dying, which (ordinary beings) view as real” is also negated. This is the dual structure of the first meaning of “non-birth.”

This, then, is what we can see from the content of the negations within this dual structure: if we consider “birth” in the first meaning of “non-birth” to point to “birth” in the phrase “being born and dying,” then “being born and dying, which ordinary beings view as real” is negated. However, this is not “real birth” or “real death” itself, but rather “being born and dying that is viewed as real by ordinary beings” who are transmigrating in real birth-and-death. Thus, although the first meaning of “non-birth” states that beings are “non-existent,” it is not a negation of “birth” itself. This “non” points to the negation of “as viewed by ordinary beings.” Further, we should not overlook the fact that at the base of that negation lays the negation of “sentient beings, which they conceive of as real.”

What on earth is being discussed here? In a word, it ends with the negation of the notion that all things possess substance (*substantia*).³³ This negation is no longer a negation as the content of the false belief in nihilism. That is to say, it is not a negation of “all things” themselves. Rather, it is a negation of the view, or the attachment that views all things as having substance. Furthermore, the basis from which this negation arises is the “reality” that “all things are devoid of substance.” It is this “reality” that is symbolized as “birth from causal conditions,” which is the second meaning of “non-birth.” The negation seen in the phrase “all things are devoid of substance” is naturally implied here. The words giving expression to this negation here are “they are actually unborn.” It is also expressed by the words, “they are non-existent, like empty space.” This differs from the content of the words “like empty space” in the first meaning of “non-birth.” The content of “like empty space” in the first meaning of “non-birth” means “as viewed by sentient beings.” Hence, T’an-luan employs the metaphor of imaginary “tortoise fur.” We do not find this expression in the second meaning of “non-birth.” In sum, it can be concluded that the negation of “all things possess substance (*substantia*)” is the basis for the establishment of both meanings of “non-birth.”

The third traditional standpoint views both the first and second meanings of “non-birth” as discussions taking place from the perspective of “beings” and the perspective of “dharma” respectively.³⁴ In this viewpoint, the two are separated from each other, and there is absolutely no inquiry into the relationship between them. Here, no relationship between the two is in any way presumed. This view does nothing more than simply rephrase the explications in the text, making distinctions between them. The tendency to do so is also not limited to this issue. In my own biased view, such a trend is particularly obvious among traditional sectarian scholars of Hongwanji-ha.

“Birth through Causes and Conditions”

My standpoint in regard to “birth from causal conditions” is like my stance regarding the relationship between the two meanings of “non-birth” in the preceding discussion. “Birth from causal conditions” is a symbol of the ontological and epistemological negation of the substantial nature of all things, a negation is referred to by T’an-luan with the words, “they are actually unborn.” This is how I wish to comprehend it.³⁵ It could also be said that “birth from causal conditions” signifies that state of all things that accords with reality, that is, the state of interdependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). The negation is immanent within this interdependent arising of all being; it becomes the condition for its “existence.” The real state of all things indicates that which becomes affirmed as “real”

while embodying that negation. In fact, it is able to become real as a result of that negation. This manner of existence is referred to as “birth from causal conditions.”

Within the traditional interpretations, “birth from causal conditions” has been considered to correspond to the notions of “non-existence” or “apparent existence” in the context of the nature of existence that arises from interdependent origination.³⁶ It has also been concluded that, since it is a profound matter, “birth takes place without any reason for being born.”³⁷ In addition, it has been interpreted to mean that one’s birth in the Pure Land is called “birth through causal conditions” because it occurs through the interdependence of “solely entrusting oneself to the Buddha” as the cause and “the power of the Buddha’s Primal Vow” as the condition.³⁸ A commentary can also be seen which states that one aspires to be born through the causal conditions of Name and Light, based on Shinran’s “twofold analysis of the cause of birth.”³⁹ Further, some have considered the difference between “birth from causal conditions” and “non-birth” to correspond to the difference between the “mundane” and the “supramundane,” or between phenomenon and noumenon.⁴⁰ In addition, others have made a distinction between “is not born” (*fushō*) and “non-birth” (*mushō*).⁴¹

“Provisional Birth”

In T’an-luan’s original text is a passage in which he explains that, “it refers to being born through causal conditions; hence, it is provisionally termed ‘birth.’” “Provisional” is a concept in regard to which sages and teachers of the ancient past have given a variety of commentaries.⁴² Based on its linguistic context within the passage, the adverbial usage of the word “provisionally” would likely give it the meaning of “for some period of time,” “temporarily,” or “for the time being.”⁴³ However, the problem lies in taking the word to mean “provisionally.” That is to say, since the phrase is a reference to “being born through causal conditions,” it must mean that the basis of “provisionally termed birth” can be found within “birth through causal conditions.” That being so, it no longer simply means “for the time being.”

Therefore, existence arising through causal conditions must necessarily come to be referred to with the noun, “provisionality,” or “provisional birth” (thus, going beyond its mere adverbial sphere). In the same sense, the term “provisionally-called person,” as taken up in the context of “birth in the Pure Land,” is also utilized in a way that would imply a similar expansion of meaning. While originally this concept lay hidden within the adverbial sense of the word “provisionally,” it can also be viewed affirmatively as a synonym of the notion of “birth from causal conditions.” Thus,

we must not forget that the conditions for negation are implied within the idea of “provisionality” itself.

“Relationship between Non-birth and Aspiration for Birth”

In the traditional interpretations the relationship between “non-birth” and “aspiration for birth” was considered problematic, and great effort was exerted to interpret them in a harmonious way. Some have considered that “birth that is non-birth,” which constitutes “birth from causal conditions,” is based on the standpoint of mundane truth, and therefore it can become the object of one’s aspiration.⁴⁴ There has also been the view that, since it is not “ultimate emptiness, in which essential nature is void” it does not prevent one from aspiring for it.⁴⁵ Also, there has also been the interpretation that, “It is provisionally-called birth through causal conditions. Hence, aspiring throughout the day to be born means that one constantly takes the principle of “non-birth” to be essential. This is the meaning of ‘aspiration for birth.’”⁴⁶

T’an-luan’s *Commentary* does not clearly inquire into this problem. However, I would surmise that for him “birth” meant that, “since all things are ‘born’ from causal conditions, they are actually unborn.” However, such “birth” is not birth in the sense that “there are real beings or that being born and dying is real, as ordinary people imagine.” This negation of the birth in the sense that “being born and dying is real” must bring into question the notion of “aspiration for birth.” Just what could it mean? It must first of all be pointed out that, as long as the “birth” in the sense of an “aspiration for birth” is not “birth” in the sense that “being born and dying is real,” then this “aspiration” will not take place at the level at which ordinary beings imagine that they are real or that birth and dying are real. Then, what kind of “aspiration” is it? I believe that it should be viewed as a concept indicating a directionality toward the negation of “birth” in the conventional sense. What this means is that “aspiration for birth” is none other than the negation of “birth” in the sense that “there are real beings or that being born and dying is real, as ordinary people imagine.” Hence, since it constitutes the negation of ordinary secular life, it is referred to as “aspiration for birth.”

Did the traditional standpoints not comprehend “aspiration for birth” as taking place at the level where being born and dying is taken to be real by ordinary beings (that is, the ordinary, secular level)? I believe that this had its origin in the ambiguous interpretations concerning (1) T’an-luan’s purpose for developing the questions and answers, and (2) the relationship between the two interpretations of “sentient beings are unborn, like empty space” that we have previously discussed.

3. Birth that Cannot Definitely be Called the Same nor Different, and So Accords with the Principles of Causality and Continuity.

In the second question and answer, T'an-luan makes mention of "birth" (*ō-jō*, literally, "go-to be born") in his question, "In what sense do you speak of birth in the Pure Land?" However, the essence of his answer contains his explanation of the meaning of "going" (*ō*). Since, in the first question and answer the meaning of "being born" (*shō*) has been clarified, naturally he here undertakes a thorough discussion of the meaning of "going."

The most striking special feature of the traditional understanding could be seen in its dualistic comprehension of the notion that birth is "neither the same nor different, and so accords with causality and continuity."⁴⁷ As we have previously pointed out, where the content of a single idea was considered to include two or more categories, within the traditional standpoint each category was likely to be seen as completely independent of other categories. For that reason necessarily, each individual category could be clarified only from its own isolated standpoint. Further, any attempt at a harmonizing interpretation would result in an erroneous, composite idea.

That being the case, just what does it mean that T'an-luan viewed the meaning of "going" as "neither the same nor different, and so accords with causality and continuity?" First of all, the notion of "going" speaks to the "relationship" between the "provisionally-called 'person' of this defiled world" and the "provisionally-called 'person' of the Pure Land." That is, their relationship is such that they are "neither the same nor different." (This is identical to the principles of causality and continuity. The content of "neither the same nor different" is identical to, and "so accords with causality and continuity.") It is not a composite conjoining of two relationships, "not the same" and "not different." "Neither the same nor different" is a contradictory statement from the standpoint of formal logic. The attitude of logic would be to seek to grasp "not the same" and "not different" from a static and superficial perspective. However, "going" cannot be comprehended from that perspective. The impossibility of comprehending it in this way is indicated by the form of the expression, "neither the same nor different." (It is not "not the same" and "not different.") It also seeks to give expression to "real" movement, or activity.

The subject of this "real" active movement, moreover, cannot be possessed of substance (*substantia*). This is clearly indicated by T'an-luan's use of the notion of "definiteness." The text does not state, "cannot be called the same" and "cannot be called different." Rather, it states, "cannot be *definitely* called the same or *definitely* called different." What is the significance of the word "definitely"? It is tied to the idea of "real" in the passage, "sentient beings, which they conceive as *real*, or the acts of being

born and dying, which they view as *real*." This is none other than a reference to substantialism. It is, in other words, the ordinary and mundane view (at the level of feeling and reason) of the locus of self-identity that, when a certain thing is said to exist, seeks to "definitely establish" the thing as that thing. Such a view of substance must be negated in the notion of "going."

What negates substance is movement, or activity. T'an-luan's words, "if they were one and the same, then there would be no causality; if they were different, there would be no continuity," indeed refer to this activity. It is unavoidable, perhaps, that it is expressed as "movement." However, in this case, it does not refer to movement in the sense that a single substance proceeds across a period of time that joins together a point in time A and a point in time B. If that were so, it would not achieve a negation of "actual substance." Movement in the sense that some substance moves within time is nothing more than locational movement, which is viewed from the ordinary perspective of feeling and reason.

The meaning of movement as "going," as it is being discussed now, is on the contrary that of an "actual, present arising." In this sense, movement enables "substance" or "time," as comprehended at the level of feeling and reason, to presently arise as "substance" or "time." (Of course, this arising takes place at the level of feeling and reason.) This is not the locus of either "substance" or "time." However, as a consequence of this negation of substance and time, the negation becomes, on the contrary, the locus that enables them to arise as substance and time. This notion of "presently arising," or movement, is what is meant by "going," which is being discussed now. Indeed the true meaning of "going" can be expressed in the notion of the "activity of emptiness."

IV.

Based on the literature to the extent possible, I have above presented my own views through an examination and criticism of the traditional standpoints. However, this was performed within the limitations of critical negation, that is, it was done "through the traditional standpoint." Of course, while such examination and criticism must be considered the starting point, the discussion here must go a step further and be developed comprehensively in a manner related to the religious existence of this self. I refer to this as the theoretical structure of birth, and will now attempt a thorough examination of it.

Prior to that, however, we must first confirm the points gleaned from the preceding discussion.

(1) The meaning of the idea of birth has been defined in T'an-luan's text as "birth through causal conditions," which is the same as not being born; it is neither the same nor different, and so accords with the principles of causality and continuity. This refers to the birth of all sentient beings, and not just of the commentary master, Vasubandhu, alone.

(2) The second meaning of "non-birth" sets out a manner of existence that is the basis for the first meaning of "non-birth."

(3) The basis for the establishment of the notion that "since all things are born from causal conditions, they are actually unborn" is the state of reality that presently arises, even while embodying ontological and epistemological negation (expressed by the phrase, "all things are devoid of substance").

(4) The locus of this state of reality is the negation of the perspective of ordinary feelings and reason (that is, the locus of "sentient beings, which they conceive as real, or the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real").

(5) "Aspiration for birth" is none other than a manner of existence that includes within it the negation of birth in the sense of "sentient beings, which they conceive as real, or the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real."

(6) Despite its original adverbial usage as the word "provisionally," the notion of "provisionality" or "provisional birth" indicates its inevitable development in a manner similar to that of "provisional truth" (within the perfectly interfusing three truths (*satya*): that existences are empty, existences are provisional, and the middle way). The basis for this development can be found in the meaning of causal conditions, which T'an-luan expresses as, "(it) refers to being born through causal conditions. Hence it is provisionally termed 'birth.'"

(7) The meaning of "birth" that is defined as, "neither the same nor different, and so it accords with causality and continuity," is the inevitable consequence of the meaning of "birth" set out in points (2) to (6) above.

(8) "Birth" that is "neither the same nor different, and so accords with causality and continuity" implies "relationship" or "movement," which can be seen within the meaning of the phrase, "since

all things are "born" from causal conditions, they are actually unborn."

(9) "Relationship" and "movement" represent the manner of existence that is expressed as "going." This is implied by the meaning of "since all things are 'born' from causal conditions, they are actually unborn." Hence, it refers to activity that involves the negation of "substance" (*substantia*), or, that is, to the activity of negation itself.

(10) "Relationship" and "movement" refer to that activity that, on the contrary, enables "substance" and "time," which have been comprehended from the perspective of feeling and reason (the perspective of "sentient beings, which they conceive as real, or the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real") to presently arise from their foundation. Accordingly, it must be said that the issues of "substantiality" (the problem of the subject that goes to be born) and "temporality" (the problem of when birth arises: in this life? or after death?),⁴⁸ both of which arise when the meaning of birth is developed from the perspective of feeling and reason, in fact are issues that lie opposite the direction of the inquiry that would reveal the theoretical structure of "birth."

These ten points comprise the essential elements that make up the fundamental form of my standpoint, which I have attempted to develop in the discussion above "through examination and criticism of the traditional standpoints." That being the case, what then forms the content of a theoretical structure of birth, which can be constructed from the basis of these essential elements?

The starting point for the theoretical structure of birth must always exist within the present existence of this self, which exists now within the perspective of feeling and reason (the locus of "sentient beings, which they conceive as real, or the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real"). If it were to be located in any other place, or if it were to be sought within a dualistic opposition to any place outside of it, the only consequence that would be perceivable would be that of "self-estrangement."

T'an-luan refers to this present existence as "the provisionally-called 'person' of this defiled world."⁴⁹ The theoretical structure of birth, which takes this as its starting point, moves in two directions from such "provisionally-called 'persons' of this defiled world." That is to say, one movement is toward negating "the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real." The other movement is toward the foundation of "being born and dying, which they view as real." The two correspond to the two senses of "sentient beings are unborn," which T'an-luan develops in the first

question and answer in passage (A). The movement toward negation represents the locus of the second meaning of "non-birth," while the movement toward the foundation represents the first.⁵⁰

The movement toward negation breaks through and destroys our attachment to "substance," that is, it negates the ignorant view that takes the existence of ordinary beings as the authentic existence of ordinary beings. This is referred to as "purification" (*vyavadāna*).⁵¹ As the negation of ignorant views, which negates the existence of ordinary beings from its very foundations, this movement points the currently existing self toward the realm of "non-birth," which is the "other shore," or, the realm of the provisionally-called "person" of the Pure Land. The basis for this negation is located in the universality of the state of reality expressed in the phrase, "since all things are 'born' from causal conditions, they are actually unborn." This, it could be said, indicates its universal direction.

The movement toward the foundation is toward the place in which "sentient beings, which they conceive as real, or the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real" are realized as just that. It is the movement toward the locus of "birth from causal conditions" itself, that is, toward the locus of "non-birth" as the foundation of "birth" (not birth in the sense of "the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real"). That "the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real" come to be revealed as just that, means that this is the direction pointing toward the realization of birth that is "birth through causal conditions." In this movement, the "present" of this presently existing self is revealed as itself. That is, it is an ontological movement toward the farthest "other shore" that points toward the source of this self. In this direction "the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real" are realized in all places as themselves. Such realization does not refer epistemologically to a simple kind of discriminative thought. Rather, it refers to the ground that completely becomes "the acts of being born and dying, which they view as real."

This has been a broad summary of the two movements inherent in the theoretical structure of "birth in the Pure Land." The relationship between the two is that the movement toward the foundation truly becomes the foundation when the movement toward negation truly becomes negation. Conversely, the movement toward negation truly becomes negation because the movement toward the foundation truly becomes the foundation. Further, negation's truly becoming negation and the foundation's truly becoming the foundation both take place as "going." The relationship between the two movements lies within the "relationship" (set forth above), which is also one of "going." Here we see the manifestation of "relationship" and "movement" that is expressed as "it is neither the same nor different, and so accords with causality and continuity."

This relationship of "going" is identical to the notions of "extinction" or "transformation" in Mahayana Buddhism, which currently exist at the

locus of praxis within one's religious existence. We are brought to enter here by Amida Tathagata, the power of the Primal Vow, and the Name, all of which constitute the "decisive cause" of birth. T'an-luan teaches us that the states of "extinction" and "transformation" are also represented by the ideas of "holding it in mind" (seen in the metaphor of the luminous mani-gem) and "spontaneously" (from the metaphor of the fire burning on ice).

Further, in order for the theoretical structure of birth to become established in the manner that we have discussed up until now the entire structure itself must be established at the locus of emptiness (*sūnyatā*). At this place the act of the self, called "birth," in which present existence fundamentally becomes present existence, takes on the structure of interdependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). There, we find that birth becomes established as the fundamental idea of Mahayana Buddhism. Furthermore, within the religious existence called "present existence," we become able to understand what kind of activity that birth really is, as it reveals to us the living state of "birth."

Finally, I would like to point out that, when we carefully enter into an examination of this kind of theoretical structure of birth, we are able to surmise the reason why Shinran had to speak of birth in terms of "entry into the stage of true settlement in this life"⁵² from the standpoint of Mahayana Buddhism. His perspective was entirely different from the viewpoints of the discussions that have been undertaken traditionally, and even now.

I have attempted in this article to comprehend the theoretical structure of birth, based upon the explications in T'an-luan's *Commentary*, as well as through a review of the literature setting out the traditional viewpoints regarding them.⁵³ Further, by going beyond T'an-luan, I have sought to examine how birth relates to religious existence in which the present existence of the self fundamentally becomes this present existence. If, as a result, I am able to receive the reader's critical response, I would be extremely grateful.

Translated by David Matsumoto

NOTES

1. Originally published in Japanese as “*Ōjō no genriteki kōzō: Donran no innenshōgi wo konkyō to shite*,” in *Shinshūgaku* 50 (1965): pp. 57–81. The text of this article and, unless otherwise noted, all of the quoted passages have been translated into English by David Matsumoto.

2. In his text, *Shūkyō to wa nani ka* [What is religion?] (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1961), Nishitani Keiji attempts to overcome this situation in the present day, while at the same time remaining grounded in it.

3. This is the meaning of “*Da sein*” in Heidegger’s philosophy. I have not taken up a consideration of later Heidegger in this article.

4. It might be said that this was Nietzsche’s stance in his text *Der Antichrist*, 1895.

5. T’an-luan, *Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land* (Ch. *Ching-t’u-wang-sheng-lun-chu*; Jpn. *Ōjō ronchū*; also *Jōdō Ronchū*, hereinafter *Commentary*), *Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 826; *Jōdō Shinshū seiten shichisohen: Chūshakuban* (hereinafter, *JSS II*), *Jōdō Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai*, ed. (Kyōto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 1996), p. 47; see also, Hisao Inagaki, trans. *T’an-Luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land* (hereinafter, Inagaki trans. *Commentary*) (Kyōto: Nagata Bushōdō, 1998), p. 121.

6. Among Chinese Pure Land thinkers, the question of whether or not the Pure Land idea of “aspiration for birth” is in accord with the Mahayana Buddhist teachings was taken up in T’an-luan’s *Commentary*, Tao-ch’o’s *An-lo-chi*, Yen-shou’s *Wan-shan-t’ung-kuei-chi*, and Wōnhyo’s commentaries on the *Contemplation and Amida Sutras*. However, in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, while Chikō’s *Muryōjukyō ronshaku* is based on T’an-luan’s line of thought, there are virtually no references to this issue in Genshin’s *Ōjyōshū*, or Yōkan’s *Ōjōjūin*. For reference, see Ishida Mitsuyuki, “*Chūgoku jōdokyō shisō no kenkyū*,” *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū* 349 (1955): pp. 38–62.

7. Ishida Mitsuyuki, *Shinran kyōgaku no kisoteki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1970), p. 95. Further, the unique features of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism as a whole is critically examined through a comparison with Chinese Pure Land thought. *Ibid.*, pp. 235 and 239–40.

8. In Hōnen’s *Kurodani shōnin gotōroku*, vol. 6, *Ōjyōshū taikō*, Chpt. 7, it states, “*Birth* means that one abandons this world, goes into a lotus blossom in that world and is there born transformed; in the brief instant it takes to close one’s eyes, one comes to sit cross-legged within a lotus

pedestal). Following the sacred assembly, in one thought-moment, one is able to attain birth in the world of ultimate bliss in the western direction. Thus, it is called *birth*" (*Taishō*, vol. 83, p. 133b). As Professor Ishida Mitsuyuki has pointed out (op. cit. pp. 236–7), Hōnen focused solely on the "assertion of the exclusive practice of the Nembutsu, as aspiration to be born in the Pure Land of form." As an inevitable consequence, Kōben (Myōe) criticized this as a "non-Buddhist view that emphasizes the existence of substance" in his *Zaijarin*. This has deep significance as a contemporary issue as well.

9. I believe that this assertion lies in the direction of an "exclusive practice of the Nembutsu, as aspiration to be born in the Pure Land of form."

10. This refers to something like "*die keine*," as set out in Martin Heidegger's, *Die Technik und die Kehre*, 1962. Heidegger explains that the *Wesen* of *Technik* is *Gesell*, which comes to exist as *Gefahr*. After that, it is *sich kehren* to *Geviert*.

11. Vasubandhu, *Treatise on the Pure Land* (Skt. *Sukhāvati-vyūhōpadeśa*; Jpn. *Jōdoron*), cited in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereinafter, *CWS*), (Kyōto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 26–7.

12. *Commentary*, *Taishō*, vol. 40, 827b–c; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 1 (hereinafter, *SSZ I*), (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), pp. 283–4, cited in *CWS*, pp. 27–28.

13. Inagaki trans. *Commentary*, pp. 239–240; *Taishō*, vol. 40, 838c; *SSZI*, p. 327.

14. *Ibid*, pp. 243–4; *Taishō*, vol. 40, 839a–b; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 2 (hereinafter, *SSZ II*), (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), p. 328.

15. In regard to the concept of "salvation," it is easy to call to mind the notion of salvation (σωτηρία in Greek) in modern Christianity. However, today it is doubtful whether or not ("salvation") is able to express truly the notion of "shō, jō" (save) in the same sense that is evident in this passage from the *Larger Sutra*, "I have appeared in the world and expounded the teachings of the way to enlightenment, seeking to save the multitudes of living beings by blessing them with the benefit that is true and real." *SSZ I*, p. 4, *CWS*, p. 8. We could also say that it is the same for such concepts as "tasuku," "tasuke sukū," and "gusai."

16. According to this view, the logic of (A) is in relation to beings of the highest grade of birth, whereas (B) represents a logical proof of the possibility of birth for beings of the lowest grades. The following passages are presented as bases for the argument: the question in passage (B) (b), the explanation of the metaphor of the fire burning fiercely on the ice, the idea of unhindered light in the passage on the gate of praise, the explanation that saying the Name is the act that destroys the darkness of ignorance, and the eightfold questions and answers. However, should the theoretical struc-

ture set out in passage (A) be limited only the birth of the highest grade of beings? Further, would the view that passage (A) constitutes a theoretical principle of birth that is applicable to all beings contradict the explanation found in passage (B) (b)? In relation to that, see the discussion regarding T'an-luan's purpose for developing the questions and answers in this article.

17. Examples of this in Shinran's writings would include the weight given to T'an-luan's *Commentary* (particularly the mutual interfusion of extensive and abbreviated features of the Pure Land and the two aspects of Dharma-body) and the *Nirvana Sutra* (the notion that all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature), as well as his emphasis on the logic of transformation found in his explication of the Ocean of the One Vehicle in the Chapter on Practice of his *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, the idea of "identity" (*soku*) as seen in the expressions "samsara is the same as nirvana," and "defiled passions are identical with enlightenment," his explication of the realm of *jinen hōni*, and his notion of the "great bodhi mind of the Pure Land."

18. This tendency can be perceived throughout the logical developments of the three great doctrinal debates in traditional sectarian studies: "the topic of faith and aspiration" (*shingan ron*) "the topic of practice and faith" (*gyōshin ron*), and "the topic of auxiliary versus right practices" (*joshō ron*).

19. If that were not so, would this be going in the direction, in which, for instance, the idea of "the teaching that is difficult to believe," which is mentioned in the concluding portion of the *Amida Sutra* (SSZ I, p. 72), would be said to reveal the "sacred eminence of the dharma"? Here, it all too often happens that a path toward indolence and lethargy, in which a severe attitude regarding the self is forgotten, lies concealed.

20. Standpoint (I) views it as a discussion regarding the "birth" of the commentary master, Vasubandhu. See Ryōe, *Jōdoronchū shūishō*, in *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 1, Jōdoshūten kankōkai, ed. (Tokyo: Jōdoshūten Kankōkai, 1928), p. 620; Chikū, *Ronchū yokuge* (Kyoto: Nishimura Kurōemon, 1661), p. 43: "Birth of ordinary beings and bodhisattvas' not being born."

Standpoint (II) views it to be a question based on the false belief in nihilism arising from the deluded passions of sentient beings. See Eun, *Ōjō ronchū fukushūki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 19 (Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin, 1913), p. 27: "It is delusory, and thus empty." Dōon says, in *Ōjō ronchū kikigaki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 10 (Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin, 1913): "Because there are beings who are submerged within the void of non-birth as the highest truth of the future, and are disdainful of birth in the Pure Land." See also Daiei, *Ōjō ronchū genyō*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 10, p. 218; Sōei, *Ōjō ronchū kaiganki*: "The question reflects a false belief and loses the meaning of

provisionally-called birth, which is through causes and conditions. Hence, it is difficult.”

Standpoint (III) views it as a discussion of “dharmic-virtues.” See Dōshin, *Ōjōronchū kakuhonketsu*, vol. 1, *Shinshū sōsho*, Shinshū sōsho hensansho, ed., vol. 5 (Kyoto: Maeda Koreyama Ryōwajō Koki Kinenkai, 1929), p. 23.

Standpoint (IV) views it as setting out the basis for the establishment of the essential meaning of birth in the Pure Land, from the standpoint of the fundamental philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism. See Enen, *Ronchū kenjingiki*, in *Shinshū taikai*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Shinshū Tenseki Kankōkai, 1917), p. 60; Jinrei, *Kōjutsu*, in his *Ōjōronchū kōsan*, vol. 3, p. 88.

Standpoint (V) views it as taking the position that the teaching of birth in the Pure Land corresponds to the principles of the Mādhyamika eightfold negation, in order to draw followers of the Path of Sages into the Pure Land way. See Jinrei, *Kōjutsu* in the *Kōsan*, vol. 3, p. 102. Although Jinrei states that, “These two questions and answers fully explicate the Mādhyamika teaching of the eightfold negations,” he does not consider them to be intended to draw followers of the Path of Sages into the Pure Land path. See also Yoshitani Kakujū, *Ōjōronchū kōhan* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtani Daigaku, 1936), p. 15.

21. The two standpoints that will be discussed are represented by standpoints (I) and (II) in note 20 above. (Editor’s note.)

22. Enen, *Kenjingiki*, p. 55: “You should know that this addresses the intentions of the commentary master, and those of all beings as well.” Thus, it is related to the births of all beings.

23. Although Jinrei’s stance is also similar to standpoint (II) in note 20 above.

24. Jinrei, *Kōjutsu*, p. 89: “The primary school of the Master T’an-luan was the San-lun School.”

25. Ibid.

26. This is point which distinguishes Jinrei’s view from that of standpoint (II).

27. Traditionally, the attribution of the basis of reality or ultimacy took place by way of obedience or non-opposition, as seen in the phrase, “Obey dharma-nature; do not oppose the fundamental dharma.” However, at the locus of the religious existence of the self this attribution would undergo a severe examination in a related way. Here, we see the expression “as the basis,” but just what would this mean at the existential locus? We will discuss this later in the section on the theoretical structure of birth.

28. Ryōchū, *Ronchūki*, vol. 1, in *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 1, p. 270; Chikū, *Yokuge*, p. 44.

29. Chikū, *Yokuge*, p. 44.

30. Jinrei, *Kōjutsu*, in *Kōsan*, vol. 3, p. 95. Yamaguchi Susumu states in *Seshin no Jōdoron* (Kyoto: Hōzokan, 1963), p. 96, "In this second question and answer the meaning of the eightfold negation in the opening gatha of the *Mūla-mādhyamika-kārikā* is accepted entirely. It can be surmised that this means that T'an-luan sought to restore and re-establish the "aspiration for birth in the Pure Land" and "birth in the Pure Land" on the basis of the fundamental standpoint of Mahayana Buddhism." This, however, seems to be a rather negative view. We must also ask what the meaning of "restore" would be in the present reality.

31. Jinrei, *Kōjutsu*, in *Kōsan*, vol. 3, p. 95. He expresses the development of the state of the "mutual identity" of the two truths, as this reading of the Chinese characters would imply. However, with such an expression the fundamental principles of Mahayana Buddhism, which is the meaning of "mutual identity," could not be sufficiently conveyed within the current state of contemporary thought. An examination from a different angle will be required.

32. Jinrei, *Kōjutsu*, in *Kōsan*, vol. 3, p. 94.

33. *Substantia* (Jpn. *jittai*), an unchanging self that assembles and maintains within oneself some generic attributes, is the most important concept considered in the study of comparative thought in Eastern and Western philosophy. If a meticulous study is made of it, through Eastern and Western philosophy, the unique features of both would become all the more clarified, and it would bring about a deeply significant dialogue between them.

34. Sōe states in the *Kaiganki*, "From the perspective of sentient beings, it indicates that birth does not arising due to obstructing passions; from the perspective of the Dharma, it signifies that birth arises through causal conditions." Engetsu states in the *Ōjō ronchū ryakuge*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 16, p. 472, "birth in the sense of feeling and birth through causal conditions."

35. Enen takes more or less the same standpoint, as he defines it in this way, "Birth through causal conditions is the same as being unborn," and goes on to say, "When many diverse conditions come to be harmoniously conjoined, it brings about the birth of all things. Both birth and extinction, arising and destruction, are simply due to causal conditions. Then the future form of birth would immediately become 'unborn.'" *Kenjingiki*, p. 57. However, what is the meaning of "many diverse conditions"? What is the manner of existence of "conditions" themselves? (Are they akin to the essential elements that serve as the basis for the construction of all things?) Further, how does one treat the problem of distinguishing between "emptiness that is known through the analysis of existing things" (*shakkū*) versus "emptiness in which things themselves are seen in their entirety as

empty" (*taikū*)? I believe that this problem represents a departure from the sphere of the content that was traditionally comprehended through the concept of interdependent co-origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*).

36. Ryōchū, *Ronchūki*, vol. 1, in *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 1, p. 270.

37. Hōun, *Ōjō ronchū hikki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 10, p. 352. Hōun relies upon Ryōchū to criticize Chikū's *Yokuge*. Hōun himself takes the view-point of Shōben.

38. Jinrei, *Kōjutsu*, in *Kōsan*, vol. 3, p. 97.

39. Senmyō, *Ōjō ronchū kikigaki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 11 (Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin, 1913), p. 36.

40. Dōshin, *Kakuhonketsu*, Chpt. 1, *Shinshū sōsho*, vol. 5, p. 23.

41. Senmyō, *Kikigaki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 11, p. 36.

42. Chikū enumerates four meanings for the phrase, "provisionally-called" (*kemyō*) (1) All things are without names, and so are provisionally given names; (2) taking another as provisional and obtaining a name; (3) a provisional appellation; (4) all things provisionally take names and then exist. However, he considers the present notion of "provisionally-named" to mean, "All things are empty and still, and nothing at all has any substance. The Pure Land and this defiled land both are born from causal conditions. Hence, they are referred to as 'provisionally-named'" (*Yokuge*, pp. 45-6).

Enen states, "The *Mūla-mādhyamika-kārikā* explains that 'Dharma-nature does not exist within the many diverse conditions. Yet, when the many conditions become harmoniously conjoined, they attain a name.'" Based on that he states, "The wood of the bamboo does not possess the form of the house. Hence, the future form of the house is itself the bamboo wood. The house has no form. Thus, 'house' is simply a provisional name" (*Kenjingiki*, vol. 1, p. 57).

Jinrei states, "If substance existed and was born, then birth would exist as birth forever. However, since all things which are born from causal conditions and are provisionally said to exist are empty and without self-nature, it is called 'no-birth'" (*Kōjutsu*, in *Kōsan*, vol. 3, p. 87).

Sōe's view is based on the meaning of "provisional" as it is explained in Sōjō's *Fushinkūron*.

Hōun states, "However, there is no real birth. Since it is just a name, it is called 'provisionally-called birth'" (*Hikki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 10, p. 358).

43. In the *Daikanwajiten*, Morohashi Tetsuji, ed., vol. 1 (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1960), p. 853, four meanings are set out for the word "provisionally" (*karini*): a. not real; b. currently not so; c. take in; d. moreover.

44. Senmyō, *Kikigaki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 11, p. 36.

45. Hōun, *Hikki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 10, p. 353.

46. Engetsu, *Ryakuge*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 16, p. 472.

47. Ryōchū, *Rinchūki*, in *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 1, p. 610; Chikū, *Yokuge*, p. 46; Senmyō, *Kikigaki*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 11, p. 36; Daiei, *Ōjō ronchū genyō*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 10, p. 219: "In this discussion, the dharmic principle is not to be understood in relation to sentient beings. What are we to surmise as to the inconceivable Vow power?"

48. Nishitani Keiji, "Shinran ni okeru toki no mondai" in *Shinran zenshū*, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Futsūsha, 1958), pp. 76–86. He inquires closely into what he calls the present arising of fundamental time. It is at that locus that it can become an essential issue for the first time.

49. However, Pure Land, birth through causes and conditions, and provisionality are all presupposed in the concept of the "provisionally-called person of this defiled world." Strictly speaking, it is not identical to present existence. "Provisionally-called person of this defiled world" is an expression that is imbued with an inclination toward the Pure Land and birth through causes and conditions. The question of why one could possess this inclination in the midst of present existence must be asked within the ontological structure of present existence itself.

50. Previously, the first meaning of non-birth was comprehended as a negation of being born and dying, which beings perceive as real. Therefore, it can be seen that one should be in accord with direction (a). However, in my view, the negation of beings, which they perceive as real, and being born and dying, which beings perceive as real (as explicated in the first sense of non-birth) is the inevitable consequence of the second meaning of non-birth. I view the negation of being born and dying, which beings perceive as real, as a directionality that arises out of the second sense of non-birth as its basis. I wish to view the first meaning of non-birth as an expression of a deepening self-realization (as a view) of the view in which "sentient beings are perceived as real by ordinary beings."

51. A number of expressions in the *Commentary* include the word "pure," including "the pure ocean of the Tathagata's wisdom" (Fasc. One, the Virtues of the Great Assembly, SSZ I, p. 302), "pure light" (Fasc. One, Virtues of Form, SSZII, p. 288), "birth of non-birth through the pure Primal Vow" (Fasc. Two, Chpt. On the Objects of Contemplation, SSZI, p. 327), "the pure Buddha land" (Fasc. Two, Chpt. On the Fulfillment of the Vow, SSZI, p. 343), and "the Name, which is like a pure mani jewel" (Fasc. Two, Chpt. On the Objects of Contemplation, SSZI, p. 328). In addition, "pure" is often affixed to "wisdom," "light," "Primal Vow," "Buddha land," and "Name." "Purity" in these cases is not simply an expression of the character or nature of those things. Rather, it must be understood as having the meaning of "purification" (*vyavadāna*), in the sense of the negation the

attachment to substance, as well as the negation of false and deluded views, which form the basis of the present existence of ordinary beings.

52. Two viewpoints exist. The first views the assurance of birth realized by the practitioner whose faith is settled in the stage of true settlement as being the meaning of “they then attain birth.” The second view recognizes an additional aspect in which the practitioner who has entered the stage of true settlement is said to have already realized birth in this life. What is important in the present case is that Shinran’s position was to view birth (from the perspective of either standpoint and attained by whatever means) as being somehow related to the locus of “the stage of true settlement in this life.” (Here, “this life” does not refer simply to the relative notion of the present being.) Further, it could be said that Shinran’s phrase, “Concerning birth, the *Larger Sutra* states, ‘All receive the body of naturalness (*jinen*) or of emptiness, the body of boundlessness,’” (*True Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, Chpt. On the True Buddha and Land, SSZ II, p. 141, CWS, p. 203) can also be truly viewed from this standpoint.

53. For the most part, interpretations and criticisms of the *Commentary* during T’an-luan’s era have not been included in this article. Neither, have we engaged in a direct examination of texts such as the *Mūla-mādhyaṃika-kārikā*, *Dvadaśa-dvara*, or *Prajñāpāramitā-śāstra*, which make mention of “this principle is the gate of contemplating sameness and difference; it is discussed in detail in the treatises.” While this examination should be based upon the standpoint of the *Kārikā*, the notion of *pratītya-samutpāda* does not reach perfect completion in that text.

Shinran's View of Other Power: On "the Profound Significance of Other's Benefiting and Benefiting Others"¹

Jitsuen Kakehashi

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I.

T'AN-LUAN (476–542) WAS the first person to introduce the term "Other Power" (*tariki*) to the teachings of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land. Prior to him, the words "self-power" (*jiriki*) and "other power" had been employed by Dharmakṣema (385–433) in his translation of the *Bodhisattva bhūmi*, Fasc. One.² That text details the four conditions through which a bodhisattva is able to give rise to the aspiration for enlightenment, or that is, the bodhi mind: self-power, other power, causal power, and the power of skillful means. The text describes the bodhi mind arising from self-power and causal power as "resolute, steadfast, decisively settled, and consummate." In contrast, the mind arising from other power and the power of expedient means is said to be "not steadfast, changing, and unsettled." Thus, we can see that self-power is judged to be superior while other power is viewed as inferior.

In addition, the terms self-power and other power can often be seen in the sutras and commentaries translated by Bodhiruci (?–527), who, it is said, had a great influence on T'an-luan. The *Ta-pao-chi-ching-lun*, Fasc. One,³ for instance, sets out four kinds of powers—self-power, other power, causal power, and the power of practice—as the conditions leading to the arising of the bodhi mind, in the much same manner as the *Bodhisattva bhūmi*. In the *Shih-ti-ching-lun*, Fasc. One,⁴ two kinds of expository skills are expounded: "The first is skill of exposition through other power; the second is the skill of self-power." The skill of expounding through other power is attained when one receives the Buddha's majestic powers. This notion is authenticated in the *Shih-ti-ching*,⁵ which states, "The reason is that, upon receiving the majestic power of all of the Buddhas, one is affixed with the brilliant wisdom of the Tathagata." This example is representative of the text's reference to other power as a power that is both "given" and

“received.”⁶ It is thus beyond question that the terms “self-power” and “other power,” which were used by T’an-luan, had also been employed by a variety of sutras and other commentaries. Where he differed from them was in his placing “Other Power” in a position superior to self-power, and in his establishment of a system of salvation by Amida Buddha that centered on Other Power.

At its very outset, the title of T’an-luan’s *Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land*⁷ indicates that it is a commentary on Vasubandhu’s *Treatise on the Pure Land*.⁸ T’an-luan then immediately sets forth the theory of the paths of difficult practice and easy practice, as they were explained in the Chapter on Easy Practice of Nāgārjuna’s *Commentary on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages*.⁹ The objective for the Mahayana bodhisattva, who aims to attain enlightenment, is to reach the first gateway known as the stage of non-retrogression. In this “world of five defilements at a time when there is no Buddha,” it is extremely difficult to arrive at the stage of non-retrogression by performing the myriad difficult practices over vast periods of time. This is because beings are engulfed by a wide variety of hindrances. T’an-luan lists five kinds of difficulties, as representative examples of them. The fifth difficulty among them is expressed as,

The path of difficult practice is based solely on self-power and lacks the support of Other Power.¹⁰

This difficulty is meant to encompass all of the preceding four difficulties. That is to say, practices performed through self-power alone, without being sustained by Other Power, constitute the most difficult of all difficult practices. In an age of the five defilements and at a time when there is no Buddha, ordinary beings who seek to attain the stage of non-retrogression should take refuge in the Pure Land teachings that are supported by the sustaining power of Other Power. Nāgārjuna refers to this as the path of easy practice,

In the path of easy practice, one aspires to be born in the Pure Land with solely one’s entrusting oneself to the Buddha as the cause, and allowing oneself to be carried by the power of the Buddha’s Vow, quickly attains birth in the land of purity. Supported by the Buddha’s power, one immediately enters the group of the truly settled of the Mahayana. The stage of the truly settled is none other than the stage of nonretrogression.¹¹

What Nāgārjuna refers to here as “the power of the Buddha’s Vow” corresponds to Other Power. Thus, having entered the path of easy practice, one entrusts oneself to the Buddha’s Vow and practices the *nembutsu* (in the form of the five gates of mindfulness). Carried by the power of the

Buddha's Vow, one is born in the Pure Land. There, one receives the sustaining power of the Buddha, and is enabled to enter the assembly of the truly settled ones (the stage of nonretrogression). According to T'an-luan, Nāgārjuna's path of difficult practice indicates a teaching in which one attains the stage of nonretrogression and seeks to attain Buddhahood through self-power. The path of easy practice, in contrast, is a teaching in which one is enabled to attain birth in the Pure Land, reach the stage of nonretrogression and attain enlightenment through Other Power. T'an-luan refers to this as the path leading to birth in the Pure Land. Thus, the fundamental nature of the Pure Land path is that of a teaching that provides for the realization of enlightenment in the Pure Land. It is the path of easy practice, supported by Other Power, which stands in contrast the path of difficult, self-powered practices.

Here T'an-luan sets out to establish the character of Vasubandhu's *Treatise* in advance of his commentary on it. That is to say, by citing Nāgārjuna's text, T'an-luan is able to state that the Pure Land teachings provide a path of easy practice in order to save beings of inferior capacities who are not equal to the challenges posed by the path of difficult practices. Accordingly, the *Treatise*, which intends to interpret the meaning of the *Larger Sutra*, must also be understood within that same framework. As we will see below, T'an-luan interprets the *Treatise's* "five gates of mindfulness," which are practices that bring about benefit to oneself and others, in the same way. That is, he stipulates from the outset that, to the extent that they are practices leading to the attainment of birth in the Pure Land, they must be understood within the framework of the path of easy practice. This is why he concludes this section with the passage,

This treatise, the *Upadesa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, indeed holds the ultimate of the Mahayana; it is a sail with which to catch the favorable wind toward nonretrogression.¹²

In other words, T'an-luan transforms the meaning of the five gates of mindfulness that bring about benefit for oneself and others—a system of practice centered on *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*—which the *Treatise* explains as making up the path of practice for the bodhisattva who aspires for birth in the Pure Land. The reason is that he considers the five gates of mindfulness as making up the path of easy practice, which is supported by the power of the Buddha's Vow.

This can be seen first of all in the section of his *Commentary* containing the "eightfold questions and answers."¹³ Taking up the problem of the capacities of beings who are the recipients of the Pure Land teachings, T'an-luan explains that even beings in the lowest grade of the lowest rank of birth, that is, evil beings who commit the ten transgressions and the five grave offenses, are taken in and included within the scope of the Vow. At

the same time, through his “explanation of the weight of ten utterances in terms of the existence of three matters: mind, activity and settledness,”¹⁴ he reveals the significance of the virtues of the ten utterances of the *nembutsu* that makes possible the birth of evil beings of the lowest grade of the lowest rank of birth.

Second is his explanation of the practice of saying the Name in the section expounding the gate of praise in the latter fascicle of the text. There he reveals that the act of saying the Name while possessed of the three aspects of *shinjin*, which is the essence of the easy practice, has the functional power that “dispels all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations.”¹⁵

Thirdly, his discussion of the “search for the true source of the bodhisattva’s realization,”¹⁶ takes three forms: (a) an interpretation of “self-benefit” and “benefiting others” (*jiri rita*), (b) a “clear verification by taking up the three relevant Vows,” and (c) a metaphorical expression of Other Power. This section sets out a detailed analysis of the content of the power of the Primal Vow, as the dharmic truth that can be received by beings, in response to the preceding “eightfold questions and answers.” It is indeed significant that this exposition is presented at the conclusion of T’an-luan’s *Commentary*.

II.

At the end of the section on the “fulfillment of the practices of self-benefit and benefiting others” in the second fascicle of the *Commentary*, T’an-luan states,

Question: What is the reason for saying, *The bodhisattva has swiftly realized anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*?

Answer: The *Treatise* states it is because he has performed the practices of the five gates and accomplished both self-benefit and benefiting others. Further, when we seek the basis for this swift realization, truly Amida Tathagata is to be considered the decisive cause.¹⁷

This passage and the related portion that follows it are referred to as T’an-luan’s exposition of the “search for the source of the bodhisattva’s realization.”¹⁸

According to Vasubandhu’s *Treatise*, one who aspires for birth in the Pure Land must practice the five gates of mindfulness. Comprising worship, praise, aspiration for birth, contemplation and merit transference, these practices take as their objects Amida Buddha and the Pure Land.¹⁹ By performing these practices of self-benefit and benefiting others, one fulfills

the minds of wisdom, compassion, and skillful means. Becoming free of the three kinds of mind that are obstructions to enlightenment, one fulfills the four kinds of pure virtues, or, minds that accord with bodhi: the mind of wisdom, the mind of skillful means, the unobstructed mind, and the excellent, true mind. This four-fold mind is summarized as the single wondrous, joyous, excellent, true mind, which accords with the pure and true nirvana. As such, it is possessed of virtues as the true cause of birth in the Pure Land and the attainment of enlightenment. By practicing the five gates of mindfulness in this way, one will be able to attain birth in the Pure Land, which is the locus of the purity of nirvana.

Further, in order to reveal that the attainment of Buddhahood becomes actualized through the fulfillment of the five gates of mindfulness, Vasubandhu states that upon attaining birth one fulfills five kinds of virtue, which represent the virtues that correspond respectively to the five gates of mindfulness. They are in order: the gate of approach, the gate of the great assembly, the gate of the grounds, the gate of the residence, and the gate of the state of sporting in the gardens and forests.²⁰ The first four gates represent the state of the fulfillment of self-benefit, and are referred to as the virtues of "entrance." The fifth gate represents the form taken by the fulfillment of benefiting others, and is referred to as the virtue of "emergence." In this way, the *Treatise* explains that, with the perfect fulfillment of both the virtues of self-benefit (entrance) and benefiting others (emergence), one realizes supreme enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). What this represents is the manner in which the path of the bodhisattva who aspires for birth in the Pure Land comes to be perfected.

The concluding passage of the *Treatise* states,

By performing the practices of the five gates of mindfulness in this way the bodhisattva accomplishes both self-benefit and benefiting of others and swiftly attains the fulfillment of supreme enlightenment.²¹

However, it must be noted that, in the passage setting forth the five kinds of virtues that immediately precedes this one, Vasubandhu states,

Again, there are five gates. The bodhisattva has fulfilled these five kinds of virtue in order.²²

Fulfilling these five kinds of virtue "in order" would appear to mean that following a proper sequence, they are brought to perfection gradually over a long period of time. That is, they would not be fulfilled "swiftly." If that were the case, however, then it would be unnatural for T'an-luan to conclude the text with the words, "swiftly attains the fulfillment of su-

preme enlightenment." If, on the other hand, one were able to fulfill them "swiftly," then the five kinds of virtues would have to be quickly realized. That is, they would be realized not in order, but in a single instant.

In order to be born in the Pure Land, the bodhisattva must fulfill the five gates of mindfulness. However, if one realizes birth upon fulfilling the five gates of mindfulness, then the five kinds of virtues, which signify the virtues of the five gates of mindfulness, would have to be manifested simultaneously, in the same instant of time. If then the single wondrous, joyous, excellent, true mind that arises from the fulfillment of the five gates of mindfulness is the true cause for the attainment of supreme enlightenment, this would imply that birth in the Pure Land and the attainment of Buddhahood must be identical. Certainly, we must wait for Shinran to later take the position that "the attainment of birth is identical with enlightenment." In any event, T'an-luan provided the above question and answer in order to clarify the question implied by the statements "fulfilling the five virtues in order" and "swiftly attaining supreme enlightenment." The abbreviated form of his answer is that,

*The Treatise states it is because he has performed the practices of the five gates and accomplished both self-benefit and benefiting others.*²³

In other words, this passage from the *Treatise* could be taken to mean that, having performed the practices of the five gates of mindfulness and accomplishing both self-benefit and benefiting others, the bodhisattva attains birth in the Pure Land. Upon reaching the Pure Land, these two virtues of benefit come to be fulfilled. Hence, the bodhisattva is able to realize the mind of bodhi swiftly. Moreover, the passage could also be taken to mean that, upon attaining birth due to the accomplishment of self-benefit and benefiting others, one is able to attain enlightenment swiftly. In either case, the *Treatise* can be seen to state without question that, upon fulfilling the virtues of self-benefit and benefiting others through the five gates of mindfulness, one fulfills the wondrous, joyous, excellent, true mind, and is quickly able to attain the resultant state of Buddhahood.

However, in order to accomplish these two kinds of benefit, would it not be necessary to practice for long, endless kalpas of time, just as the Dharmākara Bodhisattva did? Would this not be the reason that the *Treatise* states that the fulfillment of the five kinds of virtues takes place "in order"? If that were so, then T'an-luan would have explained in the prefatory portion how difficult it would be to master the actual practices of self-benefit and benefiting others in the context of the distinction made between the path of difficult practices and the path of easy practice. As a discourse on the Pure Land teachings of Amida Buddha, the *Treatise* should not be expected to give an explanation of the path of difficult

practices. Rather, the questions that Vasubandhu would be expected to answer would be these: Could in fact there be anything that would enable a being to fulfill the mind of bodhi swiftly? Could the practices of the five gates of mindfulness of self-benefit or benefiting others actually exist as a path of easy practice?

T'an-luan answers these questions with his exposition on the search for the true source of the bodhisattva's realization, which begins with the words,

Further, when we seek the basis for this swift realization, truly
Amida Tathagata is to be considered the decisive cause.²⁴

When we seek the source of the practice of the five gates of mindfulness of self-benefit and benefiting others, we come to understand that the practice is established where Amida Tathagata is taken to be the "decisive cause" (Skt. *adhipati-pratyaya*; Jpn. *zōjōen*). Generally, the term "decisive cause" is used to refer to the "supplying of power by the most powerful condition." One of the "four conditions" (*catvārah-pratyaya*), it is considered to be "supplementary condition" that possesses the power to supplement a cause and help bring about a result.

Ryōchū, of the Chinzei branch of the Jōdo school, took this to mean that the Tathagata's powerful Primal Vow is an "external condition" that supplements the cause of birth, which is the *nembutsu* performed by sentient beings in accordance with the Primal Vow. Shinran, however, viewed the "decisive cause" in the context of the significance of the inconceivable and unhindered virtues of the power of the Buddha-dharma. Thus, he states in one of his *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*,

The inconceivable working of the power of Buddha-dharma
Is such that external hindrances and karmic fetters
do not obstruct us;
Hence, the universal, Primal Vow of Amida
Is termed the "decisive cause" of birth.²⁵

Rather than de-limit it as a condition as opposed to a cause, Shinran considered the "decisive cause" to refer to the Tathagata's virtuous activity of directing virtue through the Primal Vow. It is the Vow that directs both the cause and result of birth to sentient beings, and takes them in without obstruction.

In any event, T'an-luan goes on in the *Commentary* to state,

Generally stated, it is because birth in the Pure Land, and the
practices performed by the bodhisattvas, human beings and devas

there as well, are all brought to fulfillment by the power of the Primal Vow of Amida Tathagata.²⁶

Here, he states definitely that the “decisive cause” of birth refers to the “virtue of sustaining without any futility,”²⁷ which constitutes the superlative working of the power of the Primal Vow that brings about the establishment of both the cause and result of sentient beings’ birth in the Pure Land.

III.

However, before focusing his discussion directly on the power of the Primal Vow as the decisive cause, T’an-luan provides an explanation of the distinction between “Other’s benefiting” (*ta-ri*) and “benefiting others” (*ri-ta*).

“Other’s benefiting” (*ta-ri*) and “benefiting others” (*ri-ta*) are two ways of saying the same thing. If we speak from the standpoint of the Buddha, the term “benefiting others” should be used. If we speak from the standpoint of sentient beings, the term “Other’s benefiting” should be used. Here, it is the Buddha’s power that is being discussed; hence, the term “benefiting others” applies. One must grasp the significance of this.²⁸

From a contextual standpoint, this passage appears somewhat unexpectedly. One finds it difficult to understand why T’an-luan would suddenly insert this comment at this point. In his work, *Ronchūki*, Ryōchū interprets the meaning of “If we speak from the standpoint of the Buddha, the term ‘benefiting others’ should be used” in this way,

The five gates of mindfulness constitute the bodhisattva’s practices of self-benefit and benefiting others. In attributing the basis of their effectiveness, we find that everything is a matter of the Buddha’s power. For this reason, T’an-luan explains this from the standpoint of the Buddha.²⁹

Although he mentions, “attributing the basis of their effectiveness,” Ryōchū of course takes the position that the Buddha’s power represents an external, albeit strong, condition. It does not, however, involve the power of the Primal Vow that directs the causal practice of birth to sentient beings.

In contrast, Jichō (also known as Daidō) maintains in his *Tari rita ben* that T’an-luan’s explanation of Other’s benefiting and benefiting others

represents an authenticating passage intended to reveal that Other Power is the decisive cause.³⁰ That is to say, the notion that the five gates of mindfulness arise through the decisive cause of Other Power cannot be seen in either the gatha or prose portion of the *Treatise*. Nevertheless, the key to understanding it lies in the phrase, "benefiting others." T'an-luan, by revealing the differences between "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others" (a distinction that he himself coined), seeks to prove that the five gates of mindfulness constitute the causal practices fulfilling the resultant virtues of Amida Buddha. He also seeks to establish proof that the decisive cause of birth is Other Power. Hence, his comments are presented as an authenticating passage. In contrast, a later passage in the *Commentary* takes up three relevant Vows from the *Larger Sutra* in order to provide clear verification that a being's birth in the Pure Land comes about through the power of the Buddha's Vow. By seeking to verify the meaning of this doctrine, the latter passage represents an effort to prove through logic that Other Power is the decisive cause of birth.

T'an-luan's position might be stated in this way: When we seek the true source of the bodhisattva's ability to "perform the practices of the five gates and accomplish both self-benefit and benefiting others," we find that the power of Amida Tathagata's Primal Vow is established as the decisive cause. Why are we able to understand this? It is because whether we speak of "self-benefit and Other's benefiting" or "self-benefit and benefiting others," they essentially identical expressions. The reasoning behind each expression, however, reflects a somewhat different point of view. When speaking from the standpoint of the Buddha, we should use the term "benefiting others" (*rita*). When speaking from the standpoint of sentient beings, however, the term "Other's benefiting" (*tari*) should be used. Vasubandhu here asserts that the reason the bodhisattva is able to attain enlightenment swiftly is because the five gates of mindfulness and both self-benefit and benefiting others are accomplished through the power of the Primal Vow. Thus, he utilizes the words "self-benefit and benefiting others," and not "self-benefit and Other's benefiting." By utilizing the phrase "benefiting others," he urges us to understand that Amida Tathagata is the decisive cause that brings about the fulfillment of a bodhisattva's performance of the five gates of mindfulness and accomplishment of both self-benefit and benefiting others. However, a larger problem is implied by the differentiated usage of the terms "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others." We will examine this again later on.

T'an-luan continues by commenting on the significance of taking Amida Buddha as the decisive cause of birth.

Generally stated, it is because birth in the Pure Land, and the practices performed by the bodhisattvas, human beings, and devas there as well, are all brought to fulfillment by the power of the

Primal Vow of Amida Tathagata. If one asks why this should be so, the reason is that were it not for the Buddha's power, the Forty-eight Vows would have been made in vain. Here, let us verify this by taking up the three relevant Vows.³¹

The birth in the Pure Land of practitioners who aspire for birth, as well as the performance and accomplishment of various practices by the bodhisattvas, humans and heavenly beings who have been born there have all been made to arise by the power of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. The reason is that, if they should not be brought to fulfillment by the Buddha's Power, the establishment of the Forty-eight Vows of Amida Buddha would have been nothing but vain and futile.

Now, in order to make this point clear, T'an-luan takes up three of those Vows to prove that the fulfillment of both the cause and result of sentient beings' birth is due to the power of the Buddha's Vow. That is, if the cause (the five gates of mindfulness) and result (the five kinds of virtues) were brought to perfection through self-powered practices, it would render meaningless the establishment of the Forty-eight Vows, in which Amida Buddha has established the Pure Land out of great compassion in order to save suffering beings, thus enabling even the lowest grade of beings to attain birth in that Pure Land and swiftly realize enlightenment. If that were the case, the Pure Land teaching would lose its very reason for existence.

T'an-luan cites the Eighteenth, Eleventh and Twenty-second Vows as proof that, because the power of the Primal Vow is the decisive cause, both the cause and result of birth are swiftly brought to fulfillment. This has come to be referred to as "the passage taking up the three relevant Vows in order to verify clearly that being's birth in the Pure Land comes about through the power of the Buddha's Vow."³²

After first citing the Eighteenth Vow,³³ T'an-luan states,

Through the power of the Buddha's Vow, one says the Name ten times and accordingly attains birth in the Pure Land. Because one attains birth, one escapes from transmigration in the three realms. Because one is released from transmigration, it is said one "swiftly" realizes enlightenment. This is the first proof.³⁴

Here he states that, because it takes place through the power of the Eighteenth Vow, one is able to transcend the three realms of transmigration through ten recitations of the *nembutsu*, and thereby attain birth in the Pure Land. Hence, one is swiftly able to attain perfect bodhi.

In the section containing the eightfold questions and answers, T'an-luan had previously discussed the notion of "ten thought (moments) of the *nembutsu*" (*jūnen nembutsu*) in this way,

"Ten thoughts" refers simply to continuing in mindfulness of Amida Buddha for ten thoughts, in accord with what is contemplated—whether it be the entire body or a specific feature—without any other thoughts in one's mind. Saying the Name is also like this.³⁵

Since "*nen*" refers to continuing in mindfulness (*okunen*), which implies both contemplative thoughts (*kannen*) and recitative thoughts (*shōnen*), the *nembutsu* in a broad sense could be considered as the equivalent of the five gates of mindfulness (*gonenmon*). Thus, in one aspect of T'an-luan's thought the five gates of mindfulness could be viewed as an "easy practice" that even the lowest grade of beings are capable of performing. It is also clear that T'an-luan sees the cause of birth as arising through the power of the Eighteenth Vow.

After then citing the Eleventh Vow,³⁶ he goes on to state,

Through the power of the Buddha's Vow, one comes to dwell among the truly settled. Because one dwells among the truly settled, one attains nirvana without fail. One is released from all the adversities of wandering in birth-and-death, and for this reason, it is said one "swiftly" realizes enlightenment. This is the second proof.³⁷

Because birth comes about through the power of the Eleventh Vow, one who has attained birth is enabled to dwell among the ranks of the truly settled, or that is, the assembly of those who are assured of attaining Buddhahood without fail. Such beings will be made to attain nirvana without retrogressing. Hence, they will be able swiftly to attain bodhi. T'an-luan's interpretation is that entry into the ranks of the truly settled is attained after birth in the Pure Land, and thus it corresponds to the gates of approach and the great assembly within the five kinds of virtues.

Thirdly, T'an-luan cites the Twenty-second Vow³⁸ and then states,

Through the power of the Buddha's Vow one surpasses ordinary bodhisattvas, manifests the practices of all the bodhisattva stages, and disciplines oneself in the virtue of Samantabhadra. Because one surpasses ordinary bodhisattvas and manifests the practices of all the stages, it is said that one "swiftly" realizes enlightenment. This is the third proof.³⁹

Because birth comes about through the power of the Twenty-second Vow, the bodhisattvas of the Pure Land do not progress gradually in order from one stage to another over long periods of time. Rather, they transcend all of the stages, and, becoming bodhisattvas of the upper stages, they will be

able to attain Buddhahood after a single lifetime. Hence, he states, they are swiftly able to attain bodhi. We could say that this corresponds to the gates of the grounds, the residence, and the state of sporting in the gardens and forests. Shinran would later state that the Twenty-second Vow is the Vow establishing the directing of virtue in the aspect of our return from the Pure Land. However, it is clear from this passage of the *Commentary*, as well as from the quoted passages in the section explaining the bodhisattva virtue of sustaining without any futility,⁴⁰ that T'an-luan viewed it as the Vow that those who have attained birth would be able to transcend and depart from all of the bodhisattva stages.⁴¹

T'an-luan brings this discussion to a conclusion with the words,

Inferring from these proofs, we see that Other Power is to be taken as the decisive cause. How could it be otherwise?⁴²

He then presents a metaphorical expression of Other Power, stating that even a person of inferior powers who comes to be carried by the power of a cakravartin king is able to fly freely through the air. By presenting this metaphorical example, T'an-luan urges all beings to abandon self-power and take refuge in Other Power.

Finally, he brings this entire section to a close in this way,

How foolish are scholars of these latter times! Hear the teaching that you should ride upon Other Power and awaken shinjin. Do not confine yourself to your own powers.⁴³

If persons who seek to learn the Pure Land teachings in this latter age should come to hear about the existence of Other Power, upon which they can entrust and be carried to birth, they should give rise to *shinjin* and entrust themselves to Other Power. They should not be so foolish as to become mixed with self-powered calculation or lose sight of salvation.

IV.

Generally, the terms *tari*, or, "others' benefiting" (lit. promoting others' benefits) and *rita*, or, "benefiting others" (lit. bringing benefit to others) are considered to stand in contrast to the bodhisattva's *jiri*, or, "self-benefit." As such both are generally used in the sense of "promoting benefits for others." In that light, T'an-luan's separation of the two into "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others" is not an ordinary interpretation. An example in which both terms are used in a similar sense can be found in Kumārajīva's (344–413) translation of the Nāgārjuna's *Commen-*

tary on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages. For instance, in the Chapter on the Features of the First Stage, it states,

I now aspire to perfect the unsurpassed way, for I wish to accomplish self-benefit, and also to benefit others.⁴⁴

In the Chapter on the Five Precepts of the text the terms *jiri rita* are used synonymously with *jiri tari*. For example,

Discarding thoughts of self-benefit, they constantly endeavor to promote others' benefits.

By benefiting others they benefit themselves.

When they give rise to the mind aspiring for enlightenment, their benefiting of others is identical with their self-benefiting.⁴⁵

In Bodhiruci's translation of the *Visesacinti-brahmā-pariprccha-śāstra*, Fasc. One, the two forms of benefiting are expressed in this way,

(They) perform self-benefit and work for others' benefits while practicing in accord with reality.

This is because the features of practicing self-benefit and promoting others' benefits do not differ.⁴⁶

Further, in Fasc. Nine of the Bodhiruci translation of the *Bodhisattva-gocaropaya-visayavikuvana-nirdeśa*, there is the passage,

All of the practices performed by the many bodhisattvas and mahasattvas are for the sake of self-benefit, as well as for the sake of others' benefit.⁴⁷

However, in Fasc. Two of the same sutra, the terms "self-benefit and benefiting others" are used.⁴⁸

We have earlier discussed Dharmakṣema's translation of the *Bodhisattva bhūmi*. The first fascicle of that text, the Chapter on Self and Others' Benefit, describes the bodhisattva's seven stages of learning with the words, "The first is self-benefit; the second is benefiting others." It then offers an explanation of this.

How does one practice self-benefit and bring about others' benefits? There are ten ways of explaining self-benefit and others' benefits in condensed form.⁴⁹

In other words, the terms *jiri rita* and *jiri tari* are used synonymously.

T'an-luan approaches this matter by stating, "'Other's benefiting' (*ta-ri*) and 'benefiting others' (*ri-ta*) are two ways of saying the same thing" (lit. "One is left and one is right"). While other Pure Land schools did not pay very close attention to this interpretation of these terms, Shinran clearly did. In the general conclusion to the Chapter on Realization of his text, *True Teaching, Practice, and Realization*⁵⁰ and also in the *Passages on the Pure Land Way*, he states,

Master T'an-luan clarifies Amida's directing of virtue, which is the working of great compassion for our going to the Pure Land and our return to this world; and he thoroughly expounds for all, with care and concern, the profound significance of Other's benefiting and benefiting others.⁵¹

We can thus see that Shinran understood T'an-luan's interpretation of "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others" to mean this: The five gates of mindfulness, which are expounded by Vasubandhu in his *Treatise* as practices that are performed by beings, are actually the virtues of the practices of the two forms of benefiting that have been fulfilled by Amida Buddha and directed to sentient beings to benefit them. In other words, according to Shinran, T'an-luan's profound exposition reveals the essential significance of the directing of virtue by the power of the Primal Vow. Shinran's careful insertion of punctuation marks into the passages on the five gates of mindfulness from Vasubandhu's *Treatise* and T'an-luan's *Commentary*, which he cited in the *True Teaching, Practice and Realization* and in his other texts, indicate that he considered them to be referring to the Buddha. In other words, by looking from the perspective of T'an-luan's interpretation of "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others", Shinran viewed the five gates of mindfulness as the practices that had been performed by the Bodhisattva Dharmākara.

In his *Hymn of the Two Gateways of Entrance and Emergence*, Shinran states,

It is the fulfillment of the power of the Vow that is taught as the five kinds of mindfulness.

From the standpoint of the Buddha, the term "benefiting others" should be used;

From the standpoint of sentient beings, we use "Other's benefiting;"

Know that it is the Buddha's power that is being discussed.⁵²

In Shinran's view T'an-luan provided his interpretation of "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others" in order to clarify that the five gates of

mindfulness are fulfilled by the power of the Vow. It is difficult, however, to know just how Shinran himself understood the notions of "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others." Shin Buddhist teachers of the past have set out to examine this point in a variety of ways.

V.

The second teaching master (*nōke*) of the Hongwanji, Chikū (1634–1718) writes in his *Ronchū yokuge*, vol. 9,

"Other's benefiting" means that an "other" brings benefit to me. This corresponds to sentient beings speaking in the direction of the Buddha. "Benefiting others" means that "I" benefit an "other." This is stated from the standpoint of the Buddha facing sentient beings. When the word "other" comes first, it indicates the Buddha; when comes after, it refers to sentient beings. For this reason, T'an-luan states that they are "two ways of saying the same thing."⁵³

That is, in discussing the salvation by the Tathagata, the statement, "Other's benefiting," is made in the direction "from beings toward Buddha." That is, Buddha as "Other" brings benefit to sentient beings. On the other hand, since "benefiting others" means that the Tathagata benefits sentient beings as "others," it is a statement made in the direction "from Buddha toward beings." Chikū's view is that, since the power of the Buddha is being taken up in the section of the *Commentary* in question, T'an-luan here speaks of "benefiting others." This interpretation was also taken by Hōrin (1693–1741) in his *Nyūshutsu nimonge gihanroku*, vol. 5. It was later adopted by Eun, Sōkaku, Dōon, Sōe, Gijō, Engetsu, Gizan, Senmyō among others, and has become the most commonly-held idea within the Hongwanji branch of Shin Buddhism.

According to the *Ronchū kenjingiki*⁵⁴ vol. 5 of Enen (1693–1764) a scholar of the Ōtani branch, the word "other" in both "others' benefiting" (which is another way of reading "*ta-ri*") and "benefiting others" refers to sentient beings. Both phrases are unquestionably expressions of the Buddha's benefiting of beings, or that is, of the activity that saves beings. However, says Enen, "others' benefiting" and "benefiting others" give rise to slight differences in meaning. That is, "others' benefiting" means that the virtues of the Buddha's practices of self-benefit bring benefit to sentient beings by becoming the "decisive cause," which works spontaneously without their calculation. The receipt of this benefit by sentient beings is called "others' benefiting" ("others are benefited"). In other words, "others' benefiting" is used in the case where one takes the Buddha's practices

of self-benefit as primary and discusses the virtue of “converting others,” which is a natural activity of those practices.

In contrast, Enen states that “benefiting others” expresses the state in which the Buddha undertakes vows and practices for the sake of others, becomes the Buddha whose primary intention is to bring benefit to sentient beings, and thus saves beings. In sum, the phrases “others’ benefiting” and “benefiting others” are both identical expressions of the Buddha’s bringing benefit to beings. The two expressions differ because of subtle differences between the concepts of the Buddha’s spontaneous working and the Buddha’s Vow, or between the notions of the virtues of self-benefit and converting others. This, Enen says, is why T’an-luan states that they are “two ways of saying the same thing.” That is to say, “others’ benefiting” is used in the case where one takes the virtues of self-benefit to be primary and speaks of converting others as its natural, spontaneous activity. The phrase “benefiting others” is an expression of the virtue of the Buddha that takes as primary the conversion of others, which is the result of the Buddha’s vow to save all sentient beings. Hence, when giving expression to the power of the Buddha, the phrase “benefiting others” is more suitable than “others’ benefiting.”

This explanation makes reference to the following passage from the *Ch’eng-wei-shih-lun*, vol. 10,

The body of self-nature truly embodies self-benefit. This is because it is serene and still, full of peace and bliss, and without any activity. It also merges with “benefiting others.” This is because it is the decisive cause that enables all beings to attain benefit and bliss . . . Manifested bodies that allow others to enjoy the bliss of attainment and transformed bodies are associated only with benefiting others. This is because they manifest themselves for the sake for others.⁵⁵

Whereas this text states that the Dharma-body of self-nature “merges with benefiting others,” it appears that Enen was also aware that another version of the text contains the phrase, “merges with ‘others’ benefiting.”

Chisen (1702–1768) takes up the theories set forth in the *Ronchū yokuge* and *Ronchū kenjingiki* in his text *Nimonge rujōki*. Although he finds the latter interpretation to be the better of the two, he criticizes it for not making clear the distinction between “other’s benefiting” and “benefiting others.” He then goes on to develop his own theory. According to him, “other’s benefiting” means that the power of the Dharma-realm, or, that is, the power of the “scent impregnating” of suchness becomes the decisive cause that brings benefit to sentient beings. Sentient beings are urged by that power to undertake the bodhisattva path of practices that benefit the self and others. Through the working of Buddha-nature, which is origi-

nally possessed by sentient beings, "others" (sentient beings) attain the benefit naturally, without their calculation. Hence, "others' benefiting" is used when we speak from the standpoint of sentient beings. This is commonly discussed with respect to the Path of the Sages, which emphasizes self-powered practices.

In contrast, "benefiting others" means that, having fulfilled the vows and practices to save sentient beings, Amida Buddha directs those virtues to all sentient beings, thus bringing benefit to sentient beings as "others." Hence, this phrase is used when we speak from the standpoint of the Buddha. In sum, Chisen concludes that "others' benefiting" is an expression of the teachings of self-power, whereas "benefiting others" expresses the teaching of Other Power. Chisen's notion that "others' benefiting" refers to the power of the "scent impregnating" power of suchness and is thus discussed from the side of sentient beings is thought to have resulted from the influence of his teacher, Jakurin. In his text, *Shōshinge monki*,⁵⁶ Jakurin's explanation of the opening verses of Shinran's *Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu* includes an assertion that the working of the "body of reality" corresponds to the "nature" of Other Power, while salvation by the "body for the sake of beings" corresponds to the Other Power as "practice."

Enen's student, Erin (1715–1789) was the author of a seven volume commentary on the *Ronchū kenjingiki*. In his *Tari rita jingi*, he criticizes the three theories that have been set forth above,

Even though there are three theories as stated above, none of them specifically show whether or not they are truly in accord with the profound import of the commentator.⁵⁷

He then goes on to develop his own explanation of the matter. Both "others' benefiting" and "benefiting others" unquestionably convey the notion of "teaching and converting others." However, the meaning of "others' benefiting" is that sentient beings teach others; whereas "benefiting others" reveals Amida Buddha's teaching of others. "Others' benefiting" then refers to the fifth gate of mindfulness, or, merit transference. That is, it refers to self-powered practices through which sentient beings seek to transfer the merits and virtues derived from their own practice of the four preceding gates of mindfulness in order to benefit sentient beings. In other words, "others' benefiting" means that the virtues of the practices of self-benefit serve to convert others by benefiting them spontaneously, without their calculation. It addresses the meaning of teaching and converting others from the perspective of sentient beings.

We can see, however, that Erin does not consider this form of converting others to be one that might be performed by the practitioner of Other Power, an activity that might be expressed by the phrase, "entrusting

oneself and teaching others to entrust" (*jishin kyōninshin*). Rather, in his view this constitutes a transference of merit through self-power. In contrast to that, "benefiting others," in his view, indicates the virtues of transferring merit and benefiting others on the part of Amida Buddha, who makes the vows and practices to benefit others foremost. That is, this activity is addressed from the standpoint of Amida Buddha. Accordingly, "benefiting others" becomes a phrase expressing Buddha power, or, Other Power. Hence, T'an-luan states,

Here, it is the Buddha's power that is being discussed; hence, the term "benefiting others" applies. One must grasp the significance of this.⁵⁸

In his text *Ronchū kōen*, vol. 12,⁵⁹ Jinrei (1749–1817) criticizes the theory set forth in the *Ronchū yokuge* that "Other's benefiting" means that sentient beings are benefited by the Buddha and that "benefiting others" means that the Buddha benefits sentient beings as "others." Such an assertion, he states, is problematic for two reasons. First, although the place to which the word "other" points may be different, both phrases indicate the Buddha's bringing benefit to sentient beings. The significance of T'an-luan's use of the phrase "benefiting others" to reveal the Buddha's power is concealed by that theory. Second, it differs from the terminology developed in the many sutras and commentaries, since not one example can be found in which the word "other" in "Other's benefiting" refers to the Buddha.

Further, Jinrei concurs with the assertion in the *Ronchū kenjingiki* that, since both "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others" refer to the Buddha's salvation of sentient beings, the word "other" refers to sentient beings in contrast to the Buddha. However, he states, if "Other's benefiting" means that the salvation of sentient beings comes about through the abundance of the Buddhas' practices of self-benefit, while "benefiting others" means that the Buddha's salvation of sentient beings is primary, then the locus of both would be the Buddha's salvation of sentient beings. If so, both phrases would amount to expressions from the standpoint of the Buddha and that, Jinrei criticizes, does not accord with the words of the *Commentary*, "If we speak from the standpoint of sentient beings, the term 'Other's benefiting' should be used."

In Jinrei's view, moreover, the assertion in the *Nimonge rujōki* that "benefiting others" refers to Other Power whereas "other's benefiting" refers to self-power would imply that the *Commentary's* position is that the two are essentially different. However, that would contradict T'an-luan's statement that they are "two ways of saying the same thing." In addition, among the many sutras and commentaries one can find no

examples of any of them taking "Other's benefiting" to refer to self-power. Hence, Jinrei states, such a theory is unjustifiable.

Jinrei maintains that the statement in T'an-luan's *Commentary* that, "Other's benefiting" (*ta-ri*) and "benefiting others" (*ri-ta*) are two ways of saying the same thing," means that, since both correspond to the gate of merit transference within the five gates of mindfulness, they are in essence the same. "Two ways of saying the same thing" means that "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others" are simply different names of a singular essence. Hence, "Other's benefiting" is a phrase used from the standpoint of the sentient beings who are taught and benefited. ("Others are benefited.") "Benefiting others" is a phrase used from the standpoint of the Buddha, who teaches, converts, and brings benefit to beings. ("Benefit is given to others.") The reason is that in the phrase "Other's benefiting" the word "other" comes first, indicating that sentient beings are benefited. In contrast, he states,

In the phrase "benefiting others" the word "benefit" has been placed before "others." Hence, the phrase reveals the Buddha's power, which is able to bring benefit.

T'an-luan interprets the phrase "benefiting others" to reveal Amida Buddha's Vow power.⁶⁰

This is because, even though the same words are used in both phrases, the conventional usage of Chinese characters holds that the character placed first possesses greater weight. However, Jinrei's theory has been criticized in that, if "Other's benefiting" means that "others are benefited," then it would be identical to the meaning of "benefiting others," since the one doing the benefiting would be the Buddha. However, if the phrase is read in the passive voice in this way, then "self-benefit" would also have to be read as "self is benefited." This would cause the phrase to lose all meaning.

Jichō (also known as Daidō; ?–1826) writes in his *Tari rita ben* ⁶¹ that both "others' benefiting" and "benefiting others" represent distinctions within a single path of teaching and converting others. Both refer to the benefiting of sentient beings as "others." However, because of the difference in the order of the characters there is a natural difference in the meanings of the phrases "others' benefiting" and "benefiting others" when they are interpreted in tandem. The phrase "others' benefiting" is a reference to the subject "others," and points to the benefit that is obtained by them. On the other hand, Jichō says, "benefiting others" indicates that one benefits "others," and so phrase is the result of looking at the value of its ability to bring benefit. "Others" are those who are benefited.

He then states that the phrase "others' benefiting" is established from the side of sentient beings, so that "self-benefit and others' benefiting" both

refer to two kinds of partial benefiting that are performed by the person in the causal state. In contrast, the phrase “benefiting others” is established from the side of the Buddha. It points to the complete, superior stage of teaching, in which the Buddha is completely possessed of the virtues of self-benefit and brings benefit to others. In this way, although both “others’ benefiting” and “benefiting others” refer to the same stage of teaching, they reflect the differences between partial and complete, or between inferior and superior. Critics of Jichō’s theory point out, however, that the basis for distinguishing between “others’ benefiting” and “benefiting others” in terms of the practices of one in the causal state versus one in the resultant state is very weak.

VI.

In summary, we can divide the above theories regarding “Other’s benefiting” and “benefiting others” into the following categories:

1. “Other” in the word “Other’s benefiting” is taken to refer to the Buddha, while “others” in the word “benefiting others” refers to sentient beings. Thus, the word “other” indicates both aspects of the Buddha’s salvation, from the standpoint of sentient beings and from the standpoint of the Buddha.
2. “Other” in both “others’ benefiting” and “benefiting others” is considered to point to sentient beings. Here both terms are taken to indicate the activity of the Buddha to benefit sentient beings. Within this position, there is a further division of thought:
 - a. The word “others’ benefiting” is said to take “self-benefit” as the primary activity, while “benefiting others” takes “benefiting others” as its principal activity.
 - b. Or, “others’ benefiting” is taken to indicate that sentient beings engage in teaching and converting others; “benefiting others” then is said to refer to the Buddha’s teaching of others.
 - c. Or, finally, “others’ benefiting” is considered to signify self-power, while “benefiting others” is said to indicate Other Power.
 - d. The relationship between “others’ benefiting” and “benefiting others” is seen as one distinguishing partial versus complete, or inferior versus superior.

However, while the various interpretations of "Other's benefiting" (or, "others' benefiting" as the case may be) can be divided in this manner, all of the theories agree that "benefiting others" is an expression of the power of the Primal Vow, which is the fulfillment of the self-benefiting practices of Amida Buddha.

I would like to adopt the notion presented in the *Ronchū yokuge*, which takes the position that "Other's benefiting" (*ta-ri*) means that sentient beings are benefited by Buddha (the "Other"). "Benefiting others" (*ri-ta*) means that the Buddha brings benefit to sentient beings (that is, "others"). When T'an-luan said that "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others," which had been used synonymously up until that point, "are two ways of saying the same thing," he did so in order to express their special significance in terms of the five gates of mindfulness, which represent the fulfillment of the Buddha's Vow. Still, he was also able to see the difference between the two, by focusing on the word "benefit" as a verb. That is, he understood the full meaning of the term "Other's benefiting" to be "Other brings benefit to the self" (*ta-ri-ji*). When the direct object "self" (*ji*) is omitted, the phrase becomes "*ta-ri*." This is likely because he also saw that "benefiting others" actually means, "one benefits others" (*ji-ri-ta*). When the subject "one" (*ji*) is omitted, the phrase becomes "*ri-ta*."

Accordingly, "Other's benefiting" becomes an expression of the state in which Amida Buddha (as Other) brings benefit to sentient beings (this self). In this case, the being that is saved is understood to be "the self" or "I." The Tathagata that saves is comprehended as "Other" or "You." Hence, T'an-luan states, "If we speak from the standpoint of sentient beings, the term 'Other's benefiting' should be used." Looking at it from the opposite standpoint, "benefiting others" becomes an expression of the state in which the Tathagata (as Self) brings about the salvation of sentient beings (others). In this case, the one that saves is referred to as "self"; hence, the Tathagata becomes the "I." Sentient beings that are saved are seen as "others," or, that is, as the "you." This, then, is the meaning of T'an-luan's statement, "If we speak from the standpoint of the Buddha, the term 'benefiting others' should be used."

From the standpoint of the Buddha, or, Dharma, the Buddha's salvific activity would be expressed as, "I will save you." Here, the Buddha is the "I," while sentient beings are the "you." Because such an expression accords well with the notion of "benefiting others," T'an-luan states, "Here, it is the Buddha's power that is being discussed; hence, the term 'benefiting others' applies." In other words, "benefiting others" is a term that discusses the Buddha's power from the standpoint of Dharma. This is the reason why Shinran would later make frequent use of the term "benefiting others" as a expression of the directing of virtue through the power of the Primal Vow (*honganriki ekō*).

Many scholars of the past have considered T'an-luan's words, "'Other's benefiting' and 'benefiting others' are two ways of saying the same thing" to mean that they are two aspects of a single thing. In like manner, the master T'ien-tai (Chih-i, 538–597) writes in his *Treatise on Śamatha and Vipāśyanā*,

"Sphere" (or, object of contemplation, *kyō*) and "reality" (*tai*) differ only as the left and right sides of the same thing. "Seeing" and "knowing" are like the difference between saying visual organ or eye. It should not be taught that they are separate.⁶²

Ching-hsi (Chan-jan, 717–782) comments on this passage in his text, *Chih-kuan-pu-hsing*,

Although "sphere" and "reality" are a single thing, they differ in the way that they can be named (as left or right). When a person is at the left side of a thing, he says that the thing is on his right. When a person is at the right side of a thing, he says that it is on his left. The names "left" or "right" depend on where a person is located. Still, fundamentally, this single thing has never been (two) different (things). It is the same way with "reality" and "sphere." We call it "reality" with respect to śamatha and "sphere" as an object of contemplation.⁶³

In the same way, when we discuss the salvation by the Buddha (that is, the five gates of mindfulness that are the fulfillment of the Primal Vow) from the standpoint of the Tathagata, we should use the term "benefiting others" (*rita*). When we talk about it from the standpoint of sentient beings, we should use the term "Other's benefiting" (*tari*).

In his text, *Ōjōronchū kōgi*, Koreyama Ekaku bases his view on that of the *Ronchū yokuge* of Chikū,

"Other's benefiting" expresses the absence of working on the part of sentient beings. "Benefiting others" reveals the true working on the part of the Buddha. Together the names represent "Other Power." Further, "benefiting others" in the *Commentary* is a statement made in the direction "from the Buddha toward beings." Thus, we can clearly know the meaning of the five gates of mindfulness in the *Commentary* to be that they all reveal the practices that were performed by the Dharmākara Bodhisattva. Shinran's *Hymn of the Two Gateways of Entrance and Emergence* is based on this instruction.⁶⁴

Although they both refer to the same Other Power, "Other's benefiting" reveals the absence of working on the part of sentient beings, while "benefiting others" clarifies the true working on the part of the Buddha. Thus, the term "benefiting others" is a more immediate expression of the Buddha's salvific activity.

In his *Hymn of the Two Gateways of Entrance and Emergence* Shinran follows the words, "It is the fulfillment of the power of the Vow that is taught as the five kinds of mindfulness,"⁶⁵ with an explanation of "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others." In regard to the practices of the five gates of mindfulness—worship, praise, aspiration, contemplation, and directing of virtue—that bring about the fulfillment of the two forms of benefiting, he states the following: From the standpoint of the Buddha, they represent the state in which the power of the Tathagata's Primal Vow (the content of which constitutes the five gates of mindfulness, where were practiced by the Dharmākara Bodhisattva) is actively manifested within sentient beings. In that case, the term "benefiting others" ought to be used. From the standpoint of sentient beings they represent the state in which beings entrust themselves to the Tathagata's activity. Thus, in that case, "Other's benefiting" should be used.

Hence, "benefiting others" is to be used when the acts of saying the Name, worshipping, and thinking on the Buddha are seen as constituting the form of the activity of the Primal Vow (the Tathagata's working). On the other hand, "Other's benefiting" should be used when they are viewed as expressions of the state of abandoning self-power and entrusting oneself to the power of the Primal Vow. It might be said that this situation is identical to the one discussed in the text *On Attaining the Settled Mind*,

Know then, concerning this Nembutsu-samadhi, that although we say the Name, worship, and think on the Buddha, these are not practices of the self; they are simply the practicing of Amida Buddha's practice.⁶⁶

Stated in another way, directing of virtue through the power of the Primal Vow is an expression of the Tathagata's salvific activity. Hence, it corresponds to "benefiting others." The term "not-directing merit" (*fuekō*) is a negation of the self-powered directing of merit by sentient beings. Thus, it corresponds with "Other's benefiting."

Finally, from the standpoint of the Tathagata, the word "Other Power" (*ta-riki*) could be said to be an abbreviation of the phrase, "the power that benefits others" (*ri-ta-riki*). From the standpoint of sentient beings, it could be said to be an abbreviation of "the power through which the Other brings benefits" (*ta-ri-riki*). Further, the word "Other Power" was originally used primarily to express the salvific activity of the Buddha (that is, the virtuous working of Dharma). Hence, Other Power ought to be seen primarily as

"the power that benefits others." Shinran's frequent use of the term "benefiting others" as an expression of Other Power would also seem to indicate that he wished to show that Other Power refers to the salvific activity of the Tathagata. By looking at the term "Other Power" in this way we can understand that, while Shinran acknowledged that the term was commonly taken to mean "the power of the Other," his fundamental understanding included his own unique sense of it as "the power that benefits others."

VII.

We have seen that Shinran's usage of the phrase "benefiting others" as a synonym for Other Power was based on T'an-luan's explication of "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others." Another basis for Shinran's thought can be found in Shan-tao's explanation of the "sincere mind" within his *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*.⁶⁷ That is to say, for Shinran "the true and real (mind) attained through benefiting others" (*rita shinjitsu*), which Shan-tao takes up in his discussion of the three minds of the Sutra, corresponds to the true and real mind of Other Power. Although Shan-tao frequently employed such words as "karmic power of the great Vow," "power of the Primal Vow," and "Vow power" as expressions for Amida Buddha's salvation, he never in fact used the phrases "self-power" or "Other Power." Unquestionably, the meaning of Other Power, as it was generally being used at that time, was not an expression that suited his religious consciousness.

Shinran, however, provides his own interpretation of Shan-tao's explication of the sincere mind,

What is true and real falls into two types: the true and real attained through self-benefit and the true and real attained through benefiting others.⁶⁸

by rendering his own reading of the same passage,

Further, what is true and real falls into two types: self-benefiting with a true and real mind and (Amida's) benefiting others with a true and real mind.⁶⁹

In *Gutoku's Notes*, he suggests that "self-benefiting with a true and real mind" (*jiri shinjitsu*) corresponds to the Path of Sages or the Pure Land teachings of "transcending lengthwise."⁷⁰ That is, it refers to the true and real mind of self-power. In contrast, he stipulates that "benefiting others with a true and real mind" (*rita shinjitsu*) indicates the true and real mind

of "transcending crosswise." He asserts, "This is the Other Power of the Tathagata's Vow."⁷¹ In the Chapter on Shinjin of the *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Shinran cites only that portion of Shan-tao's passage above that recognizes "benefiting others with a true and real mind." The portion presenting "self-benefiting with a true and real mind" is cited in the section on the essential gate in the Chapter on the *Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands*.

Further, in order to reveal the nature of *shinjin* of self-power and *shinjin* of Other Power, Shinran often uses "self-benefit" and "benefiting others" as different designations for self-power and Other power. For instance,

Further, the three minds that beings awaken are all minds of self-benefit that are individually different and not the mind that is single, which arises from Amida's benefiting of others.⁷²

"Deep" refers to the true and real mind that is Amida's benefiting of others; "shallow" describes the mind of self-benefit through meditative and non-meditative practices.⁷³

Shan-tao in his *Commentary* instructs the practitioner who aspires to be born in the Pure Land to practice self-benefit and benefiting of others with a true and real mind, which conforms internally and externally. Shinran, however, makes a clear distinction between "self-benefit with a true and real mind," which refers to the sincere mind of self-power, and "benefiting of others with a true and real mind," which indicates the sincere mind of Other Power.

Shinran's explication of "benefiting others with a true and real mind" was formed through his inheritance of the thought of Ryūkan (1148–1227),⁷⁴ who stated the following with regard to "self-benefit with a true and real mind" and "benefiting others with a true and real mind" in his text, *Gusanshingi*,

First of all, establishing "self-benefit with a true and real mind" means that one seeks to reform one's actions, in which one outwardly expresses signs of diligence while inwardly being possessed of falsity, thereby causing one's actions in the three karmic modes to turn to "benefiting others with a true and real mind." If one does not establish "self-benefit with a true and real mind" one would not be likely to strive to perform good in the three modes of karmic acts, nor be able to refrain from committing evil in the three modes of karmic acts. Next, establishing "benefiting of others with a true and real mind" reveals that when one takes refuge in the Vow that embodies "benefiting others with a true and real mind"

one is able to escape from the difficulties of poisoned good and false practices. If one does not establish “benefiting of others with a true and real mind,” one would not understand the import of Amida’s Vow and would grow fatigued of performing the practices of self-power; vainly striving to perform self-powered practices, one would not be in accord with Amida’s Vow.⁷⁵

Ryūkan here discusses Shan-tao’s establishment of “self-benefit with a true and real mind” and “benefiting others with a true and real mind” in the explication of the sincere mind in his *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*. First of all, he says that the passage was intended to reveal that one is able to perfect for the first time practices of self-benefit in the truest sense, in which one eliminates evil and performs good, by correcting one’s self-powered practices and taking refuge in the Primal Vow that embodies “benefiting others with a true and real mind.” Second, Ryūkan says that the passage was intended to prevent one who has taken refuge in the Primal Vow from falling into the false belief that “committing evil is no hindrance to the realization of birth.” Although this differs from Shinran’s view that “self-benefit with a true and real mind” corresponds with self-powered practices of eliminating evil and performing good, in fact it is an extremely interesting theory.

Next, Ryūkan says that Shan-tao established the notion of “benefiting others with a true and real mind” first in order to make it known that, upon taking refuge in the Primal Vow that embodies “benefiting others with a true and real mind,” one is able for the first time to become free of self-power that is poisoned and false. Secondly, he says, if taking refuge in “benefiting others with a true and real mind” is not made clear, one would become fatigued in the vain performance of self-powered acts and be unable to become free of falsity. Here, Ryūkan considers self-power to be false and unreal, and says that such acts ought to be abandoned. In contrast, the only truth in which one should entrust, he says, is the Primal Vow that embodies “benefiting others with a true and real mind.” In other words, there is nothing true or real about human activities performed with the three modes of karmic acts. Only the Primal Vow of Amida Tathagata, which is the embodiment of “benefiting others” is true and real. Ryūkan expresses this with the terms, “benefiting others with a true and real mind” and “Other Power.”

The doctrinal background for Ryūkan’s view that “benefiting of others with a true and real mind” indicates Other Power lies in the teachings of T’an-luan’s *Commentary*. For instance, in order to reveal the meaning of Shan-tao’s explication of the sincere mind, Ryūkan clearly interprets the “true and real mind” through the use of the passage on the “manifestation of true virtues” in T’an-luan’s *Commentary*.⁷⁶ Furthermore, his explana-

tion of the "Name that brings about benefit to others with a sincere and real mind" is based on T'an-luan's explication of the gate of praise.⁷⁷

Although Ryūkan does not cite the *Commentary* passage that sets forth "Other's benefiting" and "benefiting others," he does cite and discuss other passages, such as T'an-luan's explanation of "the manifestation of self-benefit and benefiting others."⁷⁸ In that way he relates that the Pure Land, which is the perfect fulfillment of the two forms of benefit, possesses the inconceivable virtues of benefiting others. It guides sentient beings to the Pure Land and causes them to attain the realization of nirvana, which transcends samsaric existence. Its activity is inconceivable, just as it would be to place Mt. Sumeru into a mustard seed or pour all of the water of the great oceans into the pores of the skin. However, he does not say that such inconceivable working lies within Mt. Sumeru or the great oceans. Rather, just as the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa śāstra* explains that it is the activity of free, supernatural powers that are possessed by the great bodhisattva who dwells in inconceivable emancipation, it is a matter that completely arises through the virtuous activity of Amida Buddha's inconceivable "Other's benefiting."

Based on T'an-luan's *Commentary*, Ryūkan offers this admonition, "Entrusting yourself completely to Other Power is sufficient; why should you strive to perform self-powered acts?" He then goes on to refer to Amida Buddha's Primal Vow and Name with such titles as the "Name that brings about benefit to others with a sincere and real mind," the "Name and Vow that bring benefit to others with a sincere and real mind" and the "Vow of benefiting others."⁷⁹ We can thus understand that Ryūkan combined T'an-luan's notion of Other Power with Shan-tao's "benefiting others with a true and real mind." We can also clearly see that Shinran's commentary on the "benefiting of others with a true and real mind," as well as his placing of self-power and Other Power into a relationship of "that which should be discarded and that which should be established" (*hairyū*), were inherited from Ryūkan.

VIII.

Beginning with the *True Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, Shinran's use of the term "benefiting others" in the same sense as both Other Power and "directing of virtue through the power of the Primal Vow" can be seen throughout his writings. While, in total, there are too many to enumerate in this paper, a few instances of his terminology would include:

1. True and real practice (*shinjitsu no gyō*)—"the great practice that embodies Amida's perfect benefiting of others" (*rita enman no daigyō*).⁸⁰

2. True and real shinjin (*shinjitsu no shinjin*)—"the true and real mind benefiting others through directing virtues" (*ekō riyakuta no shinjitsushin*),⁸¹ "the true mind of benefiting others" (*rita no shinshin*),⁸² "the sincere mind of benefiting others and directing virtues" (*rita ekō no shishin*),⁸³ "the true mind of benefiting others" (*rita shinjitsu no shin*),⁸⁴ "the ocean of shinjin that is Amida's benefiting others" (*rita no shinkai*),⁸⁵ "true and real shinjin, which is Amida's benefiting of others" (*rita shinjitsu no shinjin*),⁸⁶ "shinjin that actualizes Amida's profound and vast benefiting of others" (*rita jinkō no shinjin*),⁸⁷ "true entrusting that is Amida's benefiting of others" (*rita no shingyō*),⁸⁸ "Shinjin that arises from Amida's benefiting of others" (*nyorai rita no shinjin*),⁸⁹ "other-benefiting, true and real mind of aspiration for birth" (*rita shinjitsu no yokushōshin*).⁹⁰
3. True and real realization (*shinjitsu no shō*)—"the wondrous state attained through Amida's perfect benefiting of others" (*rita enman no myōi*),⁹¹ "the wondrous fruition attained through Amida's perfect benefiting of others" (*rita enman no myōka*).⁹²
4. The aspect of returning (*gensō*)—"the benefit that we receive, the state of benefiting and guiding and benefiting others" (*rita kyōkeji no ka*),⁹³ "the true intent of benefiting others" (*rita no shōi*),⁹⁴ "the benefit that we receive, the state of benefiting and guiding others" (*rita kyōkeji no yaku*).⁹⁵

Each of these expressions captures both the significance of "benefiting others" as revealed by the "profound significance of Other's benefiting and benefiting others," and the meaning of "benefiting others with a mind that is true and real," as presented in the section on the explication of the sincere mind. With each of them, Shinran praises the Dharma of the directing of virtue through the power of the Primal Vow in the aspects of going to be born and returning from the Pure Land. This was because, for Shinran, the word "benefiting others" was an apt expression for revealing the salvific activity of the Primal Vow, which directs virtue to beings in the aspects of going and returning, thus saving all sentient beings. It might also be said that it formed the foundation of Shinran's view of Other Power.

In the Chapter on Practice, Shinran states,

Even more decisively will the ocean of beings of the ten quarters be grasped and never abandoned when they have taken refuge in this practice and shinjin. Therefore the Buddha is called "Amida Buddha." This is Other Power.⁹⁶

Here, he suggests that the significance of the Name of Amida Buddha lies in the Buddha's grasping and never abandoning beings. This, he states, is the meaning of Other Power. Therefore, Shinran considers Other Power to constitute the significance of the Name of Amida Buddha—as the Dharma-body as compassionate means. This is not an Other Power in the sense of “the power of the Other,” in which Amida Buddha—as the Other—brings benefit to beings like us. Rather, Other Power informs sentient beings of the significance of Amida Buddha's Name, in other words, that “I take in and hold beings of the *nembutsu* and thus am called Amida Buddha.” It must be understood that Shinran clearly viewed Other Power as the activity of “benefiting others,” that is, as an abbreviation of the term, “the power of benefiting others” (*ri-ta-riki*).

In the Chapter on Practice, Shinran also explains Other Power directly in this way,

Other Power is none other than the power of the Tathagata's Primal Vow.⁹⁷

He then cites a number of passages from T'an-luan's *Commentary*, beginning with the section on the gate of “the state of sporting in the gardens and the forests,” which represents the accomplishment of the practices of self-benefit and benefiting others, and ending with the passages concerning the “search for the source of the bodhisattva's realization.”⁹⁸ On that basis as well, we must conclude that Shinran viewed Other Power as “the power of benefiting others.” He further states in his *Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu*,

Our going and returning, directed to us by Amida, come about through Other Power.⁹⁹

Since here again he expresses Other Power as the directing of virtue through the power of the Primal Vow, it could be said that he is using the phrase in the sense of “the power of benefiting others.”

Shinran also makes frequent statements of the following kind in regard to Other Power:

In Other Power, no working is true working.¹⁰⁰

Other Power means to be free of any form of calculation.¹⁰¹

With such expressions, Shinran is seeking to reveal the manner in which beings receive or “accept” Other Power. Therefore, in this case, it could be said that he is discussing Other Power in the sense of “Other's benefiting,” rather than “benefiting others.” In a *Letter*, he states,

Self-power is the effort to attain birth, whether by invoking the names of Buddhas other than Amida and practicing good acts other than the *nembutsu*, in accordance with your particular circumstances and opportunities; or by endeavoring to make yourself worthy through mending the confusion in your acts, words, and thoughts, confident of your own powers and guided by your own calculation.

Other Power is the entrusting of yourself to the Eighteenth among Amida Tathagata's Vows, the Primal Vow of birth through the *nembutsu*, which Amida selected and adopted from among all other practices. Since this is the Vow of Tathagata, Hōnen said: "In Other Power, no working is true working."¹⁰²

Seeking to purify one's acts, words, and thoughts and receive salvation, "confident in your own powers and guided by your own calculation" is the standpoint of self-power. In contrast, he states that Other Power is not to rely upon one's own power, but rather to entrust oneself to the Primal Vow of birth through the *nembutsu*, or, that is, to the Vow of "benefiting others with a true and real mind." Since one is here talking about Other Power from the standpoint of sentient beings, it should be expressed as "Other's benefiting." In this case, Other Power has the meaning of becoming free of self-powered calculation and entrust oneself to the "power of the Other—the Tathagata." In the case where Other Power is taken to refer to the "power of the Other," the perspective is from the human side, in which beings revere and entrust themselves in the salvation of the Tathagata. Hence, it means that one becomes free of the mind that relies on the self, abandons all of one's self-powered calculation, and entrusts one's entire existence to the power of the Tathagata's Primal Vow.

Whether Other Power is said to refer to the "power of the Other" or the "power of benefiting others," there is no difference in terms of their being expressions of the salvific power of the Tathagata. However, if we consider the "Other" to be a reference to the Tathagata, then Other Power becomes a word discussing salvation from the standpoint of the beings who are saved. That is, it becomes an expression of "beings' acceptance" (*kiju*). If, on the other hand, sentient beings are viewed as "other," then Other Power becomes a word indicating Dharma (*hō*), or, that is, salvation from the standpoint of the Tathagata that brings benefit to beings. It is, in other words, a difference between the statements, "I (sentient being) am saved by you (Tathagata)," and "I (Tathagata) will save you (sentient being)," respectively. The former is a statement from the standpoint of "Other's benefiting," while the latter is a statement of "benefiting others." Finally, it should be said that the latter statement represents the fundamental essence of Other Power.

Other Power as the "power of benefiting others" is a linguistic expression, made from the standpoint of the Tathagata, of the Tathagata's salvific activity that transcends all human calculation. For that reason, in his parable of the two rivers and a white path, Shan-tao expresses the state of Amida Buddha's call and summons to the traveler in this way,

O traveler, with mind that is single, with right-mindedness, come at once! I will protect you.¹⁰³

Here, the Tathagata is "I." We sentient beings are not the "I" in this statement. Rather, we are the "you" that is being called out to. When we truly know that we are the "you" that is being called to and summoned by the Tathagata, then the state of being enveloped by the "You" who is the Tathagata is the state of "being grasped, never to be abandoned." If, for Shinran, Other Power is basically a word expressing the activity of the Tathagata or the Dharma, then we should consider it to be an abbreviation of the "power of benefiting others."

This kind of activity of the Tathagata signifies seeing through the eyes of wisdom by the buddhas and buddhas alone. It refers to a sphere that is unfathomable even to the likes of Maitreya Bodhisattva. Hence, Shinran describes it with the phrase, the "inconceivable working of Other Power." Near the end of his discussion of the ocean of the one vehicle in the Chapter on Practice, he sets out forty-eight forms of contrast between the *nembutsu* and the various good practices. Here we find offered contrasts involving "Other Power, in contrast to self-power; . . . Inconceivable, in contrast to conceivable."¹⁰⁴ The teachings of self-power are conceivable, whereas the teachings of Other Power are inconceivable. The reason is that Other Power is a linguistic expression of the sphere of the inconceivable Buddha-wisdom, which cannot be grasped at all through human discriminative thinking.

Shinran also states in the *Hymns on the Dharma Ages*,

Those who follow the Path of Sages
All take the mind of self-power as essential;
On entering the inconceivable working of Other Power,
They truly realize that no working is true working.¹⁰⁵

Persons who follow the Path of Sages rely upon and entrust in themselves. They believe that they are capable of completely purifying their selves by eliminating evil and performing good acts. Such a bodhi mind of self-power is taken to be the basis of their practice. However, if they enter into the world of the inconceivable working of the power of the Tathagata's Primal Vow that transcends the calculative minds of human beings, they will become beings who are enveloped by the Tathagata and entrust

themselves to the compassionate concern of the Tathagata. When they do, they will truly know that not being mixed with the calculative mind of self-power is in itself the correct way of accepting the inconceivable working of Other Power.

Of course, not being mixed with the calculation of self-power does not mean that one does nothing at all. Shinran states that a person who even recites the *nembutsu* just barely once with the thought that that act will bring about one's own merit is a practitioner of self-power, with wrong views and arrogance. On the other hand, even though a person may recite the *nembutsu* many tens of thousands of times, if that person comprehends that each and every voicing is in itself the activity of "benefiting others" of the Tathagata who encounters and calls out to this self, then that recitation of the Name is the "great practice that embodies Amida's perfect of benefiting others" (*rita enman no daigyō*).¹⁰⁶ "Inconceivability" is a word that is used to give expression to the world that opens up when one truly knows that what one is able to conceptualize as "my own practice" is in reality not one's own act at all, but is instead the practice of the Tathagata.

An ancient person once said in a song of praise,

These legs that walk, this mouth that recites, these hands that
worship:

All are the inconceivable working of the power of Amida's Vow!

Perhaps we might say that this indeed is the realm that the words "benefiting others" and "Other Power" are meant to express.

Translated by David Matsumoto

NOTES

1. Originally published in Japanese as "Shinran Shōnin no tarikikan: tari rita no jingi wo megutte," in *Gyōshingakuhō*, no. 12 (1999): pp. 1–26. The text of this article and, unless otherwise noted, all of the quote passages have been translated into English by David Matsumoto.
2. *Bodhisattva bhūmi* (Ch. *P'u-sa-ti-ch'ih-ching*; Jpn. *Bosatsu jijikyō*), *Taishō*, vol. 30, p. 890.
3. *Ta-pao-chi-ching-lun* (Skt. *Mahā-ratnakūṭa-dharma-paryaya-śatasāhasrikā-parivartakasyapapari-vartika*; Jpn. *Daihōshakukyōron*), *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 208.
4. *Shih-ti-ching-lun* (Skt. *Daśabhūmika-sūtra-śāstra*; Jpn. *Jūjikyōron*), *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 125.
5. *Shih-ti-ching* (Skt. *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*; Jpn. *Jūjikyō*), *Taishō*, vol. 3, p. 287.
6. For further discussion of the point, see Miyaji Kakue, "Tariki shisō tenkai no hitokoma," in *Shinran taiki: Shisōhen*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1988), p. 180.
7. T'an-luan, *Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land* (Ch. *Ching-t'u-wang-sheng-lun-chu*; Jpn. *Ōjō ronchū*; also *Jōdō ronchū*, hereinafter *Commentary*), *Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 826; *Jōdō Shinshū seiten shichisohen: Chūshakuban* (hereinafter, *JSS II*), *Jōdō Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai*, ed. (Kyōto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 1996), p. 47.
8. Vasubandhu, *Treatise on the Pure Land* (Skt. *Sukhāvati-vyūhopadeśa*; Jpn. *Jōdoron*, hereinafter *Treatise*), *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 230.
9. Nāgārjuna, *Commentary on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages* (Skt. *Daśabhūmi-vibhāṣā-śāstra*; Jpn. *Jūjūbībasharon*), Chapter on Easy Practice (*Igyōbon*), *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 25; *JSS II*, p. 5.
10. *Commentary*, cited in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereinafter, *CWS*), (Kyōto: Jōdō Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 25; *JSS II*, p. 47.
11. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 26; *JSS II*, p. 47.
12. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 26; *JSS II*, p. 48.
13. Section on the "eightfold questions and answers" (*hachiban mondō*), in *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, pp. 144–7; *JSS II*, pp. 92–8.
14. Section on the "explanation of the weight of ten utterances in terms of the existence of three matters: mind, activity and settledness" (*sanzai shakugū*), in *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 146; *JSS II*, pp. 96–7.
15. Section on the "explanation of the practice of saying the Name (*shōmyō*)

in the section expounding the gate of praise in the latter fascicle of the text," *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 82; *JSS* II, pp. 103–4.

16. Section on the "search for the true basis of the bodhisattva's realization" (*kakugugohonjaku*), interpretation of self-benefit and benefiting others (*jiri rita*), the "clear verification by taking up the three relevant Vows" (*sangantekishō*), and his metaphorical expressions of Other Power, in *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, pp. 57–60; *JSS* II, pp. 155–7.

17. Section on the "fulfillment of the practices of self-benefit and benefiting others" (*rigyōmanzoku*), in *Commentary*, *JSS* II, p. 155. See also *CWS*, p. 58.

18. See note 16 above.

19. Five gates of mindfulness (*gonenmon*): worship (*raihai*), praise (*sandan*), aspiration for birth (*sagan*), contemplation (*kanzatsu*) and merit transference (*ekō*).

20. Five kinds of virtue (*gokudokumon*): the gate of approach (*gonmon*), the gate of the great assembly (*daieshūmon*), the gate of the grounds (*takumon*), the gate of the residence (*okumon*), and the gate of the state of sporting in the gardens and forests (*onrin yugejimon*); see, *CWS*, p. 172; *JSS* II, p. 150.

21. *Treatise*, cited in *CWS*, p. 58; *JSS* II, p. 42.

22. *Treatise*, cited in *CWS*, p. 172; *JSS* II, p. 41.

23. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 58; *JSS* II, p. 155.

24. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 58; *JSS* II, p. 155.

25. *Hymns on the Pure Land Masters (Kōsō wasan)*, in *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban* (hereinafter, *JSS* I), *Jōdo Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai*, ed. (Kyōto: Hongwanji Shuppanbu, 1988), p. 590; *CWS*, p. 379.

26. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 58; *JSS* II, p. 155.

27. This is a reference to the "virtue of sustaining without any futility" (*fukosajūji kudoku*). See *CWS*, p. 63; *JSS* II, pp. 130–1.

28. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 58; *JSS* II, p. 155.

29. Ryōchū, *Ronchūki*, vol. 5, in *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 1, *Jōdoshūten kankōkai*, ed. (Tokyo: Jōdoshūten Kankōkai, 1928), p. 85.

30. Jichō, *Tari ritaben*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 56 (Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin, 1916), p. 516

31. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 58; *JSS* II, p. 155.

32. For the passage "taking up the three relevant Vows in order to verify clearly that being's birth in the Pure Land comes about through the power of the Buddha's Vow" (*sangantekishō*), see *CWS*, p. 59; *JSS* II, pp. 156–7.

33. The Eighteenth Vow states, "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient

beings of the ten quarters, with sincere mind entrusting themselves, aspiring to be born in my land, and saying my Name perhaps even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma." Cited in *CWS*, p. 59; *JSS II*, p. 156.

34. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 59; *JSS II*, p. 156.

35. *Commentary*, *JSS II*, p. 98; *CWS*, p. 147.

36. The Eleventh Vow states, "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the human beings and devas in my land do not dwell among the settled and necessarily attain nirvana, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment." Cited in *CWS*, p. 59; *JSS II*, p. 156.

37. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 59; *JSS II*, p. 156.

38. The Twenty-second Vow states, "When I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas of other Buddha-lands who come and are born in my land will ultimately and unfailingly attain (the rank of) 'succession to Buddhahood after one lifetime'—except for those who, in accordance with their own original vows freely to guide others to enlightenment, don the armor of universal vows for the sake of sentient beings, accumulate roots of virtue, emancipate all beings, travel to Buddha-lands to perform bodhisattva practices, make offerings to all the Buddhas and Tathagatas throughout the ten quarters, awaken sentient 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 supreme enlightenment." Cited in *CWS*, p. 59; *JSS II*, pp. 156–7.

39. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, pp. 59–60; *JSS II*, p. 157.

40. See note 27 above. See also *JSS II*, p. 134.

41. The Twenty-second Vow: the Vow establishing the directing of virtue in the aspect of our return from the Pure Land (*gensō ekō no gan*). For a further discussion of this point, see my article, *Shinshū kyōgigaku nyūmon*, Part. 53, in *Shūhō*, no. 374 (March, 1997): pp. 18–27.

42. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 60; *JSS II*, p. 157.

43. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 60; *JSS II*, p. 157.

44. Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages* (Jpn. *Jūjūbibasharon*), Chapter on the Features of the First Stage (*jisōbon*), *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 27.

45. *Commentary on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages*, Chapter on the Five Precepts (*gokaibon*), *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 56.

46. *Visesacinti-brahmā-pariprccha-śāstra* (Ch. *Sheng-ssu-wei-fan-t'ien-so-*

wen-ching-lun; Jpn. *Shōshiyui bontenshomonkyōron*, Fasc. One, *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 340.

47. *Bodhisattva-gocaropaya-visayavikuvana-nirdeśa* (Ch. *Ta-sa-che-ni-ch'ien-tzu-so-shou-ching*; Jpn. *Daisasshanikenshi shosetsukyō*), Fasc. Nine, *Taishō*, vol. 9, p. 359.

48. *Ibid.*, *Taishō*, vol. 9, p. 324.

49. *Bodhisattva bhūmi*, Fasc. One, *Taishō*, vol. 30, p. 890.

50. *True Teaching, Practice, and Realization (Kyōgyōshō monrui)*, Chapter on Realization (*Shō monrui*), *JSS I*, p. 335; *CWS*, p. 174.

51. *Passages on the Pure Land Way (Jōdo monrui jushō)*, *JSSI*, p. 484; *CWS*, p. 302.

52. *Hymn of the Two Gateways of Entrance and Emergence (Nyūshutsu nimonge)*, *JSS I*, p. 686; *CWS*, p. 627.

53. Chikū, *Ronchū yokuge*, vol. 9 (Kyoto: Nishimura Kurōemon, 1661), p. 15.

54. Enen, *Ronchū kenjingiki*, vol. 5, in *Shinshū taikai*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Shinshū Tenseki Kankōkai, 1917), p. 697.

55. *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun* (Skt. *Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi-śāstra*; Jpn. *Jōyūishikiron*), Chpt. 10, *Taishō*, vol. 31, p. 58.

56. Jakurin, *Shōshinge monk*, in *Shinshū sōsho*, Shinshū sōsho hensansho, ed., vol. 4 (Kyoto: Maeda Koreyama Ryōwajō Koki Kinenkai, 1929), p. 2.

57. Erin, *Tari rita jingi*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 56 (Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin, 1916), p. 507.

58. *Commentary*, cited in *CWS*, p. 58; *JSS II*, p. 155.

59. Jinrei, *Ronchū kōen*, vol. 12, in *Zoku Shinshū taikai*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shinshū Tenseki Kankōkai, 1937), p. 705.

60. *Ibid.*

61. Jichō (Daidō), *Tari rita ben*, in *Shinshū zensho*, vol. 56 (Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin, 1916), p. 516.

62. T'ien-tai (Chih-i), *Treatise on Śamatha and Vipāśyanā* (Chn. *Mo-ho-chih-kuan*; Jpn. *Makashikan*), *Taishō*, vol. 46, p. 26.

63. Ching-hsi (Chan-jan), *Chih-kuan-pu-hsing* (Jpn. *Shikan bugyō*), *Taishō*, vol. 46, p. 230.

64. Koreyama Ekaku, *Ōjōronchū kōgi*, in *Shinshū sōsho: Bekkan* (Tokyo: Shinshū Tenseki Kankōkai, 1936), p. 259.

65. Shinran, *Hymn of the Two Gateways of Entrance and Emergence*, in *CWS*, p. 627.

66. *On Attaining the Settled Mind (Anjin ketsujōshō)*, Dennis Hirota, trans., *The Eastern Buddhist* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1991): p. 87; *JSS I*, p. 1401.

67. Shan-tao, *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* (Ch. Kuan-ching-su; Jpn. Kangyōsho), Chapter on Non-meditative Good (*sanzengi*), passage on the "sincere mind" (*shijōshin*), JSS II, p. 161.
68. *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, cited in CWS, p. 260; JSS II, p. 456.
69. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Shinjin (*Shin monrui*), JSS I, p. 217; CWS, pp. 85 and 260.
70. According to Shinran scheme for classifying the various Buddhist teachings, "transcending lengthwise" (*juchō*) refers to the teachings of the Path of Sages, the path of difficult practice and the teachings of self-power. "Transcending crosswise" (*ōchō*) refers to "the Other Power of the Tathagata's Vow." See for instance his discussion in the Chapter on Shinjin (CWS, pp. 107–8) and the Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands (CWS, pp. 222–3) of *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, and *Gutoku's Notes*, in CWS, p. 603. (Editor's note.)
71. *Gutoku's Notes* (*Gutokushō*), JSS I, p. 520; CWS, p. 603.
72. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands (*Keshindo monrui*), JSS I, p. 381; CWS, p. 212.
73. *Ibid.*, JSS I, p. 393; CWS, p. 222.
74. A further discussion of this point can be seen in my book, *Ichinen tanen mon'i kōsan* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998), p. 85.
75. For a reference to Ryūkan's *Gusanshingi*, in Hirai Shōkai, *Ryūkan risshi no Jōdokyō: Fu ibunshū* (Kanazawa Bunko Jōdoshūten Kenkyūkai, 1941), p. 7.
76. The "manifestation of true virtues" (*shinjitsu kudokusō*). See, Ryūkan, *Gusanshingi*, p. 7; *Commentary*, JSS II, p. 56.
77. "Name that brings about benefit to others with a sincere and real mind" (*rita shinjitsu no myōgō*). See JSS II, p. 103.
78. "The manifestation of self-benefit and benefiting others" (*jigen jiri rita*); JSS II, p. 122
79. "Name that brings about benefit to others with a sincere and real mind" (*rita shinjitsu no myōgō*), the "Name and Vow that bring benefit to others with a sincere and real mind" (*rita shinjin no myōgan*), and the "Vow of benefiting others" (*rita no gan*).
80. *Passages on the Pure Land Way* (*Jōdo monrui jushō*), JSSI, p. 478; CWS, p. 296.
81. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Shinjin, JSS I, p. 233; CWS, p. 97.
82. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Practice, JSS I, p. 231; CWS, p. 95.

83. Ibid., *JSSI*, p. 234; *CWS*, p. 98.
84. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Shinjin, *JSSI*, p. 231; *CWS*, p. 95.
85. Ibid., *JSSI*, p. 295; *CWS*, p. 143.
86. *Hymns on the Pure Land Masters (Kōsō wasan)*, *JSSI*, p. 581; *CWS*, p. 365.
87. *Passages on the Pure Land Way*, *JSSI*, p. 480; *CWS*, p. 299.
88. *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*, *JSSI*, p. 592; *CWS*, p. 381.
89. *Hymns of the Pure Land (Jōdo wasan)*, *JSSI*, p. 570; *CWS*, p. 346.
90. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Shinjin, *JSSI*, p. 241; *CWS*, pp. 103–4.
91. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Realization, *JSSI*, p. 307; *CWS*, p. 153.
92. *Passages on the Pure Land Way*, *JSSI*, p. 481; *CWS*, p. 300.
93. Ibid., *JSSI*, p. 482; *CWS*, p. 301.
94. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Realization, *JSSI*, p. 335; *CWS*, p. 174.
95. Ibid., *JSSI*, p. 313; *CWS*, p. 158.
96. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Practice; *CWS*, p. 54.
97. Ibid., *JSSI*, p. 190; *CWS*, p. 57.
98. T'an-luan's *Commentary*, *JSSI* II, pp. 153–7.
99. *Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu (Shōshin nembutsuge)*, *JSSI*, p. 208; *CWS*, p. 72.
100. *Letters of Shinran (Shinran Shōnin goshōsoku)*, *JSSI*, p. 746; *CWS*, p. 525.
101. Ibid., *JSSI*, p. 781; *CWS*, p. 537.
102. Ibid., *JSSI*, p. 746; *CWS*, p. 525.
103. The parable of the two rivers and a white path (*niga byakudō*). Cited in *CWS*, p. 90.
104. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Practice, in *CWS*, p. 65.
105. *Hymns on the Dharma Ages (Shōzōmatsu wasan)*, *JSSI*, p. 609; *CWS*, p. 412.
106. *Passages on the Pure Land Way (Jōdo monrui jushō)*, *JSSI*, p. 488; *CWS*, p. 296.

T'an-luan's Theory of Two Kinds of Dharma-body as Found in Shinran's *Wago* Writings¹

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SHINRAN'S WRITINGS IN classical Japanese are known as *wago shōgyō*² (hereafter, *wago* writings). Of these we will examine his *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, (*Ichinen tanen mon'i*)³ and *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'* (*Yuishinshō mon'i*).⁴ As Shinran himself states in these two *wago* writings, he composed these works for people with no particular scholarly ability.⁵ In these writings, Shinran makes special effort to provide notes and interpretations on the significant words and phrases found in various scriptures. Therefore, because it is necessary to demonstrate his thought in a simple and easy to understand style for the sake of the readers of these writings, Shinran does not systematically elaborate a profound and abstruse doctrine as he does in his main work, *Kyōgyōshinshō* (*The Teaching, Practice, Shinjin and Realization*).

Among the *wago* writings, *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling* and *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'* are Shinran's notes on the essential passages from the sutras and commentaries quoted in the works of Ryūkan (1139–1227) and Seikaku (1166–1235), respectively, whom he respects as senior disciples of Hōnen. In addition to the notes on the works of others, however, Shinran also introduces his own thought. In addition, these *wago* writings belong to Shinran's later years, being compiled about ten years after he completed the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. For this reason, it is thought that within the simplicity of the *wago* writings we could discover Shinran's unique realization (*koshō*) of the Buddhist path in its most complete and mature form. In this article, I would like to examine Shinran's view of the theory of two kinds of Dharma-body (*nishu hosshin*) in particular as one significant issue of Shinran's *wago* writings which weaves his unique realization of Buddhism into the fabric of these texts intended for a general, lay audience.

T'AN-LUAN'S THEORY OF TWO KINDS OF DHARMA-BODY

The theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body (Skt. *dharmakāya*), the Dharma-body of Dharma nature (*hosshō hosshin*) and the Dharma-body

of Expediency (*hōben hosshin*), originated in T'an-luan's commentary on Vasubandhu's *Discourse on the Pure Land* (*Ching-t'u lun*, hereafter referred to as the *Discourse*) known as the *Commentary on [Pure Land] Birth* (*Wang-sheng lung-chu*, hereafter referred to as the *Commentary*):⁶

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have two Dharmakāyas: (1) Dharmakāya of Dharma-nature [*hosshō hosshin*] and (2) Dharmakāya of Expediency [*hōben hosshin*]. From the Dharmakāya of Dharma-nature originates the Dharmakāya of Expediency; through the Dharmakāya of Expediency the Dharmakāya of Dharma-nature is revealed. These two Dharmakāyas are different but inseparable; they are one but not the same. For this reason, the extensive presentation and the condensed presentation enter into each other. These two are comprised in the Dharma[kāya].⁷

Here, the terms "Dharma-body of Dharma nature" and "Dharma-body of Expediency" first appear. In traditional Jōdo Shinshū studies, discussions of Buddha-body theory have almost always been explained by using the concepts of Dharma-body of Dharma nature and Dharma-body of Expediency introduced by T'an-luan. Therefore Amida Buddha, as the revelation of the Dharmakāya of Dharma-nature, is given the position of Dharma-body of Expediency.

However, when we closely examine the context in which these passages appear in T'an-luan's *Commentary*, it becomes clear that the concepts of Dharma-body of Dharma nature and Dharma-body of Expediency are not introduced in relation to the concept of Buddha-bodies. Of course, T'an-luan begins the passage by saying "the various Buddhas and bodhisattvas have two Dharmakāyas." But in the context of the *Commentary*, these phrases are introduced to explain the "ultimate reality" (*daiichigitai*) of Buddhism, and more specifically, apply to the meaning of "entering into the One Dharma Principle" (*nyū ippokku*) discussed in Vasubandhu's *Discourse*.⁸ The *Commentary* states:

"The ultimate reality" is the sphere of the Buddha's karmic activity. "Reality" is the objects of contemplation. Hence, the sixteen objects of contemplation are shown as "phenomenal aspects of a wondrous realm." The implication of this will be explained in the section on "entering into the One Dharma Principle" below.⁹

In the *Commentary*, T'an-luan explains the phrase "entering into the One Dharma Principle":

The seventeen aspects of the adornments of the Land, the eight aspects of the adornments of the Tathāgata and the four aspects of the adornments of Bodhisattvas are the extensive presentation. "Entering into the One Dharma Principle" is the condensed presentation. Why is it shown that the extensive presentation and the condensed presentation enter into each other? The reason is that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have two Dharmakāyas: (1) Dharmakāya of Dharma-nature and (2) Dharmakāya of Expediency.¹⁰

Therefore, T'an-luan's primary focus in these passages is to demonstrate the relationship between the Dharma-nature of True Thusness (*shinnyo hosshō*), and the various aspects of the glorious adornments of the Pure Land of three kinds in twenty-nine aspects (*sangon nijūkushu shōgon*), from the perspective of True Thusness, that is ultimate truth. True Thusness is understood as the condensed presentation (*ryaku*) of the adornments of the Pure Land, and the glorious adornments of the Pure Land in three kinds in twenty-nine aspects is the extensive presentation (*kō*) of True Thusness.¹¹ T'an-luan explains the relationship between the condensed and extensive presentations with the phrase "Extensive presentation and condensed presentation enter into each other" (*kōryaku sōnyū*).

In order to demonstrate how the extensive presentation and condensed presentation enter into each other, T'an-luan introduces the concepts of the Dharma-body of Dharma-nature for the "condensed" and the Dharma-body of Expediency for the "extensive" and reveals that these Dharma-bodies "arise and complete each other" (*yushō yushutsu*) and are "not one and not different" (*fuitsu fui*).¹² Therefore, T'an-luan understands the two kinds of Dharma-bodies as arising in simultaneous immediacy, or horizontal relationship (*ō*). He does not see the two bodies appearing one after the other in a step-by-step process, or vertical relationship (*shu*). Therefore, T'an-luan did not introduce the concept of the two kinds of Dharma-body as a theory of Buddha-bodies. Rather, he uses the idea of two kinds of Dharma-body as a means to explain the relationship between the True Thusness of One Suchness and the phenomenal aspects of the adornments of the Pure Land.

Shinran seems to clearly understand T'an-luan's original standpoint concerning the two kinds of Dharma-body. In the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, therefore, he does not quote these passages in the "Chapter on True Buddha and Land," in which he explains Amida Buddha and the Pure Land. Instead, in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body appears in the section of the "Chapter on Realization" which discusses merit transfer by Other Power in the returning aspect (*gensō ekō*).¹³ The purpose of citing T'an-luan's two kinds of Dharma-body in this Chapter is to explain the theory within the context of the "Chapter on the Pure Manifes-

tation Entering into the Vow Mind" (*jōnyū ganshin shō*) in the *Commentary*,¹⁴ and not for the sake of discussing Buddha-bodies. They are quoted in order to explain bodhicitta (*bodaishin*) as the cause of the returning aspect. Shinran cites these passages in order to demonstrate the benefit of bodhisattvas' accomplishment of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* and reveal the "extensive presentation and condensed presentation entering into each other" as the state of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*.

SHINRAN'S INTERPRETATION OF T'AN-LUAN'S DHARMA-BODY THEORY IN THE *KYŌGYOSHINSHŌ*

In the Chapter on the True Buddha and Land of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran speaks of the true Buddha-land and Buddha-body. Shinran quotes passages from the *Commentary* concerning the essential nature (*shōkudoku*) of the Pure Land.¹⁵ It is the explanation of the following passage in the verse portion of Vasubandhu's *Discourse*:

The great compassion of the true way arises from the supramundane roots of good.¹⁶

T'an-luan demonstrates the four meanings of "essential nature" in his explanation of Amida's merit of the essential nature of the Pure Land expounded in the *Discourse*.¹⁷ These four meanings together are important expressions of T'an-luan's conception of Amida Buddha.

The first meaning is that

Nature means essence. It signifies that the Pure Land accords with Dharma-nature and does not conflict with Dharma-essence. This matter has the same significance as the arising of Jewel-King Tathagata's nature in the *Garland Sutra*.¹⁸

"Essence" in the phrase "nature means essence" implies the essence of Dharma which points to True Thusness. That is to say, the form of awakening of Amida Buddha is shown to comply with the Dharma-nature of True Thusness, and this is also expressed as "arising of Tathāgata's nature" (*shōki*).¹⁹ "Arising of Tathāgata's nature" speaks of the revelation of the true form of the Dharma-nature of True Thusness. More concretely, it reveals that the Dharma-nature of True Thusness itself can become manifested in Amida Buddha.

The second meaning is that

It further signifies the nature fulfilled through repeated practice. It indicates what was fulfilled by Dharmākara Bodhisattva's accu-

mulating all the pāramitās and repeatedly practicing them.²⁰

"Repeated practice" in this passage means the practice of Dharmākara before he attained Buddhahood (*inni*, causal stage). By fulfilling this practice, enlightenment is fulfilled. This passage demonstrates the theory of Amida Buddha accomplished his own Buddhahood.

The third meaning is that,

Again, nature is the Sages' Family. In the beginning, in the presence of Lokeśvararāja Buddha, Dharmākara Bodhisattva attained insight into the non-arising of dharmas; the stage of that time is called the Sages' Family. While abiding in this nature, he established the Forty-Eight Vows and, through practices, gave rise to this land, the 'Land of Peace and Bliss.' This is what is realized by that cause. Concerning the fruition, the cause is taught; hence the term nature.²¹

The "Sages' Family" in this passage means the stage of Dharmākara Bodhisattva establishing his vows. The "nature" referred to here means the vows, because the "cause" in the passage "concerning the fruition, the cause is taught" here points to the Forty-Eight Vows of Dharmākara Bodhisattva. This cause is also understood as the repeated practice referred to in the phrase, "the nature fulfilled through repeated practice," in the previously quoted passage. The idea that Amida gave rise to this land through practices (*shūki*) means he gave rise to the land he established in the Vows through practice. Therefore, the practice is the bodhisattva's working for the purpose of accomplishing the Vows, and the Vows are the purpose and content of his working. Therefore, in this passage T'an-luan puts more emphasis on the Vows by saying "concerning the fruition, the cause is taught." Therefore, we can understand that "arising through practices" (*shūki*) means that the process of the present manifestation of the Tathāgata is based on his own works to fulfill his Vows through practice.

Thus, the side of "arising of tathāgata's nature" (*shōki*) reveals wisdom that completes the Dharma-nature of True Thusness, and the side of "arising through practices" (*shūki*) points to compassion that is the meaning of the Vows. The significance of the complete fulfillment of these two sides is discussed in the fourth meaning by focusing on the fruit itself, which is Amida Buddha himself.

The fourth meaning is that,

Further, "essential nature" has the meaning of "being so of necessity" and "unalterable."²²

Although T'an-luan uses two expressions, "being so of necessity" and "unalterable," the intent of the two meanings are the same. "Being so of necessity" is the function (*yū*) of the Tathāgata, and "unalterable" is his essence (*tai*). Although the Tathāgata takes in the many impurities, the essence of his constitution is pure and unchangeable eternally. Therefore it is unalterable. This points to the meaning of "arising of Tathāgata's nature" of the Dharma-nature of True Thusness. "Being so of necessity" agrees with the nature of true and real purity of himself that grasps the other. Namely, it reveals the affective function of the self-assimilation of Amida Buddha. This points to the meaning of "arising through practices." Therefore, as for the structure of "arising of Tathāgata's nature" and "arising through practices," the word "arising" (*ki*) points to Amida Buddha who has accomplished true enlightenment. From the perspective of the Dharma-nature of True Thusness, he is the arising of Tathāgata's nature (*shōki*). In the order of cause and effect, on the other hand, he has arisen to become a Tathāgata through repeated practice (*shūki*). T'an-luan, in the *Commentary*, reveals the relationship between "arising of Tathāgata's nature" and "arising through practices" in his interpretation of the two kinds of Dharma-body. The discussion of this issue is illustrated in the following Chart 1.

Therefore, in the "Chapter on True Buddha and Land" of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* where Shinran discusses the Buddha's body and land, he quotes the passages of the *Commentary* on the section of "Merit of the Nature" in order to present the original nature of Amida Buddha, rather than referring to the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body.

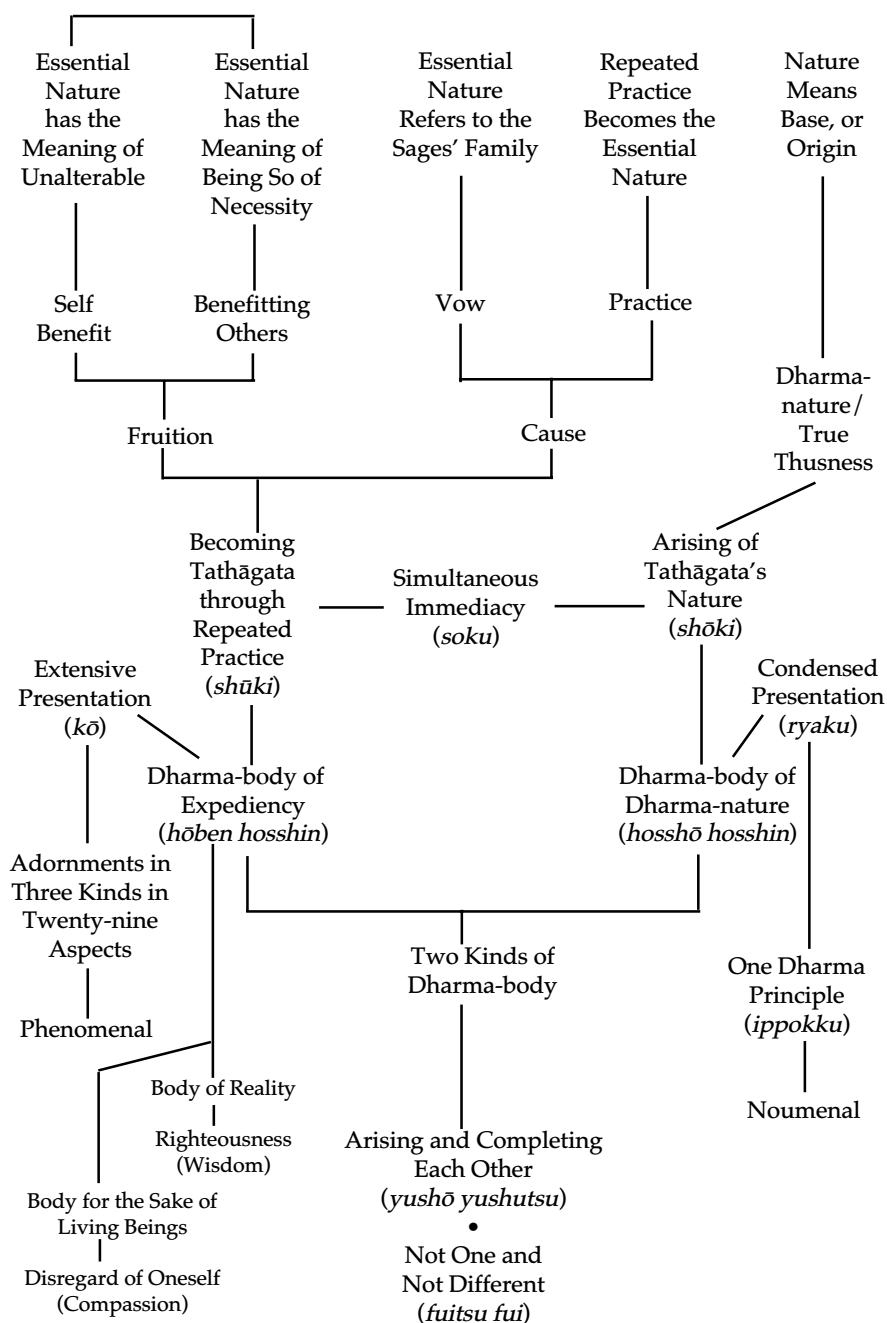
THE THEORY OF TWO KINDS OF DHARMA-BODY IN SHINRAN'S WAGO WRITINGS

However, in his *wago* writings, Shinran does not refer to the *Commentary*'s passages on the section of the "Merit of the Nature" (*shōkudoku*) in discussions of Amida Buddha. Rather, he uses the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body to define the Buddha. And yet, Shinran's thought on the two kinds of Dharma-body in the *wago* writings clearly differs from that of T'an-luan's *Commentary*. Or we can say that Shinran has developed his unique thought based on the idea of the two kinds of Dharma-body found in the *Commentary*.

In *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling* it is written:

From this treasure ocean of oneness form was manifested, taking the name of Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who, through establishing the unhindered Vow as the cause, became Amida Buddha. For this

CHART 1



reason Amida is the "Tathāgata of fulfilled body." Amida has been called "Buddha of unhindered light filling the ten quarters." This Tathāgata is also known as *Namu-fukashigikō-butsu* (Namu-Buddha of inconceivable light) and is the "Dharma-body of Expediency." "Compassionate means" refers to manifesting form, revealing a name, and making itself known to sentient beings. It refers to Amida Buddha.²³

Also, it is stated in *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*:

... there are two kinds of Dharma-body with regard to the Buddha. The first is called Dharma-body of Dharma-nature and the second, Dharma-body of Expediency. Dharma-body of Dharma-nature has neither color nor form; thus, the mind cannot grasp it nor words describe it. From this oneness was manifested form, called Dharma-body as compassionate means.

Taking this form, the Buddha announced the name Bhikṣu Dharmākara and established the Forty-Eight Great Vows that surpass conceptual understanding.²⁴

The theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body discussed in *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling* and *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'* clearly differs from the explanation of the two kinds of Dharma-body in the *Commentary*. As examined earlier, the explanation of the two kinds of Dharma-body in the *Commentary* is an explanation of the process of "entering into the One Dharma Principle." Therefore, T'an-luan understands that the relationship between the Dharma-body of Dharma nature and the Dharma-body of Expediency is not a step-by-step process, or vertical relationship (*shu*). He understands that the two kinds of Dharma-bodies arise in simultaneous immediacy, or horizontal relationship (*ō*). The explanation of the two kinds of Dharma-body in the *Commentary* might be called a Buddha-body theory, because T'an-luan does not limit his discussion to Amida Buddha. Rather, he asserts that "the various Buddhas and bodhisattvas have two Dharma-bodies,"²⁵ that is, the two kinds of Dharma-body are the Buddha-body of each Buddha and bodhisattva generally.

Shinran's unique interpretation of the theory of two kinds of Dharma-body, demonstrated in the above mentioned passages, can be summarized in the following three points. First, Shinran, explains the arising of Amida Buddha in the scheme of "Oneness (*ichinyō*) → Dharmākara Bodhisattva → Amida Buddha [Oneness manifested as Dharmākara Bodhisattva, who became Amida Buddha]." Shinran perceives the two bodies as the step-by-step process, or vertical relationship, namely, in the process that from the

Dharma-body of Dharma-nature was manifested the Dharma-body of Expediency.

Second, as for Dharmākara Bodhisattva, Shinran states that "From this treasure ocean of oneness form was manifested, taking the name of Bodhisattva Dharmākara."²⁶ Then he reveals that the oneness is the Tathāgata. According to this logic developed by Shinran, Bodhisattva Dharmākara is a revealed form of the original Buddha. Although this relationship is grasped causally and from a temporal standpoint, the flow of time is grasped in reverse and ahistorically. This conception of the bodhisattva provides a completely different standpoint from that found in general Mahāyāna Buddhism. The bodhisattva path spoken of in general Mahāyāna Buddhism is the path of practice ascending towards the accomplishment of Buddhahood. Therefore, bodhisattvas are classified by their hierarchical positions. This path takes the form of the so-called "turning from the cause to the effect" (*jūin shika*). Opposed to this, Shinran's view of Dharmākara Bodhisattva is that the original Buddha manifests as a bodhisattva of the "turning from the effect to the cause" type (*jūka gōin*). What is the original Buddha that manifests as Dharmākara Bodhisattva? Obviously, it is none other than Amida Buddha.²⁷ In addition, it reveals the interrelation between this very same Dharmākara Bodhisattva as the self realization of Amida Buddha himself, and at the same time, for Amida Buddha, his self realization becomes possible in Dharmākara Bodhisattva.

Third, Shinran says, "From this oneness was manifested form, called Dharma-body of Expediency. Taking this form, the Buddha announced the name Bhikṣu Dharmākara . . ."²⁸ This discussion of the theory of the Dharma-body of Expediency is most characteristic of Shinran's understanding of Amida Buddha. Namely, if we perform an analysis in terms of the cause and the effect of the two kinds of Dharma-body, the Dharma-body of Dharma-nature is the cause and the Dharma-body of Expediency is the effect. Further, if we attribute the cause and the effect to Dharmākara Bodhisattva and Amida Buddha, Dharmākara Bodhisattva is the cause and Amida Buddha is the effect. However, in the interpretation of '*Essentials of Faith Alone*,' Shinran understands that the Dharma-body of Expediency is not only the result of Amida Buddha, but is also Dharmākara Bodhisattva, who is the cause of Amida Buddha. The idea that the Dharma-body of Expediency is Amida Buddha, as was generally understood in the past, is one-sided. We must also recognize the Dharma-body of Expediency to be Dharmākara Bodhisattva.

When we compare the conception of Buddha-bodies in T'an-luan's Commentary with the theory of the Tathāgata discussed in Shinran's wago writings, we notice various issues. In the "Chapter on the True Buddha and True Land" in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran uses the *Commentary's* interpretation of Amida's merit of the essential nature (*shōkudoku*) of the Pure Land to discuss the original nature of Amida Buddha, and avoids applying

the explanation of the two kinds of Dharma-body because originally it is not a theory of Buddha-bodies. However, in his *wago* writings, he does not refer to the section of “Merit of the Nature” in his discussion of Amida Buddha. Instead, he explains Amida Buddha with the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body, which he did not use in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

One of the probable reasons for this is the nature of his *wago* writings. As Shinran states, he writes them so that the “people of the countryside, who do not know the meanings of characters and who are painfully and hopelessly ignorant, may easily understand”²⁹ T’an-luan’s discussion in the section of the “Merit of the Nature” was very complicated. On the other hand, we can imagine that the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body was easier for the general population to understand.

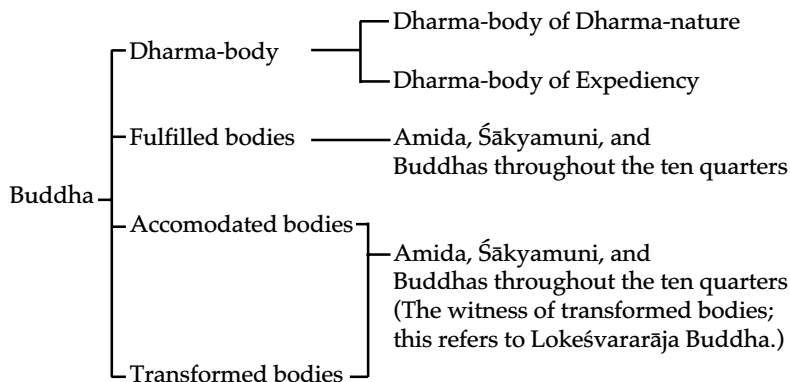
But when did Shinran begin using the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body independently as a topic for discussing theories of Tathāgata and Buddha-bodies? Answering this question is fairly difficult. However, if I could present a tentative view, I believe it might come from the time of the compilation of *Gutoku’s Notes*. Shinran demonstrates the two Buddha-bodies theory in the section on Buddha-bodies and Buddha-lands in *Gutoku’s Notes*, compiled when he was eighty-three years old. In that text Shinran states,

Concerning Dharma-body, there are two kinds:

1. Dharma-body of Dharma-nature.
2. Dharma-body of Expediency.³⁰

If we illustrate his explanation of the four Buddha-bodies, it looks like this:

CHART 2



Shinran demonstrates the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body as an independent Buddha-body theory in *Gutoku's Notes*. He further developed this discussion of the two kinds of Dharma-body in his works compiled after *Gutoku's Notes*, namely, *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling* and *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*, both compiled when Shinran was eighty-five years old. However, his interpretation of the theory in the wago writings works are, as mentioned earlier, different from the explanation found in the *Commentary*.

Conclusion

Regarding the three issues characteristic of Shinran's discussion of the two kinds of Dharma-body discussed in the previous section, I will examine the background to that thought and how he developed his unique interpretation. First, Shinran explains the two kinds of Dharma-body from the standpoint of the temporal step-by-step process, or vertical relationship (*shu*). T'an-luan's theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body are that they manifest in simultaneous immediacy, or horizontal relationship (*ō*). Shinran, however, reinterprets this as a temporal relationship. I believe that Shinran understood that the religious expression that Thuness comes to oneself can only be explained as occurring in history. Considering that Shinran knows T'an-luan's understanding of Amida Buddha in his interpretation of the section of "Merit of the Nature," we are able to know the true intention of Shinran's spirituality.

Second, Shinran interprets Dharmākara Bodhisattva as a bodhisattva of "turning from the effect to the cause" (*jūka gōin*). Shinran explains that the True Thusness is Tathāgata and that Tathāgata is Amida Buddha. He understands that Dharmākara Bodhisattva and Amida Buddha are immediately interrelated. Shinran's interpretation of this theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body in the *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling* is unique because he grasps the Dharma-body of Dharma nature as the Tathāgata.

Shinran uses the following fifteen different names as synonyms for nirvana in his writings: state of extinction (*metsudo*), ultimate tranquility (*hikkyō jakumetsu*), supreme nirvana (*mujō nehan*), uncreated Dharma-body (*mui hosshin*), true aspect (*jissō*), one suchness (*ichinyō*);³¹ body of ultimate equality (*hikkyō byōdōshin*);³² single reality (*ichijitsu*), Tathāgata (*nyorai*), Dharma-nature (*hosshō*);³³ peaceful happiness (*anraku*), Buddha-nature (*busshō*);³⁴ naturalness (*jinen*), and supreme Buddha (*mujōbutsu*).³⁵ These names, from Shinran's perspective, even if expressing True Thusness or One Suchness, are not only noumenal, but express True Thusness revealed as Amida Buddha who perfectly fulfilled his Vows and practice. In *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling* and *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*, especially, Shinran lists the various different

names for nirvana. He concludes such passages with “Dharma-nature” and “Tathāgata.” For example, in *Notes on ‘Essentials of Faith Alone’*, he states:

Nirvana is called extinction of passions, the uncreated, peaceful happiness, eternal bliss, true reality, dharma-body, dharma-nature, suchness, oneness, and Buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is none other than Tathāgata. This Tathāgata pervades the countless worlds; it fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of all beings. Thus, plants, trees, and land all attain Buddhahood.³⁶

In this passage, not only all sentient beings, but the plants, trees and land are seen to be the subject of the Tathāgata’s (Amida Buddha’s) activity that causes attainment of Buddhahood. The Tathāgata (Amida Buddha) is of the perfectly fulfilled vows and practice. Shinran grasps that True Thusness or One Suchness is the original essence of the Buddha’s activity because he understands the theory of the arising of the nature (*shōki*) found in the section of “Merit of the Nature” in T’an-luan’s *Commentary*. His conception of Tathāgata and Dharmākara Bodhisattva as interrelated and immediate comes from T’an-luan’s interpretation that the Dharma-bodies are “arising and completing each other” (*yushō yushutsu*) and “not one and not different” (*fuitsu fui*). This second issue can be thought of as a synthetic development of the interpretation of the section of the “Merit of the Nature” and the theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body in T’an-luan’s *Commentary*.

Third, Shinran’s understanding that the contents of the Dharma-body of Expediency includes not only Amida Buddha but also Dharmākara Bodhisattva who is the causal aspect of Amida, is thought to have T’an-luan’s interpretation of “arising from practice” (*shūki*) in the section of the “Merit of the Nature” in the *Commentary* as its background. Shinran expanded this idea in order to reveal the true and absolute nature of Amida Buddha’s activity. Namely, Amida, who consists of the Vows and practice of Dharmākara Bodhisattva, is a Buddha who has attained the fulfillment of the causal Vows (*ingan shūhō*). He uses such expressions in order to clarify the contents of the activity of Amida Buddha in terms of the Vows of Dharmākara Bodhisattva.

We have briefly considered the background and development of Shinran’s theory of the two kinds of Dharma-body appearing in his *wago* writings in relation to the teaching of the *Commentary*. However, the relationship between T’an-luan’s thought and the doctrines of Shinran is an area requiring further study.

NOTES

1. This is a translation of an article, "Shinran wago shōgyō ni arawaretaru Donran kyōgaku 2: Nishu hosshin ron no ichi kōsatsu" [The doctrine of T'an-luan as found in the Shinran's wago Writings, Part 2: A Study on the Theory of Two Dharma-bodies] by Yamada Yukio, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. This article is the second part of Yamada's study on the influence of T'an-luan's doctrine in Shinran's writings in classical Japanese. The first part was published as "Shinran wago shōgyō ni arawareteru Donran kyōgaku 1: tokuni genshō shōjōju ni tsuite (The Doctrine of T'an-luan as found in Shinran's Wago Writings, Part 1: Particularly Regarding the Stage of the Truly Settled in This Life)," in *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū*, 400 and 401 (1973): pp. 103–126. Unless otherwise noted, all of the quoted passages have been translated into English by the translator. Minor editorial changes, revisions, and additions are made by the editors in the texts and notes according to the journal's editorial guidelines and conventions of academic publication in English. Although all changes and revisions are made with the permission of the author, any errors are solely the responsibility of the translator and editors.

2. *Wago shōgyō* literally means "sacred teaching [of Shinran] in Japanese."

3. *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter, *CWS*), (Kyōto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), pp. 471–490, and *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol 2 (hereafter, *SSZ II*), (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), pp. 604–620.

4. *CWS*, pp. 449–469, and *SSZ II*, pp. 621–638. Other wago writings by Shinran are *A Collection of Passages on the Types of Birth in the Three Pure Land Sutras* (*Jōdo sangyō ōjō monrui*, in *CWS*, pp. 637–652; and *SSZ II*, pp. 543–550, and 551–559), *Notes on the Inscriptions of Sacred Scrolls* (*Songō shinzō meimon*, in *CWS*, pp. 491–520; and *SSZ II*, pp. 560–576, and 577–603), *Passages on the Two Aspects of the Tathāgata's Directing of Virtue* (*Nyorai nishu ekōmon*, in *CWS*, pp. 631–635, and *SSZ II*, pp. 730–732), *The Virtue of the Name of Amida Tathāgata* (*Mida nyorai myōgōtoku*, in *CWS*, pp. 653–8, and *SSZ II*, pp. 733–738). In addition there are collections of hymns (*wasan*) and letters (*shōsoku*). Excepting these hymns and letters, a common characteristic found in his wago writings is that almost all of them consist of his explanatory notes and interpretations of the words and phrases of the passages appearing in various sūtras, treatises and commentaries.

5. In the *Yuishinshō moni* (*CWS*, p. 469) and *Ichinen tanen moni* (*CWS*, p. 490), Shinran states, "That people of the countryside, who do not know the meanings of characters and who are painfully and hopelessly ignorant,

may easily understand, I have repeatedly written the same things again and again." See also SSZ II, pp. 619 and 638.

6. The full title is *Wu-liang-shou-ching yü-p'o-t'i-she-yüan-sheng-chieh-chu*, in *Taishō*, vol. 40, pp. 826a–844a, in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol 1 (hereafter, SSZI), (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), pp. 279–349, and in *Jōdo Shinshū seiten shichisohen: Chūshakuban* (hereafter, JSSII), Jōdo Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai, ed. (Kyōto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 1996), pp. 47–158. An English translation is available in Hisao Inagaki, trans. *T'an-Luan's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land*, (Kyoto: Nagata Bushōdō, 1998).

7. Inagaki, pp. 264–265.

8. See Inagaki, pp. 62–63, 94, and 316–317.

9. Modified from Inagaki, p. 239.

10. Modified from Inagaki, pp. 264–265.

11. See Inagaki, pp. 61–62.

12. See Inagaki, p. 265.

13. CWS, p. 165, and SSZ II, p. 111. In this section, Shinran cites the passages of the "Chapter on Objects of Contemplation" (*kanzatsu taisō shō*) through the "Chapter on Accomplishment of the Beneficial Acts" (*rigyō manzoku shō*) of the *Commentary*. See CWS, pp. 159–174, and SSZ II, pp. 107–118.

14. See Inagaki, p. 263.

15. SSZ II, pp. 133–134, and CWS, pp. 191–192.

16. Inagaki, p. 141, and SSZ I, pp. 269 and 287. See also CWS, p. 191.

17. SSZ I, p. 287, and Inagaki, pp. 141–143.

18. CWS, p. 191. See also SSZ I, p. 287, and Inagaki, p. 142.

19. See Inagaki, p. 76.

20. CWS, p. 191. See also SSZ I, p. 287, and Inagaki, p. 142.

21. Modified from Inagaki, p. 143, and CWS, p. 192. See also SSZ I, p. 287.

22. Inagaki, 143. See also SSZ I, p. 287.

23. Modified from CWS, 486. See also SSZ II, p. 616.

24. Modified from CWS, p. 461. See also SSZ II, pp. 630–631.

25. See Inagaki, pp. 264–265, and SSZ I, p. 336.

26. *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, in CWS, p. 486.

27. For a discussion of Amida as the Eternal Buddha, see Alfred Bloom, "Shinran's Way," in *Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World*, edited by Takeuchi Yoshinori (New York: Crossroad, 1999), p. 229.

28. Modified from *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*, in CWS, p. 461.
29. CWS, p. 469, and 490.
30. Modified from CWS, p. 591.
31. "Chapter on Realization" in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in CWS, p. 153.
32. *Passages on the Pure Land Way*, in CWS, p. 301.
33. *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, in CWS, p. 486.
34. *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'* in CWS, p. 461.
35. *Lamp for the Latter Ages*, in CWS, p. 530.
36. CWS, p. 461.

The Teaching of Hearing-the-Name in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*¹

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I. VARIOUS EDITIONS OF THE *LARGER SUKHĀVATĪVYŪHA SŪTRA* AND THE TEACHING OF HEARING-THE-NAME

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT teachings characteristic to the Pure Land Buddhism is Hearing-the-Name (*monmyō*). Hearing-the-Name, here, means the teaching expounded in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* that sentient beings are able to attain birth in the Pure Land by hearing the name of Amida Buddha. However, the concept of attaining birth in the Pure Land by hearing the name is not recorded in the early Buddhist teaching of Śākyamuni.² Therefore, Pure Land teaching is sometimes considered to be a different kind of Buddhism. Recently, however, we see much progress in the academic study of Pure Land teaching, re-evaluating this doctrine in the context of Śākyamuni's Buddhism. The results of these recent studies are beginning to show that the concept of Hearing-the-Name in Pure Land teaching is not so alien to the early ideas of Buddhist thought.

The origin of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name is found as early as the time of the emergence of the Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtras. For example, a passage in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* states, "People who hear my name are certain to attain the highest, perfect, enlightenment (*anuttarā samyaksambodhiḥ*)."³ Later, Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250) presented his interpretation of this passage concerning the concept of attaining enlightenment by hearing the name in his *Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa-śāstra*).⁴

The Buddha's name is also taken very seriously in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. The concept of hearing the name appears in numerous passages in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. A passage in the "Chapter on Entering the Dharmadhātu (Ju fa-chieh p'in, or *Gandavyūha*)" goes as follows:

Innumerable sentient beings who have heard the name will master and practice Samantabhadra's vows and unfailingly attain the highest path of enlightenment.⁵

And a passage in the eighty-scroll version of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* says,

Even if sentient beings have never aspired to the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), once they hear the name of the Buddha, they will certainly attain enlightenment.⁶

Although modern scholars have discussed various issues concerning the teaching of Hearing-the-Name as it appears in the early Mahāyāna sūtras, the origin of the concept has yet to be clarified. Doctrinal studies of the meaning of Hearing-the-Name itself, namely, why sentient beings can attain birth in the Pure Land simply by hearing the name of Amida Buddha, are far from complete. Inspired by the preceding studies on the topic, this paper examines the teaching of Hearing-the-Name and explores various issues surrounding this teaching.

First, I will briefly overview references to the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appearing in various recensions of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*⁷ and other sūtras related to Pure Land thought. The teaching of Hearing-the-Name already appears in the *O-mi-t'o san-yeh-san-fo sa-lo-fo-t'an kuo-tu-jem-tao ching*, (*Taishō*, no. 362; hereafter, *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*), considered to preserve the earliest form of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*. In that version the fourth vow is as follows.

Fourth, I vow that when I attain buddhahood, I will make my name heard in innumerable Buddha-lands in all eight directions, above, and below. I will make all Buddhas expound my virtues and the merits of my land in the assemblies of the *saṃgha*. All heavenly beings, humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms who hear my name will awaken the compassionate mind. I will cause those who rejoice and dance to be born in my land. May I attain enlightenment after I fulfill this vow. I shall not attain enlightenment until fulfilling this vow.⁸

Next, the fifth vow in the same sūtra states:

Fifth, I vow that when I attain buddhahood, if innumerable heavenly beings, humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms above, below, and in the eight directions, even if they have done evil deeds in their former lives, all hear my name and aspire to be born in my land, they will return to the right path promptly, repent their past misconduct, do meritorious deeds for the path [leading to enlightenment], observe the teachings [of the Buddha] and precepts, and wish to be born in my land continuously. When they complete their lives, they will not return to the state of beings in the realms of hells, animals, or hungry spirits, but will attain birth in

my land according to their wishes. May I attain enlightenment after I fulfill this vow. I shall not attain enlightenment until fulfilling this vow.⁹

In the fifth vow, Hearing-the-Name is explained as a necessary condition for birth in the Pure Land followed by the virtues of repentance, meritorious deeds, and observing the teachings and precepts. Therefore, it is reasonable to understand that this vow does not maintain that birth in the Pure Land is possible by Hearing-the-Name alone. Hearing-the-Name, in this vow, is introduced as a prerequisite for the subsequent practices. In other words, Hearing-the-Name provides the cause and conditions for sentient beings to arouse the mind of aspiration for birth in the Pure Land. This may be related to the concept of seeing the light of Amida Buddha, discussed in more detail below, which appears in the same sūtra. Through seeing the light of Amida Buddha, the sūtra maintains, sentient beings are provided with an opportunity to practice meritorious deeds.

Compared to the fifth vow, however, the understanding of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name in the fourth vow of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* is considerably different. We also must be aware of the meaning of the preceding third vow in which the bodhisattva pledges to establish the land of bliss.¹⁰ The fourth vow, then, introduces the method of practice to attain birth in the Pure Land described in the third vow. It is noteworthy that, in the fourth vow, the basis of birth in the Pure Land is determined by the mind of rejoicing upon hearing Amida's name. In this vow, Hearing-the-Name itself is given a very significant meaning. Therefore, the fourth vow begins with the bodhisattva's pledge that the name of Amida is to be heard in innumerable buddha-lands in all ten directions.

Some scholars have suggested that the original discussion of the cause of birth in the Pure Land seems to be very simple. Of course, this issue should be examined further not only from the perspective of theory on the cause of birth, but also broadly from the perspective of the Pure Land Buddhist view of human beings. Such a discussion might go further into issues related to the origins of Pure Land teaching, such as Pure Land Buddhism's view of traditional methods of Buddhist practice developed since the time of Śākyamuni. However, I will reserve the discussion of this topic until some future time.

As shown in the fourth and fifth vows in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, there seems to be a great difference between the understanding that Hearing-the-Name provides a preliminary cause and condition for realizing of the path of the bodhisattva and the understanding that Hearing-the-Name itself becomes the cause of birth in the Pure Land. What is the cause of the emergence of these two different views of Hearing-the-Name? It seems that those who compiled the Pure Land sūtras could not completely

disregard the established system of practice existing since the period of Early Buddhism. Therefore, in a section describing the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land, the practices for *śrāmaṇa*, or monks who have renounced homelife, is explained. On the other hand, the sūtras must also clarify the uniqueness of Pure Land teachings as Buddhism for lay-persons (*zaike bukkyo*). The compilation of the Pure Land sūtras seems to have taken place under such circumstances, which, I believe, produced the different understandings of the idea of Hearing-the-Name in one text.

In the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, there is another passage mentioning Hearing-the-Name:

When I attain buddhahood, I shall teach my name and cause my name to be heard in innumerable buddha-lands all above, below, and in the eight directions; there will be no one who does not hear my name: Innumerable heavenly beings, humans¹¹

This passage corresponds with the section known as “Verses Praising the Buddha” (*Tanbutsu-ge*) in other recensions of the sūtra. This passage appears only in this recension of the sūtra and I will examine this passage of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* later in this article.

The teaching of Hearing-the-Name becomes more significant in later forms of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*. In the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (*Taishō*, no. 360) and the *Wu-liang-shou ju-lai hui* (*Taishō*, no. 310-5), the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appears repeatedly in the vows. It appears in the thirty-fourth through thirty-seventh, forty-first through forty-fifth, forty-seventh, and forty-eighth vows, in the formula, “If sentient beings who have heard my Name should not . . . , may I not attain perfect enlightenment.” Corresponding passages of the vows in the Sanskrit text similarly emphasize Hearing-the-Name in the phrase *mama nāmadheyam śrutvā* (having heard my name). In the *Ta-ch'eng wu-liang-shou chuang-yen ching* (*Taishō*, no. 363; hereafter *Chuang-yen ching*), Hearing-the-Name also appears in the fourteenth, twenty-seventh through twenty-ninth, thirty-first through thirty-fourth, and thirty-sixth vows. In the earlier form of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, however, there are no passages corresponding to these vows. Therefore they are understood as additions made to the later *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*. It is also noteworthy that most of these vows are addressed to bodhisattvas in lands in the other directions.

It is also well known that the concept of Hearing-the-Name appears in passages concerning the fulfillment of the vow (*jōju mon*). The passage in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* states,

All sentient beings who, having heard his Name, rejoice in faith, remember him even once and sincerely transfer the merit of

virtuous practices to that land, aspiring to be born there, will attain birth and dwell in the Stage of Non-retrogression.¹²

A verse of the “Hymn of the Eastern Direction (*Tōbō-ge*)” in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* says,

By the power of that Buddha’s Original Vows,
All who hear his Name and desire birth,
Will, without exception, be born in his land,
And effortlessly enter the Stage of Non-retrogression.¹³

Corresponding passages of the verse in the Sanskrit text describe this more precisely. According to the text, innumerable *tathāgatas* and bodhisattvas in the ten directions worshiped Amida Buddha and made offerings to him. Responding to the worship and offerings, Amida Buddha smiled back at them. Then bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara asked why he smiled.

Then Amitāyus the Buddha explained:
“The miracle of my smile is due to the
vow I made in former times—
that living beings who heard my name, no matter how,
should come to my field without fail.
“This splendid vow of mine has been fulfilled.
And living beings come here from many world systems.
Arriving directly before my presence, they cannot fall back;
only this one birth remains for them.”¹⁴

It is interesting that the contents of this verse are very close to that of the *Wu-liang ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng-chüeh ching* (*Taishō*, no. 361; hereafter *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching*), which is one of the earlier versions of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*. We should note that in this passage Amida himself confirms his original vows. According to this passage, we could also understand that the essence of Amida’s vows are represented by the concept of birth caused by Hearing-the-Name.

There is another passage on Hearing-the-Name in the section of circulation (*ruzūbun*) at the end of the sūtra. The *Wu-liang-shou ching* version states,

If there are people who hear the Name of that Buddha, rejoice so greatly as to dance, and remember him even once, then you should know that they have gained great benefit by receiving the unsurpassed virtue.¹⁵

How, then, does the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* explain the meaning of Hearing-the-Name? The sūtra does not give us a clear definition of the idea itself. In some vows, however, the significance of Hearing-the-Name is explained in the context of Buddhist practices. For example, the twentieth vow of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* instructs:

... people who having heard my Name, concentrate their thoughts on my land, do various meritorious deeds and sincerely transfer their merits towards my land¹⁶

The thirty-fifth vow adds,

... people who having heard my Name, rejoice in faith, awaken aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicitta*)¹⁷

And in the thirty-seventh,

... people, who having heard my Name, prostrate themselves on the ground to revere and worship me, rejoice in faith, and perform the bodhisattva practices¹⁸

According to these vows, Amida Buddha has established the vows for sentient beings so that they rejoice in faith upon hearing the name, awaken aspiration for enlightenment, and practice the bodhisattva path diligently. In these vows, the concept of Hearing-the-Name plays the significant role of introducing beings to the path of Buddhist practice.

The understanding of the concept of Hearing-the-Name as the introduction to the path of Buddhist practice was pointed out as early as Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Larger Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Ta-chih-tu-lun*):

Concerning "hearing the name." One is not able to attain the path to enlightenment only by hearing the name. Having heard the name, practice, and then attain emancipation. Just like the wealthy man Sudatta. First he heard the name of the Buddha and rejoiced in his mind. Then he visited the Buddha, listened to the Dharma, and attained the path to enlightenment. And like a brahman Saila, who was a student of a Jaṭila named Keṇika. When he heard the name of the Buddha from his master for the first time, his mind rejoiced instantly. He visited the Buddha immediately, listened to the Dharma, and attained the path of enlightenment.¹⁹

Nāgārjuna takes the vow to mean that sentient beings are not able to attain enlightenment only by hearing the name of the Buddha. Emancipation will

be actualized by subsequent practice, inspired by the experience of hearing the name of the Buddha.

I mentioned that the sūtra itself does not give us a clear definition of Hearing-the-Name and its significance in Buddhist practice. However, according to the fourth vow in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, Hearing-the-Name is defined as listening to Amida Buddha's virtues and the merits of his land. It is also noteworthy that, in the vow, the practitioner's act of hearing corresponds with all other buddhas' acts expounding Amida's virtues and merits.

Further, in some vows in the Sanskrit text, the meaning of Hearing-the-Name is known by a word which connects Hearing-the-Name with its virtues. In the forty-second and forty-third vows, there are passages which say, "living beings will hear my name and yet the root of merit that comes with hearing my name . . ." ²⁰ and "living beings in another buddha-field will hear my name and yet the root of merit that comes with hearing my name . . ." ²¹

According to these passages, the experience of hearing Amida Buddha's name itself is understood as a practice creating virtues. In the Sanskrit text, the word "comes with" is *sahagatena* (accompanied, associated). By this word it is known that "hearing" is equal to "virtues." In these examples Hearing-the-Name is considered to have significant meaning by itself.

Having reviewed the teaching of Hearing-the-Name as it appears in various recensions of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, we have discovered that there is no significant difference between the earlier and later forms of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* concerning their views on Hearing-the-Name. Two types of interpretations of the concept of Hearing-the-Name exist in both groups of texts. The one sees high value in Hearing-the-Name itself. The other postulates that Hearing-the-Name is an introduction to the practices of the Buddhist path. In the later versions, the former interpretation is given more emphasis than in the earlier forms of the sūtra.

Next, I will review the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appearing in other sūtras related to Pure Land teaching. First, in the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*, there is a passage which goes as follows.

Like many bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas, if good men and women who have heard the name are able to attain birth in *Akṣobhya's* Buddha land, how much more so will those who wish to accumulate the ultimate roots of virtues be born in *Akṣobhya's* Buddha land. Having completely accumulated all roots of virtues, instantly they will attain the ultimate enlightenment on the highest and the most righteous path.²²

The corresponding passage in an alternative Chinese translation of the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra* goes as follows.

Oh, Śāriputra, if good men and women have heard of the name of the bodhisattva, they will attain birth in the Buddha land.²³

As in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, these passages seem to promote the teaching of birth in Akṣobhya's buddha land by hearing his name. However, some scholars point out that the idea of "birth by hearing the name" does not seem very strong in these passages considering the context of this passage.²⁴

Certainly, in the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*, emphasis is generally placed more on the six *pāramitās* of bodhisattva practice, and birth in Akṣobhya's buddha land is determined by the virtue of practitioners' good deeds rather than their experience of hearing the name of the buddha. In addition, the concept of birth in the buddha land by hearing the name does not appear in any of the original vows of Akṣobhya Buddha. Compared to the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*, it is remarkable that the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* had already included the concept of birth in the buddha land by hearing the name in its original vows. The existence, or non-existence, of the idea of birth in the buddha land by hearing the name as found in the passages of the original vows demonstrates that there is a fundamental difference in the characteristics of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* and the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*.

Another sūtra related to Pure Land teaching is the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*. There are four different Chinese translations of this sūtra, the earliest dating to the ninth century C.E.²⁵ There is also a Tibetan translation which belongs to later recensions.²⁶ Among the various Chinese translations of the sūtra, in the "Bhadrāpāla Section" of the *Mahāvaiṣṭhī-mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra* (*Ta-fang-teng Ta-chi ching hsien-hu fen*), there is a passage that includes the phrase, "having heard the name of Amida tathāgata, arhat, samyakṣambuddha . . ."²⁷ Although the concept of Hearing-the-Name exists in this Chinese translation, there is no mention of the "name" in the corresponding passages of the other translations.

In the Chinese translation of the one-fascicle edition of the sūtra, there is the famous phrase, "Those who wish to be born should meditate upon my name." Although this passage mentions the name, the corresponding sections in the Chinese translation of the three-fascicle edition, the "Bhadrāpāla Section," and also the Tibetan translation of this sūtra simply state, "meditate upon the Buddha," but do not mention the "name." The phrase "hearing the name of the Buddha" appears both in the Chinese translation of the three-fascicle and the one-fascicle editions. Corresponding sections in the other translations do not contain this phrase. Therefore, some scholars suggest that the translation of these passages in the Chinese

translation of the three-fascicle and the one-fascicle editions may not be faithful to the original texts.²⁸ Either way, we cannot deny criticisms that these arguments are, at best, mere speculation, since we do not have any decisive evidence. However, it is certain that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name or Calling-the-Name is not so significant in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*.

In the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra* (*Yao-shih pen-yüan ching*),²⁹ the concept of “birth in the buddha land by hearing the name” appears in the passages of the original vows, but as this sūtra is thought to have been compiled fairly late in the development of Mahāyāna sūtras, I will not discuss this text.

I have examined some early Mahāyāna sūtras, especially those related to Pure Land Buddhism. Among them, it is especially noteworthy that the concept of “birth in the buddha land by hearing the name” appears in the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching*, one of the earliest compiled Mahāyāna sūtras. Also, we discovered that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appears very frequently in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*—which is the most fundamental sūtra in the Jōdo Shinshū tradition—especially in the section of original vows, in the “Hymn of the Eastern Direction,” and in the section of circulation of the sūtra. However, it is not clear whether the teaching of Hearing-the-Name suddenly appeared in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, or whether there was a precursor to this teaching, or some related ideas, that existed in the early Buddhist sūtras. Some scholars speculate that this teaching may have been influenced by non-Buddhist religions. I will discuss these issues in the following section.

II. ORIGINS OF THE TEACHING OF HEARING-THE-NAME

In this section, first, I will examine the theory that high valuation of the name within Pure Land teachings was introduced from ancient, pre-Buddhist, Indian thought, or, at least, developed under such influence. Nakamura Hajime is one of the scholars representing this opinion.

The idea of giving high value to the name has existed in India from ancient times. During the period of the rise of *upanishad* thought, there arose the practice of meditating upon the sacred word “OM,” a symbol of the absolute being, Brahman. This practice has continued in various schools of Indian thought, such as Vedanta. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, there is the idea of revering the name Considering these traditions, I conclude that the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*’s idea of giving high value to the name of Amida Buddha originated in Indian religious philosophy that

existed continuously from the period of Brahmanism to the period of Hinduism.³⁰

There is another study on the concept of the name by Jan Gonda in ancient Indian religions, in which he briefly refers to Pure Land teachings by citing a work by Gerhard Rosenkranz:

In expatiating upon the modification of the Buddhist practice of “thinking of the Buddha” in Amida Buddhism Rozenkranz³¹ argues that “uralte Wortmagie” [ancient magical nature of words] led people to replace the Buddha by his name which manifests the nature of its bearer.³²

He points out that a belief in the magical power of words suggests the origin of the notion of placing high value on the name. Certainly, the idea of placing high value on the name existed in ancient Indian society. Perhaps the influence of such a concept in Pure Land teaching cannot be totally neglected. As these scholars say, the development of the idea of Hearing-the-Name in Pure Land teaching cannot be understood properly without considering notions of the potency of names and words in ancient Indian society.

Scholars of ancient India may criticize us, saying that we simply forget that this idea existed in that society. I think specialists still need to discuss many issues concerning the study of ideas in ancient societies. As for the idea of placing high value on the name, there are many questions that remain to be solved. Particularly, the issue of whether there is an essential difference between the meaning of the idea in ancient Indian society and that of Pure Land teaching is very significant. And, if there is a difference, what is it? Nakamura’s studies, however, do not address these issues.

Some studies, however, do discuss the above mentioned issues. For example, Sakamoto Hiroshi points out that there is a great difference between the faith in the names of buddhas or bodhisattvas, and other ancient beliefs in the name.³³ In the following, I summarize the outline of his arguments:

1. The buddhas or bodhisattvas, who are the subject of the belief in their names, will circulate their names and merits universally and generously without any limitation. Their names are accessible and open to anyone. On the other hand, ancient deities generally try to keep their real names secret in order to preserve their power. They only reluctantly release their powers if someone summons the name through magical rituals.

2. The supernatural power of a name, or the power of buddhas and bodhisattvas themselves, is the compassionate salvific activity which is supported by the wisdom-power of *prajñā*. The power of the ancient deities is the power to suppress dark mystical or evil power. It is no more than magical power which is only accessible or able to be activated through magical rituals.

Sakamoto's arguments, especially the latter, are very similar to Nāgārjuna's comments on the teaching of Hearing-the-Name. Nāgārjuna discusses Hearing-the-Name from the perspective of buddha-body theory. The meaning of the name in the concept of Hearing-the-Name, according to Nāgārjuna, is the name of the Buddha of the living dharma-nature (*dharmatā*) who emancipates every being and has fulfilled all vows.³⁴ The Buddha of the living dharma-nature is, as has already been discussed by some scholars, the *tathāgata* of the reward-body (*vipāka-kāya*), or enjoyment-body (*sambhoga-kāya*).³⁵ The reward-body is the actualization of the Dharma-body (*dharma-kāya*) or the wisdom of true thusness (*tatathā*) in the secular world, which works to emancipate sentient beings. The foundation of the salvific act of the *tathāgata* of Pure Land is wisdom directed toward the secular world. The nature of the reward-body is characterized by compassionate salvific activity supported by the wisdom-power of *prajñā*.³⁶

On the other hand, emphasis on secrecy in belief in the name in ancient Indian society is well represented by the phrase *guhya nāma* (hidden, secret name). The notion of the name in Pure Land teaching clearly contrasts with this. For example, a passage in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* says,

When I attain buddhahood, I shall teach my name and make my name to be heard in innumerable buddha-lands all above, below, and in the eight directions.³⁷

The name of Amida Buddha is accessible from all buddha-lands and open to everyone. We should thus be aware that there is a fundamental difference in belief in the name in ancient Indian society and in Pure Land teaching.

Of course, the possible relation between Pure Land thought and Indian thought is not limited to the teaching of Hearing-the-Name. For example, some scholars maintain that the concept of faith (*shin*) in Amida Buddha developed under the influence of the idea of *bhakti* (devotion) which appeared in texts such as the *Bhagavadgītā*.³⁸ There are also scholars who maintain that non-Buddhist religions significantly influenced the formation of Pure Land teaching. For example, there are studies trying to demonstrate a relationship to non-Buddhist religions through the idea of the light which adorns both Amida and his Pure Land.³⁹ However, we

must be careful again not to draw too broad a conclusion or too hastily establish a relationship based only on the discovery of a few similar terms. Since they share ancient Indian thought as a common background, undoubtedly some similarities in the expression of ideas exists. But these similarities should not be overemphasized. Rather, we need to find out what are the fundamental differences between ancient Indian thought and the Pure Land teaching which also arose in India.

There is another possibility that, although the teaching of Hearing-the-Name is alien to the essential parts of Buddhist teaching, it was introduced into Buddhism as a skillful means to popularize it. It can also be thought that it was simply adopted as a popular and ordinary practice that already existed in ancient India. To respond to these ideas, it is necessary to examine the meaning of the name in ancient societies, or how the name was understood among the populace. However, I disagree with the opinion that Hearing-the-Name was introduced simply as a skillful means and has nothing to do with the essential part of Buddhist teaching. If such was the case, the teaching would not have been taken so seriously in the development of Buddhist thought. To the contrary, the fact that Nāgārjuna discussed Hearing-the-Name in the *Discourse on the Ten Stages* (*Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*)⁴⁰ and the *Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*⁴¹ demonstrates that Hearing-the-Name was an essential issue in Buddhism.

Next, I will review issues concerning Hearing-the-Name within Buddhist thought. Some scholars maintain that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name was developed among Buddhists who thought that reciting the name of the Buddha with their mouth was disrespectful. According to this theory, these Buddhists believed that they could attain birth in the Pure Land or heavens simply by hearing the name of a buddha praised by other buddhas. The rise in popularity of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name is, therefore, a result of people being restrained from reciting the name.⁴² However, I doubt whether such a relationship ever existed between the practice of Hearing-the-Name and the practice of Calling-the-Name. In the earlier *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* and also in the *Lotus Sūtra*, we find the concept of Calling-the-Name. I think it is more reasonable to assume that the concepts of Hearing-the-Name and Calling-the-Name originally derived from two different groups of sūtras in India, one emphasizing the Calling-the-Name practice and the other the Hearing-the-Name practice.⁴³ That is why I doubt that the Hearing-the-Name practice was developed as a substitute for the practice of Calling-the-Name.

Next, concerning the relation between Hearing-the-Name and Calling-the-Name, some scholars believe that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name and the theory of Hearing-the-Name as the cause of birth, and the teaching of *nembutsu* and the theory of *nembutsu* as the cause of birth are the same concept expressed in different terms and, therefore, have an

inseparable relationship.⁴⁴ According to this theory, Hearing-the-Name should not be understood as an independent teaching within the Pure Land path. Rather, the experience of hearing the name of Amida Buddha is a part of the wholistic experience of hearing, awakening faith, rejoicing, and *nembutsu* that results in the attainment of enlightenment. Therefore, there is no fundamental difference between Hearing-the-Name and *nembutsu*. Hearing-the-Name itself includes virtues that reflect the historical context that “hearing” was the starting point of all practices shared by all disciples after the Buddha’s death. According to this theory, during the early period of the development of Pure Land teaching, Pure Land Buddhists needed to emphasize the significance of “hearing” on the one hand in order to respond to criticisms from Hīnayāna Buddhists, and, on the other hand, attempted to promote their teaching broadly to the general public. Under such circumstances, Pure Land Buddhists developed the idea that the practice of Hearing-the-Name itself bestowed such virtues as the eradication of evil karma, entry into the stage of non-retrogression, and birth in the Pure Land. Therefore, although it is not clear that the idea of birth by Hearing-the-Name was originally an essential part of practice among Pure Land Buddhists, it is possible to discuss the concept of birth by Hearing-the-Name as an issue related to the concept of birth by *nembutsu*.

However, I have reservations in accepting the theory which considers Hearing-the-Name and *nembutsu* to be essentially the same concept expressed in different terms. Instead, I think that the concept of Hearing-the-Name and the concept of *nembutsu* have different origins. Although the origin of *nembutsu* and Calling-the-Name is very old, there is no mention of the teaching of Calling-the-Name in the Sanskrit text of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*. However, the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appears throughout that text. It should also be noted that Nāgārjuna, in his works, does not discuss the relationship between Calling-the-Name and Hearing-the-Name at all. This also suggests that Hearing-the-Name and Calling-the-Name are derived from different doctrinal positions.

There is another reason to consider *nembutsu* and Hearing-the-Name separately. In the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching*, Hearing-the-Name mainly appears in the passages of the original vows. On the other hand, the concept of *nembutsu* mainly appears in the section discussing the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land.⁴⁵ The view that, from the perspective of the historical development of the sūtra, the section of the original vows and the section of the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land were originally compiled as independent sūtras is very convincing.⁴⁶ A few scholars have already pointed out that there are many inconsistencies in the contents of the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching*.⁴⁷ For example, the passages which correspond with the “Verses Praising the Buddha” (*Tanbutsu-ge*) in other editions of the sūtra are similar to the twenty-fourth, third, fourth, and the latter half of the

second vows, respectively.⁴⁸ These passages are considered to be a summary of the most significant four vows in the entire twenty-four vows pledged in the *sūtra*. The passages basically relate that the bodhisattva Dharmākara became the most excellent Buddha above all other Buddhas and adorned his Pure Land. Then he caused sentient beings to be born in his land by letting them hear his name and causing them to become bodhisattvas and arhats. According to these passages, the essential method of practice in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* is to cause sentient beings to be born in the Pure Land by Hearing-the-Name. Therefore, the fourth vow is considered to be more significant than the fifth, sixth, and seventh vows. However, if the existence of the passages of fulfillment of the vow reflects the significance of the vow, then this thesis becomes inconsistent, since the fourth vow does not have a corresponding passage of fulfillment of the vow. Thus it is thought that the section expounding the original vows and the section discussing the birth in the three grades were originally compiled independently.

In the above two sections, I have examined the teaching of Hearing-the-Name as discussed by scholars from various perspectives. I have pointed out the problems within each theory, which has raised issues to be discussed further. In the following sections, I would like to propose alternative approaches to understanding the idea of Hearing-the-Name.

III. THE TEACHING OF HEARING-THE-NAME AND BUDDHA-BODY THEORY

In this section, I approach the teaching of Hearing-the-Name from the perspective of Buddha-body theory. The subject of Hearing-the-Name in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* is, of course, the name of Amida Buddha. And since Hearing-the-Name means hearing the name of Amida Buddha, the nature of Amida Buddha himself becomes a very significant issue. First of all, Amida Buddha is one of the Buddhas in a presently existing Buddha land. I would like to consider the historical context in which Buddhas in other lands appeared. It is not difficult to imagine that, generations after Śākyamuni Buddha passed away, there were many disciples who lamented in deep sorrow that they were born in a world with no Buddha. Some of them, who could not suppress their passion, strongly wished to see the Buddha in this present life.

It has already been pointed out that the sense of “present-ness” exists as a significant issue at the deepest foundations of Pure Land teaching. This is readily known from the concept of welcoming (*raigō*) by Amida Buddha in Pure Land teaching. For example, the eighteenth vow in the Sanskrit text says,

Blessed One, may I not awaken to unsurpassed, perfect, full awakening if, after I attain awakening, those living beings in other world spheres . . . will not be met by me at the moment of death—if I should not stand before them, then surrounded and honored by a retinue of monks, so that they can meet death without anxiety.⁴⁹

A wish to see the Buddha in the present must be a feeling commonly shared by all Buddhists. Thus they tried to deeply grasp Amida Buddha in the image of Śākyamuni Buddha appearing in the present.

Although Amida Buddha is a Buddha of the present, he is not one who appears in this present world. Amida Buddha is not an existence appearing with a concrete form in this secular world. According to Yamaguchi Susumu, if we try to grasp the image of Amida, like a shadow, we cannot grasp it. His presence is ephemeral. Therefore, the passage “(Amida Buddha had attained enlightenment) ten kalpas ago”⁵⁰ in the sūtra is a temporal expression of his ungraspability in concrete worldly form. And the passage “(Amida Buddha resides in the Pure Land) ten thousand billion lands away”⁵¹ in the sūtra is a spacial expression of his ungraspability.⁵² Amida Buddha is a Buddha with transcendental nature as a reward-body (*sambhogakāya*). This is clear in the following analysis by Nagao Gajin:

An enjoyment-body (*sambhoga-kāya*) is known to be founded upon dual natures. On the one hand, its character transcends a personified Buddha of transformed-body (*nirmāṇa-kāya*). On the other hand, it is an actualization of absolute self-nature-body (*svabhāva-kāya*). An enjoyment-body is, therefore, transcendental as well as actual, historical as well as trans-historical. It carries two natures in one body.⁵³

According to this argument, it is clear that a reward-body includes both natures of eternity and transcendency. However, the author also points out that the special characteristic of the three body theory is that the transcendental nature of the reward-body of a buddha is not directly identified with the transcendental nature of the dharma-body (*dharma-kāya*).

If we want to create a connection with Amida Buddha, then what kind of approach is possible? Here, the name of Amida Buddha appears as a medium through which a space will be opened for us to meet Amida Buddha. This might be the only possible approach. However, it is impossible for us sentient beings to understand the name or to praise the virtues of the name, which are essentially equal to the Buddha himself. Only the other Buddhas can praise the name of Amida Buddha. We are therefore listening to the other Buddhas praising the virtues of the name. It also

means that we are listening to the virtues of Amida Buddha and the adornment of the Pure Land. There, for the first time, a space is truly opened for us to meet with the *tathāgata*.

Now, I will take another look at the fourth vow of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*. In the fourth vow, a relationship between "teaching" and "hearing" is established in the passage of teaching by other Buddhas, "all buddhas will expound my virtues and the merits of my land in the assemblies of the *saṃgha*" and the passage of hearing by sentient beings, "All heavenly beings, humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms who hear my name." The seventeenth vow in another Chinese translation, the *P'in-teng-chüeh ching*, is essentially the same vow, except that the character for "expounds, teaches (*shuo*)" is written as "praise (*t'an*)." The fourth vow in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* and the seventeenth vow in the *P'in-teng-chüeh ching* later developed into the seventeenth and eighteenth vows in the later *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. As a result, the relationship between "teaching" and "hearing" became unclear. The contents of these vows are, however, considered to retain the same relationship between the two ideas as in the earlier *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*.

However, when we turn to the passage of fulfillment of the vow, it states,

All Buddhas, Tathāgatas, in the ten directions, as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, together praise the inconceivable, supernal virtue of Amitāyus. [That is because] all sentient beings who, having heard the name [of Amitāyus], rejoice in faith, remember him even once and sincerely transfer the merit of virtuous practices to that land, aspiring to be born there, will attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. But excluded are those who have committed the five gravest offenses and abused the right Dharma.⁵⁴

In this passage, other Buddhas praise the wonderful virtue of Amida because all sentient beings may attain birth in the Pure Land and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression through hearing his name. The relationship between sentient beings' hearing and other Buddhas' praising the virtues of Amida does not seem to exist. When we read the passage carefully, however, it says "having heard the name" (*sono myōgo wo kikite*). In this passage, "the name" implies that sentient beings have heard "the name other Buddhas are praising." Therefore, the relationship between sentient beings' hearing and other buddhas' praising the name of Amida Buddha exists in the passage of the fulfillment of the vow.

A study by Unebe Toshihide indirectly supports this idea. According to his study, in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, only other Buddhas are

able to praise the name.⁵⁵ However, sentient beings or bodhisattvas, as subjects, have never praised the name or recited the name. On the other hand, the subjects who hear the name are consistently sentient beings (or bodhisattvas, or women) in the Sanskrit text of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, and other buddhas have never appeared as the subject of hearing the name. In the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, the idea of Hearing-the-Name means hearing the name being praised by other Buddhas, and hearing the virtue of Amida Buddha and the merits of the land.

Next, I examine the origin of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name in relationship to Hearing-the-Dharma (*monbō*) which has been expounded in Buddhist traditions since the time of the early Buddhist sūtras. I believe that the teachings of Hearing-the-Name and Hearing-the-Dharma are fundamentally the same. Śākyamuni's teaching of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) developed the transcendental and metaphysical aspects of the teaching of the ultimate truth. This aspect of the development of the teaching concretely appears in the idea of Dharma-body and reward-body in Buddha-body theory. Therefore, in Pure Land teaching, Śākyamuni's teaching of dependent origination is expressed in the form of a reward-body of Amida Buddha. It is possible to see that Amida Buddha is a concrete and personified presence of Dharma. In that sense, hearing the name of Amida Buddha is not different from hearing Śākyamuni's teaching. Thus the teachings of Hearing-the-Name and Hearing-the-Dharma are inter-related.

Then why was it necessary that Hearing-the-Name be taught along with Hearing-the-Dharma? A possible reason for this is that the Dharma realized by Śākyamuni gradually became more and more transcendental and metaphysical. As a result, it became more and more difficult for the general public to understand. On the other hand, Buddha-body theory, in which Dharma is expressed in the form of the body of the Buddha, developed. In Buddha-body theory, the reward body symbolizes the Dharma-nature of the ultimate reality and the principle of Buddha Dharma, and its will to actualize the spirit of Dharma upon human beings. A transformation body is the form fully realized in the world of human beings. Therefore, we are made to feel a closeness to Amida Buddha as a reward body buddha, or the name of Amida Buddha. We have classified various recensions of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* into two groups, earlier and later, and Amida Buddha in the earlier recensions of the sūtra appears as a more personified figure than in the later recensions. For example, in the earlier recensions, Amida Buddha takes baths and appears in the lecture hall in the Pure Land. All these scenes have disappeared in the later recensions of the sūtra. Also in the earlier editions there are expressions that say Amida Buddha will pass into *nirvāṇa* or hears voices. In the earlier *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, Amida Buddha is not completely considered as a reward-body and there still remains some nature of

a transformation body. Therefore, in some descriptions, Amida Buddha's behavior is similar to that of an ordinary being's.

In the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, hearing the name is promoted on the basis of this understanding of Amida Buddha's body. In the sūtra, hearing the Dharma is also promoted. In the section of circulation at the end of the Sanskrit text of sūtra, there is a passage which goes as follows:

In order to hear this discourse on the Dharma, one should plunge into a three-thousandfold, many thousandfold, world system full of fire, one should not allow even one single thought leaving, nor should there be any regret.⁵⁶

Also in the section of the lower grades of aspirants of the Pure Land in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, there is a passage which says,

When they hear the profound Dharma, they joyfully accept it and do not entertain any doubt; and so remembering the Buddha even once . . .⁵⁷

This shows that Hearing-the-Dharma will also inspire the mind of joy and faith, just like Hearing-the-Name. However, these passages explain that Hearing-the-Dharma is a very difficult practice as explained in the section on circulation. The difficulty of Hearing-the-Dharma is also found in the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* saying that this teaching is the most difficult to accept.⁵⁸ We see that the Dharma had already become very difficult for common people living in secular society to understand. Perhaps this is why the Hearing-the-Name practice was promoted instead of Hearing-the-Dharma.

These issues of the relationship between the name and the Dharma remind me of the interpretation of the name by T'an-luan (476–524). T'an-luan understood the Buddha's Names in the relationship that names and dharmas (things) are exactly identical. He explains this idea in his *Commentary on the Discourse on the Pure Land* (*Ching-t'u-lun chu*) as follows:

In some cases, names and things [dharmas] are exactly identical, and in others, they are different. Some examples of the former are the names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the word *prajñāpāramitā*, *dhāraṇī*s, spells and some other [mystic] phrases.⁵⁹

T'an-luan classifies all names into two categories: names the same as dharmas and names not the same as dharmas. He defines all names other than names of Buddhas, *dhāraṇī*, etc., to be not the same as dharmas, and indicates the inconsistency in ordinary names and their meanings, and

their inappropriateness. By following T'an-luan's definition, we are able to understand the relationship of the name and what it signifies, i.e. Dharma (teaching). And we are able to know that there is no difference between hearing the name of Amida Buddha and hearing the teaching.

IV. THE IDEA OF HEARING-THE-VIRTUE-OF-LIGHT

Another remarkable idea in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* which is related to Hearing-the-Name is the idea of hearing the virtue of the Buddha's light. In the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, there is a passage which says, "If sentient beings, having heard of the majestic virtue of his light, glorify it continually, day and night, with sincerity of heart, they will be able to attain birth in his land, as they wish."⁶⁰ No corresponding passage exists in other recensions of the sūtra and the passage might make more sense if it said that sentient beings praise his light by seeing it. But what exactly does this passage mean by "hearing the virtue of the light"? Here we need to consider the meaning of light and the relationship between light and the name.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the idea of light is given special emphasis. For example, in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the Buddha is frequently described in terms of light. The Chapter on Vairocana Buddha explains the merit gained by sentient beings who encounter the Buddha's light:

Observing the light of the Buddha is like [seeing] a cloud. It is difficult to conceive in one's mind. It is omnipresent. It appears right in front of one's eyes. The radiation of light from [the Buddha's] pores is like a cloud. It is unlimited. In accordance with the sound of sentient beings, limitless virtue of the Buddha is praised. If sentient beings encounter the Buddha's light, all sufferings will be permanently eliminated and peace and happiness achieved. They will be filled with joy.⁶¹

The virtue of light and its this-worldly merits are mentioned frequently in other passages in the sūtra, such as the Chapter of Bhadramukha Bodhisattva.⁶²

Among the sūtras which emphasize the virtue of light, it has been pointed out that the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* places more emphasis on light than any other sūtra.⁶³ In the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, the virtue of seeing light is explained in the section near the end of the text. There is a section in which Ānanda sees the land of Amida Buddha, and those of other bodhisattvas and arhats.⁶⁴ After seeing the land, Ānanda rejoices greatly and dances and says, "Namo' mitābha-samyaksambuddha" (*Na-mo O-*

mi-t'o san-yeh-san-fo-t'an).⁶⁵ Responding to this act of recitation of the name, light radiates from Amida's buddha-land. Countless numbers of humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms, see Amida Buddha's light and rejoice with compassionate minds. Then the text says, "All blind persons instantly gain their sight. All deaf persons instantly begin to hear. All mute persons instantly are able to speak." A similar passage is also found in the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching*.⁶⁶ This passage, however, does not exist in the other Chinese translations, nor the Sanskrit text or Tibetan translation. This issue should be discussed from the perspective of the sūtra's historical development.

This passage has been considered to be a case which includes this-worldly merit and magic in practicing the recitation of the name. If we read the passage carefully, however, we may not necessarily need to interpret it in that way at all. Rather, "Namo' mitābha-samyaksambuddha" may be better considered as Ānanda's expression of deep joy after seeing the adornment of the Pure Land. Therefore, the merit of healing, such as the blind gaining sight, is more properly understood as the working of light and its merits.⁶⁷

While one passage explains the this-worldly merits of light, another passage uses the word "light" synonymously with the word wisdom. For example, in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, there is a section on the light of bodhisattvas and arhats in the Pure Land:

One of the bodhisattvas is called Avalokiteśvara. Another bodhisattva is called Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Their light of wisdom is most excellent and the light from these bodhisattvas radiates in all directions.⁶⁸

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, such usages are found in the sūtras compiled during its period of early development. In Chinese Buddhist texts, light and wisdom are often used as compound words, such as *chih-hui-kuang*, *chih-kuang*, *hui-kuang* (light of wisdom). These terms are also found consistently in the later *Larger Sukhāvāṭīvyūha Sūtra*, describing Amida Buddha as light.

Therefore, in the *Larger Sukhāvāṭīvyūha Sūtra*, seeing the Buddha is explained as not merely seeing Amida himself but also seeing Amida's light. In the section of the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land in the earlier editions of the *Larger Sukhāvāṭīvyūha Sūtra*, however, there are some examples in which seeing Amida and seeing the light are considered to be different, but I think these cases are exceptional.

How, then, does the sūtra explain the relationship of Amida's light and name? The following passage in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* is noteworthy:

The name of Amida Buddha's light is heard in innumerable buddha-lands in all eight directions, above and below. All heavenly beings and humans hear and know [the name]. Those who hear and know [the name] will certainly attain liberation [from samsara].⁶⁹

I think that the name and light are placed together in this passage since the virtue of the name and light are considered to be one. From this passage, it is clear that even in the earlier *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, light and the name are regarded as one. In this context, expressions like "having heard of the majestic virtue of Amida Buddha's light" seems very natural.

I have examined various issues concerning the idea of Hearing-the-Name. There are many issues which remain to be discussed in the future, such as the concept of Hearing-the-Name discussed in the *Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Discourse on the Ten Stages* by Nāgārjuna, the establishment of Pure Land teaching and the teaching of Hearing-the-Name, and the meaning of the act of "hearing" itself. As the answers to such problems became clear, so the position of Pure Land Buddhist thought will also become better understood.

Translated by Eisho Nasu

NOTES

1. Translator's note: This is a translation of the first section of the third chapter, "*Muryōjukyō ni okeru monmyō shisō: Monmyō shisō no haikei*," in the *Zotei: Muryōjikyō no kenkyū: shisō to sono tenkai* [A study of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*: development of its teaching (Expanded and revised)] (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 2000), pp. 249–277, by Prof. Ōta Rishō, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. Unless otherwise noted, all of the quoted passages have been translated into English by the translator. Minor editorial changes and revisions are made in the texts and notes according to the journal's editorial guidelines and conventions of academic publication in English. Additional notes are inserted occasionally to help readers to identify the original texts and their English translations if available. I also want to thank Mr. Harry Bridge (Institute of Buddhist Studies/Graduate Theological Union) and Mr. Yōdō Yamada (Ryukoku University) for their kind assistance. Although all changes and revisions are made with the permission of the author, any errors are solely the responsibility of the translator.

2. Also, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the idea of practice had developed systematically and gradually completed its method of practice, for example the development of the concept of the ten stages (*daśabhūmi*) of the bodhisattva, or the concept of the various stages of the bodhisattva elaborated in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. However, development of a systematic method of practices does not seem to have a clear connection to the development of Pure Land teaching. Kawanami Akira points out that there is no theory of stages of practice in Pure Land sūtras. See, Kawanami Akira, "Jōdokyō teki shūkyō taiken ni okeru soku no ronri to kaitei no ronri," *Jōdoshūgaku kenkyū*, 4 (1969): pp. 117–140.

3. *Mo-ho-pan-jo-po-lo-mi-to ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 8, p. 221-a.

4. *Ta-chih-tu-lun*, *Taishō*, vol. 25, p. 313-c.

5. *Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 9, p. 689-c.

6. *Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 10, p. 124-a.

7. There exist seven recensions of the sutra: a Sanskrit text, a Tibetan translation, and five Chinese translations. Five Chinese translations are:

1. *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching*, translated by Lokakṣema (Chih Lou-chia-ch'en) between 147 and 186, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 361, pp. 279b–299c. Fujita Kōtatsu, however, identifies the translator as Po-yen, ca. 258. Another theory attributes the translation to Dharmarakṣa.

2. *O-mi-t'ō san-yeh-san-fo sa-lo-fo-t'an kuo-tu-jen-tao ching*, commonly called *Ta A-mi-t'ō ching*, translated by Chih-ch'ien between 223 and 228, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 362, pp. 300a–317c. Another theory attributes the translation to Lokakṣema.

3. *Wu-liang-shou ching*, translated by Saṃghavarman (K'ang Seng-k'ai) in 252, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 360, pp. 265c–279a. According to Fujita Kōtatsu and other scholars, however, this translation was produced jointly by Budhabhadra and Po-yün in 421.

4. *Wu-liang-shou ju-lai-hui*, translated by Bodhiruci between 706 and 713, *Taishō*, vol. 11, no. 310-5, pp. 91c–101c.

5. *Ta-ch'eng wu-liang-shou chuang-yen ching*, translated by Fa-hsien in 991, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 363, pp. 318a–326c.

According to the study of Fujita Kōtatsu, “Among these five translations the first two preserve an early form of the *Larger Sutra*. The next two, together with the Sanskrit and Tibetan recensions, show a more evolved form; the fifth an even more developed one; the three together manifest characteristics of an advanced form of the sutra” (Fujita Kōtatsu, “Pure Land Buddhism in India,” in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development* [Berkeley, Calif.: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1996], p. 7). For the studies on the Chinese translators of the sūtra, see Fujita Kōtatsu, *Genshi Jōdo shishō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), pp. 35–96.

8. Some scholars do not consider this vow as pledging the cause of birth in Pure Land. For example, Sonoda Kōkun thinks that although sentient beings will rejoice and dance when hearing the name of Amida praised by other buddhas in the ten directions, it is nothing but an expression of the mind of aspiration. He maintains that this is known by the fact that the passage of fulfillment of the vow corresponding with this vow does not exist. (Sonoda Kōyū, *Muryōjukyō shōihon no kenkyū* [Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1960], pp.14–15.)

9. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 301b.

10. Therefore, this vow is often called the vow of seven treasures in the Pure Land, spontaneous fulfillment of adornments, magnificent adornment of the Pure Land, etc.

11. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 300c.

12. Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1994), p. 268. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 272b.

13. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 273. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 273a.

14. Luis O. Gómez, *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), p. 95. See also, Yamaguchi Susumu, Sakurabe Hajime, and Mori Mikisaburō, eds.,

- Jōdo sanbukyō*, Daijō butten, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1976), p. 65.
15. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 311-312. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 279a.
 16. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 244. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268b.
 17. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 246. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268c.
 18. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 247. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268c-269a.
 19. *Taishō*, vol. 25, p. 313c.
 20. Gómez, p. 75.
 21. Ibid.
 22. *A-ch'u-fo-kuo ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 11, p. 761c.
 23. *Pu-tung ju-lai-hui*, *Taishō*, vol. 11, p. 110a.
 24. Ikemoto Jūshin, *Daimuryōjukyō no kyōrishi teki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1969), p. 122.
 25. Four Chinese translations are:
 1. *Ta-fang-teng Ta-chi ching hsien-hu fen*, translated by Jñānagupta in 595, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 416, pp. 872a-897c.
 2. *Pan-chou-san-mei ching*, one-fascicle edition, translated by Lokakṣema, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 417, pp. 897c-902c. An English translation of this edition is made available by Hisao Inagaki, "*Pan-chou-san-mei-ching: Translation with Notes*," in *Fujita Kōtatsu hakase kanraki kinen ronshū: Indo tetsugaku to bukkyō*, Fujita Kōtatsu hakase kanraki kinen ronshū kankōkai, ed. (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1989), pp. 49-88.
 3. *Pan-chou-san-mei ching*, three-fascicle edition, translated by Lokakṣema, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 418, pp. 902c-919c. An English translation of this edition is made available by Paul Harrison, *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra* (Berkeley, Calif.: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998).
 4. *Pa-p'o-p'u-sa ching*, translator unknown, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 419, pp. 920a-924b.
 26. An English translation of a Tibetan translation is made available by Paul Harrison, *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Tibetan Version of the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990).
 27. *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 876a.
 28. Kagawa Takao, "*Hanju-zanmai-kyō ni okeru jōdo shisō*," *Bukkyō daigaku kiyō*, 35 (1958): p. 100-117.

29. *Taishō*, vol. 14, no. 449, pp. 401a–404c.
30. Nakamura Hajime, “Jōdo shinkō ni tomonau mondai no fuhensei to tokushusei,” *Satō Mitsuo hakase koki kinen: Bukkyō shisō ronsō*, Satō Mitsuo Hakase koki kinen ronbunshū kankōkai, ed. (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1972), p. 202.
31. Gerhard Rosenkranz, *Der Weg des Buddha: Werden und Wesen des Buddhismus als Weltreligion* (Stuttgart: Evangelische Missionsverlag, 1960), p. 268.
32. Jan Gonda, *Notes on the Names and the Name of God in Ancient India* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1970), p. 25.
33. Sakamoto Hiroshi, “Na e no kodaiteki shinkō” (Ancient Beliefs of Name), *Ōtani daigaku kenkyū nenpō*, 16 (1963): pp. 41–71.
34. *Taishō*, vol. 25, p. 313b .
35. Ui Hakuju, *Indo tetsugaku kenkyū*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), p. 401.
36. Yamaguchi Susumu, “Nyorai ni tsuite, tokuni hōjin no imi ni kanshite,” *Kyōka kenkyū* 72 (1974): pp. 2–10.
37. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 300c.
38. For example, Iwamoto Hiroshi, “Jōdokyō, sono kyo zō to jitsuzō,” *Chūgai nippō* (1972, January 20).
39. Itō Gikyō, in his *Zoroastriā-kyō kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979), compares Zoroastrianism and Pure Land teaching. He closely investigates the similarities of these two traditions.
40. *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 32c, and p. 42a-c.
41. *Taishō*, vol. 25, p. 313a-b, and p. 712b.
42. Mano Ryūkai, “Jōdokyō kyōten no bunkengakuteki kenkyū,” *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū*, 21 (1975): pp. 1–15.
43. It is thought that the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* and *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* are included in Hearing-the-Name group, and the *Lotus Sūtra* is included in Calling-the-Name group.
44. Ujitani Yūken, “Hearing-the-Name ōjō no shisō ni tsuite,” *Dōbō gakuho* 8 and 9 (1962): pp. 89–106.
45. *Taishō*, vol. 12, pp. 309c–311a.
46. For example, Shizutani Masao, in the *Shoki daijō kyōten no seiritsu katei* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1974), thinks that the current edition of the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching* is based upon two separate parts: the story of the bodhisattva Dharmākara and his twenty four original vows, and the part of the adornment of Pure Land and three levels of sentient beings attaining birth in the Pure Land. The introduction and passages of circulation were then added.

47. Ikemoto, p. 125.
48. *Taishō*, vol. 12, pp. 301a-b and 302c.
49. Gómez, p. 71.
50. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 270a.
51. Ibid.
52. Yamaguchi, pp. 2–10.
53. Nagao Gajin, “Busshinron wo megurite,” *Tetsugaku kenkyū*, 521 (1971): pp. 1–26.
54. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 272.
55. Unebe Toshihide, “Bonbun Muryōjukyō ni okeru shobutsu to shujō no kōō,” *Dōbō bukkyō*, 6 (1974): pp. 133–166.
56. Gómez, p. 108.
57. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 270. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 272c.
58. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 359. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 348a.
59. Hisao Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodō, 1998), pp. 210–211. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 835c.
60. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 256. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 270b.
61. *Taishō*, vol. 9, p. 417a.
62. *Taishō*, vol. 10, pp. 72a–80b.
63. Kagawa Takao, “Bukkyō ni okeru kōmyō shisō no tenkai,” in *Fujiwara Kōdō sensei kokikinen: Shigaku bukkyōgaku ronshū*, Fujiwara Kōdō sensei kokikinenkai, ed., vol. 2 (1973), pp. 863–883.
64. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 316b-c.
65. Ibid., p. 316c.
66. Ibid., p. 298c.
67. In the later editions of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, there is a vow called “peace and happiness by touching the light (*sokkō nyūnan*)” (the thirty-third vow of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*). In the vow, it is pledged that sentient beings’ minds will become peaceful and calm by touching the light of Amida and will gain happiness surpassing that of human and heavenly beings. See *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268c.
68. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 308b.
69. Ibid., p. 303a.

Hisao Inagaki's *T'an-luan's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land: A Study and Translation* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998): A Review and Comment

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OVERVIEW

THIS TRANSLATION REPRESENTS a long-awaited development in the understanding of Pure Land Buddhist thought in the English-speaking world. A growing body of scholarship in the West has come to recognize what scholars in the East have long known: the intellectual and religious contributions of T'an-luan (476–542) have been of vital importance to the development of Pure Land thought in China and Japan, not to mention Chinese Taoist thought as well. In particular, T'an-luan's major text, the *Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land* (Jpn. *Ōjō ronchū*; *Taishō*, vol. 40, No. 1819, pp. 826a–844b), sets out the philosophical underpinnings for such fundamental Pure Land notions as Amida Buddha, Pure Land and the path upon which ordinary beings might be able to realize birth in that land.

Until now, Western students of Pure Land Buddhism had been confronted with a dearth of English translations of T'an-luan's text. Those fortunate enough to obtain a copy have made considerable use of an earlier translation done by Roger Corless in his doctoral dissertation (1973). We have also gained guidance from a number of his subsequent articles and texts. In addition, portions of T'an-luan's text have been translated as part of the Shin Buddhist Translation Series of the Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha in Kyōto, a series that culminated in the publication of *The Collected Works of Shinran* (Kyōto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997). Thus, by providing us with the first systematic and annotated translation of the entirety of T'an-luan's *Commentary*, Dr. Hisao Inagaki has provided all students of Buddhism with a gateway to this seminal Pure Land thinker. At the same time, this translation may well serve as a springboard for future advances in the understanding of Pure Land Buddhist thought in the English-speaking world.

For those unfamiliar with his many contributions, Dr. Inagaki is a prolific translator and writer, who has made significant contributions to the introduction of Buddhist thought in the West. His body of work includes, *A Tri-lingual Glossary of the Sukhāvativyūha Sūtras* (1984), *A Dictionary of Japanese Buddhist Terms* (1984, 85, and 88), *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī Sūtra and Jñānagarbha's Commentary* (1987), *A Glossary of Zen Terms* (1991 and 95), *The Three Pure Land Sūtras: A Study and Translation* (1994, 95 and 2000), *Nāgārjuna's Discourse on the Ten Stages: Translation and Study of the Verses and the Chapter on Easy Practice* (1998). Some of his other translations are the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, Shan-tao's *Kuan-nien fa-man* and *Pan-chou tsan*, Kūkai's *Sokushin-jōbutsugi*, and Kakuban's *Amida-hishaku*. He has also written many other texts and articles of note.

Inagaki now brings his considerable linguistic and philosophical skills to this challenging undertaking. He informs us, correctly, that the bulk of the scholarship related to T'an-luan has until now taken place in Japan, especially among those within the scholastic tradition of Shin Buddhism. Certainly, this is due to the fact that Shinran (1173–1262) paid close attention to T'an-luan as he developed a systematic approach to Pure Land Buddhism that we today call Jōdo Shinshū. In addition, Inagaki demonstrates his sensitivity to the fact that the act of translation is also to a large extent an act of interpretation. That is, the translator's choice of terms, expressions, sentence structure and logical flow involves more than an attempt to balance accuracy and readability. In fact the translator always engages in the act of translation/interpretation from a particular stance, whether this is admitted or not. From this perspective, Inagaki frankly acknowledges that his translation of T'an-luan's *Commentary* is based on his understanding of the text, which has been developed from the interpretive standpoint of his father, Inagaki Zuiken, as well as those of Katsura Riken, Ōe Junjō and Koreyama Ekaku. This represents a very honest and ultimately useful approach, since the doctrinal context of his translation is made clear from the outset. One wishes that other translators would be as forthright in their approach.

At the same time, as we will see below, the style of Inagaki's translation and his choice of expressions represent his own religious appreciation of the Pure Land teachings. The resolute use of the term "faith" and his willingness to adopt such devotional phrases as "glorious merit" and "precious adornments" seem to indicate that, for this translator, the deep religious underpinnings of T'an-luan's text cannot be ignored. In this way, the reader is presented with a classical philosophical text from sixth century C.E. China, which even today offers to the religious seeker a guide toward the realization of Amida Buddha's salvific reality.

SUMMARY AND CONSIDERATION OF THE TEXT

The text consists of three essential parts. Part 1 offers a section on historical and doctrinal studies, which consists of a discussion of the historical development of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism and T'an-luan's place within it. Part 2 constitutes the annotated translation of T'an-luan's *Commentary*. The third portion consists of appendices and indices.

In Part 1 a brief description of Chinese Buddhism prior to the emergence of T'an-luan is followed by an interesting study of T'an-luan's life and work. Here Inagaki compares the differing accounts of T'an-luan's life according to texts written by Tao-ch'ö, Tao-hsuan, Chia-ts'ai, Wen-shen (and Shao-kang) and Fei-cho respectively. A review of these accounts, some of them rather hagiographic in nature, allows one to sketch out his life while tracing certain themes throughout them. We see, for instance, references to his early interest in the Taoist art of longevity, his Taoist writings, his early Buddhist studies and his later conversion to Pure Land Buddhism. Inagaki then goes on to place T'an-luan within the context of Pure Land thought. He begins by discussing forms of early Amida worship in India, describing Amida *jātaka* and *samādhi* among other things. Inagaki then goes on to describe what he calls Nāgārjuna's "Mādhyamika-Pure Land system," which merged an emphasis on the *pratyutpanna samādhi* practices with the path of easy practice for the attainment of the stage of non-retrogression (that is, contemplation, recitation of the name and taking refuge in Amida Buddha). He next discusses Vasubandhu's *Discourse on the Pure Land*, a systematic presentation of contemplative practices centered on Amida and his Pure Land (including the five mindful practices and the twenty-nine adornments of the Pure Land), which was to become the subject of T'an-luan's *Commentary*.

Following a summary of early Pure Land Buddhism in China, Inagaki takes up a consideration of T'an-luan's Pure Land thought. He begins by addressing, through a discussion of T'an-luan's view of reality, the traditionally held view that T'an-luan's thought represented a synthesis of the Mādhyamika thought of Nāgārjuna and the Yogācāra perspective of Vasubandhu. Inagaki's thesis at this point is that the Mahayanistic notion of the twofold truth of reality—ultimate reality (*paramārtha-satya*) and conventional reality (*saṃvṛti-satya*)—comes to serve as T'an-luan's explanation of the nature of "true merit" of the Pure Land. That is, ultimate reality is the "sphere of the Buddha's karmic activity," which represents "true merit" that conforms to Dharma-nature and "has the characteristic of purity." The realm of Samsara is the world of illusion, desire, and endless rounds of suffering. The reality of the Pure Land stands in contrast to that and is represented by the twenty-nine "glorious manifestations" of the

Land, the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. This true merit is produced by Dharmākara Bodhisattva's Primal Vow and practices.

More specifically, says Inagaki, the twofold reality of the Pure Land means that all of the "glorious features" of the Land are at once phenomenal manifestations and noumenal ultimate reality. Such "extensive" and "condensed" presentations "enter into one another." This represents the view of Vasubandhu, who had also distinguished the three Buddha-bodies in his Yogācāra texts: body identical to ultimate reality (*Dharmakāya*), reward body (*Sambhogakāya*) and accommodative body (*Nirmāṇakāya*). According to Inagaki, T'an-luan re-phrased the two-fold reality theory and the three Buddha-body theory as the notion of the two kinds of Dharma-body (*Dharmakāya*): (1) *Dharmakāya* of Dharma-nature and (2) *Dharmakāya* as Expediency. T'an-luan states that the two are "different but inseparable; they are one but not the same." T'an-luan accepted the traditional view that Amida Buddha is a *Sambhogakāya* Buddha, since he arose out of the bodhisattva's vows and practices. At the same time, however, Inagaki states that T'an-luan viewed Amida Buddha in terms of this new, two-body theory. That is, "Amida as the *Dharmakāya* is the *Dharmakāya* of Dharma-nature, and his *Sambhogakāya* and *Nirmāṇakāya* bodies are included in the *Dharmakāya* of Expediency." In this way, Inagaki takes the position that T'an-luan developed a dynamic view of Amida Buddha, containing all three aspects of the Buddha-body and encompassing the working of wisdom, compassion, and *upāya*.

In a section entitled T'an-luan's theory of salvation, Inagaki proposes that for T'an-luan the Name of Amida Buddha, particularly recitation of the Name with correct faith, was soteriologically central. Referring once again to the concept of "true merit," Inagaki maintains that, for T'an-luan, "All the glorious manifestations of the Pure Land, etc. include Amida's Name." He then reminds us that the Five Mindful Practices, which Vasubandhu set out as essentially contemplative practices for the bodhisattva, become for T'an-luan a path of practice and faith for ordinary people. Further, the Five Mindful Practices become fulfilled when one practices in accord with the Dharma, which is "in agreement with the significance of the Name." The issue here then becomes one of the correctness of one's faith, which must be sincere, single-hearted and constant. What is required, Inagaki points out, is a "singleness of mind" or complete faith in the salvation brought about by Amida Buddha. It is through the Vow-Power, or Other Power, that one is able to attain enlightenment "quickly" and thus one "should accept it in faith, and should not entertain restricted views."

In the next section on T'an-luan's successors, Inagaki clarifies the extent to which Tao-ch'ō and, later, Shinran were influenced by T'an-luan's thought. In particular, he maintains that Shinran's understanding of the two aspects of merit-transference, his system of thought based on the

Vows, and his conceptions of true practice, faith, enlightenment, true Buddha and Land, and the transformed Buddha and Land all owe much to the religious thought of T'an-luan.

The reader will find that Part 1 offers a useful introduction to the historical and doctrinal background of T'an-luan's *Commentary* and thus provides an appropriate context from which to engage the text. The detailed, albeit summarized, presentation of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist thought is helpful. Moreover, Inagaki's efforts to develop certain major themes, such as the nature of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land, Vow-Power, contemplative and recitative practices, the "true merit" embodied in the Name, and the primacy of faith, will provide guidance to one who seeks to delve into the depths of this challenging work. Finally, in the course of setting out his own exegesis, Inagaki also introduces us to the ideas of a number of Japanese thinkers, including Ryōchū, Jinrei, Koreyama Ekaku, Fujita Kōtatsu, Yamaguchi Susumu, and others.

Part 2 consists of the translation of T'an-luan's *Commentary*. Fascicle One begins with T'an-luan's introduction of the paths of easy practice and difficult practice leading to the stage of non-retrogression. After considering Vasubandhu's *Discourse* and setting out some preliminary definitions, he then presents an elucidation of the verse portion of that text. He details the Five Mindful Practices, which comprise worship, praise, aspiration, contemplation and merit-transference. T'an-luan then begins to discuss the twenty-nine objects of contemplation of the Pure Land, Amida Buddha and the bodhisattvas of that land. The first fascicle ends with a supplementary discussion—eight questions and answers pertaining to issues of salvation, karma and practice.

Fascicle Two contains T'an-luan's exposition on the prose portion of Vasubandhu's text. He revisits the Five Mindful Practices and the Twenty-Nine Objects of Contemplation. In this section, he presents them as the "glorious merits" of that Land, which are accomplished through the Buddha's Vows and practices. Such merits manifest the perfection of self-benefit and benefiting of others. All of these "glorious adornments" enter into the one Dharma principle of "purity." The extensive and condensed presentations enter into each other, and thus all Buddhas and bodhisattvas have two Dharma bodies. T'an-luan goes on to discuss the significance of this structure of purity from a soteriological perspective (converting beings by skilful means) and schematically (the accomplishment of the five gates of approach to Enlightenment). In the end, he explains that bodhisattvas attain highest Enlightenment quickly due to the working of the Eighteenth, Eleventh, and Twenty-Second Vows of Amida Buddha. Setting out the significance of benefiting others and benefit for others, he concludes by extolling Other Power, and urges all beings to have faith in it.

The present translation comes equipped with a number of aids to the reader. Each page is divided into two sections. The upper portion contains

the *Taishō* version of the original text, while Inagaki's translation can be found in the lower portion. Corresponding sections in each are numerically keyed for easy reference. In addition, Inagaki has provided a number of features to this translation that will be quite helpful, especially to the reader who plans to study the text with some reference to the Japanese scholastic tradition. For instance, chapter and section headings are provided in English with subheadings in Chinese. Although these headings do not appear in the Chinese original, they correspond to a traditional interpretive organization of the text. Substantial annotation is also appended to the text in the form of endnotes. Certain key terms are highlighted and accompanied by the original Chinese character with its corresponding Sino-Japanese romanization. Finally, the appendices, following the translation, are also quite informative and useful. They include historical maps of China from the Later Han to the Southern and Northern Dynasties. The collection of sources for T'an-luan's biographies in the original Chinese is unique and should provide a wealth of material for historians. Equally useful are the indices that are appended to the end of the book.

The translation itself should be quite accessible even to the reader with a modest background in T'an-luan's Pure Land thought. That is to say, Dr. Inagaki's T'an-luan is quite readable. As with most of his other translations, the choice of words and the crafting of phrases do not appear to have been done with the purpose of confusing the reader. Instead, one has the sense that his translation, together with its many reading aids, is intended to give the reader every opportunity to take part in a meaningful, "interpretative" exploration of an extremely dense, dark and daunting forest of ideas. This clumsy attempt at a metaphor is intended to point out another engaging feature of T'an-luan's text and this translation: its many similes and metaphors. Perhaps aware that he was asking the reader to comprehend an extremely difficult (and ultimately incomprehensible) text, T'an-luan laced his work with an assortment of illustrative examples. From the hair of the tortoise (indicating the non-existence of birth and death that is conceived as real by sentient beings) to the man riding the donkey that could fly (illustrating one who entrusts in Other Power), the similes and metaphors of T'an-luan's *Commentary* give it a life that would be beyond the reach of a mere philosophical tract. Inagaki apparently recognizes this unique and vital feature of the text, and so has devoted considerable effort to make these similes and metaphors hit the mark in English as well. Particularly handy is an index explaining T'an-luan's many similes and metaphors, which Inagaki includes at the end of his text.

One's reservations about the translation are relatively trifling. Chief among them is the clear Shin Buddhist perspective that Inagaki brings to his reading of T'an-luan. However, as mentioned above, every translation expresses a particular view or interpretive stance, and Inagaki is quite "up front" about the perspective that he has brought to his task. Another

concern for some might be that, at times, the translator's choice of expression becomes somewhat idiosyncratic, causing the words to lose their transparency. For instance, the translation of the term *shōgon kudoku* (literally, adornment-virtue) as "glorious merit" is a bit flowery for my taste. The words "lordship" for *shu* (literally, head) and "kinsmen" for *kenzoku* (kin or family) both seem a bit dated. However, in light of the breadth and depth exhibited in Inagaki's considerable achievement, these are not important criticisms. Moreover, in another sense, one could argue that the use of these sorts of terms does not deter the reader from grasping the meaning of T'an-luan's text at all. In fact, the terms employed by Dr. Inagaki seem often to have been selected exactly because they give expression to his own religious appreciation of T'an-luan's Pure Land Buddhist message.

For example, let us compare the differences between translations of the same passage found at the end of T'an-luan's *Commentary*. The first can be found as a passage cited in Shinran's *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, which was translated by the Shin Buddhism Translation Series (of which Dr. Inagaki is a leading committee member).

Again, a person of inferior powers astride a donkey cannot rise up off the ground, but when following an outing of a cakravartin king, is able to ride in the air and wander freely throughout the four continents with no obstruction—such is termed "Other Power." How foolish are scholars of these latter times! Hear the teaching that you should ride upon Other Power and awaken shinjin. Do not confine yourself to your own powers (*The Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 60).

This rendition is, of course, entirely accurate and reads beautifully. Still, there is a distance here between the reader and T'an-luan, who seems somehow remote and preachy. We get the feeling that we are being given instructions by a Dharma Master who is telling us that we must entrust in Other Power and realize *shinjin*. Perhaps this translation conveys the words of T'an-luan truthfully and literally. Still, I cannot help but wonder whether it conveys the penultimate point that he was trying to reach in his text.

Compare the previous passage now to the one translated by Dr. Inagaki. The literal meaning is the same, or at least very similar. However, in this rendition we get the sense, not that Master T'an-luan is delivering instruction to us, but that he is offering to us his own religious understanding and experience—his "faith" if you will—and is encouraging us to realize the same.

Though a man of little virtue who rides a donkey cannot fly, if he were to follow the procession of a Cakravartin, he could fly in the

air and travel in the four continents without hindrance. This is called "other-power." How fortunate we are to have met with the Other-Power! Students of the future, having heard that the Other-Power is to be trusted in, should accept it in faith, and should not entertain restricted views (Inagaki, p. 291).

CONCLUSION

Although T'an-luan has been exhaustively studied in the East, systematic treatments of his thought are only just beginning in the West. Dr. Inagaki's study and translation of *T'an-luan's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land* is sure to play an important role in the development of this research in English for many years to come. But even more than that, it will help to ensure that the religious commitment of this individual who in sixth century China wrote exhaustively of his faith in Amida Buddha's salvation will reach the hearts and minds of all "students of the future." Translation truly becomes a work of art in the hands of a master. We express our heart-felt appreciation to Dr. Inagaki and eagerly await his next contribution.

Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History Chapter Seven: T'an-luan

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IN THIS ISSUE WE continue with the publication of selections from Leo Pruden's translation of Shinkō Mochizuki's *Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History*. Given the theme of this issue, we have chosen to publish chapter seven, on T'an-luan, out of order. As mentioned in the previous issue, editing of Pruden's typescript has been limited to improvements in the readability and updating some of the terminology employed.

We again wish to express our appreciation to everyone who contributed to initiating this project, especially the Pruden estate for their permission to publish the work.

CHAPTER VII: T'AN-LUAN

1. T'an-luan's Life and Writings

T'an-luan was counted by Tao-ch'ō as one of the "Six Pure Land Worthies. His influence over later generations of Pure Land thinkers was considerable, due to his commentary on the *Wang-sheng lun* of Vasubandhu, his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, and his teaching in this work with respect to the "other-power" of the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha.

Hōnen, in his *Senchaku-shū* (the *Senchaku-hongan-nembutsu shū*), divides the Chinese Pure Land movement into three major traditions. First is the tradition founded by Hui-yuan of Mt. Lu, second is the tradition represented by the Tripiṭaka Master Tz'u-min, and third is the tradition represented by the two masters, Tao-ch'ō and Shan-tao. The first patriarchal master of this third tradition was the master T'an-luan.

As we have mentioned earlier, Hui-yuan's tradition centered on the cultivation of the visualization, in meditation, of the form of Amitābha, a meditation based upon the teachings of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*. In opposition to this practice, T'an-luan stressed rebirth in the Pure Land after one's death, that one attained this rebirth by means of the powers inherent in the Fundamental Vows of the Tathāgata, and that once there, one could speedily attain to the state of non-regression.

In later years, these three traditions came to merge with one another in China, but in Japan, largely through the influence of Hōnen, the third tradition (that of Tao-ch'ō and Shan-tao) came to be the mainstream tradition of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. It is due to this that the master T'an-luan has come to be esteemed in Japan as the first of the five Chinese Pure Land patriarchs, whereas in China itself the master Hui-yuan is regarded as the first Pure Land patriarchal master.

According to his biography in the sixth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, T'an-luan was a native of Ying-men (present-day Tai-chou, Shansi). Another source states that he was a native of Wen-sui, in Ping-chou. His family home was located close by the sacred mountain of Wu-t'ai shan (located in present-day Wu-t'ai hsien, Shansi), and when he was a little over ten years of age he climbed this mountain and there visited its monasteries and holy sites. This left a lasting impression on him, and soon thereafter he left the householder's life and joined the Sangha. He read widely in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist writings, specializing in the *Ssu-lun* (the Madhyamaka Tradition) and the *Fo-hsing lun* (The Treatise on Buddha-nature by Vasubandhu). Subsequently, he planned to write a commentary on the *Ta-chi ching* (the *Mahā-saṃnipāta* corpus), but became gravely ill in the middle of his work. He recovered, but had now become intensely aware of the transience of human life. He then began to search out and study various Taoist formulas for long life. In this search he traveled to the south, to the capital city of Chien-k'ang, where he is reported to have had an audience with the Liang Dynasty Emperor Wu. He departed the capital city and traveled to Mt. Chü-yung, where he met the adept T'ao Hung-ching, from whom he received instruction in ten volumes of Taoist texts. He then left the company of T'ao Hung-ching and visited a number of other famous mountains, visiting the masters there and cultivating the different Taoist arts of prolonging life.

While traveling home, he passed through the city of Loyang, where he met the Indian master Bodhiruci. He is reported to have told Bodhiruci of his Taoist studies, to which Bodhiruci responded that the deathless state could not be attained in China, and then presented T'an-luan with a copy of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, as being a scripture of the Greatest Sage, the Buddha. Reading this scripture, T'an-luan became suddenly awakened, and burned his Taoist texts. He subsequently returned home, where he began to cultivate the Pure Land teachings, converting many clergy and

laity. His fame spread, and he came to the attention of the Emperor of the Wei Dynasty, who bestowed the title of "shen-Luan" (the divine Luan) upon him. The Emperor gave over the Ta-yen ssu Monastery, in Ping-chou, to T'an-luan. Later, T'an-luan moved to the Hsüan-chung ssu Monastery, at the foot of the Pei-shan cliffs, in Fen-chou (present-day Chiao-ch'eng hsien, Shansi). Here he gathered around him a group of disciples, and together they cultivated the Nien-fo practice. T'an-luan is reported to have died in the year 542, at the age of sixty-six, in a "mountain monastery" in Ping-yao.

As we have mentioned above, the account of T'an-luan meeting Bodhiruci and receiving a copy of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* from him, is highly doubtful. Furthermore, in his composition, the *Wang-sheng lun chu*, T'an-luan criticizes the choice of words used by the translator of the *Wang-sheng lun* (i.e., Bodhiruci). Especially, in a note to the passage "one searching out" in the *Wang-sheng lun*, T'an-luan says, "The translator uses the word 'to search out.' How obscure this meaning is!" Now if Bodhiruci were T'an-luan's master, who introduced him to the Pure Land teachings, then these words would have been extremely rude. In a word, we do not know who the teacher was, who introduced T'an-luan to the Pure Land teachings and their practice.

However, it is recorded in his biography that T'an-luan was a student of the Ssu-lun Tradition (the Madhyamaka Tradition), which was based on four treatises: the *Chung-lun*, the *Pai-lun* and the *Shih-erh lun*, plus the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. Also, among the "Six Pure Land Worthies" listed in the *An-lo chi*, the order Tao-ch'ang and T'an-luan is given, so perhaps T'an-luan studied under the master Tao-ch'ang, who was the leading authority on the *Ta-chih-tu lun* of his day. We have also mentioned above that Tao-ch'ang had received a copy of the Maṇḍala of the Five Bodhisattvas of Supernormal Powers, so perhaps T'an-luan may have received his introduction into the Pure Land faith from this master.

The *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan* places T'an-luan's date of death in the year 542 (the fourth year of Hsing-ho, of the Eastern Wei Dynasty). However the name of a bhikṣu Seng T'an-luan appears among some twenty-seven names listed on an inscription carved in the second month of 554 (the fifth year of T'ien-pao, of the Northern Ch'i Dynasty). Assuming that this Seng T'an-luan is this same T'an-luan, then his death must be placed some time after the year 554.

Furthermore, the last volume of Chia-ts'ai's *Ching-t'u lun* gives the biography of T'an-luan, and mentions that he was still alive "at the end of the Wei, and at the beginning of the Kao-Ch'i Dynasties." The biography of Tao-ch'o in the twentieth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, as well as the *Wang-sheng Hsi-fang Ching-t'u shui-ying shan-ch'uan*, lists him as "the Dharma Master T'an-luan of the Ch'i era." It is clear from the above that T'an-luan did not die any time during the Eastern Wei Dynasty, but was alive well into the Ch'i Dynasty.

Only three works have come down to us from the hand of T'an-luan: the two-volume *Wang-sheng lun chu*, the one volume *Ts'an O-mi-t'o Fo chieh*, and the one-volume *Lüeh-lun An-lo Ching-t'u i*.

The first work, the *Wang-sheng lun chu*, is a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Wang-sheng lun*. The first volume of his work comments on the twenty-four lines of *gāthā* in this work, and the second volume comments on the prose section. In various places throughout this work T'an-luan presents his Pure Land philosophy.

The *Ts'an O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* (*Gāthās in Praise of the Buddha Amitābha*) is a short work, consisting of 195 seven character lines. This work is a collection of praises of the various qualities of Amitābha and his Pure Land, based largely on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. This work is also variously entitled the *Wu-liang-shou ching feng-ts'an* (Praises Offered to the *Wu-Liang-shou ching*) or simply the *Ta-ching feng-ts'an* (Praises Offered to the Greater Sūtra).

The *Lüeh-lun An-lo Ching-t'u i* raises, and answers, several questions with respect to the Pure Land:

- whether it is within the three dhātus or not,
- how many adornments it has,
- what are the various types of capacities of devotees who can be reborn therein,
- the nature of womb birth in the peripheral areas of the Pure Land,
- the doubts and delusions of the Five Wisdoms, and
- the problem of ten continuous recitations.

This work's authenticity has been called into question by a number of writers. In his *Yanggwŏn Muryang-gyŏng jong'yo*, the scholar-monk Wŏnhyŏ—from the Silla dynasty in Korea—claims that the simile of crossing the river employed in the *Lüeh-lun* can be traced back to Kumārajīva. The Japanese Tendai scholar-monk Shōshin, in the sixth volume of his *Hokke-gengi shiki*, claims that Kumārajīva composed this work. However, the *Lüeh-lun* quotes a number of works, specifically the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and the *Wang-sheng lun*, which were translated into Chinese only after the death of Kumārajīva, so the work cannot possibly be his work.

In the Edo period the scholar-monk Reikū Kōken composed a work entitled *The Lüeh-lun An-lo Ching-t'u i is not a Work by T'an-luan* (*Ryaku-ron Anraku Jōdo-gi Donran-sen ni arazu*). In this he claimed that the *Lüeh-lun* was composed in Japan by someone very uneducated, and that it was not really from the hand of T'an-luan. However, in the last volume of his *Ching-t'u lun*, Chia-ts'ai mentions, in addition to the *Wang-sheng lun chu* and the *Wu-liang-shou ching feng-ts'an*, one volume of *Questions and Answers*, and here refers to the *Lüeh-lun*, which is written in a catechical

form. The *Lüeh-lun* is also quoted many times in Tao-ch'ó's *An-lo chi*. In addition to this, an old manuscript copy of the *Lüeh-lun* has been discovered among the finds in Tun-huang, so it is clear that the *Lüeh-lun* is not a Japanese composition.

Besides the above three works ascribed to T'an-luan, his biography in the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan* also mentions a work entitled the *Tiao-ch'í lun* (An Essay on Regulating the Breath). Additionally, *The Monograph on Bibliography* (the *Ching-chi chih*) in the *Sui Shu* mentions two other works by T'an-luan, the *Liao pai-ping tsa-wan fang* (Prescriptions for Mixing Pills for the Cure of All Illnesses), and the *Lun liao-fang* (A Discussion of the Role of Breath in the Curing of Illnesses). Finally, the *Monograph on the Arts and Literature* (the *I-wen chih*) of the *Sung Shu* mentions a work entitled the *Fu ch'í yao-ch'ueh* (Essentials for Regulating the Breath). We can see from this that T'an-luan was considered to have been very learned in the homeopathic sciences. These works are probably the result of his own studies in recuperative techniques, carried out in the period early in his life when he was gravely ill.

2. The Two Paths

T'an-luan's major teachings are to be found in his *Wang-sheng lun chu*. At the very beginning of this work, he quotes the "Chapter on Easy Practice" from the *Shih-chu pi-p'o-sha* (the *Daśa-bhūmi vibhāṣā*), traditionally ascribed to Nāgārjuna. There are two paths by which the Bodhisattva can search out the stage of non-regression (Skt: *avaivartika*), the path of different practice (*nan-hsing-tao*) and the path of easy practice (*i-hsing-tao*). To search out the stage of non-regression in this world, which is full of the five defilements, and in this present age, which is without the living presence of a Buddha, is regarded as the path of difficult practice. But to be born in the Pure Land due to one's faith in the Buddha (lit.: by means of the causes and conditions of believing in the Buddha), to be empowered by the Buddha and so enter into the Mahāyāna assembly of those definitively assured [of such a rebirth] is termed the path of easy practice.

In a world full of the five defilements and without a Buddha, the non-Buddhists propagate doctrines of tangible, existent characteristics. These teachings disturb the characteristic-less cultivation of the Bodhisattvas, and the self-centered discipline and the self-benefitting teachings of the Hīnayāna śrāvakas cause the Bodhisattva to turn away from his own practice of great compassion and benevolence. Also, evil and unreflective beings destroy the distinguished qualities of the Bodhisattva, and, seeing the perverted, defiled results of these beings disturbs the mind of the Bodhisattvas, and so brings about a disruption of their religious cultivation.

Furthermore, in a world without a Buddha, one cannot rely on the power of the Buddha, and one must cultivate religious practices through his own powers. For these reasons, then, it is extremely difficult to attain the state of non-regression. Therefore, the author likens this path to walking on land, and so terms it "the path of difficult practice."

In opposition to this, however, the path of easy practice takes advantage of (lit.: rides on) the power inherent in the Buddha's Fundamental Vows, and leads to rebirth in the Pure Land. Furthermore, by being empowered by the Buddha, the devotee enters into the Mahāyāna assembly of those whose rebirth is assured, and thus abides in the stage of non-regression. That is to say, he attains the stage of *avaivartika* by means of "another power," a power that is not his own, and this is likened to riding a ship over the water (and not walking on land). This is termed "the path of easy practice."

The theory of the two paths, the difficult and the easy path, is originally borrowed from Nāgārjuna. Nāgārjuna holds that to strenuously cultivate religious practices in this world for a long time, and to thus attain the stage of non-regression, constitutes the path of difficult practice. However, calling upon the Names of the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will allow the devotee to speedily attain the stage of non-regression. These would include the Names of the Buddhas of the ten directions, such as the Buddha Sugaṇa (Fine Qualities) in the East, etc., and the Names of other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, such as Amitābha and Lokeśvararāja. Thus, this path is called the path of easy practice. In other words, according to Nāgārjuna, both paths allow the devotee to attain the stage of non-regression, the only difference being in the time that it takes to reach the goal. However, T'an-luan modified this teaching slightly, and taught that the attainment stage of non-regression in this world is the path of difficult practice, whereas attaining the stage of non-regression through rebirth in the Pure Land constitutes the path of easy practice. In other words, he discusses the differences in these two paths by virtue of the difference between this world and the Pure Land. To Nāgārjuna, the problem of the attainment of the stage of non-regression did not especially give rise to the necessity for rebirth in the Pure Land. For T'an-luan, however, the attainment of the stage of non-regression within the path of easy practice was considered to be one of the benefits (*teh-i*) attained after one had been reborn in the Pure Land. According to his teaching, then, in order to attain the stage of non-regression, one must first be reborn in the Pure Land, and rebirth in the Pure Land became a necessary condition for the attainment of the stage of non-regression.

Also, Nāgārjuna held that calling on the Names of the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas constituted, in its totality, the easy practice, whereas T'an-luan, in opposition to this, held that faith in one Buddha, the Buddha Amitābha, constituted the path of easy practice. Furthermore, T'an-luan

strongly stressed the power inherent in the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha, and that such attainments as rebirth in the Pure Land, and the attainment of the stage of non-regression once one is reborn in the Pure Land, were all due to the empowerment (*chu-chih*) derived from these vows. It is in these points, then, the teachings of T'an-luan differed greatly from those of Nāgārjuna. T'an-luan drew these teachings from both the *Wu-liang shou ching* and the *Wang-sheng lun*, and it was he who first introduced this theory of the two paths into the Pure Land faith. From that time onward, this theory came to be used very frequently in subsequent Pure Land writings.

T'an-luan deeply revered Nāgārjuna, for we find in his *Tsan O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* the phrases:

The Great Master Nāgārjuna, the Mahāsattva,
was born at the beginning of the period of the Counterfeit Dharma,
and served as a model of Truth.
He closed and locked the doors of error, and opened the pathway
of Truth. For this reason, all eyes in Jambudvīpa
look to him in reverence, he who is enlightened in the Stage of Joy.
I go to Amitābha for Refuge, that I may be reborn in Sukhāvātī.

And in another passage:

In the manner that when the dragons move, clouds must follow
in Jambudvīpa, he gave off hundreds of rays of light.
Homage to the Venerable One, the most compassionate Nāgārjuna,
we bow down to him in reverence.

In the above passages, the phrase "He who is enlightened in the Stage of Joy" (Skt. *pramuditā-bhūmi*) refers to a passage in the ninth chapter, the chapter "On Stanzas" in the *Ju Leng-chia ching*, translated in 513 by Bodhiruci. In this chapter, the Buddha predicts the eventual rebirth of Nāgārjuna into Sukhāvātī. T'an-luan had studied the Ssu-lun Tradition (the Madhyamaka Tradition), and it was probably at this time that he first became a devotee of Nāgārjuna. His faith was deepened by this reference in the *Ju Leng-chia ching*, and it was probably based on this that his faith in the Pure Land teachings became as firm as it did. In addition, the Chapter on "Easy Practice" mentions the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha, and Amitābha and his Pure Land are praised in a *gāthā* of some thirty-two lines in this same work. T'an-luan clearly got his inspiration from these works of Nāgārjuna, and so developed his theory of easy practice with respect to this one Buddha only, as well as the teaching that the stage of non-regression is attained only after the attainment of rebirth in the Pure Land.

3. The Other Power of the Fundamental Vows

Needless to say, T'an-luan's stress on the power of the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha is based on the teachings of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, but we also get some hints for this theory from the writings of Nāgārjuna.

The *Wu-liang-shou ching* circulated early in South China and we know from the monastic biographies that the monk Fa-tu of the Chi-hsia ssu Monastery and the monk Pao-liang of the Ling-wei ssu Monastery lectured frequently on this scripture. However, we do not have any idea what their views on these Fundamental Vows were, since no works from their hands, or from their disciples exist. Nevertheless, it was T'an-luan who was the first person to employ this scripture in the north, and to stress the power of these vows in his teaching. It is for this reason that he exercised a great influence on all later Pure Land writers and thinkers.

T'an-luan teaches the greatness of the power of these Fundamental Vows of Amitābha in the last volume of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*. In this passage, he states that cultivating the practice of the five types of *nien-fo*, benefiting oneself and others, and speedily attaining *samyaksambodhi* (supreme, perfect enlightenment), is due basically to the Tathāgata Amitābha. In this way, Amitābha is considered the "predominating condition" (*ts'eng-shang yuan*, Skt: *adhipati-pratyaya*) for all these attainments. The power of the Fundamental Vows of the Tathāgata Amitābha also conditions birth in the Pure Land, and the performance of all types of good deeds by bodhisattvas, humans, and devas. If these powers of the Buddha did not exist, then his forty-eight vows would have been set up in vain. Hence, what T'an-luan teaches is that birth in the Pure Land, etc., is made possible by means of the power of the actual attainment (*ch'eng-chiu*, Skt.: *siddhi*) of these forty-eight vows by Amitābha.

Of these forty-eight, T'an-luan lays particular stress on the eleventh, eighteenth, and twenty-second vows. It is by means of these vows that one can be reborn in the Pure Land, attain the stage of non-regression, and can speedily attain Buddhahood.

The eleventh vow is the fundamental vow that the devotee will abide in the assembly of those definitively determined [to be reborn in the Pure Land]. T'an-luan holds that it is by means of the power of this vow that those reborn in the Pure Land all abide in the assembly of those definitively determined, and are able to attain this stage of non-regression.

The eighteenth vow is the fundamental vow of rebirth in the Pure Land, and T'an-luan holds that it is by means of the power of this vow that all beings in the ten directions are able to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

The twenty-second vow is the vow that the devotee will certainly go to the abode just before the stage of total enlightenment. It is by means of this vow that, when the devotee is reborn into the Pure Land, he will do so by

jumping over all of the various religious practices of the different bhūmis, and will presently cultivate the qualities of the Universally Auspicious One (Samantabhadra). T'an-luan teaches that it is by means of the power of this vow that the devotee who is to be born into the Pure Land does not need to gradually traverse all the different bhūmis in sequence. Rather than going from the first bhūmi to the second, from the second bhūmi to the third, and so on, the devotee is enabled to jump over all of the various practices of these different bhūmis, and speedily attain the stage of "only one more rebirth" (*i-sheng pu-ch'u*).

In a word then, T'an-luan borrowed heavily from the thought of Nāgārjuna, taking for his point of departure the problem of non-regression. Since it was his aim to attain Buddhahood as quickly as possible, he laid special emphasis on the eleventh and the twenty-second vows. But all of these benefits are benefits attained only after the devotee's rebirth in the Pure Land, so as a preparation for the attainment of these benefits, T'an-luan also stressed the eighteenth vow, the vow that enables the devotee to attain rebirth by calling on the name of Amitābha. T'an-luan then constructed his theory of the "other-power" of these Fundamental Vows, centering on these three vows. The path of difficult practice is a path centered on one's own power, and the cultivation of this path is not supported by any other power. The path of easy practice takes advantage of the power of the Buddha's Vows, and one is able to be reborn in the Pure Land and, sustained by the power of the Buddha, to speedily attain Buddhahood. In this manner, T'an-luan taught what he considered to be the true message of the Pure Land faith. In later years, the theory of the Fundamental Vows propounded by Shan-tao will be seen to derive directly from the theories first taught by T'an-luan.

4. The Five Teachings of Nien-fo

In his teachings, T'an-luan stressed the power of the vows of the Buddha, and centered his theories on the concepts of birth, non-regression, and the speedy attainment of Buddhahood. Of these three, non-regression and the attainment of Buddhahood were automatically realized by virtue of the power of the vows of the Buddha. However, in order to attain rebirth, a specific type of religious practice was demanded of the devotee: these were the Five Nien-fo Teachings (*wu nien-fo men*), which were ultimately based on the *Wang-sheng lun* of Vasubandhu.

These five are: "Prostrations" (*li-pai men*), "Singing Praises" (*tsan-t'an men*), "Making Vows" (*tso-yuan men*), "Insight Meditation" (*kuan-ts'a men*), and the "Transfer of Merits" (*hui-hsiang men*). The treatise attributed to Vasubandhu explains these practices, but T'an-luan explains them in greater detail, and gives many of his own opinions in these explanations.

"Prostrations" means that one should always turn his thoughts to the desire for rebirth and make prostrations to the Tathāgata Amitābha. T'an-luan's understanding of this item does not differ from that of Vasubandhu.

"Singing Praises" means to recite the names of "the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light in all the Ten Directions" (*chin-shih-fang wu-ai-kuang ju-lai*: Amitābha). In explanation of this practice, the *Wang-sheng lun* states: "One's verbal actions sing the praises of, and recite the Name of the Tathāgata. / The wisdom and glory of the Tathāgata / are the meaning of his Name; one should want to truly cultivate its aspects." T'an-luan understands this passage as saying that light (the glory, Skt.: *ābha*) is the mark of the Buddha's wisdom, so he is called "the mark of wisdom and glory." This light illumines all the worlds in the ten directions. It removes the darkness of ignorance from all beings, and fulfills all the vows and aspirations of all creatures. Thus, if one truly cultivates this practice, and if one is in union (*hsiang-yin*, yogic union) with the meaning of the Name of the Tathāgata, the darkness of ignorance will be destroyed, and all aspirations will be satisfied. However, if beings should call on the Name, and their ignorance is not destroyed and their aspirations remain unsatisfied, this is only because they are not in union with the significance of the Name in their practice. They do not know that the Tathāgata is the "true aspect body" (*shih-hsing shen*), and that he is a form for the benefit of living beings (*wei-wu shen*). Furthermore, it is because their faith is not honest, sometimes being there and sometimes not: their faith is not one-pointed and definitive, and is not continuous, being interrupted by other thoughts. For these reasons, then, their practice is not correct, and they are unable to attain a yogic union with the significance of the Name of the Buddha. If, however, the devotee's faith is sincere, if it is definitive and continuous, he will be able to attain a yogic union with the significance of the Buddha's name, and will be able to fulfill his every aspiration.

This theory owes much to the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. In the thirty-fourth volume of the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, it is taught that the Buddha has two bodies or modes of appearance. First, there is the body arisen from Dharmatā (*fa-hsing sheng-shen fo*). Second, there the transformation body manifested, in either a superior or an inferior manner, in accord with the world in which it arises (*sui-shih chien-yü lieh hsien-hua fo*). The first type of Buddha, the body arisen from Dharmatā, is without limits, and is able to fulfill all aspirations. It is taught that if one but hears the Name of this Buddha, one will be able to attain enlightenment. Since the Buddha Amitābha is the Buddha whose body has arisen from Dharmatā, when one truly (correctly) cultivates these practices, all of one's aspirations should be fulfilled.

The *Wang-sheng lun* also has the passage: "With oneness of mind I go for refuge to the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light, which fills all the ten directions." If one's faith is definitive and continuous, one will be in a yogic

union with the significance (the light) of the Name of Amitābha, and will be able to destroy the darkness of ignorance.

Of these various theories, the teaching that one's faith must be "definitive and continuous" (*hsin-hsin ch'üeh-ting hsiang-hsu*) was later elaborated by Shan-tao, and came to be regarded by him as the primary cause (*ch'eng-yin*) for one's rebirth into the Pure Land. Nevertheless, this portion of the explanation is T'an-luan's own understanding of the problem, and we would do well not to consider this theory as part of the original intention of the *Wang-sheng lun*. In any case, the phrase in the section on "Singing Praises"—"one should want to truly cultivate its aspects"—is parallel to similar phrases in other sections. For example, in the section "Making Vows", we have "one should want to truly cultivate śamatha," and in the section "Insight Meditation," we have "one should want to truly cultivate vipaśyana." From these remarks we can clearly see that, according to T'an-luan, the purport of these passages is that one should want to correctly cultivate the religious practice of yogic union. If this is the case, then the Chinese phrase *hsiang-ying* must be considered a translation of the Sanskrit word *yoga*. The sense of this section, then, is that singing the praises of Amitābha is for the purpose of correctly cultivating the religious practice of a type of yoga.

There are four types of yoga (union): yoga with respect to the external sphere of sense perception (*viśaya*), yoga with respect to the religious practice (*cārya*), yoga with respect to the resultant state (*phala*), and yoga with respect to the Teaching (*deśanā*). Singing the praises of Amitābha's qualities corresponds to the yoga of the resultant state. The practice of śamatha and vipaśyana is the yoga with respect to religious practice. The passage describing the ornaments of the Pure Land corresponds to the yoga with the *viśaya*. The whole of the five nien-fo teachings is largely arranged as the yoga with respect to the teaching. We have already discussed this in detail in the thirteenth chapter of my *Jōdo-kyō gairon* (An Outline of the Pure Land Teachings), and so will not go into it here. We must conclude in any case, that T'an-luan devised the teaching of the yogic correspondence of the significance of the Name (light) because he was dissatisfied with the explanation given by Vasubandhu.

The third teaching, that of "Making Vows," means that the devotee, with one-pointedness of mind and a full and exclusive concentration of thought, makes the vow to attain rebirth in the Pure Land; he correctly cultivates stilling of the mind, or śamatha. T'an-luan explains this word "stilling" as "the stilling of evil," the ending of evil deeds. He divides this into three aspects. First, if one thinks only of the Buddha Amitābha with one-pointedness of mind, and so desires to be reborn in the Pure Land, the Name of this Buddha and the Name of his land are able to put an end to all manner of evil. Second, since the Pure Land of Sukhāvatī transcends the Three Dhātus, if one is reborn into this land, all the evils generated by his

body, speech, or mind, will automatically be stilled. Third, the power of the Tathāgata Amitābha, which is maintained through his enlightenment, will naturally still the striving after the Two Vehicles (that is, striving for the stage of Arhat or Pratyekabuddha) on the part of those beings who are reborn in the Pure Land. These three types of stilling all arise from the true and actual (*ju-shih*) meritorious qualities of the Tathāgata, and so the text speaks of the correct or true cultivation of the practice of śamatha.

The fourth teaching is that of "Insight Meditation." This means that with "right thought" (*ch'eng-nien*, part of the Eightfold Path), one is to visualize or meditate upon the twenty-nine different types of adornments of the Pure Land. That is, one should correctly cultivate the practice of vipaśyana, or insight. T'an-luan divides this vipaśyana into two different types. First, in this world the devotee should direct his thought to, and visualize the qualities of the ornaments of the Pure Land. Since these qualities are real and true (*ju-shih*), the person who cultivates this visualization will also attain (through yogic union) these true qualities, and thus will certainly attain birth in the Pure Land. Second, when one is reborn in the Pure Land, he will then be able to see Amitābha, and a Bodhisattva who has not yet been awakened to his own pure mind will be able, exactly as the Bodhisattvas of pure mind, to realize his own Dharmakāya. This is why the author speaks of the correct (*ju-shih*) cultivation of the practice of Vipāśyana. In his explanation of the word śamatha as "putting an end to evil," and not as mental stilling, he was clearly in opposition to the accepted understanding of this word. This is also the case with his understanding of the word Vipāśyana as meaning to see the Buddha after one had attained rebirth in the Pure Land. Both of these explanations are at variance with the understanding of the original author of the *Wang-sheng lun*, Vasubandhu. Rather, we must understand that T'an-luan is concerned primarily with the Buddha himself, and with the power inherent in the Buddha and his Name, and that he explains the whole of this text in this light. Although there are passages which are inconsistent with the meaning of the original text, T'an-luan is himself consistent throughout the whole of his commentary.

The fifth teaching is that of the "Transfer of Merits." This means that the devotee transfers the merits that he has accumulated through the practice of "the roots of good," his good deeds, not for the attainment of his own personal enjoyment, but for the relief of the sufferings of all sentient beings. He should desire to take all beings to himself so they may be reborn into the Pure Land with him.

T'an-luan also divides the transfer of merits into two different aspects: "The aspect of going" (*wang-hsiang*), and "the aspect of returning" (*huang-hsiang*). The "aspect of going" means that one gives his own stock of merits to all sentient beings, with the vow that he may, together with them, be reborn in the Pure Land. The "aspect of returning" means that, after he has been born in the Pure Land, he attains śamatha and vipaśyana. Then, if he

attains success (*siddhi*) in the power of expedient means, he will return to this Saha world to work for the conversion of all sentient beings, so that together they may follow the path of the Buddha.

The intention to transfer these merits (the *hui-hsiang hsin*) is none other than the “unsurpassed Bodhicitta” (*wu-shang p’u-t’i-hsin*) spoken of in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in the passage describing the three types of persons who are reborn into the Pure Land. This unsurpassed Bodhicitta is identical with the aspiration to attain Buddhahood (the *yuan tso-fo hsin*). This aspiration to attain Buddhahood is identical with the thought to save all beings (the *tu chung-sheng hsin*), and the thought to save all beings is identical to taking all beings to oneself and causing them to be reborn in a land that has a Buddha. Consequently, if one desires to be reborn in the Pure Land of Sukhāvati, one must generate this Bodhicitta. If one does not generate this Bodhicitta, but seeks rebirth in this Pure Land only in order to enjoy the pleasures of this land, then, it is argued, he will not be able to do so. In other words, if one does not generate Bodhicitta, one will not be able to be reborn in the Pure Land. The teaching of the necessity of the Bodhicitta for rebirth is termed “the theory of the Bodhicitta being the primary cause” (*p’u-t’i-hsin ch’eng-yin shou*; Japanese: the *bodai-shin shōin setsu*).

In this way, then, T’an-luan taught that all of these five Nien-fo teachings constitutes the means by which the devotee could attain rebirth in the Pure Land. Borrowing from the ideas of Vasubandhu’s *Wang-sheng lun*, it appears that he taught that the most essential of these five teachings was the fourth teaching, that of insight meditation (*kuan-ts’a*). However, as we have mentioned above, he firmly believed in and taught the importance of the “easy practice of calling on the Name” (*ch’eng-ming i-hsing*), a teaching based ultimately on the *Shih-chu p’i-p’o-sha lun*. T’an-luan thus stressed the recitation of the Name of the Tathāgata in the second teaching, that of “singing the praises” of the Buddha. He laid great stress on the calling on, or the recitation of, the Name of the Buddha, for he believed that the very Name itself contained a profound number of merits, and exhorted Pure Land devotees to hear it frequently, and to believe in it.

In the beginning of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, T’an-luan says that the Name of the Buddha Amitābha constitutes the “nature” (*t’i*) of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. He explains that the Name of the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light possesses the “function” (*yung*) of destroying the darkness of ignorance. Also, the Name of the Tathāgata and the name of his land (Sukhāvati) are able to put an end to all forms of evil. Additionally, even if the devotee has transgressions and impurities from countless numbers of births and deaths, when he hears the “highest, unarisen, pure and pear-like gem of the Name of the Tathāgata Amitābha, and when this Name is cast into his defiled mind, his transgressions will be extinguished from thought

to thought, his mind will become pure, and he will attain rebirth." His *Wu-liang-shou ching feng-tsan* also states that

If all who hear the meritorious Name of Amitābha
but have faith in, and take joy in what they have heard,
and if for one instant of thought they have utmost sincerity,
and if they transfer these merits and desire rebirth, then they shall
attain rebirth.

T'an-luan taught that ten continuous recitations (*shih-nien hsiang-hsü*) constitute the cause by which one attains rebirth. He based this on two passages. First, there are the words of the eighteenth vow in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, "If one is not reborn into the Pure Land with but ten recitations, then I shall not attain to Supreme Enlightenment." Second, there is the passage describing the lowest rank of the lowest grade of rebirth in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. This latter states that if one recites "Na-wu O-mi-t'o Fo" ten times, all his transgressions will be extinguished and he will attain birth. T'an-luan interpreted this phrase as signifying that the work necessary for birth had been accomplished.

As he states in the first volume of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, the word *nien* (here "recitation") signifies calling to remembrance (*i-nien*) the Buddha Amitābha. This is further divided into its "general aspect" (*tsung-hsiang*) and its "specific aspect" (*pieh-hsiang*). Whichever of these two one chooses to visualize, he is not supposed to have any other thoughts in his mind. It is these ten continuous thoughts which T'an-luan terms "the ten recitations," and this is also the case for ten continuous recitations.

In illustration of this one-pointedness of mind, T'an-luan employs, in his *Lüeh-lun An-lo ching-t'u i*, the example of "taking off one's clothes in crossing the river." Suppose that there is a man walking through a deserted land, and bandits rush upon him, intent upon killing him. He begins to flee, but suddenly in front of him appears a river that he must cross. If he crosses the river, he will escape the danger of the bandits: so this person is concerned only with a way to cross the river, and no other thoughts preoccupy him. He thinks, "When I get to the bank of the river, should I throw myself into the river with my clothes on, or should I take them off? If I go into the river with my clothes on, I shall perhaps drown, but if I try to take my clothes off, I probably will not have the time to do so." At the time, this person has only the thought of how to cross the river, and he has no other thoughts. It is in this manner, then, that the devotee should with singleness of mind think on the Buddha Amitābha, and his mind should be interrupted with no other thoughts: when ten such thoughts succeed one another, this is what is termed "the ten continuous thoughts." This also applies to the recitation of the Name of the Buddha, or the visualization of the major and minor marks of the Buddha. In both of these cases the

devotee should exclusively and totally concentrate his mind, and should have no other thoughts in his mind, and if ten such thoughts succeed one another, this is termed “the ten thoughts or recitations.” If in this manner he concentrates his mind and visualizes the marks of the Buddha, etc., the devotee will be unable to know just how many thoughts have elapsed, since he will not be concerned with any other thoughts, such as counting the thoughts from one to ten. But if initially he remembers the Buddha, and then thinks of something else, and then thinks on the Buddha again, and then thinks of another thing, he will in this manner be able to know the number of his thoughts, but his thoughts will be interrupted, and so these thoughts cannot be termed continuous.

In opposition to this, however, T'an-luan holds that these full ten thoughts (*chü-tsu shih-nien*) signify the completion of the work or practice necessary for rebirth, so it is not absolutely necessary for the devotee himself to know the number of his thoughts. The cicada is born in the summer and dies in this same summer, so he does not know spring or autumn (the passage of time, a quotation from *Chuang-tzu*). However, if someone who does know the passage of longer periods of time views the cicada, it becomes clear to the viewer that his lifespan is very short. In this same way, then, we unenlightened beings are unable to know the successful completion of these ten thoughts, but when we are viewed by someone who has attained the supernormal psychic powers (*ṛddhi*), it is clear to him whether we have done so or not. The devotee need only recollect the Buddha with one-pointedness of mind, with a mind undisturbed by any other thing, and he need only continuously accumulate such thoughts. If, however, he feels the need to know the number of thoughts that he has accumulated, T'an-luan teaches that there is a special method for knowing their number, but this method is only transmitted orally, and cannot be written down. Based on this, then, T'an-luan lays great stress on the continuation of concentrated thoughts, for this constitutes the essential truth of the completion of the work necessary for rebirth.

5. Amitābha and the Pure Land

In the period in which T'an-luan lived, there had not yet developed any teachings or theories with respect to the classification of the Pure Lands. Drawing on the teachings of the *Wang-sheng lun* and the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, T'an-luan states that the Pure Land of Amitābha transcends the Three Dhātus. The *Lüeh-lun* states that the land of Sukhāvati is not included within any of these Three Dhātus, for this is the teaching of the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. And why is this the case? It is not within *kāmadhātu* (the realm of desire) since there is no desire in Sukhāvati. On the other hand, it is a real abode, a *bhūmi*, so it is not included within the *rūpadhātu* (the realm of

form). Finally, because there are shapes and colors in the Pure Land, it is not included within the *ārūpyadhātu* (the formless realm).

The *Wang-sheng lun* contains a passage stating that “it far transcends the realms of rebirth of the Three Dhātus.” T’an-luan comments on this passage in the first volume of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*. He states that while viewing these Three Dhātus, the Buddha saw them all to be illusory and unsubstantial, constantly revolving and endless in and of themselves, like a caterpillar in its wanderings, and like a cocoon enmeshing itself in its own bonds. For this reason, the Buddha initially gave rise to these pure qualities. Taking compassion on the living beings who were bound in these Three Dhātus and subject to perverted views and much impurity, so the Buddha wished to establish a place that was not illusory and insubstantial, nor in a constant state of Samsaric flux and endlessly cyclical. In short, he desired a place that was pleasurable (*sukhā*) and pure, and it is for this reason that he gave rise to these qualities of pure adornment.

Furthermore, T’an-luan does not list any names for the various bodies of the Buddha—Saṃbhogakāya, Nirmanakāya, etc. In his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, T’an-luan says that the Bodhisattva Dharmākara attained the stage of non-regression (*anutpādadharmakṣānti*) in the presence of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja. His stage of spiritual development at this time was that of the Ārya-gotra, “the clan of the Āryans” (he was now bound for eventual full enlightenment). In this Ārya-gotra, he set up forty-eight vows, which in turn gave rise to the Pure Land. This land was attained while he was still in the causal state (the state of a Bodhisattva, and not a Buddha).

In his *Lüeh-lun An-lo ching-t’u i*, T’an-luan further writes that the Bodhisattva Dharmākara made these great vows in the presence of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja, taking for his purview all the different Buddha Lands. These vows were completed during the course of numberless *asamkhyeya* kalpas, during which time, too, he cultivated all the Pāramitās, eventually perfecting good and attaining unsurpassed Bodhi. This Pure Land was thus something attained by means of a specific karmic action, and for this reason, this Pure Land is not included within any of the Three Dhātus. Based on this, then, T’an-luan without doubt holds that the Buddha Amitābha was a Saṃbhogakāya, and that his Pure Land was a Saṃbhoga Land.

Chi-tsang, in his *Kuan-ching i-shu*, says that a master (or masters?) of the north holds that Amitābha’s Pure Land is not included within any of the Three Dhātus. Instead, the claim is that the Bodhisattva Dharmākara made his vows while in the stage of Dharmakāya, a stage above the eighth bhūmi. It was by means of these vows that he created his Pure Land, termed a Saṃbhoga Land. This North Chinese master may, of course, be T’an-luan.

T’an-luan was also the first to attempt to reconcile two contradictory teachings within the Pure Land corpus. The *Wu-liang-shou ching* says that countless numbers of (Hinayāna) śrāvakas dwell in Amitābha’s Pure Land.

In apparent contradiction, the *Wang-sheng lun* teaches that beings in (lit.: the seeds of) the Two Vehicles (śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas) are not born into the Pure Land. T'an-luan attempts a reconciliation on two points: first, in this world of the five impurities, the one (the One Vehicle teaching) is divided into three (the Three Vehicles). In the Pure Land, these five impurities do not exist, so there is no distinction between these Three Vehicles, and beings in the two lower vehicles therefore do not dwell in the Pure Land. When the *Wu-liang-shou ching* says that śrāvakas dwell in the Pure Land, this is referring only to the Arhats (those who have reached the goal of the śrāvaka path), and does not refer to *real* śrāvakas. The Arhat has cut off the defilements (*fan-nao*; *kleśas*), and is no longer reborn in any of the Three Dhātus, but has not yet—which is outside of the Three Dhātus—and it is here that he must now continue to seek out unsurpassed Bodhi. When the Arhat is born into the Pure Land, he merely keeps his original name of “śrāvaka” without actually being one.

The second point that T'an-luan makes is that the seeds (*chung-tzu*; *bījas*) of the Two Vehicles do not arise in the Pure Land. Thus the *Wang-sheng lun* can say that the “seeds of the Two Vehicles do not arise” (*erh-ch'eng chung pu-sheng*) in the Pure Land. However, this does not prevent beings in the Two Vehicles here on earth from being reborn in the Pure Land. For example, the orange tree does not produce any fruit in North China, but its fruit can be seen in the market places of South China. In this way, the seeds (beings) of the Two Vehicles do not arise in the Pure Land, but this does not mean that beings who are śrāvakas in this world cannot go to the Pure Land. In this hypothesis, then, real śrāvakas are allowed to dwell in the Pure Land. This problem was also examined in later years by Shan-tao, as well as by various other masters. It is clearly Vasubandhu's teaching in the *Wang-sheng lun* that the Pure Land is the abode of Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas only, and that there are no śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas there under any guise. Despite this, a large number of these masters adopted this latter explanation, holding that actual śrāvakas dwelt in the Pure Land.

Kōgatsuin Jinrei's "Introduction to *The Ronchū Lectures*"

Introduction and
Translation by
W. S. Yokoyama

KŌGATSUIN JINREI (1749–1817) regarded the systematizer of the “East Academy” (i.e., the academy of Higashi Hongwanji), was the epitome of the Academy Lecturer, the highest title attainable by the son of a temple family during the Edo period. A prolific writer he produced upward of a hundred works, some of which are read and studied even today, such as the *Ronchū Lectures* introduced here. He was also a popular speaker who traveled the country to give talks, a strategy that no doubt helped to promote the Academy, as well recruit new students from among the thousands of Pure Land temples in Japan.

Early on in his career, Jinrei was just another name among hundreds of contenders. There were people like Hōrei (1748–1816) who was a year older and had similar ambitions but different ideas. There was also Senmyō (1749–1812) who was the same age and with whom he would later work closely. But it was Jinrei who had a knack for bringing people together on academic matters about which they could not at first agree. He thus excelled in the role of systematizer not only by his writings but by these personal qualities as a mediator. By this time Jinrei became Senior Lecturer and his popularity must have been at its zenith. One record shows the student enrollment in his Suitensha society in Kyoto had over a thousand names at one point. Sheer numbers alone guaranteed his lineage would somehow survive into future generations, as indeed it has.

The interest Jinrei had in promoting Shinshū literacy among the people is also seen in his role of co-editing with Senmyō an affordable, easy-to-read version of the Shinshū teachings called *Shinshū kana shōgyō*, completed in 1812, a work commemorating the 550th year of Shinran's passing. This thirteen volume edition contained the exact same selection of thirty-nine Shinshū works as in the elegantly printed thirty-one volume *Shinshū hōyō* published by the Nishi Hongwanji in 1765. However, its compact size no doubt contributed to its popularity among Shinshū followers for many generations, until it was replaced by the modern versions used now.

The short talk that follows is the introductory portion from Jinrei's voluminous *Lectures on [T'an-luan's] Commentary on [Vasubandhu's]*

Treatise, which in the modern Hōzōkan edition totals over seven hundred pages. Its size notwithstanding, it has undergone numerous printings, at least five times in the past century alone, the most recent edition in 1981 being supplied with an index to the work. Its popularity is due in part to the fact that the published text of these talks are in plain, modern Japanese, not Sino-Japanese (*kanbun*), and scholars interested in this text will find them highly accessible.

There are literally hundreds of commentaries on T'an-luan's *Commentary* that have been produced by Japanese Pure Land scholars over the centuries, attesting to the strategic importance of this work. During the Kamakura period (1185–1333) most of the commentaries were by Jōdoshū scholars. With the establishment of the two Hongwanjis in Kyoto at the start of the Tokugawa period in 1603 and the subsequent formation of their respective Academies, the Nishi Hongwanji being the first in 1638, *Ronchū* commentaries by Jōdo Shinshū scholars began to appear as well.

The *Ronchū* has a special place in Jōdo Shinshū because of the emphasis Shinran places on it. Interestingly, the earliest sample we have of a printed version of the *Ronchū* in Japan is a copy with Shinran's annotation; that is, it is an undated woodblock print edition of unknown provenance to which Shinran, in 1256, indicated where to parse the unpunctuated medieval Sino-Japanese text. It is also from this time on that *Ronchū* commentaries began to appear in the Japanese Pure Land community.

The number of modern studies on this text are considerable, with the lion's share being done by Nishi Hongwanji-related scholars. At the same time it should be noted that modern Buddhist scholarship in Japan has always relied heavily on early Tokugawa studies by scholars such as Jinrei. While all of what he has to say may not stand up to modern scholarship, much of what he says presents the *Ronchū* in a way relevant to understanding the larger textual context in which it appears.

As to why T'an-luan's *Commentary* is so important to the Pure Land tradition, as a commentary on a discourse traditionally associated with the *Sūtra of Infinite Life* it brings out in simple terms the significance of the latter. The *Commentary* clearly provides categories that express this Other Power-generated movement from the world of Buddha to the world of believer reflected in this numinous experience of the infinite Buddha light.

Introduction to *The Lectures on T'an-luan's Commentary*¹

by
Kōgatsuin Jinrei

This work, [T'an-luan's] *Commentary on the Discourse* [Ronchū], is the master key that unlocks the secrets of the Pure Land teaching, it is the hinge on which the doors of the Shin school turn. Those who seek to enter the portals of the Pure Land must make every effort to come to terms with this document.

First of all, the translation of the *Discourse on the Pure Land* [attributed to Vasubandhu] in the Land of Han [China] was done by the Tripitaka Master Bodhiruci during the Northern Wei. He produced his translation in 529, when Master T'an-luan (476–542) was in his fifty-fourth year.

If we look at the *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks*, Master T'an-luan's taking refuge in the Pure Land way through Bodhiruci's teaching occurred in the two or three year period when [Vasubandhu's] *Discourse on the Pure Land* was being translated. Thus it was through receiving instruction from the Tripiṭaka Master that [T'an-luan] composed this *Commentary on the Discourse*.

This *Commentary* came into being when Japan was under the reign of her twenty-[sixth] emperor Keitai. Thus it is truly an ancient treatise, and it is sometimes said that, among the various commentaries on discourses, this must be the first, or so we are led to think. But this is not the case.

It is said that, in Tsan-ning's *Brief History of Monks*, upper scroll [kan], the very first commentary on a Buddhist sūtra in the Land of Han was on Saṃghavarman's translation of the *Dharma Mirror Sūtra* during the time of Sun-ch'uan (182–252) in the Wu dynasty. However, it would seem that the first commentary on a discourse [rather than a sūtra] was unknown [to Tsan-ning], as the *Brief History of Monks* has no such record.

In the sixth scroll of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* of the Liang it says that someone named T'an-ying wrote a treatise on the *Mūlamadhyamaka Śāstra*. T'an-ying was one of the ten philosophers of the Kumārajīva (350–409) assembly. Kumārajīva died sixty-seven years before Master T'an-luan. Generally, Kumārajīva rendered a considerable number of works, the Tripitaka Master translating the *Three Treatises*, the *Mahāprajñāparamitā Upadeśa*, the *Daśabhūmivibhāṣa Śāstra*, the *Sattayasiddhi Śāstra*, and so on. Thus, it is impossible to imagine that the

[heralded] four or ten philosophers of the Kumārajīva assembly did not produce commentaries on these discourses.

We can surmise from this that this *Commentary on the Discourse* is not the very first of a vast number of such commentaries. At the same time it goes without saying that this *Commentary on the Discourse* is indeed an ancient commentary. In later generations, there is none among such commentaries that is earlier than the *Commentary on the Discourse*. As a consequence, although Ching-ying [Hui-yüan, 523–592] and T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i, 538–598] were his contemporaries in the same world, by dint of the fact he was their senior by a great number of years, these masters all relied on him.

In the introductory dedication of Ching-ying [Hui-yüan]'s *Lectures on Ten Stages*, in one scroll, there is a passage thought to be modeled after the *Commentary on the Discourse*, where it gives the analogy of the filial son [who thinks of his parents] and the loyal retainer [who thinks of his lord]. Further, in T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i]'s *Passages from the Lotus*, scroll 1, section 1, it says, "T'an-luan says," and cites the passage, "Fine distinctions are like smoke in the wind, what is hard to polish ends up as so much dust blown away." While these are not the words of the *Commentary on the Discourse*, it appears that they were Master T'an-luan's words from his commentary on the *Mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra*. This is a metaphor to the effect that, if we were to translate all of the sūtra literature, there are so many fine distinctions they make that we stand in danger of getting lost in the tangle of words and losing the sense of what these passages mean.

The reason why these words are cited here is the *Lotus Treatise* of Master Yun-fa of Kuang-che is so finely divided into categories, where it presents evidence that breaks new ground it cites Chang-an [561–632, the fourth T'ien-t'ai patriarch]. In the third scroll of the *Subtle Praise of the Lotus*, by T'zu-en [Kuei-ki, 632–682], it directly cites from the *Treatise's* latter scroll on upaya. From this we can surmise that the *Commentary on the Discourse* was not adopted exclusively by the patriarchs and masters of the Pure Land way such as Hsi-hua [Tao-ch'o, 562–645] and Kuang-ming [Shan-tao, d. 662, 681]. We can see evidence that it impressed the various eminent masters of the Sui and T'ang and was adopted by them.

But what strikes us as rather strange is the fact that, when it comes to the *The Essentials of Birth* of Yokawa [Genshin, 942–1017] of our [native] Japan, [Vasubandhu's] *Discourse on the Pure Land* is quoted but [T'an-luan's] *Commentary on the Discourse* is not cited even once. From the standpoint of our [Jōdo Shinshū] school, in order to preserve the transmission of the seven eminent patriarchs, the *Commentary on the Discourse* should be cited but it is not. As I ponder the matter, it would seem that the *Commentary on the Discourse* was at that time not included among the works in the sūtra collection transmitted to this Northern Citadel [Mount Hiei] of Japan, hence Yokawa [Genshin] had no opportunity to examine it.

In this regard, if we look to a cause we should consider the sūtra catalogues in the Land of Han. Firstly, in the thirteenth scroll of the *Record of Transmission of the Three Treasures*, [by Fei Ch'ang-fang, late 6th century,] there is the *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, in one scroll. While this would normally indicate the *Discourse on the Pure Land* alone without the *Commentary on the Discourse*, the possibility exists that this is a compilation of both the *Discourse* and the *Commentary* together. The reason I say this is because in the [lexicon] *Hui-lin Yin-i*, scroll 47, [by Hui-lin, 737–820,] at the beginning of the entry there is an explanation of the *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, scroll 1, but if we look toward the end it includes an explanation of a passage from [T'an-luan's] *Commentary on the Discourse*. From this we can assume that the *Commentary* as a whole is a running commentary on the translation of the original *Discourse*.

I would especially point out that since the *Commentary* cites the original *Discourse* in its entirety leaving out not a single word, it would seem that despite the title, *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, it is a work that contains the *Commentary* as well. From this we can speculate that the title *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life* in the *Record of Transmission of the Three Treasures* could well be a work that contains the original *Discourse* and the *Commentary* together.

Next, in the fifth scroll of the *Sūtra Catalogue of Schools of the Sui*, [by Fa-ching, ca. 594,] the original *Discourse* is listed as the “*Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, one scroll,” and then in scroll 6, the *Commentary* is listed as “Annotation to the Verses in *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, one scroll, as explained by T'an-luan.” From this piece of evidence it is clarified that, during the Sui, this *Commentary* was transmitted as a document contained in the sūtra canon.

Now, it is noteworthy that in the sūtra records of the T'ang, in the *Great T'ang Record of the Contents of the Canon* of Tao-hsüan (596–667) of Nan-shan the *Commentary on the Discourse* is mentioned. To be precise, in the *Record of the Contents of the Canon*, scroll 1, it gives the *Sūtra of Infinite Life* translated by An Shih-kao [ca. 148] of the Latter Han and then in a detailed note it says that “śramaṇa T'an-luan is the author of a commentary on a discourse explaining this.” Since this “commentary on a discourse” is a commentary to the *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, the mention appears at the end of the first *Sūtra of Infinite Life* [translation]. But this is not all that the Nan-shan work tells us. Toward the end of the entry on the *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life* that appears later on, there is a statement that would be inappropriate to append to the *Sūtra of Infinite Life* itself, to the effect that in the latter portion of the fourth scroll of the *Record of the Contents of the Canon*, in the *Record of Bodhiruci of Wei*, it says: “With regard to the *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life* in 532 a monk made a written record of [his] discussions [with Bodhiruci].” Fur-

ther, at scroll 8, it says "*Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*," and in the latter part of scroll 9, it says it was "eight pages."

Beyond these, we have the *Descriptive Catalogue of Translated Sūtras*, scroll 4, [by Ching-mai, ca. 665], and the *Catalogue of Printed Works of the Buddhist Schools*, scroll 6, [by Ming-ts'uan, ca. 695] that say there was a *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, a one scroll work of eight pages. Also, in scroll 13 [of the same work, as well as the *K'ai-yuan Record*, scroll 6 and 12, latter portion, [by Chih-sheng, 669–740] and the *Chen-yuan Record*, scroll 22, [by Enshō, ca. 778], all of them have "*Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life*, one scroll," indicating the original *Discourse* but not indicating the *Commentary on the Discourse*.

However, in those entries on the *Discourse on the Sūtra of Infinite Life* where the number of pages is indicated, all of them say this is "a one scroll work of eight pages." If this is a work of eight pages, then it cannot be the *Discourse* compiled together with the *Commentary on the Discourse*. This would seem to indicate that the *Commentary on the Discourse* was left out of the [sūtra] repositories in the T'ang. But at least until the Chen-yuan era [785–805] of the T'ang, there is evidence that the *Commentary on the Discourse* enjoyed a vogue. As I mentioned before that the *Commentary* is found in the *Hui-lin Yin-i* of the T'ang. In *Yin-i*, scroll 47, there are four places where the *Commentary on the Discourse* is cited. However, judging from the sūtra catalogues, as explained above, it seems to have been left out of the [sūtra] repositories, as the *Commentary on the Discourse* fell from popularity and in the end became obsolete.

In the present collections, we find the *Discourse on the Pure Land* in the Koryo, Sung, and Ming collections, but not the *Commentary on the Discourse*. However, there is something that the late Kaitetsu-in [Zuie, d. 1782] used to say: that we should be happy the *Commentary on the Discourse* was not included in the Sung and Ming collections. The reason he said this was the *Discourse on the Pure Land* in the Ming collection is full of omissions, hence it was a good thing the *Commentary on the Discourse* was not included in the Sung and Ming collections otherwise it too would have ended up that way.

All of the texts of the translations of sūtras and commentaries that were done during the years of unrest of the Five Dynasties period (907–960) at the end of the T'ang are corrupted and have mistakes. It is important to keep this in mind when reading those texts. This *Commentary on the Discourse* [perhaps] was lost during the disturbances of the Five Dynasties, or it might have already become obsolete before that time. By the time the Great masters Jikaku [Ennin, 794–864] and Chishō [Enchin, 814–891] entered the T'ang in its final years, the *Commentary on the Discourse* was no longer in circulation. This is perhaps the reason why it was not brought to Japan from the continent. Since the *Commentary on the Discourse* was not transmitted to the [sūtra] collection of our Northern Citadel [Mount Hiei],

this would seem to be the reason why the Venerable Genshin was unable to examine it and thus was unable to cite it.

On the other hand, if we ask when it was that [T'an-luan's] *Commentary* reached Japan, it was transmitted to the Southern Capital [Nara] for the first time at the beginning of the T'ang. Evidence of this is seen during the reign of her fortieth emperor, Tenmu (673–686).² During the Hakuho period (672–685), Dharma Master Chikō (ca. 673) of the Gangōji temple in Nara wrote the *Record on the Pure Land*, 5 scrolls [no longer extant]. This record by Chikō was made after he examined [T'an-luan's] *Commentary on the Discourse*.

Thus, in the *Origin of the Pure Land Lineages* by the Venerable Gyōnen (1240–1321) of Tōdaiji we can see a note that says, “Dharma Master Chikō, a monk of the Gangōji of Japan, made a five-scroll *Record on the Treatise on Birth*. As he adopted the principal points made by T'an-luan, it was through T'an-luan that Chikō was able to arrive at an understanding of the Three Treatise [school].” From this we can glean that Chikō examined the *Commentary on the Discourse* and grasped its principles to write his *Record on the Pure Land*. At that time, when Japan was in the Hakuho period, in the Land of Han the T'ang had just begun, and the Great Master Shan-tao was still alive. It was from that time that the *Commentary on the Discourse* was transmitted to the Southern Capital [Nara] of Japan.

It occurs to me that this *Commentary on the Discourse* made the crossing from the the Land of Han along with other treatises of the Three Treatise school. Of the Eight [Buddhist] Schools of Japan, the Three Treatise school is the oldest of the transmissions. The first transmission to Japan was from Dharma Master Ekan of the Koryo [Korea] who received a direct transmission from the Great Master Chia-hsiang [Chi-ts'ang, 549–623] of the T'ang. The grand disciple of Dharma Master Ekan was Dharma Master Chizō who again entered the T'ang to receive the transmission of the Three Treatise school. The disciple of Chizō was Dharma Master Chikō of the Gangōji [in Nara].

In the Pure Land tradition, it is said the Great Master T'an-luan was first a follower of the Three Treatise school but abandoned it for the Pure Land way upon [hearing what] Bodhiruci had to teach. Before we too readily agree that this indeed must have been the case, we must look at the fact that the Three Treatise school of the Southern Capital regarded Master T'an-luan as a teacher in their school. The reason I say this is because we have a person like Dharma Master Chikō of the Three Treatise school who writes a five-scroll *Record on the Pure Land*, and while it is acknowledged that Master T'an-luan also believed in the Pure Land way, ultimately he is to be regarded as a teacher of the Three Treatise school. Thus, [Gyōnen's] *Origin of the Pure Land Lineages* says, “It was through T'an-luan that Chikō was able to arrive at an understanding of the Three Treatise [school].” Seen from this perspective we can glean the fact that this *Commentary on*

the Discourse was transmitted to the Southern Capital long ago as one of the works of the Three Treatise school. I think this gives a fairly accurate account of the route by which the *Commentary on the Discourse* arrived in Japan.

After that, the *Ten Causes of Birth* was composed by Vinaya Master Eikan [1033–1111; also known as Yōkan], who belonged to the Tōdaiji in the Southern Capital, hence was another member of the Three Treatise school. It is said that the Three Treatise school of the Gangōji was later transmitted to the Tōdaiji. As a result we find the *Commentary on the Discourse* cited in Eikan's *Ten Causes of Birth*.

Now, during the age of the original Founder [Hōnen, 1133–1212], the *Commentary on the Discourse* was flourishing in the world, and we see it cited in the *Senchakushū*. At that time, because the original *Discourse* was referred to as the *Discourse on the Pure Land* as well as the *Discourse on Birth*, as seen in [Genshin's] *The Essentials of Birth*. Likewise, with the *Commentary on the Discourse*, from ancient times it was referred to as either the *Pure Land Commentary on the Discourse* or the *Birth Commentary on the Discourse*; in [Eikan's] *Ten Causes of Birth* it is called T'an-luan's *Pure Land Commentary on the Discourse* and in [Hōnen's] *Senchakushū* it is T'an-luan's *Birth Commentary on the Discourse*. At times the original Founder [Hōnen] cites from the *Commentary on the Discourse*, but by and large the *Senchakushū* relies on Shan-tao almost exclusively to explain matters, though [Hōnen] might have used the *Commentary on the Discourse* for his own personal reference without using passages from it.

Now, in the case of the Founder, [Shinran] Shōnin of our [Jōdo Shinshū] school, as has been said from long before, everything depends on the Seven Patriarchs, especially on T'an-luan, for it is especially on Master T'an-luan that the principle of our school is established. For that reason in the *Kōmonrui* [Shinran's work, popularly known as the *Kyōgyōshinshō*] the *Commentary on the Discourse* is cited some thirty-eight times. The *Commentary on the Discourse*, in its two scrolls, upper and lower, is cited virtually in its entirety in the *Kōmonrui*. It can be said that the *Commentary on the Discourse* holds the key to understanding what it truly means to be Jōdo Shinshū, the basic guidelines on which our school models itself being laid down in the Founder's *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The two kinds of transference for going forth and returning, the four cardinal points of teaching, practice, reception, and realization—all of these principles come from [T'an-luan's] *Commentary on the Discourse* that deliberates these matters in depth. Therefore, those who deem themselves heirs to the present tradition must apply themselves to understanding the *Commentary on the Discourse*.

NOTES

1. Kōgatsuin Jinrei, *Chūron koen*, vol. 1, in *Jōdo ronchū kōgi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1973), pp. 1–5.
2. Editors' note: The designation of Temmu as the fortieth emperor of Japan is according to the old count and is not supported historically.

Pure Land's Multilineal Ancestry: A New Metaphor for Understanding the Evolution of "Living Religions"¹

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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."² 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.³ 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.⁴ 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—itself, 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;⁵ (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*.⁶ 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").⁷

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.⁸

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.⁹

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).¹⁰

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*).¹¹ It has been conclusively shown that the Ling-pao texts of Taoism were directly influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism.¹² 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴

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'ō, (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.

Toward a Pro-Active Engaged Shin Buddhism: A Reconsideration of the Teaching of the Two Truths (*shinzoku-nitai*)

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IN THIS ESSAY WE will focus on the well-known teaching of the “two truths” (Jpn. *shinzoku nitai*). This theory has been notably prominent in the history of modern Shin Buddhism and indicates the continuing concern for the relation between Shin teaching and the institutions to society. The theory is one of the most problematic concepts in Shin Buddhism today, encountering sharp criticism from many contemporary thinkers. The reason is that the traditional acceptance of Buddhist truth and its reflection on social ethics have not been mutually integrated, but have been separated to imply two different ways of living by one person. In addition, whether such a view of “two truths” originated in Shinran’s thought or not has also been called in question. The concept of “two-truths” originated in the Mādhyamikan Buddhist tradition. However, it has come to be used in Shin Buddhism to mean Buddha’s Law (Jpn. *buppō*, Skt. *buddhadharma*) and King’s Law (Jpn. *ōbō*), which has nothing to do with the original Mādhyamikan usage.

It is the purpose of this essay to survey the historical development and application of the concept of “two truths” in the history of Japanese Buddhism. We will take up its modern interpretation and offer a reinterpretation more consonant with the contemporary situation of Shin Buddhism within democratic society.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TEACHING OF THE TWO TRUTHS

The idea of “two truths” is derived from Mādhyamikan teaching found in the following verses of the *Chūron*, a Chinese translation of Nāgārjuna’s

(150–250) *Mūlamādhyaṃaka kārikā* by Kumārajīva (344–413):

All Buddhas expound the teaching for all sentient beings
 On the basis of the “two truths”;
 One is the mundane truth
 And the other, the highest truth.
 If one cannot understand
 And discern the meaning of the “two truths,”
 One cannot understand the true meaning
 At the depth of the Buddha Dharma.
 If not based on the mundane truth,
 The highest truth cannot be obtained.
 If the highest truth is not obtained,
 One cannot attain nirvāṇa.¹

“The highest truth” (Skt. *paramārtha-satya*) and “the mundane truth” (Skt. *loka-samvṛti-satya*) in the above verses have traditionally been called in Japanese *shintai* (supramundane truth) and *zokutai* (mundane truth), which are combined to create the phrase *shinzoku nitai*. As we clearly see in these verses, the notion of the “two truths” refers to the two phases of ultimate reality taught in Mahāyāna Buddhism, i.e., *śūnyatā* (emptiness, void). *Śūnyatā* cannot be understood unless these two phases are taken into consideration; one is the negative phase which is totally beyond conceptual understanding, while the positive is within the realm of human comprehension. It is the sphere of our ordinary, conventional truth.

In actuality, however, “mundane truth” means presenting the teaching in words and concepts in order to reveal the ultimate reality or *śūnyatā*, which is beyond human comprehension. It is because of the function of such words and concepts that the teaching is likened to “a finger pointing to the moon.” Without the finger (words and concepts, or mundane truth), one cannot be aware of the moon (highest reality beyond words and concepts, or supramundane truth).

At the core of Shinran’s Pure Land thought, we can definitely find the original Mādhyamikan sense of the “two truths.” He was much influenced by T’an-luan (476–542), who is the third of the Seven Patriarchs of Shin Buddhism, and who first applied the Mādhyamikan concept of *śūnyatā*, or “emptiness” as the basis of the Pure Land way of thinking. Shinran regarded it as the fundamental structure of the concept of Amida and the Pure Land. Moreover, it is the Mādhyamikan concept of the “two truths” that frees the concepts of Amida and the Pure Land from being a mere mythological story.

The notion of “form” and “formless” (Jpn. *katashi* and its negative) in Shinran’s terminology refers to the two phases of *śūnyatā* in Mādhyamikan thought. Through “form” which is captured by human understanding,

śūnyatā can be described and expounded in words and concepts in contrast to the “formless” which transcends any conceptual understanding. In the following passage by Shinran we find this way of grasping ultimate reality applied to Amida Buddha:

... there are two kinds of dharmakāya in regard to the Buddha. The first is called dharmakāya-as-suchness and the second, dharmakāya-as-compassion. *Dharmakāya-as-suchness has neither color nor form; thus, the mind cannot grasp it nor words describe it. From this oneness was manifested form, called dharmakāya-as-compassion.* Taking this form, the Buddha proclaimed his name as Bhikṣu Dharmākara . . .²

According to Shinran, the two phases of ultimate reality are clearly shown by the “form” and “formless” aspects of Amida Buddha. That is, Dharmākara-Amida is the manifestation in form of the “formless” reality, which is expressed as “oneness” or “treasure ocean of oneness.” It goes without saying that this way of viewing Amida by Shinran is firmly based on T’an-luan’s “twofold *dharmakāya*” (Jpn. *nishu hosshin*), i.e., “*dharmakāya* as suchness” and “*dharmakāya* as compassionate means.”³ It is quite clear that Shinran’s view of Amida Buddha in terms of the form-formless relationship as seen in the above quotation from *Notes on Essentials of Faith Alone* is based on Nāgārjuna’s Mādhyamikan thought by way of T’an-luan’s understanding of the “twofold *dharmakāya*.”

THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE USAGE OF THE TEACHING OF THE TWO TRUTHS

As explored above, the original sense of *shinzoku nitai* refers to the Mādhyamikan “two truths.” We have shown that they are grasped by Shinran through the relation between form and formless in his conception of Amida Buddha. But as already mentioned, this understanding by Shinran is not what is called *shinzoku nitai* in traditional and contemporary Shin Buddhist terminology.

The “two-truths” as frequently used in Shin Buddhist tradition does not express its original Mādhyamikan meaning. Rather, it is similar to the usage that became popular during the Heian and Kamakura periods. At this time the “supramundane” truth referred to “Buddha’s Law” and “mundane” truth, the “King’s Law.” It is not accurately known when this usage first appeared.⁴ However, we can definitely find it in the *Mappōtomyōki*, or *The Lamp of the Last Dharma Age*, the authorship of which is attributed to Saichō (767–822), founder of Japanese Tendai school. Almost all of it is quoted by Shinran in the “Chapter of Transformed

Buddha and Land" in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

He is a dharma-king that, basing himself on oneness, sets flowing the cultivation of beings.

He is a benevolent king that, widely reigning over the four seas, sends down the winds of virtue.

The benevolent king and the dharma-king, in mutual correspondence, give guidance to beings. The supramundane truth and the mundane truth, depending on each other, cause the teaching to spread. Thus, the profound writings are everywhere throughout the land, and, the benevolent guidance reaches everywhere under heaven.⁵

"Dharma king" here signifies the Buddha Śākyamuni, and the "benevolent king" is the ruler of the nation. The intention of this passage is that "supramundane truth" or Buddha's Law, and "mundane truth" or King's Law should co-exist harmoniously in order to encourage peace in the nation. As will be noted below, this is often likened to the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a carriage. However, it is not a praise of governmental policy by the Buddhist organization of those days. Rather, it is actually a protest against its control over the Buddhist monks and nuns. Perhaps *Mappōtōmyōki* was composed as a protest against government laws which were enacted in 798 to screen out Buddhist monks and nuns for violating the precepts.

Shinran's intent in quoting from *Mappōtōmyōki* was also to criticize the government of those days in Japan, which placed Buddhist monks and priests strictly under its control. Needless to say, Shinran's criticism of the government for its despotic control of Buddhists emerged out of his own experience at the age of 35, when the nembutsu community led by Hōnen was persecuted and crushed by the government. Far from depending on secular authority in spreading the teaching, Shinran must have aimed at the independence of the nembutsu community from any control by secular authority, including control by other traditional Buddhist schools then in existence. If Shinran had an ideal of the nation, it was certainly realized by a person like Prince Shōtoku, who aimed to administer the state in a Buddhist spirit. Among his *Wasans* in praise of Prince Shōtoku, the following is notable:

He composed the seventeen-article constitution

As the standard for the imperial law.

It is the rule for the peace and stability of the state,

The treasure that makes the country prosperous.⁶

We have so far examined the transformation of the concept of supramundane truth and mundane truth, from its original sense of the Mādhyamikan way of grasping ultimate reality, into Buddha's Law and King's Law, which is specific to Japanese Buddhist usage. Shinran was familiar with this distinctive usage of *shinzoku nitai* in which the supramundane truth and mundane truth are equated with Buddha's Law and King's Law. However, in Shinran, it was Buddha's Law to which King's Law was to be subordinate as had been observed in Prince Shōtoku's way of governing the state.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SHIN BUDDHISM

From its beginnings Pure Land Buddhism implied a judgment on this defiled world, and, despite its otherworldly character, it has been intimately involved with society. Shin Buddhism also, as a lay movement, has implications for society as a whole, particularly because of its emphasis on absolute Other Power which offers emancipation regardless of social or moral standing.

The teaching of the "two truths," supramundane and mundane, became especially prominent within Shinshū in modern times, beginning with the reign of Emperor Meiji at the end of the nineteenth century. Employing imperial absolutism to advance its political goals, nationally and internationally, the government exploited religion, by directing religious devotion to the state. Shin Buddhism played a large role in this effort through its advocacy of loyalty to the Emperor and maintenance of public morality in the Testament issued by Abbot Kōnyo in 1872.⁷ The Hongwanji branch had early supported the Chōshū conspirators in restoring the Emperor with money and personnel. From that time the interpretation of the teachings have been affected by nationalistic, political interests.

Other Buddhist sects in one way or another have also been involved with social affairs, but Shin Buddhism is distinct from other traditions in rejecting the monastic life as the required environment for realizing spiritual ideals. It also maintains that the assurance of ultimate human fulfillment, that is, attaining Buddhahood, can be received through one's experience of faith and trust in Amida Buddha's Vows in one's own heart-mind within the context of everyday life without moral criteria.⁸ In the experience of the one-thought moment of faith, we glimpse, even though only for a split second, the ego transcendence that is the goal of Buddhism. Such an awareness highlights our continuing egoistic, passion-ridden life, and has implications for ethical and social relations in the secular world. Such ethics and morality are to flow out of the awareness of Amida's compassion and not merely to be dictated by the state.

The problem for Pure Land teaching and Shin Buddhism was religiously justified antinomianism in which the believer might engage in anti-social activity on the presumption that Amida's compassion would save him/her. The issue arose most clearly during the time of Hōnen and Shinran when some disciples violated social conventions, believing that Amida Buddha's salvation permitted them to do as they pleased in society. They ridiculed the gods and other Buddhas. We call this antinomianism or "licensed evil." The established Buddhist orders of Tendai on Mount Hiei and Kōfukuji in Nara called for the prohibition of the teaching. Finally Hōnen and his leading disciples, including Shinran, were banished from Kyoto because of indiscretions of some members.

Within the Shin community Shinran urged his followers to respect the gods and buddhas and not to ridicule others for their faith, but to live at peace with them. In later times regulations to control the behavior of disciples appeared, supported by exclusion or excommunication. Rennyo (1415–1499) later refers to regulations made by Shinran.⁹ The problem of absolute Other Power salvation in Shin Buddhism, particularly, required a theory to integrate religious faith and ethical life. This later took the form of *ōbō-buppō* (King's Law and Buddha's Law / *buddha-dharma*) or *shinzoku nitai*.

Kakunyo (1270–1351), the third Abbot, and Zonkaku (1290–1373), his son, also had to defend Shin Buddhism against critics. Zonkaku in his *Haja kenshōshō* ("Treatise on Refuting Error and Manifesting the Truth") took up a variety of charges against Pure Land and Shin Buddhism made by the monks of Mount Hiei.¹⁰ He described the then current view of the relation of the state and Buddhism:

Buddha's Law and King's Law are a pair, just like the two wings of a bird; like the two wheels of a carriage. Neither of the two should be missing. Therefore, Buddha's Law is to protect the King's Law and King's Law is to respect Buddha's Law.¹¹

The Muromachi period, a time of upheaval and social change, was the background for Rennyo, the eighth Abbot. Facing continued opposition from established orders, he instructed his disciples concerning their social obligations and stressed the principle that externally, the secular law is basic (*hon-moto*), and the principles of Confucianism have priority (*sen-saki*). Internally, one treasures faith for birth in the Pure Land after death. Externally one follows the laws of society.¹²

In the transition to modern times, when the Shogunate collapsed and the Emperor was restored to power, the new nationalist leadership, dominated by National Learning proponents and Confucianists, questioned the usefulness of Buddhism in the new society, despite the assistance from the Hongwanji-ha. In response Buddhist leaders, such as Kōnyo and his

successors, promoted Shin Buddhism as loyal to the emperor and a supporter of social morality. Other leaders such as Inoue Enryō stressed the benefits of Buddhism to society.

The modern *shinzoku nitai* or two truth theory essentially took over Kakunyo's and Rennyo's interpretation of the relationship of secular dharma (*ōbō*) and Buddha-dharma (*buppō*) as a means of demonstrating the utility and benefit of Buddhism for the new society. While the theory is not specifically a doctrine, in the traditional sense, which illuminates the path to enlightenment, it provided a framework which influenced the interpretation of the teaching in general by stressing the aspect of afterlife as the essence of faith and conformity to the present socio-political order as one's obligation in this life. Life became compartmentalized into the religious domain and the social domain.

The establishment of *shinzoku nitai* as an orthodox principle in the Hongwanji came about on the background of incidents of *haibutsu kishaku* (Destroy Buddha; throw down Sākyamuni) which resulted from the official separation of Shintō and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*) and also the practice of destroying temples and making one central temple in a province (*haigōji*). For example, in Toyama prefecture more than 1330 temples were to be reduced to one. There were also efforts to reform the sect organization. Hongwanji was seen to be useful to the government which followed the principle of *saisei itchi* (the unity of government and rituals, based on the divinity of the Emperor). It was in this environment that *shinzoku nitai* doctrine was strongly advocated.¹³

Against this background the Abbot of Nishi Hongwanji, Kōnyō issued his last letter exhorting people to devote themselves to the nation and stressing the dependency of the teaching on the good will of the state:

Of all those born in this imperial land, there is no one who has not received the emperor's benevolence. These days especially, he labors from morning to night in his deliberations, administering the just government of the restoration, maintaining order among the many people within [the country], and standing firm against all foreign countries. Is there then anyone, priest or lay, who would not support the imperial reign and enhance its power? Moreover, as the spread of Buddha-dharma is wholly dependent on the patronage of the emperor and his ministers, how can those who trust in Buddha dharma disregard the decrees of imperial law?¹⁴

This statement lays great emphasis on the duty of followers to support the state, because the dharma is totally dependent on the good will of the state. In other words the Buddha-dharma is subordinated to the interests of the state. The content of the *zokutai* or secular area comprises either governmental relations or the requirements and obligations of citizenship and the

principles of ethics such as the five major values of Confucian morality and later the *Imperial Rescript on Education* promulgated in 1890.

In the history of the principle within Shin Buddhism we can observe transformations, inspired by historical circumstance, from Shinran who does not specifically interpret it to the modern period where the Buddha-*dharma* became subject to the interests of the state. While the aspect of faith appears to be maintained, it became increasingly restricted to matters of the individual afterlife and of little relevance within society, while the secular *dharma* referred to either Confucian values or the *Imperial Rescript on Education*. Minor Rogers comments concerning Shinran's thought:

The Shinshū as a Japanese Buddhist tradition appears to have inherited from Shinran's teaching few resources, conceptual or other, to question, much less to resist, the demands of the state. The absolute authority of the emperor's command in prewar Japan may be seen as an extreme instance within this pattern. Shinran's symbols for the transcendent—Amida, Primal Vow, faith, and nembutsu—are, in theory, differentiated from the mundane and thus hold a capacity for criticism of all temporal authority, including that of the state. Instead, these religious symbols were subsumed by symbols for the national polity and imperial system.¹⁵

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TWO TRUTHS THEORY

In modern discussions, there have been a variety of theories on the relationship between the two dimensions, the supramundane and the mundane or secular.¹⁶ Shigaraki Takamaro has been greatly influential in the discussion through his observation that there are five theories. These theories arose from a background in the late Edo and Meiji periods when officials and Kokugaku (National Learning school) advocates regarded Buddhism as useless. Briefly the various relationships are: (1) the sacred and secular are of one essence; (2) the sacred and secular are parallel and unrelated; (3) they are mutually related and mutually assisting; (4) religious truth onesidedly influences the secular; and (5) the secular truth is an *upāya* (a tactful device) in order to lead to the ultimate truth.

Ōhara Shōjitsu and Fugen Daien in their studies also outlined and critiqued various relationships between the areas of secular and sacred. They see three basic relations, namely that they are of one essence, parallel or mutual. Though there are problems with each alternative, the mutual relationship is proposed as more appropriate and meaningful or realistic.¹⁷

This division of spheres and categories of relationship can be useful for discussing religion and society. However, while the structure is useful, the content of each dimension must be considered carefully. Shigaraki has

critiqued all the alternatives as leading to the subservience of Buddhism to the social order. Futaba Kenkō has pointed out that with the priority of the Emperor and Confucian morality in modern society, it did not make much difference whether Shinshū existed or not, and its meaning was lost. The teachings of *shinzoku nitai* revealed the meaninglessness of Shinran's teachings.¹⁸ When we look at the teachings historically, they were very different, being based on Buddhist principles. In addition, today belief in the afterlife is not as strong as it was in former times.

The various alternatives relating the two spheres of truth all assume Confucian morality as the basic ethical system, whereas Shinran did not regard the value system of society as ultimate or absolute. For Shinran, the world is a lie and deceptive. Amida Buddha is the only basis for judging good and evil and not any worldly authority. According to Futaba Kenkō, Shinran stands on the Buddhist teaching of no-self (*muga/higa*). As such, Buddhist reality transcends history and the dichotomy of self power and Other Power, which assumes existing selves. Absolute Other Power which transcends history in the Vow of Amida manifests itself within the person in faith-*shinjin* and takes the form of *hōon* (gratitude) and *jishin kyōninshin* (sharing one's faith with others). The true way of expressing gratitude is to relate to people, bringing the truth to them.

Shinran's understanding of "despising the world," which is a characteristic of Buddhism and Pure Land teaching, involves criticism of the political authority and the primitive gods. The principle of *jishin kyōninshin* implies a perspective for manifesting Shin Buddhism in society without dependence on the state or worldly power.¹⁹ Consequently, Shinran criticized the Emperor and his ministers and the scholars who decreed the unjust punishment meted out to Hōnen and his followers, including himself. As a mark of his refusal to accept their judgment, he gave himself his own surname, not accepting the official name. He also declared that he was neither a priest nor a layperson, that is, he did not fit the official categories.

In the *Kyōgyōshinshō* Shinran quoted a sūtra which declared that the monk (for him, the person of faith) does not bow before the King, or to his parents nor serve the six closely related persons such as mother, father, elder or younger brothers, elder or younger sisters.²⁰ While Shinran acknowledges that one may pray for the welfare and peace of the state, it was in order to facilitate the spread of Buddhism. However, there is to be no reliance on external authorities to achieve this goal. Buddhism is the primary object of devotion and commitment.

Shinran's understanding of life and reality relativizes all forms of power within the world, as well as all egoistic claims and worldly value systems. For Shinran, there is only one absolute—the compassion of Amida—which transcends our limited human judgments of good and evil.

Although we may not find specific answers to contemporary problems in his writings—or in Buddhism as a whole, he delineates an understanding of ourselves and the world which can critique the ideologies of our time. The thrust of Shinran's teaching can inspire compassion and justice among people and motivate the search for humane solutions to problems, personal and social. It can be a foundation for our working in concert with others, whatever their tradition, who strive for the highest good.

In recent years there has been much discussion among Shin scholars concerning "Wartime Doctrine." Some consider that the theory of "two truths," Buddha-dharma and Royal or Imperial dharma, distorted the true character of the ethical, as well as doctrinal meaning of Shin Buddhism. Much of the criticism of Rennyo that appeared during the 500th memorial commemoration centered on his stress on the doctrine of "two truths." It is an effort to develop a more critical, and perhaps activist, and socially responsible, Shin Buddhism in the face of the severe problems confronting Japanese society and the world.

As we have noted, the relationships between the respective spheres may vary. However, the content of each is generally regarded as the same, being in the respective spheres either the result of faith or the product of human reasoning. It is clear that the concept developed within an Imperial and Confucian society. The discussions in recent doctrinal textbooks are based to some degree on the traditional terms and do not take into account the experience of modern Japanese history or envision any alternative society, such as our democratic, western society.

While the discussion of the teachings and their relation to society is useful for us, we must remember the context of Japanese society from which they emerge. Consequently, the alternatives given assume good citizenship in the prevailing society, depending on the period, and do not discuss the possibilities of pro-active efforts to influence society based on one's spiritual convictions and values.

The theory of the mutual dependency and mutual influence of faith and society is widely held. It emphasizes the influence of the spiritual dimension on the individual in society. However, it does not indicate influence on society as a whole. Nor, being a mutual system, is the influence of society on religion and the possible manipulation of religion by government indicated, though it happened in recent Japanese history. It is not suggested that the religious sphere provides any critique of the social or governmental sphere. Here we must refer to the exploitation of religion by the government and leaders of the sect as a means to engage the commitment and devotion of the people through religious sanction.

In wartime doctrine, Amida was even identified with the Emperor; Yasukuni with the Pure Land. The principle of the selflessness of the devotee of Amida was used to encourage selfless devotion to the Emperor

and country, putting aside personal ambition. Kamegawa Kyōshin stated: "The joy of religion is to be found in the life of gratitude where the self is cast away. In this crisis, what is demanded of us is to do away with our petty selves and become shields of the Emperor."²¹

Shin Buddhists in Japan have learned from their wartime experience and are actively seeking to bring the implications of Shinran's teaching to bear in society. Hongwanji has been a leader in movements to overcome discrimination, resist changing the Constitution, oppose the reestablishment of Yasukuni Shrine, and oppose nuclear weapons. It has acknowledged publicly its responsibilities in uncritically supporting the war effort. It is now important to recover the historical meaning of Shinran which would transform society into a world of personal equality and individual dignity. It is the task and subject of Shin Buddhism to create such a world through a true understanding of faith and history.

RECONSIDERING THE DOUBLE TRUTH THEORY: A PROPOSAL

The criticism of the past in contemporary Japan has opened the door to reconsideration of the relation of faith and society in a more creative way. Shin Buddhists in democratic societies outside Japan must reinterpret the relation of religion and ethics within the context of their contemporary societies, and replace the traditional content of Confucian morality and the assumptions of an imperial society that still unconsciously remain in the presentation of the teaching. What must be developed in the West is a more pro-active stance based on, and acceptable within, the context of faith.

We must understand that within a democratic society it is assumed that individuals and groups will strive to realize their spiritual values and ideals in society or bring them to bear on an issue. However, this effort is to be done on a consensual basis with respect for individual rights. A truly democratic approach will reject attempts to legislate for all people irrespective of their beliefs on issues that have clear religious roots.

From the side of society or the state all efforts to control religion politically or use it for political ends are rejected. Hence, the separation of religion and state is essential. A religious basis for such an effort might be found in the *Jūseige* or *Sanseige* which are taken from the *Larger Sukhāvāṇīvyūha Sūtra* and chanted in worship services. According to the text, Dharmākara Bodhisattva vows to emancipate the suffering and poor. He also declares that he will open up the treasury of the *dharma* universally and constantly proclaim the *dharma* with a lion's voice. While Buddhism is often criticized for lacking a strong social awareness, there are materials within Buddhist tradition to show that Buddhism has always been broadly concerned for the welfare of people and is not only a spiritual or otherworldly way.

Further, there was Shinran's experience on the road to Kantō after the exile, when he decided to recite the Three Pure Land Sūtras 1000 times for the sake of the salvation of all beings. However, after a while he stopped and realized that the true way to repay the benevolence of the Buddha was to share his faith with others (*jishin kyōninshin*). He recognized his continuing self-striving nature. While this refers to a religious act, we may also interpret it that Shinran changed from an indirect approach in securing the salvation of people to one of direct contact with them. This is indicated in his affirmation of teaching the people (*kyōninshin*). Shin Buddhism began as a movement with his effort in sharing the dharma with the people among whom he lived in the Kantō region. While Shinran was not a social reformer, his style of human relations and spiritual perspective can assist our efforts in social action.

In our time, in whatever way is possible, we must consider the actual lives of the people and how our religious faith can enhance life in society. In a recent sermon Rev. Tatsuo Muneto²² clearly indicated that Shin Buddhists should contribute to society by supporting the equal treatment of all people and supporting their pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This may at times call for positive efforts to assist those members of society who are discriminated against.

Followers of a religious faith should strive to persuade people individually to their understanding of reality. Likewise in social issues, religious people should make known their views, as individuals and groups, in matters of legislation by showing how their view actually conduces to the well-being of society and not simply a demand to conform to their religious viewpoint. We have learned that not to act is really also an action which may cause great suffering for people. There is, therefore, room in social debate for religious groups, as well as individuals, to express their views and take positions which result from their best insight and study.

This study has shown that the understanding of the relationship of Buddhism and society has shifted through the centuries, responding to the necessities of history and social change. Particularly, the modern character of Shinshū has been influenced by the requirements of an authoritarian society. The principle of *shinzoku nitai* has shaped the presentation of doctrine through the division of domains which turned Shin Buddhism into an otherworldly religion, excluding strong social interest and critique.

As Futaba Kenkō has indicated, the restriction of Shin Buddhism to only spiritual or otherworldly concerns renders it irrelevant for society. At bottom a major issue discussed by Futaba is the interaction of history and faith. Faith is always in history which means that the experience of the eternal takes place within the historical and social context where we find ourselves. The truth expressed through Pure Land teaching must find its meaning and expression within historical life. It is not simply an otherworldly truth beyond history and experienced only at death.

We often hear it said that religion must relate to everyday life. The implication of such a statement, if taken seriously, means that the truth of the teaching must be realized within our historical social experience, not merely subjectively in piety and emotions, but in human relations and worldly life. For those who demur, holding that religious faith deals with eternal matters and not temporal issues that come and go, we may recall that time is the passing shadow of eternity. The eternal has its import for the temporal. Though religious faith gives us hope for ultimate enlightenment beyond history, its truth is to become real in this life as well.²³

CONCLUSION

A major part of this study has been historical. The reason for this is that it is important to show that Buddhist and Shin teaching has not been static but has been shaped by historical forces. In the course of time the principle of "two truths" was transformed from a metaphysical to a social perspective which had considerable consequences in Shin history. The understanding of the relation of Shin Buddhism and society has shifted through the centuries. As it moves into new societies and cultures it must further adapt itself in meeting the spiritual needs of the various peoples who find their meaning through it.

In the western context it is widely understood that the influence of religion on the social process is not merely to create good citizens who are obedient and subservient to the laws of society, but also to inspire members to evaluate the justice of society and to lend its weight to positive social change. Compassion that is not concerned for social justice is hardly compassion. One cannot claim to be compassionate and not give food to a starving person. The difficulties and complexities in dealing with social issues by a religious group does not remove the responsibility to attempt to arrive at some solution or offer insight.

Setting aside the earlier historical conditionings of society and its influence on the teaching, it is the argument of this paper that Shin Buddhism must go beyond the traditional interpretations of *shinzoku nitai*. Full participation in democratic society requires that people of faith, as individuals and groups, to be sensitive to, and offer their insights on, the many problems of society. In this way Shin Buddhism will be liberated into society and also liberate people in society.

NOTES

1. *Chūron*, Chapter 24, verses 8-10, in *Taishō*, vol. 30, p. 32. Translation appearing in the text and notes are by the authors unless otherwise noted.
2. *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone,' A Translation of Shinran's Yuishinshōmon'i*, Shin Buddhism Translation Series (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1979), p. 43. (Emphasis added.) A similar passage is found in *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling, A Translation of Shinran's Ichinen-tanen-mon'i*, Shin Buddhism Translation Series (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1980), p. 46, which reads: "From this treasure ocean of oneness form was manifested, taking the name of Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who, through establishing the unhindered Vow as the cause, became Amida Buddha."
3. In T'an-luan's *Commentary on the Treatise on Birth in the Pure Land*, the following passage is well-known: "Among Buddhas and bodhisattvas there are two aspects of dharmakāya: dharmakāya as suchness and dharmakāya as compassionate means. Dharmakāya as compassionate means arises out of dharmakāya as suchness, and dharmakāya as suchness emerges [into the realm of human comprehension] through dharmakāya as compassionate means. These two aspects of dharmakāya differ but are not separable; they are one but not identical" (*Shinshū Shōgyō Zenshō*, vol. 1 [Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941], pp. 336-7).
4. Perhaps the earliest usage appears in the *Shitennōji gosho in engi* (attributed to Prince Shōtoku, but more probably composed in 1007 by some other author), where we find the following passage: "Composing the *Seventeen Article Constitution*, he made up the discipline of the King's Law and spreading the teaching of "Do not commit evils . . .," he established the foundation of the Buddha's Law" (*Shōtoku Taishi denryaku*, in *Dainihon Bukkyō zensho*, vol. 112 [Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912], p. 18).
5. A passage from the *Mappōtōmyōki* ("Lamp for the Last Dharma-age"), quoted in *The True Teaching Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter, CWS), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 244. (Emphasis added.)
6. "Hymns in Praise of Prince Shōtoku," in CWS, vol. 1, p. 443.
7. Suzuki Shūken, "*Shinzoku nitai ron hihan*," in *Kyōdan kaikaku e no hatsugen*, Oka Ryōji, ed. (Kyoto: Nagata Bushōdo, 1971), p. 156.
8. See "Chapter on Shinjin (51)," *The True Teaching Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, in CWS, vol. 1, p. 107.
9. See Rennyo's *Letters*, III-11 and IV-1 in Minor Lee Rogers and Ann T.

Rogers, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991) pp. 212–213 (III-11) and p. 218 (IV-1). Rogers and Rogers note that there is no evidence that Shinran ever established regulations (p. 212, n. 39). See also *Tannishō*, 13 in *CWS*, pp. 670–67, and Zen'en's rules, in James Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 67. Jitsunyo refers to Zen'en's rules as made by Shinran.

10. James Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū*, pp. 89–90.

11. *Haja kenshōshō*, in *Shinshū shōgyō zenshō*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), p. 173.

12. Rennyō's *Letters*, III-12, in Rogers and Rogers, p. 217.

13. Hino Kenryū, "Kindai ni okeru shinshū no kyōgaku rosen: toku ni shinzokunitai o chūshin to shite," *Bukkyōshi Kenkyū* 19 and 20 (1984): pp. 147–162. See also *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 244.

14. Rogers and Rogers, p. 320.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 332.

16. Kizuki Hironori, "Shinzoku nitai ron ni tsuite no ichikōsatsu: mō hitotsu no senji kyōgaku," part 1, *Bukkyōshi kenkyū* 27 (1990): pp. 21–35. Different formulations of the relation are:

1. *Shinzoku-ittai*, sacred and secular are of one essence (Fukuda Gidō), *Dōtoku-ittai* (Maeda Eun), *Shintai-ittai* (Shichiri Gōjun, Kaneko Daiei).

2. *Shinzoku-hankō*, faith and social actions are parallel and unrelated (Nonomura Naotarō).

3. *Shinzoku* mutually related, Zonkaku's idea of mutually assisting and mutually dependent (*sōshi sōe*) like two wheels of a cart or two wings on a bird.

4. The theory that religious truth onesidedly influences social action like perfume or a light in a lantern (Akamatsu Renjō, Tōyō Engetsu).

5. Secular truth is *upāya* (Kiyozawa Manshi).

17. Ōhara Shōjitsu, *Shinshū kyōgakushi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1953), pp. 217–254, and Fugen Daien, *Shinkōto jissen* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1959), pp. 122–132.

18. Futaba Kenkō, *Nihon bukkōno kadai: mōhitotsu no bunka no kōchiku ni mukete* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1986), p. 262.

19. Futaba Kenkō, *Shinran no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1962), p. 355.

20. "Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands (102)," *The True Teaching Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 274.

21. Ronald Anderson, "Nishi Honganji and Japanese Buddhist Nationalism 1862–1945," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Berkely, 1956), p. 103.

22. "Finding Equality in the Dharma," October 18, 1998, at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

23. Unfortunately, this is not the appropriate setting in which to go into detail on the practical means by which Shin followers can relate to contemporary social issues. The authors would like to suggest, however, that there are some practical means that can be used which are not radical in their character, but which may be effective in assisting members to arrive at their own understanding of and approach to problems. We can only suggest that there be formed social concerns committees in temples which research and study issues that might be relevant for consideration by members. Study of the relation of the teaching and society can be an ongoing project. A social concerns committee can develop educational programs and cooperate with other community organizations in focusing issues and arousing public opinion. Information can be placed in newsletters. A temple might arrive at a public position through democratic procedure within the temple giving majority and minority positions for members to evaluate.

Shan-tao's Exposition of the Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha, Part 2

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THIS IS A REVISED translation of Part 2 of *Shan-tao's Kuan-nien o-mi-t'o fo hsiang-hai san-mei kung-te fa-men* (Jpn. *Kannen Amidabutsu sōkaizanmai kudoku bōmon*), commonly known as the *Kuan-nien fa-men* (The Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha, Jpn. *Kannenbōmon*).

The original English version was published in *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū*, 425 (1984): pp.20–41, and 431 (1988): pp. 20–33. Revised translation of the Part 1 was published in the *Pacific World*, Third Series, 1 (1999): pp. 77–89. Part 3 was published in *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū*, 431 (1988): pp.20–33. Revised translation of Part 3 will appear in forthcoming issue of this journal.

EXPOSITION OF THE MERIT OF THE SAMĀDHI OF CONTEMPLATION ON THE OCEAN-LIKE FIGURE OF AMIDA BUDDHA

**Compiled by
Bhikṣu Shan-tao**

PART TWO: FIVE KINDS OF MERIT

12 Exposition of the five kinds of superior conditions based on sutras (one fascicle):

1. Based on the *Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life*,
2. Based on the *Sixteen-Contemplation Sutra*,
3. Based on the four-sheet *Amida Sutra*,¹
4. Based on the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra*,²
5. Based on the *Sutra on the Ten Methods of Attaining Birth*,³
6. Based on the *Sutra on the Pure Salvation Samādhi*.⁴

13 Respectfully based on Śākyamuni Buddha's teaching, as shown in the six sutras that teach the way of birth in the Pure Land, I will clarify that those who desire to be born in the Pure Land by being mindful of Amida Buddha and calling his Name will, while in the present life, have their life-spans prolonged and escape the nine calamities.⁵ Details of those benefits will be given in the part below where the five conditions will be explained.

Question: The Buddha urges all sentient beings to awaken the Bodhi-Mind and desire to be born in the Western Land of Amida Buddha. He also urges them to build statues of Amida, praise and worship him, offer incense and flowers to him and contemplate him day and night without interruption. He further urges them to call Amida's Name single-mindedly many times—from ten thousand, twenty thousand, thirty thousand, fifty thousand up to a hundred thousand times. He also urges them to chant the *Amida Sutra* many times—from fifteen, twenty, thirty, fifty up to a hundred times, and further chant it until they reach a hundred thousand times. If they perform those practices, what benefit will they gain in the present life and what benefit will they gain when their lives, a hundred years at the longest, come to the end? Will they surely attain birth in the Pure Land or not?

Answer: Both in the present life and after death they will certainly attain great merit and benefit. In connection with this, I will reveal, according to the Buddhist teaching, the causal relations which bring about five kinds of superior benefit. They are: 1. the dominant force effecting destruction of one's karmic evils, 2. the dominant force effecting protection and longevity, 3. the dominant force enabling one to see the Buddha, 4. the dominant force embracing beings, and 5. the superior condition enabling one to attain birth.

14 [1] The dominant force effecting destruction of one's karmic evils:

Those who attain birth on the highest level of the lowest class in the *Contemplation Sutra*⁶ have completely committed grave offenses of the ten evils. When they become ill and are about to die, they may have a chance to meet a good teacher and receive from him the teaching that urges them to call the Name of Amida Buddha. Each time they recite it, the grave karmic evils which would bind them to transmigration for five billion kalpas will be destroyed. This shows the dominant force effecting destruction of one's karmic evils.

Further, those who attain birth on the middle level of the lowest class⁷ have committed all sorts of offenses against the Buddha-Dharma, violating the rules of abstinence and other precepts, appropriating properties of the Sangha or utilizing the Buddha-Dharma without repenting or feeling ashamed of such acts. When they become ill and are about to die, a mass of fire of hell besieges them all at once. At that time, they may meet a good teacher, who will tell them about the meritorious physical characteristics of

Amida Buddha and the splendors of his land. No sooner have they heard this, their karmic evils which would bind them to transmigration for eight billion kalpas will be destroyed and [the fire of] hell will disappear. This also shows the dominant force effecting destruction of one's karmic evils.

Further, those who attain birth on the lowest level of the lowest class⁸ have committed fully the gravest offenses of five deadly acts throughout their lives, and so they are destined to hell where they will suffer interminable pain. When they become ill and are about to die, they may meet a good teacher, who will urge them to call the Name of Amida Buddha ten times. With each calling, the heavy karmic evils which would bind them to transmigration for eight billion kalpas will be destroyed. This also shows the dominant force effecting destruction of one's karmic evils.

15 Furthermore, if there are persons who draw paintings of the grandeur of the Pure Land in accordance with the *Contemplation Sutra*, etc., and contemplate the jewel-ground day and night, the karmic evils which would bind them to transmigration for eight billion kalpas will be destroyed with each contemplating thought. Also, if there are persons who draw paintings [of the Pure Land] in accordance with sutras, and meditate on the splendors of the jeweled trees, jeweled ponds and jeweled towers, their karmic evils which would bind them to transmigration for innumerable koṭis of incalculable kalpas will be destroyed in the present life. Further, if one contemplates day and night in accordance with the [prescribed method of] visualization of the splendors of the lotus seat,⁹ then, while in the present life, one's karmic evils which would otherwise bind one to transmigration for fifty billion kalpas will be destroyed with each contemplating thought. Further, if people practice, in accordance with the sutra, visualization of the image, the true Buddha body, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta,¹⁰ then, while in the present life, their karmic evils which would bind them to transmigration for innumerable koṭis of kalpas will be destroyed with each contemplating thought.

The above references show the dominant force effecting destruction of one's karmic evils.

16 [2] The dominant force effecting spiritual protection:

As stated in the twelfth contemplation,¹¹ if a person concentrates and visualize the two kinds of recompense, i.e. the splendors of Amida's body and the Pure Land, at all times, day and night, wherever he is, then the innumerable transformed Buddhas manifested by Amida Buddha and also innumerable transformed bodies manifested by Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta will come to this practitioner, even though he may or may not see them. This shows the dominant force effecting spiritual protection in the present life.

Also, it is stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*:¹²

If a person concentrates and is always mindful of Amida Buddha and the two bodhisattvas, then Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta will be constantly with him, become his good friends and teachers and follow him in his steps just as a shadow follows an object.

This also shows the dominant force effecting protection in the present life.

Further, it is stated in the ninth contemplation¹³ of the true Buddha body:

Amida Buddha has a body of golden color. The light emanating from the white curls of hair between the eye-brows shines on the sentient beings living in the worlds throughout the ten quarters. The light from each hair-follicle also universally shines on the sentient beings. So does the circle of light about his head. Also the light from each of the eighty-four thousand physical characteristics universally shines on the sentient beings. Each of the lights issuing forth from the physical characteristics mentioned above universally shines on the worlds throughout the ten quarters. If there are sentient beings who single-heartedly think of Amida Buddha, his light always shines on them, embracing and protecting them and never abandoning them.

There is no mention of the light shining on practitioners of the other miscellaneous acts. This also shows the dominant force effecting protection in the present life.

17 Further, it is stated in the *Sutra on the Ten Methods of Attaining Birth*:

The Buddha said to Mountain-Ocean-Wisdom Bodhisattva and Ānanda: "If there is a person who is single-heartedly mindful of Amida Buddha of the west, wishing to be born in his land, I will henceforth dispatch twenty-five Bodhisattvas,¹⁴ so that they may, just as a shadow follows an object, protect this practitioner, keep evil spirits and evil devas from tormenting him and thus enable him to dwell in peace during the day and the night."

This also shows the dominant force effecting protection in the present life.

18 Further, it is stated in the *Amida Sutra*:¹⁵

If there is a man or a woman who single-heartedly and is exclu-

sively mindful of Amida Buddha, desiring to be born in his land, for a period of seven days and nights, or during the whole lifetime, innumerable Buddhas of the six quarters, as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, will come and protect him or her always. For this reason, this sutra is called “the sutra of protection.”

“The sutra of protection” means that they will also keep various evil spirits and devas from approaching this person and also enable him or her to escape unexpected illnesses and untimely death. Thus all calamities and hindrances will naturally disperse. Excepted, however, are those who lack single-heartedness. This also shows the dominant force effecting protection in the present life.

19 Further, it is stated in the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra*, Chapter on Practice:¹⁶

The Buddha said to Bhadrupāla, “If there is a person who confines himself in a hall for practicing the Way, dissociating himself from all engagements and single-heartedly contemplates Amida Buddha’s body of golden color, for seven days and seven nights, without lying down to sleep, or if a person single-heartedly contemplates the Buddha, recites his Name and is mindful of him, for a day, three days, seven days, or two weeks, five, six or seven weeks, or for a period of a hundred days, or throughout his life, then the Buddha will take him in his embrace. Once he is embraced, he certainly knows that, with his karmic evils destroyed, he will attain birth in the Pure Land.”

The Buddha continued, “If a person exclusively practices this Amida-Recollection Samādhi, then all devas, the Four Heavenly Guardian Kings, and the eight groups of demi-gods, including dragons, will follow him like a shadow follows an object and will enjoy seeing him. Thus they will keep various evil spirits, hindrances and calamities from waywardly tormenting and vexing him.”

This benefit is explained in detail in the Chapter on Protection. This also shows the dominant force effecting protection in the present life.

20 Further, it is stated in the *Abhiṣeka Sutra*, third fascicle:¹⁷

If there is a person who keeps the three refuges and the five precepts, the Buddha orders Indra, the Lord of devas, to dispatch sixty-one heavenly beings to this precept-abiding person so that

they may protect him day and night throughout the year and keep various evil spirits from waywardly harassing and tormenting him.

This also shows the dominant force effecting spiritual protection in the present life.

21 Further, it is stated in the *Sutra on the Pure Salvation Samādhi*:

The Buddha said to the Great King Bimbisāra, “If there is a man or a woman who, on the six precept-observing days of the month and the eight-king days [of the year], confesses any transgressions or faults to deities of the heaven, of the underworld and of all other realms, and seeks to abide by the precepts, then the Buddha will order the kings of the six heavens of the realm of desire each to dispatch twenty-five good deities¹⁸ to this person, so that they may always follow and protect this precept-abiding person, keep various evil spirits from waywardly tormenting and harming him or her, and enable this person to escape unexpected illnesses, untimely death and calamities, thereby enabling this person to live in peace and comfort at all times.”

This also shows the dominant force effecting protection in the present life.

22 Again, I would like to urge you, practitioners: If you, while in the present life, wish to think single-heartedly of Amida Buddha continuously, day and night, single-heartedly chant the *Amida Sutra*, worship and praise the holy beings who serve as adornments of the Pure Land, thereby wishing to attain birth there, and if you daily chant the sutra fifteen times, twenty or thirty times or more, or if you are chanting it forty, fifty, a hundred times or more, then you should strive to chant it a hundred thousand times. Also glorify and worship the two kinds of splendors of Amida’s Pure Land, i.e., the dependent and principal rewards. Also, except when you are in the meditation hall, call Amida’s Name without interruption for ten thousand times a day, until your life ends. If you do so, you will receive the benefit of Amida’s remembrance, and the hindrances of your karmic evils will be eliminated. Also you will receive the benefit of constant accompaniment, protection and remembrance by Amida and holy beings, so that your life-span will be extended and you will enjoy a long life in peace and comfort. Detailed accounts of the benefit are given in the *Parable Sutra*,¹⁹ the *Sutra of Samādhi on the Contemplation of Nothingness*,²⁰ the *Sutra on the Pure Salvation Samādhi*, etc. This is further evidence of the dominant force effecting protection in the present life.

23 [3] The dominant force enabling one to see the Buddha:

It is stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*:²¹

The queen of Magadha, named Vaidehī, while dwelling in the palace, always desired to see the Buddha. Facing towards the Vulture Peak, she wept with grief and bowed in worship. The Buddha, knowing this from afar, disappeared from the Vulture Peak and manifested himself in the palace. Upon raising her head, the queen saw the Buddha. His body was the color of purple gold, and he was sitting on a jeweled lotus throne, attended by Maudgalyāyana and Ānanda on his left and right. Above him in the sky were Śakra and Brahmā, scattering flowers as offerings. Having seen the Buddha, the queen threw herself on the floor, wept bitterly and pleaded and repented herself to the Buddha, saying, “I pray, O Tathagata, please teach me how to visualize the land of pure karmic perfection.”

By this scriptural evidence is shown not only that through sincerity of heart the queen was able to see the Buddha, but also that the method [of Buddha contemplation] was expounded for the sake of ordinary people of the future. If there is a person who cherishes a desire to see the Buddha, he should sincerely think of the Buddha as the queen did. Then there is no doubt that he will see the Buddha. It is due to Amida Buddha’s three mindful Vow-Powers working on this person from outside that he will be able to see the Buddha. The three powers, according to the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra*,²² are as follows: (1) Because [the Buddha] remembers this person with the great Vow-Power, he is able to see the Buddha; (2) because [the Buddha] remembers him with the Samādhi-Power, he is able to see the Buddha; and (3) because [the Buddha] remembers him with the original Merit-Power, he is able to see the Buddha. This significance will be further exemplified below when the dominant force enabling one to see the Buddha are explained. This is called the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha.

24 Question: Since the queen had a strong and superior merit-power, she was able to see the Buddha. How can sentient beings of the last Dharma age, who have deep and heavy karmic evils, be compared with the queen? As this implication is extremely profound and broad, please show me clear evidence by quoting extensively from the Buddhist sutras.

Answer: The Buddha is a sage of the three transcendental knowledges,²³ possessed of the six supernatural powers²⁴ which know no obstructions. After observing the people’s capacities, he gives them [appropriate] teachings. Whether the teaching [one practices] is shallow or deep, if only one

devotes oneself sincerely to it, there is no doubt that one will see [the Buddha]. It is stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*:²⁵

The Buddha praised Vaidehī, saying: “It is good that you have asked me about this matter. Ānanda, keep the Buddha’s words and expound them widely to the multitudes of beings. I, the Tathagata, will teach Vaidehī and all sentient beings in the future how to contemplate the Western Land of Utmost Bliss. Through the Buddha’s Vow-Power they will be able to see that land as clearly as if they look into a clear mirror and see their own images in it.”

This quotation from the sutra is further evidence showing that, due to Amida Buddha’s three powers working from outside, one is able to see the Buddha. Hence, we call this the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha and the Pure Land.

25 Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra*:²⁶

The Buddha said to Vaidehī: “You are an ordinary person, and your mental faculty is inferior, and so you are not able to see far. Buddhas, Tathagatas, with a special expedient enable people like you to see [the Pure Land].” The queen said to the Buddha, “Now I have seen the Buddha’s Land through his power. How can sentient beings, who come after the Buddha’s death and, being defiled and evil, are tormented by the five pains, see the Land of Utmost Bliss?” The Buddha said, “Vaidehī, you and other sentient beings should single-mindedly fix your thoughts and contemplate the lapis lazuli ground of the Western Land, all the jewel-bannered pillars under it, manifold jewels on the ground, decorations inside the buildings, etc.”

If one single-mindedly concentrates one’s thought, one will be able to see [the Pure Land] just as the queen saw it, as stated above. Hence, it is said:²⁷

Visualize them very clearly, one by one, so that you can see them whether you close your eyes or not. If you have accomplished this contemplation, it is said that you have roughly seen [the Pure Land].

As this is a visualization in the state of conscious thought, it is said ‘roughly seen.’ If you have attained a meditative samādhi or a recitation samādhi, your mind’s eye will open and you will see with it all the splendors of the Pure Land, which no words can fully describe. This quotation from the sutra is further evidence. All ordinary beings can certainly see [the Pure

Land] if only they concentrate their thoughts. You should realize this. If you have heard of someone who has seen [the Pure Land], you should not be surprised or entertain doubt. The reason is that, due to Amida Buddha's Samādhi-Power working on him from outside, he can see it. For this reason, we call this the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha's Pure Land.

26 Again, it is stated further down in the contemplation of the lotus seat:²⁸

The Buddha said to Ānanda and Vaidehī: "I will teach you a method of removing suffering. You should discern and expound it to multitudes of beings." When those words were uttered, the Buddha of Infinite Life, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta responded to them by appearing in person and standing in the midair. Seeing them, Vaidehī worshiped them. After worshipping them, she said to the Buddha: "Now I have seen the Buddha of Infinite Life and the two Bodhisattvas through the Buddha's power. How can sentient beings who come after the Buddha's death see Amida Buddha and the two Bodhisattvas?" The Buddha said: "If you and other sentient beings wish to see that Buddha, you should concentrate and form an image of a lotus flower. When you have formed an image of a lotus flower, you should next imagine the Buddha. When you imagine the Buddha, let your thought form his image with thirty-two physical characteristics. Imagine parts of his body, one by one, from the top of the head down to the cross-legged posture. In correspondence with your contemplating thought, the Buddha will manifest his body."

This shows that, due to Amida's three powers working from outside, one is able to see the Buddha. This, again, is called the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha.

27 Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra* below:²⁹

When you perceive the Buddha, you should first perceive his image. Perceive a golden image sitting on the [lotus] flower. When you have seen this, your mind's eye will open, and with it you will be able to see clearly and distinctly all the splendors of that Land.

This shows that, due to Amida's three powers working from outside, one can see the Buddha. This is called the dominant force enabling one to see the Buddha.

Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra* below:³⁰

Next, perceive the two Bodhisattvas and various forms of light. See them clearly. When you have seen them, you, the practitioner, will be able to hear in the samādhi the flowing water, light, adornments, and so forth, proclaiming the Dharma. Whether in or out of the samādhi, you will be able to hear the excellent Dharma always.

This also shows that, due to Amida's three powers working from outside, one is able to see the Buddha. This is called the dominant force enabling one to see the Buddha.

28 Further, it is stated [in the *Contemplation Sutra*] below in the section on the visualization of the true body:³¹

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "When you have accomplished the contemplation on the image, next perceive the Buddha of Infinite Life. His body is of the color of genuine gold. Perceive and see with your mind's eye the white curls of hair between the eyebrows, the circle of light, the transformed Buddhas and the rays of light which shine forth from his physical characteristics and minor marks of excellence. When you have seen them, you will be able to see all Buddhas of the ten quarters. Hence, this is called Buddha-Contemplation Samādhi."

This passage is further evidence showing that, due to Amida Buddha's three powers working from outside, one is able to see the Buddha. Hence, this is called the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha.

Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra* below:³²

The Buddha said: "For this reason, a wise person should single-mindedly and clearly perceive the Buddha of Infinite Life. You should enter into the contemplation through one of his physical marks. One who clearly perceives the white curls of hair between the eyebrows will spontaneously perceive all the eighty-four thousand physical marks. Having seen them, he will see all the Buddhas of the ten quarters and personally receive from each of them the prediction of his attainment of Buddhahood."

This passage of the sutra also testifies that, due to Amida Buddha's three powers working from outside, the ordinary beings who single-mindedly meditate on him are definitely enabled to see the Buddha. This is also called

the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha.

29 Further, [we find similar expositions in the sections on] contemplation of Avalokiteśvarara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, the over-all aspect, miscellaneous aspects, etc., and also below in the section on the nine grades of aspirants:³³

Those who practice throughout their lives or practice even for seven days, one day, or call the Name ten times or even once, desiring to see the Buddha at the time of death,—if they meet good teachers in this life and think of Amida Buddha and call his Name, the Buddha will appear before them with a host of sages, holding lotus pedestals. The practitioners will see the Buddha and also the host of sages and the lotus pedestals.

This passage of the sutra also testifies that, due to Amida Buddha's three powers working from outside, one is able to see the Buddha. Hence, we call this the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha.

30 Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra* below:³⁴

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "This sutra is called the Sutra of Contemplation on the Land of Utmost Bliss, the Buddha of Infinite Life and Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattvas. You should hold this and not forget this. Those who practice this samādhi will be able to see in the present life the Buddha of Infinite Life and the two Bodhisattvas."

This passage of the sutra also testifies that, due to Amida Buddha's three powers working from outside, ordinary beings who meditate on him are made to avail themselves of their own three-mind power and are, therefore, enabled to see the Buddha. [The aspirants'] sincere mind, believing mind and aspiring mind are the internal cause; and Amida's three kinds of Vow-Power on which they depend are the external condition. Through the coordination of the external condition and the internal cause one can see the Buddha. Hence, this is called the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha.

31 Further, it is stated in the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra*:³⁵

The Buddha said to Bhadrupāla Bodhisattva: "There is a samādhi called 'all Buddhas of the ten quarters appearing before one's

eyes.' If you wish to attain this samādhi quickly, you should always hold fast to it and not allow doubt, even as minute as a hair, to creep in. If monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen wish to practice this samādhi, they should keep awake for seven days and nights and keep their minds free of all distracting thoughts. They should concentrate on one point, that is, meditate on the body of Amida Buddha of the west, which is of the color of genuine gold and possesses thirty-two characteristics; his body emits penetrating light and is incomparably majestic."

If they single-mindedly contemplate with uninterrupted thoughts and practice oral recitation [of his Name], the Buddha says:

They will see him after seven days. It is like observing stars at night. Let us suppose one star is one Buddha. Anyone of the four groups of Buddhists who practices this meditation can see all the Buddhas just as they see all the stars.

The passage of this sutra also testifies that, due to Amida Buddha's three powers working from outside, one can see the Buddha. "Samādhi" means that the Nembutsu practitioners think [of the Buddha] in their minds and recite [his Name] with their mouths, without having miscellaneous thoughts; if the thoughts [of the Buddha] continue to be present in their minds and the utterances [of the Name] follow one after another, their mind's eyes will open and they will see the Buddha manifest himself clearly. This is called concentration and is also called samādhi. When one sees the Buddha properly, one also sees the host of sages and various adornments. Hence, this is called the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha and the Pure Land.

32 Further, it is stated in the *Moon-Lamp Sutra*:³⁶

If one meditates on the Buddha's physical characteristics and his virtuous conduct, keeps one's senses from being disturbed and keeps one's mind free of delusion and in agreement with the Dharma, then what one can learn by hearing and what one can know will be like the great ocean. If a wise person dwells in this samādhi and performs practices while keeping his thoughts well under control, then he will be able to see, at the place of his walking practice, a thousand kotis of Tathagatas and also meet Buddhas as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.

The passage of this sutra is further evidence. This is also called the dominant force enabling one to attain the samādhi of seeing the Buddha.

33 Further, it is stated in the *Mañjuśrī Prajñāpāramitā Sutra*:³⁷

Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha: “Why is it called ‘Single Practice Samādhi’?” The Buddha replied: “If a man or a woman, while dwelling at a quiet place, discards all distracting thoughts and, facing towards the place where the Buddha resides, sits in the proper upright position; then, without forming in the mind any image [of the Buddha], he or she single-mindedly recites his Name. If the recitation continues uninterrupted, then he or she will be able to see in the recitation practice all the Buddhas of the past, present and future.”

The passage of this sutra is further evidence testifying that one can see the Buddhas, due to the working of their thought powers, which arise from ‘the great compassion of looking on all as of the same body as oneself.’ This is again the dominant force enabling ordinary beings to see the Buddha.

34 [4] The dominant force embracing beings:

One of the Forty-eight Vows³⁸ in the *Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life* says:

The Buddha said: “If, when I become a Buddha, the sentient beings of the ten quarters who desire to be born in my land and say my name even ten times should not be born there through my Vow-Power, then may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”

This shows that the practitioners aspiring for birth, when they die, are enabled to attain birth by being embraced by the Vow-Power. Hence, this is called dominant force embracing beings.

Further, it is stated in the same sutra, fascicle 1:³⁹

Those beings who attain birth in the Western Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life all avail themselves of Amida Buddha’s karmic power, such as the Great Vow, as the dominant force [for that purpose].

This is further evidence. This is indeed the dominant force embracing beings.

Again, it is stated in the same sutra, fascicle 2:⁴⁰

The Buddha said: “All sentient beings are different in their spiritual capacities, and so they may be divided into upper, medium

and lower classes. The Buddhas all urge them to say the Name of the Buddha of Infinite Life single-heartedly, each according to his own spiritual capacity. When their lives end, the Buddha personally comes to welcome them with a host of sages and enable them all to attain birth."

This also shows the dominant force embracing beings.

35 Further, it is stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*, sections on the first eleven contemplations⁴¹ and the nine grades of aspirants⁴² below, which are all the Buddha's own exposition: When those who perform either meditative or non-meditative practices die, Amida, the World-Honored One, will come to each one of them in person with a host of sages, offering his hands to help him mount a lotus-dais and thus welcoming him to be born [in the Pure Land]. This also shows the dominant force embracing beings.

36 Further, it is stated in the four-sheet *Amida Sutra*:⁴³

The Buddha said: "If a man or a woman single-heartedly and exclusively recites Amida's Name for one to seven days, when his or her life is about to end, Amida Buddha will come in person to welcome him or her, thus enabling him or her to be born in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss." Śākyamuni Buddha continued: "As I see this benefit, I have spoken these words."

This is further evidence. This shows the dominant force embracing beings.

37 Further, it is stated in one of the Forty-eight Vows:⁴⁴

If, when I become a Buddha, those sentient beings of the ten quarters who awaken the Bodhi-Mind, perform various meritorious practices and desire with sincerity of heart to be born in my Land, should not, when they die, see me appearing before them with a host of sages, then may I not attain the perfect enlightenment.

This again shows the dominant force embracing beings.

Further, another Vow below⁴⁵ says:

If, when I become a Buddha, those sentient beings who, having heard my Name, fix their thoughts on my Land and turn their merits towards it, aspiring for birth in my Land, should not fulfill their desire, then may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

This again shows the dominant force embracing beings.

Further, still another Vow below⁴⁶ says:

If, when I become a Buddha, those women in the worlds of ten quarters who, having heard my Name, rejoice in serene faith, awaken the Bodhi-Mind and seek to abandon women's bodies, should, after their death, be born again as women, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

The meaning of this vow is that, due to Amida's Power of the Primal Vow, those women who call the Buddha's Name will, at their death, be transformed into manhood; Amida will take their hands and Bodhisattvas will hold their bodies to enable them to sit on the jeweled lotus-daises. Then, following the Buddha, they will be born in his Land, join the Buddha's great assembly and realize the insight into the non-arising of all things. Again, unless they rely on Amida's Name and Vow-Power, women will not be able to leave their female bodies even after a thousand or ten thousand kalpas or a period of kalpas as innumerable as the sands of the River Ganges. If a monk or a layman says that women will not be able to be born in the Pure Land, this person is telling a lie. You should not believe him. The above quotation of the sutra is further evidence. This also shows the dominant force embracing beings.

38 [5] The dominant force enabling one to attain birth:

Question: You have said that Amida's Forty-eight Vows embrace all sentient beings and enable them to be born in the Pure Land. It is not yet clear what sort of sentient beings attain birth and who testifies to their birth.

Answer: It is stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*:⁴⁷

The Buddha said to Vaidehī: "Do you know that Amida Buddha is not far from here? You should fix your thoughts and visualize that Land. Then your pure act will be accomplished. I will also enable all ordinary beings of the future to attain birth in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss."

The above passage of this sutra is further evidence. If ordinary beings who will come after the Buddha's death take advantage of [Amida] Buddha's Vow-Power, they will definitely attain birth. This indeed shows the dominant force enabling one to attain birth.

39 Question: Śākyamuni's sermons were meant to enlighten sentient beings. Why are there people who believe in them and those who do not, each abusing the other?

Answer: Moral natures of ordinary persons are of two kinds: good nature and evil nature. Those of good nature are again of five kinds: (1) good persons who, having heard the teaching, abandon evil and do good; (2) good persons who abandon the wrong and perform the right; (3) good persons who abandon the untrue and perform the true; (4) good persons who abandon the unrighteous and perform the righteous; and (5) good persons who abandon the false and perform the true. Those five kinds of persons are able to benefit both themselves and others if they take refuge in the Buddha. At home they perform filial duties; outside, they bring benefit to others. Among the people, they perform sincerity; in the imperial court, they are called 'gentlemen,' being loyal to the king and bent on fulfilling their duties as loyal subjects. Hence, they are called persons who are good in their own nature.

Persons of evil nature are: (1) evil persons who slander the true and engage in the false; (2) evil persons who slander the right and engage in wrong-doings; (3) evil persons who slander the righteous and engage in unrighteous deeds; (4) evil persons who slander the true and engage in the untrue; and (5) evil persons who slander good and engage in doing evils. Even if those five kinds of persons wish to take refuge in the Buddha, they are not able to attain their own benefit, nor bring benefit to others. At home they do not perform filial duties; among the people, they have no sincerity. At the court, they are called 'petty-spirited persons'; when they serve the king, they always entertain flattery and insidious thoughts; hence, they are called 'disloyal persons.' Furthermore, in their attitudes towards wise, virtuous and good people, those persons deny righteousness and fabricate unrighteousness; they see only evils in others. Hence, they are called persons who are evil in their own nature. All the good and righteous people among human and heavenly beings as well as Buddhas and sages are slandered and shamed by those evil persons. Wise people should be aware of this. I have above given detailed explanation of the persons of good nature and those of evil nature, thereby clarifying the way things are. I have thus answered your question.

40 Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra* below:⁴⁸

The Buddha said to Vaidehī: "You and other sentient beings should concentrate and fix the thoughts on one point, contemplating the golden bannered pillars under the ground of the Western [Pure Land] and also the various jeweled adornments above it."

From here to the end of the thirteenth contemplation is generally [the Buddha's] reply to Vaidehī's two requests as mentioned above. This is clear evidence of the fact that [Śākyamuni Buddha] desired to rouse good and evil ordinary persons to convert their thoughts and perform practices so

that they might all attain birth. This also shows the dominant force enabling one to attain birth.

Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra* below:⁴⁹

In the land made of various jewels there are five hundred koṭis of jeweled towers. In those jeweled towers there are innumerable heavenly beings, who play heavenly music and proclaim in it mindfulness of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. If you have accomplished this contemplation, you will, after death, surely be born in his Land.

This passage of the sutra is further evidence. This also shows the dominant force enabling one to attain birth.

Further, it is stated in the [*Contemplation*] *Sutra* below:⁵⁰

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "This wondrous flower has originally been produced by Dharmākara Bhikṣu's Vow-Power. If you want to contemplate on that Buddha, you should first form an image of this flower-seat. Contemplate each part of it until you can see the whole thing clearly. If you have accomplished this meditation, you will definitely be born in the Land of Utmost Bliss."

This passage of the sutra is further evidence. This again shows the dominant force enabling one to attain birth.

41 Further, it is stated in the *Larger Sutra*:⁵¹

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "If sentient beings have been born in his Land, they all join the group of the right established state. All the Buddhas of the ten quarters praise that Buddha. If sentient beings, having heard his Name, rejoice with a heart of absolute trust and think of him even once, desiring to be born in his Land, then they will attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression."

This passage of the sutra is further evidence. This also shows the dominant force enabling one to attain birth.

42 Further, it is stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*, section on the nine grades of aspirants, that the sentient beings mentioned in each grade are ordinary persons of the period of the five defilements when the Buddha was still in the world and after his death. They may meet good teachers, who urge them to awaken faith, observe the precepts, think of the Buddha, chant sutras, worship and praise him, and then they will definitely attain

birth. Due to the Buddha's Vow-Power they will all attain birth. This again shows the dominant force enabling one to attain birth.

43 Further, the *Amida Sutra* says [to the effect]:⁵²

There are in each of the six quarters Buddhas as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. They all produce tongues, covering the entire universe with them and proclaiming the words of sincerity and truth: 'All ordinary persons, whether they live during the time of the Buddha or they come after his death, should convert their thoughts and think of Amida Buddha, desiring to be born in his Pure Land, and call his Name continuously until their lives of a hundred years, at the longest, come to an end, or call his Name for seven days, one day, or even ten times, three times or only once. When they die, the Buddha will come to the aspirants in person with a host of sages and welcome them, thus enabling them to attain birth.

Those Buddhas of the six quarters manifested broad tongues and gave testimony to ordinary persons that their karmic evils would be destroyed and they would attain birth. If, in spite of the testimony, they should not be born, the Buddhas' tongues that were manifested out of their mouths would not have returned to their mouths and would have naturally decayed and perished. This also shows the dominant force enabling one to attain birth.

44 Respectfully I urge you, all aspirants: When you have heard those words, you should accordingly shed tears of anguish like rain and resolve to repay your indebtedness to the Buddhas even by grinding your bodies into powder and breaking your bones for many kalpas to come. Then you will come into accord with their original intent. Why should there be doubt, even as minute as a hair, which keeps you from accepting these words? I also urge you, all followers of the Way: All ordinary persons of karmic evils can still have their evils destroyed and realize attainment of birth; how much more so with sages? How could they desire birth and yet fail to reach [the Pure Land]?

I have summarily answered the question as to what sort of sentient beings can be born in the Pure Land. Here ends my explanation of the five kinds of dominant force.

NOTES

1. *O-mi-t'o ching* (Jpn. *Amida-kyō*), popularly known as the *Smaller Sutra*, covers four sheets in old Chinese editions. *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 366.
2. The *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra* (Chn. *Pan-chou-san-mei-ching*; Jpn. *Hanju-zammai-kyō*) exists in two Chinese versions, 1-fasc. (*Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 417) and 3-fasc. (*Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 418) texts; the sutra explains how one can practice concentration and visualize Buddhas, especially Amida. For my translation of this sutra from Chinese, see "*Pan-chou-san-mei-ching*: Translation with Notes," in Fujita Kōtatsu Hakushi Kanreki Kinen Ronshū Kankōkai, ed., *Fujita Kōtatsu hakushi kanreki kinen ronshū: Indo tetsugaku to Bukkyō* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1989), pp. 49–88.
3. *Shih-wang-chu-ching* (Jpn. *Jūōjō-kyō*); the full title is *Shih-wang-chu-sheng-e-mi-t'o-fu-kuo-ching* (Jpn. *Jūōjō-amidabukkoku-kyō*). This sutra has been considered apocryphal, but Tao-ch'ō (562–645) frequently quotes from this in his *An-le chi* (Jpn. *Anrakushū*; *Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1958).
4. The Chinese title is *Ching-t'u*[淨度]-*san-mei-ching* (Jpn. *Jōdo-sanmai-kyō*); the text here reads *Ching-to*[淨土]-*san-mei-ching*, "*Pure Land Samādhi Sutra*," but in the quotation from it which occurs below, *Ching-t'o*[淨土] is replaced by *Ching-t'u*[淨度], "*Pure salvation*." This sutra has been considered apocryphal.
5. According to the *Ta-kuan-ting-ching* (Jpn. *Daikanjō-kyō*; *Taishō*, vol. 21, no. 1331) the nine calamities are as follows: 1. unexpected illness, 2. being involved in unreasonable disputes, 3. encountering wicked governmental officials, 4. having an inferior and meritless body and being possessed by evil spirits, 5. being deprived of one's possessions by bandits, 6. floods and fire, 7. attacks by a beast or bird of prey, 8. evil spells, magic, etc., and 9. being deceived by superstitious arts of longevity, curing illnesses, etc., thereby increasing suffering and misery (*Taishō*, vol. 21, p. 535c). The *Yao-shih-ching* (Jpn. *Yakushi-kyō*; *Taishō*, vol. 14, no. 450) gives the following nine untimely causes of death: 1. death caused by failure to obtain medical care, 2. execution by a penal law of the state, 3. death caused by evil spirits that take advantage of one's unruly acts, 4. death by fire, 5. death by drawing, 6. death by attacks by a beast, 7. death by falling off a cliff, 8. death by spell or poisoning, and 9. death by hunger and thirst (*Taishō*, vol. 14, p. 408a).
6. Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation from Chinese*, 3rd edition (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 2000), pp. 345–6.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

8. Ibid., p.348.
9. Refers to the seventh contemplation, *ibid.*, pp. 328–330.
10. Refers to four contemplations, from the eighth to the eleventh, *ibid.*, pp. 330–337.
11. Ibid., pp. 337–8.
12. The reference is made to a passage near the end of the sutra, *ibid.*, p. 350. This and most of the quotations which follow are either extracts or adaptations from the original passages.
13. Cf. Ibid., p. 332.
14. The twenty-five Bodhisattvas are: Kanzeon (觀世音), Daiseishi (大勢至), Yakuō (藥王), Yakujō (藥上), Fugen (普賢), Hōjizaiō (法自在王), Shishiku (獅子吼), Darani (陀羅尼), Kokūzō (虛空藏), Tokuzō (德藏), Hōzō (寶藏), Konzō (金藏), Kongōzō (金剛藏), Kōmyōō (光明王), Sankaie (山海慧), Kegon'ō (華嚴王), Shubōō (衆寶王), Gakkōō (月光王), Nisshōō (日照王), Sanmaiō (三昧王), Jōjizaiō (定自在王), Daijizaiō (大自在王), Byakuzōō (白象王), Daiitokuō (大威德王), and Muhenshin (無邊身). This passage was also quoted in Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū* (*Taishō*, vol. 84, p. 47b and 74a). This contributed to the popularity of the idea of the twenty-five Bodhisattvas' welcoming the Nembutsu practitioners at the time of death to take them to the Pure Land.
15. Cf. *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 359.
16. A modified quotation from *Pan-chou-san-mei-ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 899a.
17. The title of the sutra referred to as the third fascicle of the *Kuan-ting-ching* (Jpn. *Kanjō-kyō*) is *Fo-shuo-kuan-ting-san-kuei-wu-chieh-ti-fei-hu-shên-ch'ou-ching* (Jpn. *Bussetsu-kannjō-sanki-goki-taihai-goshinju-kyō*, *Taishō*, vol. 21, no. 1331). The sutra says to the effect that if there is someone who observes the three refuges and the five precepts, thirty-six kings of the heaven and twenty-five good deities will be sent to this person to protect him (*Taishō*, vol. 21, pp. 501c–502c).
18. The names of the twenty-five good deities appear in the *Abhiṣeka Sutra* (*Taishō*, vol. 21, pp. 502c–503a).
19. *Pi-yü-ching* (Jpn. *Hiyu-kyō*, *Taishō*, vol. 4, no. 217) is quoted in the *An-le chi* as saying: There was a rich man, who did not believe in the law of karma. When he was fifty, he saw a dream that a demon came to snatch his tablet, which was interpreted as taking his life in ten days. Horrified, he went to see the Buddha. The Buddha said to him that if he believed in the three treasures he would be able to escape death. He followed the Buddha's teaching and actually lived to be a hundred years old. See *An-le chi*, *Taishō*, vol. 47 p. 16a, and *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereafter, *SSZ*), vol. 1 (Kyoto:

Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), pp. 419–420.

20. *Wei-wu-san-mei-ching* (Jpn. *Yuimusanmai-kyō*). See *An-le chi* (*Taishō*, vol. 47, p. 16a; *SSZ*, vol. 1, 419.)

21. Cf. *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 319–320.

22. *Pan-chou-san-mei-ching*, 1 fasc., *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 899b, where it is said that one is able to see the Buddha due to the three powers: (1) the power of taking refuge in the Buddha, (2) the samādhi power and (3) the original merit-power. According to another version of the sutra (3 fasc.), the three are as follows: (1) the Buddha's majestic power, (2) the Buddha's samādhi power and (3) the original merit-power, *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 905c.

23. The three transcendental knowledges (Skt. *tisro vidyāḥ*), are: (1) knowledge of the former lives of oneself and others, (2) ability to know the future destiny of oneself and others and (3) ability to destroy all evil passions. Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Arhats are said to be all possessed of those three knowledges.

24. The six supernatural faculties *sad* (Skt. *abhijñāḥ*) are: (1) ability to go anywhere at will, (2) ability to see anything at any distance, (3) ability to hear any sound at any distance, (4) ability to know others' thought, (5) ability to know the former lives of oneself and others, and (6) ability to destroy all evil passions.

25. Cf. *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 322.

26. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 322, ff.

27. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 324–5.

28. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 328–9.

29. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 330–1.

30. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 330–1.

31. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 332–3.

32. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 333–4.

33. For the section on the nine grades of aspirants in which the practice of reciting Amida's Name is mentioned, see *ibid.* pp. 345 and 348.

34. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 349.

35. A modified quotation from *Pan-chou-san-mei-ching*, 3 fasc., *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 906b-c. See also another version, 1 fasc., *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 900a.

36. *Yüeh-têng-san-mei-ching* (Jpn. *Gattō-zanmai-kyō*), *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 553a-b.

37. A modified quotation from *Wên-shu-pan-jo-ching* (the full title is *Wên-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-mo-ho-pan-jo-po-lo-mi-ching* [Jpn. *Monjushiri-shosetsu-makahannyaharamitsu-kyō*]), *Taishō*, vol. 8, p. 731a-b.

38. Refers to the Eighteenth Vow with the text modified according to Shantao's interpretation.
39. There is no passage in the *Larger Sutra* which exactly corresponds to the quotation but it is said in the sutra that the Pure Land has been established and sustained by Amida's karmic power. This exposition of the sutra seems to be interpreted here to mean also that we are enabled to be born in the Pure Land by his karmic power.
40. Refers to the section on the three groups of aspirants, *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 272b-c.
41. *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 323–337.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 339–348.
43. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 356.
44. The nineteenth vow.
45. The twentieth vow.
46. The thirty-fifth vow.
47. Cf. *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 321.
48. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 324.
49. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 328.
50. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 330.
51. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 268.
52. The *Amida Sutra*, in the section on the Buddhas of the six quarters, *ibid.* pp. 356–8

BOOK REVIEWS

Critical Reflections on Buddhism and Buddhist Studies

The last thirty years or so have seen an increasing awareness of the effects of social location on the interpretation and explanation of historical events and social processes. This has led for example to examinations of the social history of science and technology, as well as to reconsidering the colonialist assumptions built into representations of the exotic other. Buddhism is one of the exotic others that has been frequently represented in Western popular and scholarly discourse. To varying degrees the ways in which Buddhism has been represented have been influenced both by the unexamined assumptions and the ideological agendas of those doing the representing. This has been the case whether the underlying attitudes have been critical of Buddhism or critical of Western society.

At the same time, the study of ideology has led to questioning religious doctrines in terms of their ethical effects. To take just two examples, religion has been used to justify both the enslavement and the liberation of African Americans, and to justify both the imposition of gender defined roles and the equal treatment of women. From this perspective religion loses its former role as the arbiter of ethics, and becomes itself the object of ethical inquiry.

These topics were explored in a panel at the March, 1998, meeting of the Western Region of the American Academy of Religions, which was held at the Claremont schools. Contributors to the panel spoke on recent publications that dealt with the topic. These included John Thompson on *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism*, Taline Goorjian on *Rude Awakenings*, and Geoff Foy on *Curators of the Buddha*. In addition we have added a review of the Winter 1995 (volume 18, no. 2) issue of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, which complements these other works, being a special issue on method in the study of Buddhism.

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Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism. Edited by Jamie Hubbard & Paul L. Swanson. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997. 515 pages. Hardcover: \$45.00; paperback: \$22.95.

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Pruning the Bodhi Tree: the Storm over Critical Buddhism explores serious issues regarding the understanding of Buddhism in the academy, the role of the scholar, and the possibility of objective scholarship. It thus is part of the recent self-critical trend in Buddhist Studies exemplified in other works such as *Curators of the Buddha* and *Rude Awakenings*. *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* focuses on a contemporary movement in Japanese Buddhist Studies led by Matsumoto Shirō and Hakamaya Noriaki, scholars and practitioners of Sōtō Zen. Matsumoto and Hakamaya call into question basic tenets of much of East Asian Buddhism, especially the doctrines of *tathāgata-garbha* ("womb/embryo of Buddhahood") and "original enlightenment" (*hongaku*). According to both scholars, these doctrines are "un-Buddhist." They claim such teachings promote sloppy thinking, embrace "no-thought" at the expense of logical rigor and all-too easily dismiss language's capacity to convey truth. Matsumoto and Hakamaya call this type of thinking "topical" and argue that it leads to a naive tolerance that often masks discriminatory, totalitarian, and ethnocentric agendas. In its stead, they advocate a "Critical Buddhism" based on the doctrines of *anatta* (no-self) and *pratītya-samutpāda* (dependent origination) that stresses clear thinking and compassionate action. A distinctly political agenda informs both Matsumoto and Hakamaya's work, one running counter to the prevailing *Nihonjinron* atmosphere in Japan during the 1980s and '90s. Their work also echoes Western Postmodern discourse in questioning the possibility of objective, "value-free" scholarship.

Pruning the Bodhi Tree is divided into three sections, each containing essays by Matsumoto and Hakamaya with responses from other scholars. Part One, "The What and Why of Critical Buddhism," centers on the distinction between "critical" and "topical" thinking, a division Hakamaya traces to 17th century scholar Giambattista Vico and his "debate" with Rene Descartes (pp. 56–63). [N.B., this debate never actually occurred since Descartes died 18 years before Vico's birth]. Part Two, "In Search of True Buddhism," concerns Matsumoto and Hakamaya's extensive critique of the *tathāgata-garbha* tradition. Matsumoto terms this teaching "*dhātu vāda*," equating it with "original enlightenment" thought so prevalent in Japanese Buddhism. Matsumoto is adamant that this teaching is not "true Buddhism" (pp. 165–173). Part Three, "Social Criticism," highlights the

political aspects of "Critical Buddhism." The authors show how the theory of "original enlightenment" works to maintain the status quo, and argue that *hongaku* promotes strong ethnocentric sentiments glorifying the unique Japanese "essence," a notion that has often served to support totalitarianism and militarism.

Each of the essays in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* has something to recommend it. Matsumoto and Hakamaya's essays are insightful and show both scholars' vast erudition to good avail (both studied with Yamaguchi Zuihō, Japan's leading Tibetologist). Hakamaya's "Critical Philosophy versus Topical Philosophy" and "Scholarship as Criticism," along with Matsumoto's "The Doctrine of *Tathagata-garbha* Is Not Buddhist" and "Buddhism and the Kami: Against Japanism" present both scholars' main points clearly and strongly. These essays make clear that "Critical Buddhism" is not a search for an "original Buddhism" (pace Rhys Davids) and draw a sharp contrast between "critical" and "topical" thought. Perhaps most importantly, they highlight disturbing aspects of Japanese politics that "Critical Buddhism" is protesting.

Most of the essays by other contributors to *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* take Matsumoto and Hakamaya to task for their claims. Among the best of these are Sallie King's "Buddha Nature is Impeccably Buddhist" (pp. 174–192), in which she argues that "Buddha Nature" thought may not imply a monistic ontology, and that its teachings can have positive social repercussions, and Peter Gregory's "Is Critical Buddhism Really Critical?" (pp. 286–297), in which Gregory notes that Hakamaya's account greatly oversimplifies doctrinal and historical developments. Other contributions are equally worthy, however; Paul Swanson's "Why They Say Zen Is Not Buddhism" (pp. 3–29) is highly recommended for the balanced overview it gives of the whole Critical Buddhist movement.

Pruning the Bodhi Tree encourages critical responses so it is no surprise that I have many of my own. I will be brief due to constraints of space. First, is Critical Buddhism really new? It seems to me that a "critical" spirit consistently appears in the history of Buddhism and many contributors to *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* argue the same point. Second, why favor Critical over Topical Buddhism? Hakamaya's assertions that "Topical philosophy" is morally impoverished and irrational may hit the mark in some cases, but I doubt "Critical philosophy" will always be better. Third, must "original enlightenment" thought lead to social discrimination? Although Matsumoto and Hakamaya are justifiably outraged at social problems in Japan (and Buddhism's supporting role in their formation), they nowhere make a convincing case that Topical Buddhism will always lead to institutionalized social discrimination. Finally, I doubt that either Matsumoto or Hakamaya have an adequate understanding of "religion" since both stress that "True Buddhism" entails belief in basic teachings rather than ritual participation or community membership. Frankly, such uncritical accep-

tance of nineteenth century Protestant notions of “religions” are no longer viable in Religious Studies these days.

All such criticisms aside, *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* is an important book for bringing major issues in Japanese Buddhist scholarship to a greater audience. The book’s dialogical structure, thought-provoking analyses and controversial claims promote active engagement on the reader’s part. For these reasons it is excellent even if problematic. Matsumoto and Hakamaya are to be commended for forcing us to consider how Buddhist discourse may be shaped by political agendas. At the very least the last section of Matsumoto’s essay “The *Lotus Sutra* and Japanese Culture” (pp. 388–403) should be required reading in all courses on East Asian Religions if only to counter overly romanticized views such as Suzuki presents in *Zen and Japanese Culture*.

On a final note, the provocative tone both Matsumoto and Hakamaya assume (it comes through even in translation and recalls the style of Neo-Pragmatist Richard Rorty) makes for an entertaining read. Although some readers might be offended, I often found their comments amazingly trenchant. I think my favorite is Hakamaya’s likening of Sino-Japanese Buddhism to a parasite feeding off a lion. As he puts it, “In China and Japan the parasite fattened and grew strong by taking the form of the philosophy of original enlightenment, debilitating the lion almost to the point of killing it.” (p. 136) However, Matsumoto’s characterization of a particular Japanese scholar—“From beneath the flutter of the monk’s robes the glint of polished armor quickly catches the eye” (p. 358)—runs a close second. Such remarks are sure to arouse a variety of responses from their readers. I leave it to others to decide whether these passages are instances of *upāya* designed to further our own understanding of Dharma or just nasty jibes tossed out by a couple of irascible academics.

Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism. Edited by James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo. (Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture.) Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994. 390 pages. Hardcover: \$ 42.00; paperback: \$ 21.95.

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Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism is an important contribution to contemporary trends in Critical Buddhism. This text is a product of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and

Culture, centered at Nanzan University, a Catholic school in Nagoya, Japan, and it is edited by John Maraldo and James Heisig, a Catholic priest and director of the Nanzan Institute. The Nanzan Institute is dedicated to translating and transmitting Japanese philosophy and religion, such as the works of the Kyoto school, into Western languages. *Rude Awakenings* is a collection of fifteen papers presented at the international Kyoto Zen Symposium funded by the Taniguchi Foundation in March, 1994 at Santa Fe, New Mexico. At this gathering, participants from Japan, the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Belgium shared their diverse and often conflicting conclusions about nationalistic tendencies of Zen priests, intellectuals, and Kyoto school philosophers during the first half of this century. Compounding the spectrum of perspectives presented in this collection is the broad range of ground that it covers. The essays within *Rude Awakenings* address such topics as the active support that Zen priests exercised toward Japan's military endeavors, the *nihonjinron* ("Japanese exceptionalism") rhetoric of early internationally-minded intellectuals such as D. T. Suzuki, and the question of whether the so-called Kyoto school thinkers were responsible for providing the philosophical underpinnings for Japanese imperialism. *Rude Awakenings* is organized into four interrelated sections: Questioning Zen, Questioning Nishida, Questioning Modernity, and Questioning the Kyoto School.

For those more familiar with Buddhism than the Kyoto school, this so-called 'school' refers to a group of intellectuals centered on the professor Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), often referred to as the founder of modern Japanese philosophy. These scholars, most of whom were affiliated with Kyoto Imperial University, sought to synthesize Eastern and Western thought, with a focus on the philosophy of history. Discussing the role of nationalism among the members of Zen and the Kyoto school, the articles of this text do well in providing an adequate view of the historical context and background against which their topics are framed. Especially useful for anyone interested in modern Japanese history is the wealth of detailed information that the contributors to *Rude Awakenings* provide regarding the domestic and international events engaging Japan from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

The question of nationalism in Japan, as Jan Van Bragt points out, technically begins with the dismantling of the Tokugawa feudal system during the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the concurrent establishment of an imperial-based government by which Japan sought to define its own status as a nation-state alongside the other nation-states of the world. With the initiation of radical modernization—or as some would say, Westernization—during the mid-nineteenth century, Japan began adopting Western science and technology at rapid pace. Fueled by slogans such as "Civilization and Enlightenment" and "Enrich the country, Strengthen the military" the Japanese people of the Meiji period took pains to assert them-

selves as a representative nation of the East which could stand up against the impending force of Western imperialism. Viewing European and American colonialism looming around them, the Japanese started using military aggression to push Japan's boundaries outwards into Asia under the auspices of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere." Justifying their own assumed imperialist control over these surrounding areas under the need to liberate Asia from the West, Japan eventually expanded its empire to a tremendous size.

It was within this sequence of events, during which Japan transformed itself from a newborn nation-state into a great international power, that the intellectual undercurrents of nationalism discussed in *Rude Awakenings* were formed. Before considering whether or not the advocates of Zen and the Kyoto school did appropriate these new nationalistic trends, let us take a critical look at the term 'nationalism,' which otherwise might be easily thrown around as a derogatory but hollow catchphrase. In order to do this I will present the definitions of this term provided by three of the contributors.

Robert Sharf, in his article "Whose Zen?: Zen Nationalism Revisited," delineates nationalism as a strictly modern phenomena. According to Sharf's explanation, the context of modern nationalism is globalization, which is largely coextensive with the spread of Western science and technology. Nationalism then arises as a reactionary attempt to preserve native tradition and culture in the face of foreign cultural hegemony. However, he asserts,

Ironically, nationalist discourse cannot escape the ground from which it grew: nationalism is very much the product of modernity and the modernist episteme. That is to say, as nationalist representations of self are inevitably constructed in dialectical tension with the foreign "other," the nationalist promise to restore cultural "purity" is always necessarily empty (p. 47).

In his article, "Kyoto School—Intrinsically Nationalistic?," Jan Van Bragt identifies Japanese nationalism as a type of cultural particularism that developed in Japanese history before its modern nation-state status, as a strategy of self-preservation under the threat of outside forces. Van Bragt identifies this cultural particularism with what he describes in Japan as "a remarkably flexible notion of the family that was able to radiate from the center of the 'Imperial Family'" (p. 237). He also points out that Japan's modern nationalism, generally taken as a reaction to European and American culture, is modeled after an earlier pattern of nationalism that developed in response to intimidation by China, the neighboring country to which Japan owes much of its cultural heritage (p. 238).

In his contribution "Questioning Nationalism Now and Then: A Critical Approach to Zen and the Kyoto School," John Maraldo states, "in broad

terms, we may define nationalism as the assertion of self-identity by a specific people made over against other people or states as a declaration of the right to preserve and advance its own identity in an international world" (p. 334). Maraldo also points out that some critics differentiate types of nationalism according to their 'object of loyalty,' such as ethnic nationalism, cultural nationalism, and state nationalism (ibid.).

With these definitions of nationalism in mind, we may proceed to the question of whether the works of Japanese Zen and Kyoto school intellectuals may be accurately known as nationalistic. Regarding this difficult query, the range of opinions presented by the contributors to *Rude Awakenings* is surprisingly diverse. Most critiques are not simply leveled at a one-dimensional 'Hooray for our team!' enthusiasm. Instead, what we find in this book are highly sophisticated analyses of historical fact and philosophical speculation that attempt to dig deep into the foundation of thought expressed by some of the pioneers of modern Japanese philosophy and Zen Buddhism, such as Nishida Kitarō and Suzuki Teitarō (1870–1966). Three general responses to the question of these scholars' nationalism are put forth by the authors of *Rude Awakenings*. These are the (1) negative responses by those who claim these men were not nationalistic, (2) the ambiguous responses by those who claim that they were positioned on a middle territory between nationalism and anti-nationalism, and (3) the positive responses by those contributors who agree that they had actively participated in the popular trends of the day and had attempted to universalize the Japanese perspective. Such responses will be discussed here in this order, from the most defensive to the most accusatory.

Looking into the personal letters and interviews of the scholars in question, many contributors to *Rude Awakenings* conclude that the early Zen and Kyoto school leaders were quite opposed to Japanese involvement in war and military aggression abroad. Ueda Shizuteru relates a particularly moving account of how Nishida reacted to the news that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. At that time, the seventy-year old Nishida was hospitalized for rheumatism, where he was told the news of the bombing by his student Aihara Shinsaku.

I will never forget the expression on his face when I told him what was in the articles prominently displayed in the special editions of the newspapers. It was a face filled with grave concern and anxiety over the terrible force that had been let loose. There was nothing in him of the excitement over a great victory that most people felt. At that moment, his whole body had become one mass of sadness.... As Japan chalked up one victory after another and euphoria spread among the public at large, his mood seemed only to deepen in the opposite direction (p. 86).

Nishida, Suzuki, and their colleagues are frequently shown by these authors to be opposed to the increased militarism and ultra-nationalism during the Pacific War, even risking their lives by speaking out against the Army's squeeze on the imperial government and their curtailing of academic freedom. Because the very nature of their scholastic mission was an explicit attempt to reconcile and put into dialogue the voice of Eastern thought with that of Western philosophy and religion, these scholars were regarded at that time as the cutting edge of international scholarship. In contrast with the nationalism of which he is now accused, Yusa Michiko, in her essay "Nishida and Totalitarianism: A Philosopher's Resistance," claims that "the vision he [Nishida] proposes is of a pluralistic community of nations within which each nation is able to maintain its own identity" (p. 111).

However, such apologists do not overlook that these thinkers also occasionally expressed themselves in the popular rhetoric of national polity endorsed by the Army they seemingly opposed, appearing to celebrate such cathected notions as "the Imperial Way" and "Japanese Spirit." In their defense, contributors such as Ueda Shizuteru and Yusa Michiko suggest that there was a deliberate tug-of-war over meaning taking place between the intelligentsia and the Army, and it was through this semantic struggle that scholars such as Nishida sought to redefine catchphrase terminology and empower this rhetoric with more constructive, pluralistic value.

While certain contributors to *Rude Awakenings* seek to defend the members of the Kyoto school and Zen circles from their critics, most authors concur that these men were positioned on some type of middle ground with regard to an advocacy of Japanese nationalism. Such responses claim that it is the very ambiguity of this middle territory which gives rise to current questioning of them. According to this strain of argumentation, it is also such a middle stance that left them open to critique by the ultra-nationalists and militarists during the war and by the ultra-liberalists and Marxists after the war. As the prominent Kyoto school scholar Nishitani Keiji once remarked, "During the war we were struck on the cheek from the right; after the war we were struck on the cheek from the left" (p. 291). Some contributors have pointed out that the ambiguity of their middling posture is related to the ideological importance of "emptiness" for Zen and "absolute nothingness" for the Kyoto school. Although these concepts are not equivalent, Zen was an important influence on the Kyoto school, having been embraced personally by Nishida Kitarō and many of his students, and its doctrine of emptiness informed of the Kyoto doctrine of absolute nothingness.

However, the doctrines of emptiness and nothingness are not just evidence for the position that these scholars took a middle stance with regard to nationalism. According to those contributors who claimed that

these Japanese intellectuals were in fact nationalists, the theories of emptiness and absolute nothingness were an important means by which these men promoted the Japanese point of view. According to some contributors to *Rude Awakenings*, emptiness and absolute nothingness were taken up, along with the idea of "pure experience," by Suzuki and Kyoto school leaders as a uniquely Eastern claim to a universalist rationale comparable to the universalist claims of Western scientific theory. Likewise, some claim that these Japanese thinkers, who were the first to attempt to represent the "East" in East-West dialogue, used the theories of emptiness and nothingness to essentialize their own positions as the standard of a universal truth, while subsuming the subjectivity of the West within this stance. In contrast with contemporary scholastic trends toward respect for pluralism among traditions, such a universalist tendency is rather easily targeted by critics as nationalistic.

According to those who assert the nationalism of Zen and Kyoto school scholars, taking a stance based on emptiness, suchness and nothingness led these intellectuals toward a tendency of collapsing the distinction between the actual and the ideal, the phenomenal state and the absolute, the is and the ought. Christopher Ives, while summarizing Ichikawa Hakugen's critique, points out the Taoist influence on this tendency in the context of Zen, which he describes as a way to "give up resistance to, and then accept and accord with, the actuality around oneself. To promote this 'accord with the principles of things as a kind of naturalism,' one restrains from judgmental discrimination and thereby removes oneself from the psychological basis of preferences, struggle, and resulting anguish" (p. 19). Accepting the actual as emptiness or suchness, an approach witnessed in the oft-quoted Zen dictum from the *Record of Lin-chi* "Make yourself master of every situation, and wherever you stand is the true [place],"¹ becomes ethically precarious during a time of war, when the ideal might be something much different than the socio-political actuality with which a person has accorded (p. 19).

In addition to the problematic of equating "the is and the ought," critics have found that the negating function of emptiness and absolute nothingness leaves no position for an individual self to assert his or her human rights in the face of injustice. Furthermore, there is no foundation by which to ground an ethos of behavior toward other persons, who are also denied their own substantial position. The following is one statement about nothingness by Nishitani that certain contributors have found particularly troublesome. "We have to kill the self absolutely . . . , breaking through the field where self and other are discriminated from one another and made relative to one another. The self itself returns to its own home-ground by killing every 'other,' and, consequently, killing itself"² (p. 253). While Nishitani's formulation may be a rather pointed formulation of emptiness,

and even a healing antidote for those who are mentally stuck in a substantialist paradigm, as Van Bragt points out, his speculation on the symmetrical negation of I and Thou is problematic with regard to practical action in the world, especially at a time when his fellow citizens and students were being sent off to war (p. 254).

Although some authors have shown that these scholars of Zen and the Kyoto school expressed opposition to Japan's involvement in military aggression, their reliance on the notions of emptiness and absolute nothingness left these men open to critique on all sides. By asserting such doctrines, Suzuki and Nishida hoped to contribute a universalist philosophy to an international community that had already staked claims to the rights of a universal rationale. However, the very attempt to propose a universalist position that was born from uniquely Japanese roots is what today's critics are inclined to label as 'nationalistic.' At a time when European and American civilization were seeking to dominate the globe through colonialism, and as some would say, cultural hegemony, these scholars attempts to assert an Eastern alternative may not be so reprehensible. Unfortunately, globalization was still a new development in world history at that time, and Japan, just like many other Western nations, also tried to subsume the plurality of the East under their own universalist, totalitarian force. Today, when essentializing rhetoric that asserts singular norms for either the East or the West has become a virtual relic of past scholarship, the Zen and Kyoto school intellectuals who sought after a universalist philosophy more readily appear to have embraced the nationalist trend, especially in light of the socio-political situation of Japan at that time.

In conclusion, I want to address the question, "why is it important to know whether or not these Zen and Kyoto school philosophers were nationalistic?" And, furthermore, "what does it mean for us to be questioning these Japanese scholars of the past, most of whom are deceased and have no chance to defend themselves?" With regard to the first question, which points to the value of critical scholarship, honest discernment of the political involvements of these early scholars and transmitters of Japanese philosophy and religion to the West provides an essential framework for the study of both Buddhism and Kyoto school philosophy. This information brings to light the social and political agendas underlying their work, and responsible scholarship recognizes text in context, rather than abstracted from historical particularity. For example, Suzuki's emphasis on Zen experience, which was probably influenced by his personal friend Nishida's theory of pure experience, resonated with contemporary Western interest in mystical experience as propagated by William James. However, while the notion of direct experience in Zen was especially marketable to the Western audience at that time, Suzuki stressed this successful topic to the neglect of the important historical role that monasticism plays

in the Zen tradition, and it is now clear, as contributor Kirita Kyohide has pointed out, that "Suzuki was the first Zen Buddhist deliberately to distinguish between Zen experience and Zen thought, and to recognize the importance of the latter . . ." (p. 67). Therefore, critical scholarship will not merely accept Suzuki's view of the centrality of experience for Zen without accounting for the particular political agendas informing this view.

With regard to the second query, which addressed the retrospective mode of modern critique, I find it valuable to point out that our own critical research into the nationalism of others also requires that we turn this critical eye back toward ourselves in order to reckon with the underlying assumptions that we too have brought into our own scholarship. While it is interesting and perhaps necessary to clarify the ideological frameworks of those scholars whose work we study, it is also important for us to use the same critical faculties with regard to our own agendas so as to responsibly account for our own position as we evaluate the works of others.

In my opinion, nationalism is only one symptom of a fundamental and tenacious human tendency to promote the well-being and interests of oneself over and above those of others in the world. While it may be easier for us today, who are not involved in a world-scale war, to identify the nationalism of Zen or Kyoto school advocates, it is not as if the same self-centeredness that leads to such an ideology has already been extinguished from the world. While I am extremely impressed with the meticulous scholarship put forth by the authors of *Rude Awakenings*, I hope that its readers will not simply accept it as a condemnation of these Japanese men of the past, but rather, that we will be able to use it as a tool to finetune our own critical faculties in order to become more aware of our own ideologies and tendencies to do harm to others in the quest to promote ourselves.

Notes

1. This quote was adapted by Ives from Ruth Fuller Sasaki, trans., *The Record of Lin-chi* (Kyoto: Institute for Zen Studies, 1975), pp. 17 and 27.
2. Van Bragt draws this quote from Nishitani Keiji, *Religion and Nothingness*, translated by Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 263.

Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism. Edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995. vi, 298 pages. Hardcover: \$ 56.00; paperback: \$ 18.00.

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The contributors to *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism* base their examination of Buddhist Studies on the critical study of Edward Said's work *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Said's study is an examination of French, British, and American colonialist perspectives which have influenced Western academic research and political movements in the last two and half centuries. According to Said, the colonialist attitudes of 18th and 19th century Europe constitute a cultural phenomenon, which he calls "Orientalism," thus the title of his book. Of course, Said's word choice is quite deliberate due to its connection to the Western notion of the "Orient," implying, among other things, the dialectical relationship between the "Occident" and the "Orient," or the "West" and the "East." Accordingly, the general meaning of "Orientalism," from Said's theory, "is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and . . . the 'Occident'" (*Orientalism*, p. 2). Essentially, what Said claims in his work is that both terms are human inventions originating from 18th and 19th century academic and political discourse. Moreover, the terms actually have much more to do with epistemology than ontology. For example, the "Orient" does not designate a physical locale, but rather a way of knowing and portraying physical places and real people. Consequently, Orientalism has more to do with "our" world than with the world of the "other" (*Orientalism*, p. 12). In the world of academics, then, Orientalism is a type of discourse which takes away the power of representation from the culture being studied and gives it to the learned scholar (the "Orientalist"), the one who declares what documents are worthy of study and which texts are deserving of the honorable title, "normative" (*Orientalism*, p. 94). The purpose of Said's critical study, which he makes quite clear, is to "criticize—with the hope of stirring discussion—the often unquestioned assumptions" with which the Orientalist predicates his or her study of the "dark," "mysterious," "undiluted," yet often "nefarious," Oriental (*Orientalism*, p. 51).¹

In effect, the authors of the *Curators of the Buddha* are engaged in a synonymous task: by drawing upon the ideas and methodology of Edward Said, the contributors set out to delineate the conceptions and methods that have created a "tradition of misrepresentation" in the history of Buddhist Studies. "The question," Donald Lopez explains, "is not one of the ethics of

scholarship but of the logics of representation, the question is not one of how knowledge is tainted but of how knowledge takes form" (p. 11).

All the entries in this collection raise provocative examples of how Buddhism has been, or could be, misrepresented despite the scholarly work that went into the formulation of such depictions. In order to reveal the characteristics of a "Critical Buddhist Studies," it will suffice to highlight selected essays from this collection.

In Charles Hallisey's article, "Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravada Buddhism" (pp. 31–62), the issue of representation arises to the surface through the author's analysis of the textual studies of T.W. Rhys Davids, R. Spence Hardy, Paul Bigandet, and Adhemard Leclere. Hallisey historically reconstructs the methodologies of these early "Orientalists" in order to show how Buddhism underwent a process of "textualization," the program of signifying certain texts as authoritative in their re-presentation of a living tradition called "Buddhism" (p. 37). Hallisey argues that the textualization of Buddhism produced the beginnings of a "professional" field of study that favored texts in classical languages, such as Sanskrit, and, in some cases, texts in vernacular languages (pp. 41–43). In either case, Hallisey shows that the European scholars constructed a framework to legitimize their textual translations and theories as authoritative while circumscribing the opinions and work of local Asian scholars (p. 37). As a consequence, European scholars created a "normative" Buddhism that was skewed in its representation because of a heavy bias on "original Buddhism" via classical texts (pp. 41–42).

Hallisey argues that despite the biases that existed within this scholarly framework, there were the beginnings of a "postorientalist" approach to Buddhist Studies (see especially pp. 33 and 49). In his discussion of Leclere's work in particular, Hallisey shows that a process of "intercultural mimesis," the influence of a subjectified people on the researcher's reconstruction of a cultural tradition, is noticeable in the scholar's own writings (pp. 49–52). According to Hallisey, Leclere was attentive to "the production of meaning in local contexts" (p. 52). As a contemporary Buddhist scholar, Hallisey wants to benefit from this insight and assist Buddhist Studies to remain vigilant in its search for all legitimate sources of information. Yet, Hallisey is aware that the criterion for claiming certain sources more authoritative than others need to be clarified. He believes that further investigation into the criteria used by early Orientalists can assist current researchers with the task.

The question of authoritative representation is also addressed in Robert H. Sharf's contribution, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism" (pp. 107–160). Sharf critiques the "New Buddhist" movement of Japan during the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning decades of the 20th. Sharf calls into question the representations of Zen by figures such as D.T. Suzuki and Nishida Kitarō. Sharf deciphers at length their claims that Zen

enlightenment is a “transcultural experience” (p. 108) authentically Japanese yet transcendent of any limits that local manifestations might claim. The orthodoxies of modern Rinzai or Sōtō monasticism, as Sharf contends, do not figure into the theoretical framework of Suzuki or Nishida. Consequently, Sharf considers their version of Zen distorted and misleading.

This becomes a complicated matter for Buddhist Studies scholars; they must decide how to handle the brand of Zen that originates from Suzuki and others. As most readers are aware, Suzuki’s writings on Zen have been a major source of data for Western thinkers. For that matter, many students of Buddhism received their introduction to the Buddhist tradition through Suzuki’s popularized accounts. On the one hand, then, the popularity of Buddhism in the West has a lot to owe Suzuki. Yet, on the other hand, Sharf’s critique strongly suggests that what the West has received is a gross misrepresentation of one particular Buddhist tradition that has been universalized to the point of being simultaneously associated with the word “Buddhism.”

The article by Donald Lopez, Jr., “Foreigner at the Lama’s Feet” (pp. 251–296) confronts the issue of representation in Buddhist Studies in a different manner than the previous two; he offers his critique through a self-reflexive account. By placing himself in a line of scholars seeking to preserve a mystified, lost Tibet,² Lopez recounts in rich detail his experience of studying texts under a lama exiled in India. Lopez admits that a part of what he was engaged in was the creation of his own text through the exploitation of a lama-disciple relationship (p. 286). Lopez’s intention was to do textual analysis with the “voice” of the experienced scholar-monk along his side (pp. 270 and 279). Yet he couldn’t escape the struggle within himself that he was trying to write an authoritative text which would eventually supercede the authority of the lama—all for the sake of preserving the tradition of the lama. The circularity of the dilemma is compounded by Lopez’s use of two methods: textual analysis of a historical document and the ethnography of a contemporary Buddhist practitioner. Lopez considers the combination of the two as legitimate, but he recognizes that it is not always clear when the researcher is a historian and when he/she is an ethnographer (pp. 282–83). Moreover, the role of the scholar-practitioner in the preservation of a text, and how that fits within an entire tradition, is also in question.

In all the articles of this anthology the authors attempt to recover the “Orientalism” within the cultural history of Buddhist Studies. It is true that as much as the authors are aware of the cultural biases which exist among the founders of Buddhist Studies, they are also cognizant of their own predisposition toward composing prejudiced assumptions of what constitutes legitimate Buddhist Studies. This kind of consciousness is evident in Luis O. Gomez’s warning that “all of us aspiring scholars must heed the danger signs of crypto-Orientalism—the willingness to bask in the glory of

our texts and then use them to our own ends, the desire to tell our subjects what they really think, and the compulsion to deny any sympathetic involvement" (p. 229).

Lopez's article is another good example of a "postorientalist" analysis—a critic's self-criticism involving an honest inquiry into one's own theories and methods. While exploring his subject he readily pauses to assess his actions. It is this articulation of the self-critical process that constitutes the preeminent contribution of these authors to Buddhist Studies. Others include Hallisey's acknowledgment of the importance of local meaning for constructing a "representative" conception of Buddhism, Sharf's willingness to engage his critics in his postscript in order to reassess his representation of D.T. Suzuki, and Lopez's insightful "conversation" with the ethnography and hermeneutics of Buddhist texts.

An important point to mention is that this anthology of critical studies is only the beginning. The authors readily admit the confines of their research and the limits of their theories. Their work covers many principle issues, but there are a few specifics that are left for subsequent studies. For example, as Hallisey stated in his article, there is a need for recovering more texts in vernacular languages, whether translations of sutras or commentaries (p. 49). There is also the question Sharf's article implies of how to study Buddhist expressions in the West, such as the phenomenon of "American Zen." Who decides its legitimacy or, for that matter, its illegitimacy? What kind of questions should be asked when studying it? And in relation to Lopez's article, one could ask about the significance of his ethnographic experience for the future of Buddhist Studies in the academy. What should the basic requirements be for a prospective Buddhologist? Of course, these are just a few questions and concerns out of the many which these authors contend with. Yet there still remains one pressing question: what is meant by the term "Buddhism"? By dispelling some of the myths created by "Orientalism," the authors of *Curators of the Buddha* have given present and future students of Buddhism a framework to address this question.

Notes

1. My use of these terms is not without warrant considering the literature Said reviews; see especially his comments on the same page about Raymond Schwab's *La Renaissance Orientale*.
2. Hallisey cites Rhys Davids' entries in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as examples.
3. Lopez explains that because of the "genealogy of urgency" which he shared with others scholars (Ippolitio Desideri, Alexander Csoma de Koros, and L. Austine Waddell), Tibet became "a threatened abode of western construction, a fragile site of origin and preserve, still regarded from the periphery as a timeless center" (p. 269).

"On Method," special issue of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Winter 1995)

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While it may seem odd to include a journal in a set of book reviews, this special issue "On Method" is an outstanding landmark in the field of critical reflection on Buddhist Studies. The issue comprises six articles, and here we can only highlight some of the important topics raised and points made with the hope of guiding the interested reader to the original sources.

D. Seyfort Ruegg's "Some Reflections on the Place of Philosophy in the Study of Buddhism" opens the issue. Ruegg argues that philosophy is integral to Buddhism. He directly addresses those classic texts that are cited as grounds for making of Buddhism a tradition that rejects philosophic reflection, such as the story of the man shot by an arrow. Through a careful analysis of the actual texts, he concludes that "What is rejected, then, is disputing for the sake of disputing, rather than useful discussion and analysis" (p. 152). Ruegg also discusses one of the familiar styles of the philosophic study of Buddhism, the comparative approach. He says that often such an approach proves "to be of rather restricted heuristic value, and methodologically it turns out to be more problematical and constraining than illuminating" (p. 154). The difficulties inherent in such projects lead to a discussion that also appears in other papers in this issue. This is the apparent conflict between approaches which place philosophic insights within specific intellectual, historical, social, and cultural contexts, and those which attempt to understand such insights as transcending their contexts of origin and applying universally. For example, consider the claim that everything that exists does so only as the result of causes and conditions. This is itself a universal claim, yet it arises in a particular intellectual environment. Crudely paraphrased, Ruegg's answer is that an adequate understanding is dependent upon first placing a philosophic insight within its context of origin so as to avoid reading onto it our own conceptions, and only then comparing it with other insights from other times and places.

Ruegg is internationally renowned for his studies of the *tathāgatagarbha* theory, and one of the issues that this essay takes up is the "critical Buddhism" of Hakamaya and Matsumoto (see the review of *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* included in this issue). Hakamaya and Matsumoto have criticized *tathāgatagarbha* and buddha-nature theories as contravening the teaching of interdependence, and therefore not Buddhist. Ruegg points out that they have failed to take into account the many Buddhist thinkers outside Japan who accepted both the *tathāgatagarbha* theory and the foundational character of interdependence.

Also worth noting is Ruegg's treatment of the mismatch between the conception of authority in Western philosophy and that of *pramāṇa*, which is often translated as authority, in Buddhist philosophy. In Western thought authority is not considered to be a very dependable source of knowledge. However, in Buddhism the authority of a buddha is based on possession of "immediate knowledge of reality" (p. 176). This mismatch reveals just how essential it is to adequately comprehend a philosophic concept in its context of origin.

The second essay is "Unspoken Paradigms: Meanderings through the Metaphors of a Field" by Luis O. Gómez. He points out that refusal to consider the issues of theory and method in the study of Buddhism does not mean that one thereby becomes "magically divested of a method, a theory, and a particular choice of perspective" (p. 184). While contemporary Buddhist Studies is expanding through interaction with the new historicism, and literary and critical theory, the field is still structured by and continues to require the older methods of classical philology and historical positivism.

Additionally, Gómez calls attention to the relation between the scholar and the various audiences for his/her work. While some scholars might only consider their academic colleagues as their audience, the field of Buddhist Studies also has several other audiences. These include the contemporary religious communities that constitute Buddhism in the present, as well as institutional authorities and interested members of society generally. The effect of the social environment on Buddhist Studies is also reflected in the difference between the way in which Christian Studies has developed as an integral part of Western, Christian social and intellectual history. For Buddhist Studies, however, the "methods and expectations of our scholarship and our audiences have been shaped by a cultural history very different from that of Buddhist traditions" (p. 190). Gómez points out that the Buddhist tradition has its own critical intellectual resources that have as yet not been brought to bear by contemporary scholars in their inquiries into Buddhism itself.

In one section Gómez outlines four different styles of Buddhist Studies which have been influenced by their object, i.e., by Buddhism itself. These are the classic philological method, which gives primacy to the etymology of words and sees Buddhism as primarily embodied in texts; the scholastic method of examining systems of thought as orderly, complete wholes; the doxological method of examining doctrines, either as a matter of personal commitment or as an object of critical inquiry. The fourth method is the creation of histories on the basis of textual chronologies. This has the danger of unconsciously recreating organizing systems that originally served a polemic purpose, whether cast as progressive development ("culminationist") or as devolution and decay from an originally pure, pristine teaching.

The third essay is "Buddhist Studies as a Discipline and the Role of Theory" by José Ignacio Cabezón. Cabezón examines some of the differing ways in which Buddhist Studies has recently been critiqued. Some find traditional Buddhist Studies as overly focused on India, marginalizing other Buddhist cultures, such as Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan. Others critique the focus on texts that excludes other kinds of Buddhist praxis, such as ritual, meditation, social and institutional organization, artistic and aesthetic forms. Critiques have been leveled both at what is studied and at how it is studied. The critique of traditional philology seems to threaten any unity that Buddhist Studies might have hoped to maintain, any hope of disciplinary identity. Cabezón is quite careful, however, to avoid being misunderstood as suggesting that some other method should displace philology as the unifying model for Buddhist Studies. Rather, he suggests that what will assure "the stability and longevity of the discipline is . . . embracing heterogeneity" (p. 240).

From the current of conflicting stereotypes of different styles of Buddhist Studies—European, North American, Taiwanese, Japanese, etc.—Cabezón draws out two general positions which he identifies as positivist and interpretivist. In his usage, positivists focus on texts, seeing for example the reconstruction of texts as the end of scholarship. On the other hand, interpretivists for Cabezón see texts as basic, as the starting point for further inquiry. One of the presumptions that Cabezón discusses is typical of the North American style of scholarship, the view which holds that "true research . . . contains an element of novelty" (p. 254). In other words, purely philological work is not in itself adequate. Rather, research in this style

requires the full involvement of the scholar not only in the text, but beyond it as well, utilizing the text as an object of interpretation with the goal of achieving results that are broad and general in scope (p. 254).

Cabezón also explains the rationale for the expansion of Buddhist Studies from a strictly textual project to one that includes all other aspects of Buddhism: "doctrine itself cannot be fully understood independently of culture in the broad sense of the term" (p. 263). This is more than simply an argument for an examination of the context of a text, but rather entails a redefinition of the character of Buddhism itself. Not solely the philosophic reflections of monastic intellectuals, but the living religion of peasants and kings, of mothers and fathers, of artisans and poets. From this perspective, other issues, such as the relation between Buddhist institutions and social, political, and economic power, open up for examination.

Cabezón portrays an extreme of the philological approach as one in which "scholars can and should be devoid of—or rather, since this is

something that must be cultivated, 'void themselves of'—all bias and prejudice, allowing the text to speak for itself" (p. 251). This portrayal is directly confronted by Tom J.F. Tillemans in his "Remarks on Philology," the fourth essay in this issue. He asserts that no philologist actually undertakes his/her work in this fashion. None would have so narrow a view as to ignore "the history, institutions, context and preoccupations of an author and his milieu" (p. 269). The goal in Tillemans's view is not to "allow the text to speak for itself," but rather to gain an understanding of an author's thought. His argument appears to be basically one against solipsism: if we can claim to understand the thought of a contemporary, and the thought of someone living a decade ago, then it is only a matter of degree to claim that one can understand the thought of a medieval Indian such as Dharmakīrti. Granted, as temporal and cultural distance increases, such understanding becomes more difficult. However, this only means that one needs to be willing to apply greater effort.

Tillemans rejects the assertion frequently heard in some contemporary academic circles that it is impossible to get outside of one's own cultural conditioning, in a word, that all texts are simply mirrors in which we can only see our own reflection.

... we can often get rid of mistaken ideas about what texts and authors thought by means of rational argumentation and by meticulous analysis, so that it just won't do to say baldly that we read our own baggage of cultural prejudices into a text (p. 272).

Although Tillemans does not belabor the fact, his argument is effective because it turns the assertion back upon itself. Any convincing exemplification of the assertion, such as demonstrating that Stcherbatsky's understanding of certain key Buddhist philosophic concepts was unduly influenced by neo-Kantian thought, only works because we are able to demonstrate a better understanding by "means of rational argumentation and by meticulous analysis."

In his essay, "A Way of Reading" C.W. Huntington, Jr., implicitly agrees with Tillemans when he asserts that "grammar and vocabulary are in themselves not enough" (p. 280). Initially, Huntington critiques a view of comparative philosophy which seeks to read philosophic works from other traditions as part of a "denaturalized discourse" (p. 282, the term is Paul Griffiths'). Approaching, for example, Nāgārjuna from the perspective of a denaturalized discourse seeks "to peel back from Nāgārjuna's writing the layers of cultural baggage (everything that has to do with the period and place in which these texts were composed) and uncover a core of timeless philosophic truth" (p. 281). Thus, where Cabezón critiques the view that we must remove all of our own cultural baggage, and Tillemans

critiques the view that it is impossible for us to know anything other than that baggage, Huntington critiques the view that we can understand by removing the cultural baggage from the hands of the other.

Huntington points out that our own conception of philosophic discourse—such as talk of persuasion, argument, grounds, and theory—is itself far from denaturalized, but rather arises “not only from later Indian and Tibetan commentaries but from our own deeply embedded preconceptions about what constitutes legitimately ‘philosophic’ language” (p. 282). Rather than reading Nāgārjuna within the framework of our own preconceptions of philosophy, mistakenly believing that conception of philosophy to be transcendent, or denaturalized, Huntington suggests that Nāgārjuna be read as an instance of apophatic discourse. “At the center of apophatic discourse is the effort to speak about a subject that cannot be named” (p. 283). On this reading the argumentation found in Nāgārjuna is not the sole criteria for defining his intentions, for “even the most rigorous logical form can be exploited for a variety of literary and rhetorical effects” (p. 283).

Rather than argumentation, Huntington suggests reading Nāgārjuna in terms of the religious imagination. Approaching the language of religious writings in this way,

the task of the theological critic is to interpret the significance of such language not as a function of whether it is true or false, but rather to seek to uncover the vitality of the text as a vehicle for religious transformation (p. 296).

On this pragmatic view, it is not necessary to abstract out some ultimate truth from the cultural context of a religious text, but rather to understand how that text works to produce religious transformation in exactly that cultural context.

The final essay in the issue, Jamie Hubbard’s “Upping the Ante: budstud@millenium.end.edu,” discusses the societal context of contemporary Buddhist Studies, specifically the impact of computers on the ways in which research and teaching are done. In large part a survey of recent history, including efforts such as BUDDHA-L and an electronic conference hosted by the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, Hubbard identifies three general areas in which computers have transformed the way in which scholarship had been done. These are word processing, electronic communication, and large scale electronic archives of textual and visual materials. These in turn have wrought further changes, including the use of electronic media in teaching, the extension of intellectual community, the effect of differing levels of access to technology on tenure, promotion, and publishing, the possible infringement on intellectual property rights, and the pressure to

improve the quality of scholarly work. All of these involve additional investment of both finances and professional time, hence the title phrase “upping the ante.”

Together these essays identify the important methodological issues facing Buddhist Studies, presenting different views on those issues in such a fashion as to stimulate the reader’s own creative reflection. On the one hand Buddhism itself is being redefined in a variety of ways. On the other, those different ways in which Buddhism is understood entail different ways of studying it.

The Sound of Liberating Truth: Buddhist Christian Dialogues in Honor of Frederick J. Streng. Edited by Sallie B. King and Paul O. Ingram. (Curzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, 12). Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999. xxxii, 276 pp. Hardcover: \$55.00

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"What is the sound of liberating truth?" This is the question that Frederick Streng posed to Paul Ingram in Honolulu at the Sixth East-West Philosophers Conference just three years before his death. Streng described this question as his "life's koan," and two years later, made it public, going on to say that whatever form the solution to that koan might take, it must involve "ultimate transformation." Streng was not interested in simple descriptions of reality or detached, diplomatic interreligious dialogue. Rather, as a historian of religions, he wanted to show that all religions have a transformative power at their core, and that this power lies at the heart of all human life. Streng advocated engaged interaction, conversation in community, but did not limit this interaction to one or two particular topics. Instead, he worked on a grander scale, encouraging dialogue in several different areas, each of which supported and informed the others. This book seeks to honor both his memory and his work by engaging in the multi-faceted, mutually transformative dialogue he sought all his life to engender.

The essays in this collection fall under five categories: Interreligious Dialogue, Ultimate Reality, Nature and Ecology, Social and Political Issues of Liberation, and Ultimate Transformation or Liberation. Each part consists of four chapters, written by two authors, one Buddhist and one Christian. Each author has written both an essay and a response to the other author's essay. In this way, the book seeks to emulate Streng's love of dialogue, providing not only different religious perspectives on a particular theme, but a genuine engagement as well. David Chappell and Winston King discuss the topic of interreligious dialogue. Bonnie Thurston and Malcolm David Eckel consider the concept of ultimate reality. Alan Sponberg and Paula Cooley reflect on nature and ecology. Sallie King and John Keenan exchange views on social and political issues of liberation. Thomas Kasulis and Ruben Habito review the idea of ultimate transformation or liberation. The book concludes with two epilogues, one by Taitetsu Unno and the other by John Cobb.

There are several main themes that run throughout the majority of the different essays, resurfacing at different points, refracted through a variety of lenses. Not surprisingly, given the nature of Streng's work, one of the main concepts of the essays is emptiness. I found the various discussions

of emptiness helpful, not for their depth, but for their breadth. The concept of emptiness is elaborated under the heading of ultimate reality, brought to bear on the Buddhist notion of ecology, discussed from a Christian perspective, and described both as a goal and a process. These varying interpretations are useful for getting a sense of the way in which the understanding of emptiness has developed over the course of time in various contexts.

Of course, the topic of interreligious dialogue is also at the fore of all the essays, but what is of particular interest is the way in which methodology and boundaries are discussed. What I mean by this is the fact that in many of the essays, the conversation goes beyond discussion about this or that specific topic and treats the very structure of the dialogue itself. Different motives for dialogue, for both Christians and Buddhists are advanced, and, in some cases, the definition of what actually constitutes dialogue is challenged. For example, in David Chappell's essay, "Buddhist Interreligious Dialogue: To Build a Global Community," he suggests three forms of dialogue: intellectual doctrinal discussion, joint religious practice, and joint social action. Winston King, however, in his essay, "Interreligious Dialogue," endorses only the first as a legitimate form of dialogue, and by definition, concludes that almost exclusively, it will be the religious "professionals" who will actually engage in dialogue, and even of them, only a few. This exchange is important because, in my experience, there is precious little of this type of self-reflection occurring among dialogue partners, and its absence is conspicuous. This fact makes the reflections on the act of interreligious dialogue found here of particular importance.

Another important aspect of the interreligious dialogue that occurs in this book is the foregrounding of the authors' specific backgrounds and traditions. Often in interreligious dialogue, the talk is between some idealized form of Buddhism or Christianity that does not seem to have roots in any specific community. In these essays, the authors without exception take care to articulate their own particular faith communities and/or academic disciplines. For example, in her essay, "Creation, Redemption, and the Realization of the Material Order," Paula Cooley makes it clear that she is speaking from a Reformed Protestant position, and uses her work on Jonathan Edwards to inform her stance. This assists the reader enormously in understanding her argument and enables us to concretize her point of view. From there, we are better equipped to either agree or disagree with her opinion, knowing we are making an informed decision either way.

As should be obvious, one of the great strengths of this book is the wide variety of authors who are represented here. For those readers who are new to the field of interreligious dialogue, this book provides an excellent introduction both to different scholars working in the area as well to different topics that are frequently discussed. However, this book is not

only for the beginner. Among the various authors, there is no across the board agreement on anything, and thus it is useful to see on which points the Buddhists and Christians disagree among themselves, and on which points they agree. There is no chance of being led astray by the single opinion of any one author, because there are so many other opinions on similar topics. As Paul Ingram mentions in the introduction, all the essays are, to a greater or lesser degree, interrelated, and the insights from one set of essays informs the discussion of all the others. The interplay allows the reader to see old ideas in a new light, familiar concepts filling different roles, and staid positions in fresh locations. In this way, this book is an asset for those seasoned scholars working in interreligious dialogue as well.

Lastly, a word about methodology. Clearly, there is no one method of dialogue that characterizes all of the essays, and the methodological diversity of the articles is another advantage of the book. I want to just mention a few of the most interesting approaches. John Keenan's essay, "The Mind of Wisdom and Justice in the Letter of James," is an excellent example of the "Buddhist exegesis" he has popularized in his earlier books, *The Meaning of Christ: A Mahāyāna Theology*, and *The Gospel of Mark: A Mahāyāna Reading*. Thomas Kasulis, in his essay, "Under the Bodhi Tree: An Idealized Paradigm of Buddhist Transformation and Liberation," discusses the way in which the story of Gautama's enlightenment functions as a "spiritual heuristic," rather than a *modus operandi*. Finally, Alan Sponberg uses the Buddhist understanding of "self" to articulate a Buddhist position on ecology in his essay, "The Buddhist Conception of an Ecological Self."

It is the rare book that lives up to the promise of its table of contents, but this is one book that, upon further exploration, does not disappoint. There are worthy talking points in each and every essay, and ideas of interest for both Buddhists and Christians alike. It is an honorable and estimable tribute to an influential, stimulating scholar, and we the readers are the ones who benefit from the contributors' labor of love.

***Consciousness at the Crossroads: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on Brain Science and Buddhism.* Edited by Zara Houshmand, Robert B. Livingston and B. Alan Wallace. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1999. 183 pages. Paperback: \$15.95.**

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This work is a record of the second Mind and Life Conference, held in 1989. These conferences are held once every two years and were initiated in response to the Dalai Lama's lifelong interest in establishing a serious

dialogue between Buddhism and Western sciences. This conference focused on the study of mind, brain and cognition, and included a number of the leading figures in contemporary cognitive science.

The work reflects the structure of the conference in which a somewhat formal presentation by one of the participants set the ground for an open discussion. These presentations provide a valuable summary of the issues of contemporary cognitive science. Included are:

“Toward a Natural Science of the Mind” by Patricia Churchland;

“Mapping Brain Functions: The Evidence of Damage to Specific Brain Regions” by Antonio Damasio;

“Steps toward an Anatomy of Memory” by Larry Squire;

“Brain Control of Sleeping and Dreaming States” by Allan Hobson;

“Psychiatric Illnesses and Psychopharmacology” by Lewis Judd.

Two additional sections add greatly to the value of the work as a whole. These are two chapters of clarification by B. Alan Wallace, who also served as one of the translators and editors. Both of these provide commentary from the Madhyamaka perspective on issues raised in the course of the discussions. These comments are both informative and well-balanced, seeking to further the dialogue rather than asserting the superiority of one tradition over another.

Taken together these presentations themselves provide a very accessible overview of contemporary cognitive science without falling into a simplistic popularization of the issues. While the conversational tone of the presentations and discussions has been preserved, the work is not simply a transcript of the conversation. Yet, the editing has been so carefully and skillfully done that the result is almost seamless.

Churchland’s presentation begins with the reflections of the Greek thinkers Plato and Aristotle that gave rise to inquiry into consciousness, particularly the unity of perception—visual perceptions of shape and color are experienced as parts of the unity of an object: there is unity across the sense modalities such as seeing and touching what is perceived to be the same object, and there is unity of an object over time. A majority of the presentation and discussion is devoted Cartesian mind-body dualism, called “substance dualism.”

Three critiques of substance dualism are presented, two negative and one positive. The first is the problem of interaction—how can there be any kind of interaction between two entirely distinct kinds of being, physical and mental? Second is the point that things often seem different from the way they really are, “Critics argued that even though our experience seems to be very different from the behavior of brain cells, that doesn’t mean they *are* different. Seeming to be different is not in fact evidence for things

actually being different" (p. 25). The third critique is the dependence of mental states upon the physical conditions of the brain. Chemicals, electrical stimuli and physical damage all directly effect mental experience. On the basis of these criticisms of substance dualism, Churchland asserts a materialist view in which the mind is simply a state of the brain. In this view, there is a one way causal relation: changes in brain state produce different mental conditions, while there is no reverse effect of thoughts on brain states.

The subsequent chapter, "A Buddhist Response" by B. Alan Wallace, skillfully demonstrates the common assumptions underlying both Cartesian mind-body dualism and the materialist monism maintained by Churchland. The argument basically has been that Descartes proposed an explanation of mind involving two kinds of substance, one of which can be shown to not exist, therefore, the other is the sole explanation. However, dualism and materialist monism are not the only two options. Idealist monism is so out of favor as to not even receive any mention. What Wallace develops, however, is not another option bound within the terms of this approach. Rather, he presents the Madhyamaka view which denies the substantial character of both the mental and the physical.

Damasio's presentation discusses the issue of just how different specific mental functions are from one another, and how they are very uniquely localized in the brain. For example, there is one area on each hemisphere of the brain which are jointly responsible for color vision. Damage of one of these leaves shape and depth perception unaffected, but one half the visual field is seen in black and white.

Squires' discussion focuses on the mechanisms of memory. He identifies two foundational problems for neuroscience: "there is the problem of the initial organization of connections among nerve cells in the brain, and there is the problem of how these original connections can be altered" (p. 78). Where Damasio's presentation dealt with the first problem, the question of memory must deal with the second.

Hobson presents a discussion of how the brain acts differently in the three primary states of consciousness—waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. This topic drew particular attention to the possibilities and significance of lucid dreaming and dream yoga. The fact that dream contents are highly suggestible leads, however to a problem. It has been shown "that we can teach subjects to dream anything they want to dream about. Therefore, if the dream is taken as important evidence for a psychological or philosophical theory, we encounter the problem of a circular loop. The subject may be dreaming what he expects to dream about in order to prove the theory, and this does not constitute scientific evidence of anything" (p. 101).

Judd's presentation focuses primarily on the physical origins of mental disorders, which he indicates are much more widely prevalent than is commonly believed. The development of detailed diagnostic procedures

has allowed for more effective psychopharmacological interventions. One of the key issues raised in the following discussion is the complex causal situation for a mental disorder such as major depression. It is neither purely a physiological matter, nor purely experiential, but rather involves both “a genetic vulnerability and an environmental stressor. Major depression is a complex interaction between one’s inherited constitutional givens, and environmental events that elaborate and precipitate manifestations of the depressive disorder” (p. 129).

One of the most important issues for contemporary cognitive science is raised by Robert Livingstone in the discussion. This is the issue of the persistent and perhaps unavoidable use of metaphors for describing the workings of the mind. The metaphors employed always draw on the forms of technology current at the time that the analysis of mind is made. Livingstone mentions Descartes’ use of the metaphor of hydraulic systems. Numerous other examples could be given as well. For instance Plato uses the metaphor of a carriage to describe a three part model of mind. An argument could also be made that Kant’s model of mind—though not explicit—is the factory. That such metaphors are very powerful is demonstrated by Churchland’s insistence that the mind really is a kind of computer. Livingston asserts, however, that “I think Western neuroscientists are inclined to believe that there is no model that is entirely appropriate, as yet, for the brain” (p. 30). Metaphors can, however, be very useful as heuristics for analysis. As such they can only be judged by how fruitful they are, and not as to whether they are true or false. Computation is just as much a metaphor for understanding the mind as is Descartes’ hydraulics, though it may be a more fruitful one.

Over the course of the presentations and discussions a variety of different issues and topics came under consideration. One of these topics is different kinds of knowledge. It is interesting to observe in the course of the discussion how easily the scientists involved adopt the categories introduced by the Dalai Lama—direct perception, inference and testimony. These three are, of course, based on classic Indian epistemology. Not only were the categories accepted without discussion, but the goal of knowing exclusively by means of direct perception was accepted. This is in turn a reflection of the Gelugpa interpretation of Madhyamaka that awakening is achieved through the direct perception of emptiness—not simply an intellectual grasp of the concept of emptiness.

While the implication that Buddhism as an entirety holds that direct perception is the highest form of knowledge needs greater nuancing, there is another issue that is more relevant to the issue of the interaction between Buddhism and contemporary thought—arguably the concern of the work stated broadly. Just as cognitive science and Buddhism may mutually benefit from engaging in conversation, so also may Buddhism and contemporary epistemology.

The problem is exemplified when the Dalai Lama asserts that one can today directly perceive that the earth is round rather than flat by looking at pictures taken from outer space. This is reinforced by a version of the “ignorance of our forebears” argument—that centuries ago belief that the earth was flat was based solely on testimony (p. 118). This argument ignores the fact that it is we who have learned to ignore the direct perception of our senses in favor of a highly testimony-laden (i.e., theory-laden) acceptance of a photograph as revealing a “higher” truth. Antonio Damasio, one of the participants, although apparently in agreement with the idea that direct perception is the highest form of knowledge, actually points out the inescapable bonds between theory, observation and knowledge, when he says that in science “The process is always shifting, based on better observations, better technology, and better theory” (p. 117).

B. Alan Wallace picks up this thread in his concluding reflections, pointing out that both science and Buddhism necessarily rely on all three forms of knowledge (p. 170). He goes on to point out the circularity involved in determining authoritative testimony, “By what criteria does one judge who is and who is not an authority who can provide reliable testimony? In other words, whose direct observations are to be deemed trustworthy?” (p. 172). (For an extended discussion of this question in relation to the Buddha as an authoritative source, see Roger Jackson’s *Is Enlightenment Possible?: Dharmakirti and Rgyal Tshab Rje on Knowledge, Rebirth, No-Self and Liberation*, Snow Lion Publications, 1993).

One of the issues that appears repeatedly, though perhaps not centrally, throughout the discussions is that of reincarnation, or metempsychosis. A case of twin sisters who remember people, places and objects from their immediate past life is discussed in terms of its implications for there being extremely subtle (by which is not meant higher or more sophisticated, but rather less obvious) aspects of mind which are not dependent upon the material structure of the brain. One may question, however, just how vital an element this is for Buddhism as a whole. It is certainly central to the institutionalized authority structures of Tibetan Buddhism in which deceased monastic leaders are replaced by themselves in another incarnation (the tulku system). Other cultural forms of Buddhism in which institutional continuity is not dependent upon such a system of reincarnations do not place such great emphasis on the concept. The centrality of karma per se to Buddhism generally does not entail the problematics of reincarnation.

Perhaps the most important point of agreement found in this entire discussion is the conventional nature of the self. Here, Buddhist insight and compassion complement cognitive science, providing a personal value and significance to the shared view: “the Madhyamikas add that while none of us exist as independent things, we do exist in interrelationship with

each other. Thus, we do not exist in alienation from other sentient beings and from our surrounding environment; rather we exist in profound interdependence, and this realization is said to yield a far deeper sense of love and compassion than that which is conjoined with a reified sense of our individual separateness and autonomy" (p. 173).

One of the issues facing contemporary cognitive science is terminological. This is evident in the disagreement over how far to extend the term conscious, e.g., are fetuses conscious?, are animal conscious? This is a definitional rather than an objective question. While these specific questions may not have been raised in the history of Buddhist psychology, there is a well-established terminology in Sanskrit and Tibetan detailing a variety of mental states. The value of this Buddhist psychological terminology, however, will continue to be limited until a standardized set of translation equivalents can be established.

For the relation between Buddhist thought and cognitive science one of the most important issues is also one of the subtlest. It is not directly expressed, but rather is revealed in the nuanced way in which the conversation has been structured. It would be very easy—and entirely misleading—to simply assume that the questions of contemporary cognitive science can be directly addressed to Buddhist psychology and coherent answers received. Not only are the terms of the two discourses not univocal, but the underlying assumptions are also vastly different. This work is informed by an awareness of this issue and is the better for it.

If Buddhism is to continue to develop as a living tradition, it is necessary that interaction of this kind be continued. There is much that is of value in traditional Buddhist psychology, but an ongoing process of discerning and replacing outdated physiological concepts is needed. At the same time it is also essential that some common, but mistaken preconceptions about cognitive science held by contemporary Buddhists be overcome as well.

***The Collected Works of Shinran.* 2 vols. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997. xii, 706 pages (volume 1); viii, 364 pages (volume 2). Hardcover: \$ 50.00.¹**

Eisho Nasu

Institute of Buddhist Studies

Although Shinran (1173–1262) is known to have advised his followers that his teaching is “the true teaching easy to practice for small, foolish beings; it is the straight way easy to traverse for the dull and ignorant (*The Collected Works of Shinran* [hereafter, *CWS*], vol. 1, p. 3),” his writings are

nevertheless known for their difficulty even for modern educated Japanese readers (Kakehashi Jitsuen, *Seidoku Bukkyō no kotoba: Shinran*, [Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 1999], p. 247). Shinran wrote both in *kanbun* (Classical Sino-Japanese, or *kango shōgyō*) and *wabun* (Classical Japanese, or *wago shōgyō*). Reading his *kanbun* writings usually requires that the serious student spend years just to learn the Japanized transformed *kanbun* popular during the Kamakura period (1192–1333). Shinran's writings in *wabun*, which include various styles and forms of text, e.g., prose, verses, hymns (in *imayō*), letters, commentaries, and notes, are in no way easier. Even works written in plain *wabun* are typically loaded with highly technical Buddhist Chinese terminology and concepts, regardless of Shinran's saying that "I write only that foolish people may easily grasp the essential meaning" (*CWS*, vol. 1, pp. 469 and 490).

Considering these preexisting difficulties in the original texts, the completion of the *CWS* is a monumental achievement in the study of Shinran's thought. The *CWS* not only presents an accurate and readable English translation of Shinran's works (vol. 1), but also provides readers with academically sound and scholarly intriguing introductions to all translated texts, a handy glossary with a list of terms, and other reference materials, such as "Notes on Shinran's Readings," and "Names and Titles Cited" in the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* with cross references to the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* and *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (vol. 2).

From the perspective of bookmaking, the structure of the *CWS* in two volumes seems a little bit odd. Readers may wonder why the publication committee decided to place the introductions to all texts together in the second volume (pp. 11–169), rather than placing them in front of each translation. However, I have actually used the *CWS* in graduate level reading courses, and the two-volume style turns out to be very handy when students need to look up terms or find references in other texts within the first volume. With all the introductions in one place, the second volume by itself could in fact be used independently as an excellent reader for an introductory course on Shinran's thought. Although not explicitly stated in the *CWS*, the publication committee seems to have prepared the second volume not simply as a collection of supplementary reference materials. For graduate students interested in Shinran's thought or instructors who need to discuss Shinran's thought in college level courses, I strongly recommend the second volume as a must-read text.

The *CWS* is no doubt the best and most complete translation of Shinran's writings currently available in English. Even in an excellent work, however, there is always room for future improvement. There are of course a few mistakes here and there, and I was left with some unanswered questions. The most puzzling thing about the *CWS* is its lack of an explanation why the translation committee adopted the Japanese word *shinjin* as the translation of three different words, *shin*, *shinjin*, and *shingyō*,

in Shinran's writings. The issue and policy of the selective adaptation of the words *shinjin* and "entrusting" for *shingyō* are sporadically mentioned in the CWS, once in the footnotes of the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* (vol. 1, p. 77), and once in the introduction to *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* (vol. 2, p. 42); they are also partially explained in the "Glossary of Shin Buddhist Terms," under the entries "Entrusting, shinjin" (vol. 2, p. 182) and "Shinjin" (vol. 2, p. 206). However, the reason for substituting *shinjin* for *shin* is not mentioned anywhere in the CWS.

The translation committee perhaps believe that their convention of using the word *shinjin* in order to avoid using an English/Christian word, such as "faith," has been accepted by readers as a result of their more than twenty-year publication project, and that therefore no further explanation is necessary. This may be true among practicing Shin followers. However, the issue of whether to use the word *shinjin* as is or to translate it as "faith" is far from settled in scholarly discussions. Rather, the debate seems to be expanding and getting more lively recently (see, for example, Hee-Sung Keel, *Understanding Shinran: A Dialogical Approach* [Fremont, Calif.: Asian Humanity Press, 1995], pp. 80–119, especially footnote 6, pp. 82–83). Given this continuing debate, it would have been helpful had the translation committee included an explanation on this issue as they did previously in the *Notes on the Inscriptions of Sacred Scrolls* (Shin Buddhism Translation Series, 1981, pp. 77–82).

To be fair to the translation committee, I should point out that they do attempt to differentiate their use of *shinjin* for the word *shingyō*. If readers are careful enough to read all the above mentioned notes and entries in the glossary before delving into the CWS, they will discover that the translation committee decided to mark the word *shinjin* "with an asterisk when used to render the term *shingyō*" (vol. 1, p. 77). From a stylistic point of view, however, this convention looks a bit odd. The reader must also be careful because the asterisks are occasionally missing in the translation (vol. 1, pp. 3 and 67).

Whether Shinran's original words *shin* and *shingyō* should be replaced with another Japanese word or translated into English is up to the translators' doctrinal interpretation. Yet, if the translators decided to adopt such an unconventional method to translate some of Shinran's most important ideas, at least they should more clearly inform readers at the beginning of the translation. It is also interesting to see that the word "faith" miraculously survives in the translation of the titles of *Yuishinshō mon'i* (Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone', vol. 1, p. 451) and *Yuishinshō* (Essentials of Faith Alone, vol. 1, p. 685), regardless of the committee's effort to purge the word "faith" from the English translation of Shinran's thought.

Another problematic policy set by the translation committee is their rather anachronistic adherence to what they call the doctrinal integrity of

the *Mattōshō* (Lamp for the Latter Ages) in editing Shinran's letters. In the CWS, Shinran's letters are first presented in accordance with the order of the *Mattōshō* (vol. 1, pp. 523–555), then supplemented with other collected letters as well as six letters which do not appear in any of the early collections (vol. 1, pp. 559–584). In the introduction to the *Letters* (vol. 2, pp. 156–165), this *Mattōshō* centered editorial policy is justified by reference to the fact that the majority of Shinran's letters are not fully dated and therefore are impossible to present in accurate chronological order. More importantly, they defend their conservative stance by stating, "Preserving the integrity of the early collections is useful for readers concerned chiefly with understanding Shinran's thought, though the principles of compilation may differ from the historical orientation of modern scholarship" (vol. 2, p. 156).

From the perspective of historical studies of Shinran's letters, however, these two reasons are no longer very convincing. It is true that the dates of more than half of Shinran's letters remain unidentifiable, but at least the dates of sixteen (or fourteen according to the edition in *Mattōshō*) out of forty-three letters have already been identified. Furthermore, modern philological studies have discovered that, although the *Mattōshō* is still the most popular collection of Shinran's letters, the date of compilation is later (1333) than other collections, and some of the letters in the *Mattōshō* are less authoritative than earlier ones. This problem is partially acknowledged by the translation committee of the CWS, who say, "Where the original letters of *Mattōshō* survive in Shinran's own hand (*Letters* 2, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15) or in the hand of the original transcriber (*Letter* 5), we have followed the originals" (vol. 2, p. 165).

The translation committee tries to play down the problems existing in the *Mattōshō* by saying "The only major variation occurs in Shinran's reply in *Letter* 7" (p. 165). However, given new information brought into light by recent philological studies of Shinran's letters, for example, scholars agree that *Letter* 19 (vol. 1, pp. 550–552) was originally three different letters (or more precisely one letter [vol. 1, pp. 550–551, l. 17] and two other parts [p. 551, l. 18–l. 30 and pp. 551, l. 31–552, l. 11] which were most likely postscripts Shinran attached to now unknown letters).

The translation committee's policy to neglect the "historical orientation of modern scholarship" to preserve "the integrity of the early collections," is therefore regrettably not always "useful for readers concerned chiefly with understanding Shinran's thought." In fact, this *Mattōshō* centered view of Shinran's *Letters* has been abandoned not only by academics but even by the Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, which happens to be the same organization producing this English translation, more than a decade before the publication of the CWS.

Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha has published two editions of Shinran's works in Japanese: one, a critical academic edition of the collection of Jōdo Shinshū scriptures, *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Gentenban* in 1985; the other, a

popular edition, *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban* in 1988 (both edited by Shinshū Seiten hensan iinkai and published by Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto). In these publications, Shinran's letters were edited according to the authenticity of the source texts and placed in chronological order as best as possible. Since these editions of the *Jōdo Shinshū seiten*, especially the *Chūshakuban*, are gaining recognition as standard editions of the Jōdo Shinshū scriptures among Japanese readers, in future editions of the CWS, the editorial committee should reconsider their *Mattōshō* centered editorial policy and revise the translations of Shinran's *Letters* to follow the order of the *Jōdo Shinshū seiten*, which is based on more reliable sources and solid philological studies of the letters.

The translation committee's disinterest in the "historical orientation of modern scholarship" seems to prevail beyond Shinran's *Letters*. In the introduction to the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, the committee says, "Many readers tend to place Shinran in the history of Buddhism that begins with Śākyamuni, and view *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* as the product of that historical flow. Shinran himself, however, stands on the Buddha-ground of Amida's Vow, which transcends history" (vol. 2, p. 25). I do not disagree with this statement as a Shin believer's view. But, in order to create a fruitful discussion in modern academic environment, such an absolutist statement is not very helpful for the reader.

In the same introduction, the committee continues their surprisingly hostile attitude to the modern historical approach, stating, "The modern perspective, while standing within history and viewing Śākyamuni, the Pure Land masters, and Shinran historically, seeks to come to the Vow-mind that transcends history through them. This is precisely the opposite of Shinran's perspective, and a true grasp of Shinran is extremely difficult from such an approach" (vol. 2, p. 26). I agree that Shinran did not write the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* as a historical text, but perhaps they should leave it up to the readers to decide if a modern historical approach makes it more difficult for them to understand Shinran.

The committee seems to misunderstand what constitutes a modern historical approach to religious texts. Particularly troubling is the following statement, which seems to be merely a caricature of the historical approach: "The first step in understanding Shinran is to respect his alterations of the readings of quoted passages, which have been criticized from a perspective within history as 'completely arbitrary and audacious in the extreme.' To contradict his notes and read the quoted passages in *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* according to the literal meaning is to read his work as an historical document" (vol. 2, p. 26). Although very occasionally we still encounter such "bad" historicism, the modern academic approach—to read Shinran's work as an historical document—is precisely opposite to the committee's concern. In order to read Shinran's work historically, it is essential to read his writings as accurately as possible.

Philological studies of Shinran's work as medieval Japanese literature will also help solve many questions which are insoluble through a doctrinal approach only. Unfortunately, the translation committee of the *CWS* does not seem to appreciate the more significant developments in recent "good" historical studies of Shinran's works.

Another historical problem in the *CWS* is that, regarding the manuscript of *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* in the possession of Nishi Hongwanji, the translation committee refuses to concede that the manuscript is not by Shinran's own hand, stating, "The traditional ascription of this manuscript to Shinran has been questioned, however, and at present nothing is known of its provenance" (vol. 2, p. 73). Through meticulous philological and historical studies of the manuscript (e.g., by Shigemi Kazuyuki, *Kyōgyōshinshō no kenkyū* [Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981], pp. 101–139), modern scholars have already proven that this manuscript is a very close copy of the Bandō manuscript, which is established as Shinran's own hand writing, and was probably completed in 1275, thirteen years after Shinran's death.

A final point concerns the episode in which Shinran received his name from Hōnen. Again, the translation committee overlooks modern scholarship that clarifies the incident. In the postscript of the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, Shinran's *bōgō*, Zenshin, is added in brackets by the translators as the new name given to Shinran (then Shakkū) by Hōnen (1133–1212) in 1205.

Further, since my name 'Shakkū' had been changed in accord with a revelation in a dream, on the same day he wrote the characters of my new name [Zenshin] in his own hand. (vol. 1, p. 290)

Although this agrees with the tradition of the *Shūi kotokuden* (in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* [henceforth, *SSZ*], vol. 3, p. 731) compiled by Kakunyo (1270–1351), the third head priest of the Hongwanji, and the *Rokuyōshō* (*SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 206 and 440) by Kakunyo's son Zonkaku (1290–1373), modern Japanese historians of Jōdo Shinshū, such as Hiramatsu Reizō, have pointed out that this new name cannot be Zenshin (Hiramatsu Reizō, *Seiten seminar: Shinran Shōnin eden*, [Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 1997], pp. 104–105 and 116–119).² According to the custom of the Kamakura period, Hiramatsu explains, Buddhist priests usually had two names, a conventional name (*kemyō*, also called a residential name, *bōgō*), and a real name (*jitsumyō*, also called a reserved name, *imina*). The *kemyō*, or *bōgō*, was the name used publicly to identify a priest. The *jitsumyō*, or *imina*, was an official name used only sparingly (e.g. signing official documents) out of respect to the priest. For example, Hōnen's *jitsumyō* is Genkū but his disciples or followers commonly identified him with his *bōgō*, Hōnen, or Hōnen-bō.

In the case of Shinran, Zenshin or Zenshin-bō is his *kemyō* and before he changed it in 1205, Shakkū was his *jitsumyō*, which is proven by his signature in a document called the *Shichikajō kishōmon* (Seven Article Pledge), co-signed by Hōnen and his major disciples and issued in 1204. The postscript of the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* says the name Shakkū, his *jitsumyō*, has been changed, but it cannot have been changed to Zenshin, which is his *kemyō*. Hiramatsu concludes that, although the name is mistakenly identified as changed to Zenshin by Kakunyo and Zonkaku, the new *jitsumyō* which Hōnen approved must be Shinran.

Whether the translation committee likes the “historical orientation of modern scholarship” or not, modern scholarship continues to provide objective and useful information. Even though they believe that “a true grasp of Shinran is extremely difficult from such an approach,” at least, in order to avoid these unnecessary problems, the committee needs to become more aware of the recent historical and philological studies on Shinran’s writings.

Despite the problems mentioned above, the translations and introductory materials provided in the *CWS* are, over all, of excellent quality. The accuracy and readability of the translated texts are very close or often better than the modern Japanese renditions of Shinran’s works (e.g., Ishida Mizumaro, *Shinran zenshū*, 5 vols. [Tokyo: Shūnjūsha, 1985–87]). The *CWS* is additionally valuable for the amount of new materials it renders into the English corpus of translations of Shinran’s works. With the translation of the remaining letters of Shinran, as well as the shorter works, the entirety of Shinran’s works are now available in English. *Gutoku’s Notes* is especially a most welcome addition in the *CWS*. Although the text merely looks like a collection of cryptic and sketchy fragments, *Gutoku’s Notes* systematically outlines Shinran’s view of the classification of Buddhist teaching and is an indispensable guide for scholars and students of Shinran’s thought.

Although the *CWS* collects all of Shinran’s works, it might also be helpful to translate the letters of Shinran’s wife, Eshinni. These rare and very insightful first hand observations of Shinran’s life help us to understand the socio-historical and cultural aspects of Shinran’s thought and the early Jōdo Shinshū community.

Although I find the translation committee’s general indifference to modern historical studies problematic, their twenty-year project has established a very high standard for English translations of Shinran’s works and the results are crucial for scholars of religion and students who learn to read Shinran’s work through English translations. In the future, even Japanese students may need to study the English version of Shinran’s works to understand his thought.

Notes

1. This review is based on the author's presentation for a Japanese Religions Group panel, "Intellectual and Pedagogic Reflections on *The Collected Works of Shinran*," at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Boston, Massachusetts), November, 1999.
2. It is also noteworthy that the CWS and Hiramatsu's book on Shinran's biography were, coincidentally, published by the same publisher, Hongwanji Shuppansha, in the same year. Hiramatsu further elaborates his theory in his recent historical study on Shinran's life (Hiramatsu Reizō, *Shinran* [Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998], pp. 124–128). Hiramatsu's view is also supported by Satō Masahide, another modern scholar of Shinran (Satō Masahide, *Shinran nyūmon* [Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1998], pp. 74–76).

NOTES AND NEWS

INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES AND

IBS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY SHIN BUDDHIST STUDIES

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES: SEPTEMBER 1995–NOVEMBER 2000

I. IBS New Academic Program

A new core academic program was designed during the 1995–96 academic year and implemented during the 1996–97 academic year. This program provides both a quality education for ministerial aspirants and programmatic flexibility for others. Three aspects of the Institute's academic program were revised: the set of courses offered, the degrees offered, and responsibilities for ministerial education and training.

A. Course Offerings

In keeping with its Mission Statement, the academic program of the Institute takes as its organizing principle the contemporary application and development of Shin Buddhist thought. Based upon this principle a set of priorities for the instructional program have been developed:

1. Shin Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism,
2. Japanese Buddhism and Japanese religions,
3. Mahayana Buddhism,
4. Buddhist tradition generally.

The Institute's curriculum has a coherent organizing principle—contemporary Shin Buddhist studies—and priorities for curricular offerings.

B. Degree Program

IBS offers two graduate degrees.

1. A Master of Arts (Buddhist Studies) degree. This is an academic degree, and is jointly administered by the Institute and the Gradu-

ate Theological Union. Its minimum requirements are fourteen courses, a foreign language relevant to the study of Buddhism, and a thesis.

2. A Master of Buddhist Studies (MBS) degree. This degree program is administered by IBS for those students who wish to pursue a systematic study of Buddhism, but are not interested in receiving an academic degree.

C. Ministerial Training

Ministerial aspirants have a three-year program of study, in either or both degree programs. Course work includes an introduction to Shin Buddhist thought, the history of Indian, East Asian, and Japanese Buddhism, the three Pure Land Sutras, and the history of the Shin Buddhist tradition. There is a focus on a three-course sequence of Reading Tutorials in Shin Buddhist Texts; a three-course sequence on The Writings of Shinran, and a course called Shin Buddhist Services and Ceremonies, which is to be taken every semester that the student is enrolled in the program. In addition, the BCA Ministerial Candidates' Affairs Committee (MCAC) supervises Ministerial Candidates in fieldwork experience placements.

II. On-going Research Programs

Four areas serve as the focal points of on-going research and study at IBS under the coordination of the Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies. The areas and their facilitators are:

Buddhism and Psychology—Dr. Richard Payne

Buddhism in Contemporary Culture—Dr. Eisho Nasu

Self-Salvation-Society—Rev. David Matsumoto

Shin Buddhist Propagation in the West—Rev. David Matsumoto

IBS research programs include a variety of activities, including study sessions, occasional seminars, conferences, and publications.

III. IBS Public Lectures

A. BCA Centennial Lecture Series

1. Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism: Constructing a Shin Buddhist Theology in a Religiously Plural World.

A symposium held on September 13, 14 & 15, 1996 at IBS and the Pacific School of Religion.

2. The Life and Thought of Rennyo Shonin

Two public lectures by Prof. Jitsuen Kakehashi on September 26, 1997 at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple and September 28, 1997 at the Gardena Buddhist Temple.

3. Jodo Shinshu in the 21st Century: A Return to the Starting Point of Religion.

Two public lectures by Professor Akira Omine on August 14, 1998 at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple and August 16, 1998 at the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

4. The Essence of Shin Buddhism.

Two public lectures by Prof. Takamaro Shigaraki on September 10 at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple and September 16 at the Orange County Buddhist Temple.

B. Other Public Lectures

1. Buddhist Practice: How? What? Why?

Workshops by Bhante Madawala Seelawimala and Rev. David Matsumoto at the San Jose Betsuin (Nov. 1, 1998) Sacramento Betsuin (November 4, 1998) and San Mateo Buddhist Temple (November 13, 1998), Salt Lake Buddhist Temple (December 12, 1999).

2. Tri State Buddhist Temple Nembutsu seminar, October 2-3, 1999.

Lectures by Dr. Eisho Nasu, "Awakening in Dreams: Shinran's View of the Pure Land Buddhist Practice of Dream Meditation," and Dr. Richard Payne, "The Contemplation Sutra and the Awakening of the Mind of Faith."

3. Seminar on Buddhism and Christianity at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, October 1, 1999.

Lectures by Dr. Nasu and Dr. Payne on Christianity in Pre-modern Japan and Buddhism in Modern America, respectively.

4. Intellectual and Pedagogic Reflection on *The Collected Works of Shinran*.

Panel at the AAR conference in Boston, organized by Dr. Payne, with papers by Dr. Nasu, Prof. Hallisey, Prof. Kasulis, Prof. Keenan and responses from Prof. Hirota and Prof. Mark Unno.

5. Honen and Shinran: Master and Disciple.

A seminar on October 23, 1999 by Professor Taishin Kawasoe, an IBS visiting scholar from Ryukoku University at the New York Buddhist Church.

6. Gender Issues in Japanese Buddhism.

A seminar on October 21, 2000 by Prof. Hank Glassman of IBS, at the New York Buddhist Church and NY Buddhist Academy.

7. Love and Great Compassion: Ai to Jihi.

The Professor Nagatomi Memorial Public Lecture by Professor Naoki Nabeshima of Ryukoku University on November 17, 2000 at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple.

IV. IBS Lectures

A. Ryukoku Lectures/Seminars

1. "Pure Land Thought in Heian Buddhism," by Prof. Myosei Tatsuguchi (Spring 1996).
2. "The Teachings of Rennyo Shonin," by Prof. Tomoyasu Hayashi (Spring 1997).
3. "The Contemplation Sutra and Buddhism of Central Asia," by Prof. Meiji Yamada (Spring 1998).
4. "Shinran's Vision of the Primal Vow: Jodo Shinshu's Approach to Pure Land Faith," by Prof. Yukio Yamada (Spring 1999).
5. "Tendai Buddhism and Pure Land Thought," by Professor Masahiro Asada (Spring 2000).

B. Numata Lectures

1. "Engaged Buddhism," a series of lectures by various speakers (Fall 1995).
2. "Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism," by Prof. Dennis Hirota & Rev. David Matsumoto (Fall 1996).
3. "The Life and Thought of Rennyo," by Prof. Jitsuen Kakehashi & Rev. David Matsumoto (Fall 1997).
4. "Shinjin in Shinran's Thought," by Prof. Takamaro Shigaraki & Rev. David Matsumoto (Fall 1999).
5. "Issues in Buddhist Counseling," a series of lectures by various speakers (Fall 2000).

C. Special Lectures

1. "The Religious Dimension of Confucianism in Japan," convened by Dr. Richard Payne (April 6, 1996). Proceedings published in a special issue of *Philosophy East and West*.
2. "Shinran Shonin and Jodo Shinshu," by Prof. Chikai Nakanishi (August 16, 1996).

3. "Religion and Language: the Soteriological Significance of Religious Language," by Prof. Akira Omine (August 11, 1998).
4. "Religion in Contemporary Japan," by Prof. Tetsuo Yamaori (September 6, 1998).
5. "A Shin Buddhist View of Terminal Care," by Prof. Naoki Nabeshima (September 12, 1999).
6. "Issues in Shin Buddhist Propagation: Reflections in America," by Professor Taishin Kawasoe (March 17, 2000).

V. Visiting Scholars

1. Prof. Mitsuya Dake of Ryukoku University (June–July, 1997). Work on the IBS translation project.
2. Prof. Naoki Nabeshima of Ryukoku University (September 1998–September 1999). Research on the issues of Buddhist terminal care and bioethics in the US.
3. Prof. Taishin Kawasoe of Ryukoku University (April, 1999–March, 2000). Research on Shin Buddhist propagational methods in the West.

IV. Continuing Education for Ministers

1. "Propagation in Jodo Shinshu," by Prof. Tomoyasu Hayashi at the Stockton Buddhist Temple, Los Angeles Betsuin and San Jose Betsuin in March 1997.
2. Special workshop by Prof. Jitsuen Kakehashi at the Los Angeles Betsuin on September 29, 1997.
3. Special seminars by Prof. Meiji Yamada at Senshin Buddhist Temple, Stockton Buddhist Temple, and Tacoma Buddhist Temple in March 1998.
4. Seminar at the BCA Ministers Association Fuken by Prof. Akira Omine in Los Angeles in August 1998.
5. "A Contemporary View of the Anjin Rondai," by Prof. Jitsuen Kakehashi. A seminar for ministers on August 26, 1999 at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple.
6. "The Essence of Shin Buddhism," by Prof. Shigaraki at San Jose Buddhist Church & LA Betsuin.
7. "Shin Buddhist Perspectives on Terminal Care," a seminar for ministers on November 20, 2000.

V. Other Educational Programs

1. IBS Extension Class: An Introduction to Shin Buddhist Thought, a systematic examination of some of the fundamental features of the Jodo Shinshu teachings. Taught by Rev. Masao Kodani, Rev. Marvin Harada, and Rev. John Iwohara at the Orange County Buddhist Church from February 3 to May 19, 1998.

2. Ministerial Students' Research-Exchange Seminar (June 6 to 18, 1998): A seminar in Japan providing students of Shin Buddhism with an opportunity to study the history and thought of the Shin tradition from a number of professors from Ryukoku University.

3. IBS Summer Seminar 2000 (August 11–13): A seminar directed toward temple leaders, Dharma School teachers, prospective IBS students, and all other persons who wish to learn more about the history, teachings, and contemporary significance of Jodo Shinshu and Buddhism generally. Lectures by IBS faculty members on the topics of:

- Visualization, Meditation, and Ritual,
- Shin Buddhist Liturgical Tradition,
- Gender Issues in Japanese Buddhism,
- Shinran's View of Buddha-nature and its Social Implication.

4. BCA Study Tour 2001 (June 11–23, 2001). A seminar in Japan that will allow students of Shin Buddhism to encounter the teachings, practices and history of Shin Buddhism. To be sponsored by the Ministerial Candidate Affairs Committee of the BCA, with support provided by IBS.

VI. Translation Projects

1. *Bearer of the Light: the Life and Thought of Rennyo* by Jitsuen Kakehashi.

2. *A Study of Shinjin* by Takamaro Shigaraki.

3. *Jodo Shinshu in the 21st Century: A Return to the Starting Point of Religion* by Akira Omine.

4. *Religion and Language: The Soteriological Significance of Religious Language* by Akira Omine.

5. *The Shin Buddhist View of Birth and Death: the path transcending life and death* (BCA Centennial Keynote Address) by Jitsuen Kakehashi.

6. Articles translated and prepared for the *Pacific World*, including

those by Akira Omine, Jitsuen Kakehashi, Tomoyasu Hayashi, Ryusei Takeda, Risho Ota, Yukio Yamada.

VII. IBS Website

Located at <http://www.shin-IBS.edu>, this site provides information about the IBS educational program, including courses, public lectures, translations, publications, the IBS library, and other news items. Developed and maintained by Prof. Eisho Nasu.

VIII. Other Publication Projects

1. *No Abode: The Record of Ippen*, 2nd printing, by Dennis Hirota. University of Hawaii Press. July 1997.
2. *Bearer of the Light: The Life and Thought of Rennyo Shonin* by Jitsuen Kakehashi. August 1999.
3. *A Study of Shinjin* by Takamaro Shigaraki. Projected publication date: Spring 2001.

IX. Institutional Development

The IBS Board of Trustees has approved a plan for the development of the IBS educational program and its facilities. Specifically, IBS will actively pursue the attainment of the following goals:

- a. Full membership in the Graduate Theological Union,
- b. Independent accreditation,
- c. New IBS educational facilities within the expanded GTU complex in Berkeley.

The Association of Theological Schools voted in July to grant affiliate status to IBS. This action can be seen as a favorable indication that ATS welcomes IBS's immediate participation in its activities, even during IBS's application for accreditation as a seminary by ATS.

BDK ENGLISH TRIPITAKA SERIES: A Progress Report

As we enter the dawn of the 21st Century, the BDK English Tripitaka Series has reached a milestone with the publication of the twenty-first volume in this First Series, bringing the total number of English Tripitaka volumes to thirty-one.

The following volumes have thus far been published. (For additional information about a specific volume, please see previous issues of the *Pacific World* journal, especially the Fall 1999 issue.)

The Summary of the Great Vehicle [Taisho 1593] (1992)

The Biographical Scripture of King Asoka [Taisho 2043] (1993)

The Lotus Sutra [Taisho 262] (1994)

The Sutra on Upasaka Precepts [Taisho 1488] (1994)

The Essentials of the Eight Traditions [extra-canonical] and The Candle of the Latter Dharma [extra-canonical] (1994)

The Storehouse of Sundry Valuables [Taisho 203] (1994)

A Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci'en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty [Taisho 2053] (1995)

The Three Pure Land Sutras [Taisho 360, 365 & 366] (1995)

The Essentials of the Vinaya Tradition [Taisho 2348] and The Collected Teachings of the Tendai Lotus School [Taisho 2366] (1995)

Tannisho: Passages Deploing Deviations of Faith [Taisho 2661] and Rennyo Shonin Ofumi [Taisho 2668] (1996)

The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions [Taisho 2087] (1996)

Senchaku Hongan Nembutsu Shu (A Collection of Passages on the Nembutsu Chosen in the Original Vow) [Taisho 2608] (1997)

The Pratyutpanna Samadhi Sutra [Taisho 418] and the Surangama Samadhi Sutra [Taisho 642] (1998)

The Blue Cliff Record [Taisho 2003] (1999)

Three Chan Classics [Taisho 1985, 2005 & 2010] (1999)

Three Texts on Consciousness Only [Taisho 1585, 1586 & 1590] (1999)

The Scriptural Text: Verses of the Doctrine, with Parables [Taisho 211] (2000)

Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia [Taisho 2125] (2000)

The Scripture on the Explication of Underlying Meaning [Taisho 676] (2000)

Kaimokusho or Liberation from Blindness [Taisho 2689] (2000)

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch [Taisho 2008] (2000)

The next volumes tentatively scheduled for publication are:

A Comprehensive Commentary on the Heart Sutra (Prajnaparamita-hrdaya-sutra) [Taisho 1710]

This text by K'uei-chi, a disciple of Hsuang-tsang and a leading figure in the Fa-hsiang (Hosso) school, is the earliest Chinese commentary on the *Heart Sutra*, part of the voluminous Mahaprajnaparamita literature. The *Heart Sutra* is so-called because it is said to contain the essence, or "heart" of the Prajnaparamita ("Perfection of Wisdom") teachings. K'uei-chi gives a line-by-line analysis of the sutra from the viewpoint of Yogacara (Fa-hsiang) doctrine, sometimes contrasted with a Madhaymaka position. The author drew on a variety of textual sources for his commentary, including the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* (published as *Demonstration of Consciousness Only* in the volume *Three Texts on Consciousness Only*, translated by Francis H. Cook, Numata Center, 1999), the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, the *Yogacarabhumi-sastra*, the *Mahayanasamgraha*, the *Samdhinirmocana Sutra* (published as *The Scripture on the Explication of Underlying Meaning*, translated by John P. Keenan, Numata Center, 2000) and the *Dazhidulun*.

Two Esoteric Sutras: The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra [Taisho 865] and The Susiddhikara Sutra [Taisho 893]

These volume contains two of the most important scriptures in East Asian Esoteric or Tantric Buddhism. The *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*, translated into Chinese by Amoghavajra, is part of the *Sarvatathagatasamgraha*, a seminal text of the Yoga tantras, one of the four classes of Buddhist tantric literature. It describes the rituals associated with the Great Mandala "Adamantine Realm." The *Susiddhikara Sutra*, translated into Chinese by Subhakarasiṃha, is one of the Kriya ("Action") Tantras, the first of the four classes of Buddhist tantras. It provides a comprehensive description of the basic practices associated with the Kriya Tantras.

Lives of Great Monks and Nuns: The Life of Asvaghosa Bodhisattva [Taisho 2046]; The Life of Nagarjuna Bodhisattva [Taisho 2047]; Biography of Dharma Master Vasubandhu [Taisho 2049]; Biographies of Buddhist Nuns [Taisho 2063]; and The Journey of the Eminent Monk Faxian [Taisho 2085]

The five texts in this volume include brief biographies of three important Indian Mahayana Buddhist masters, Asvaghosa (first-second century C.E.), Nagarjuna (second century C.E.), and Vasubandhu (fourth-fifth century C.E.); a survey of the lives of sixty-five Chinese Buddhist nuns dating from the fourth to sixth centuries; and the Chinese monk Faxian's account of his journey in Central Asia and India, from 399-414 C.E., to collect Buddhist texts on the Vinaya to bring back to China.

These volumes can be purchased through most bookstores, online at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble's BN.net or directly from the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.

This year we also marked Dr. Kenneth Inada's retirement as chairman of the Publication Committee. We thank him for his years of dedication and diligence to this project and wish him and his wife good health and happiness.

In appointing a new Publication Committee Chairman, the BDK English Tripitaka Project was most fortunate to secure the services and wisdom of Dr. Francis H. Cook, recently retired professor of religion at the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Cook brings to this Committee and Project many years of presenting Buddhist thought and theory, including several years of study in Japan at Kyoto University. He is the translator of *Three Texts on Consciousness Only*, published by the Numata Center in 1999.

The Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research as well as the Publication Committee of the BDK English Tripitaka Project look forward to continuing to publish volumes of the English Tripitaka Series. Through this work we hope to help to fulfill the dream of founder Dr. Rev. Yehan Numata to make the teaching of the Buddha available to the English-speaking world.

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

In 1984 the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research published the first English translation of the *Buddha-Dharma*, which was adapted from the *Shinyaku Bukkyo seiten* (The Newly Translated [Concise] Buddhist Canon), first published in 1925 in Japan.

A revised second edition of this volume, numbering over 900 pages, will be published next year. Included in this new edition will be Introductory Notes for each book, a listing of scriptural sources, a glossary, and a detailed index.

The “*Buddha-Dharma*” has often been described as a “Buddhist Bible.” Noted scholars such as Alfred Bloom, Taitetsu Unno and Robert Thurman, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Gary Snyder have all endorsed this unique and useful reference guide to the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Dr. Masatoshi Nagatomi

September 1, 1926–June 2, 2000

In Memoriam

The Institute of Buddhist Studies lost a great supporter, teacher and champion with the passing away of Dr. Masatoshi Nagatomi on June 3, 2000. Although he will be deeply missed by all who knew him, the impact produced by this great scholar-priest will far outlive the lifespan of any one human being.

Dr. Nagatomi has left the world with a legacy of outstanding academic achievement and profound religious faith. During his long scholarly career in the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies and the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University he demonstrated notable expertise across a wide range of languages, traditions, and specializations in the fields of Buddhist and religious studies. In addition, he directed his considerable energy and concern to his many students and colleagues. The wise guidance and instruction he gave to them surely influenced their intellectual development and lives in countless ways.

Concrete examples of Dr. Nagatomi's particular commitment to the Shin Buddhist tradition could be found in his service on the Board of Advisors of the Institute of Buddhist Studies, as well as his tenure as the President of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies. He challenged Shin Buddhists not only to exercise rigorous discipline and academic honesty to the study of their tradition, but also, in his words, to "articulate the essentials of Shinran's religious insight in and through diverse foreign religio-cultural spheres today."

We at IBS remember with immense gratitude his participation in a symposium hosted by our school in 1996, where he revealed once again his far-sighted and hopeful vision regarding the "contextual translation" of the Shin Buddhist message in today's religiously plural world. At the same time, we were able to witness the deep sense in which Shinran's religious insight held value and meaning within his own religious life.

Now, following his untimely passing, his wife, Mary, and the Institute of Buddhist Studies have established a memorial fund in order to honor Dr. Nagatomi's memory and continue in his work. By providing financial support for educational programs at IBS, the Nagatomi Memorial Endowment Fund will become a vehicle for the fulfillment of his dream of making Shin Buddhism a full participant in today's "global community of faith."

*We hold his memory as an inspiration to our future work,
The Board, students, faculty and staff of the
Institute of Buddhist Studies*

The Pacific World—Its History

Throughout my life, I have sincerely believed that Buddhism is a religion of peace and compassion, a teaching which will bring spiritual tranquillity to the individual, and contribute to the promotion of harmony and peace in society. My efforts to spread the Buddha's teachings began in 1925, while I was a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley. This beginning took the form of publishing the Pacific World, on a bi-monthly basis in 1925 and 1926, and then on a monthly basis in 1927 and 1928. Articles in the early issues concerned not only Buddhism, but also other cultural subjects such as art, poetry, and education, and then by 1928, the articles became primarily Buddhistic. Included in the mailing list of the early issues were such addressees as the Cabinet members of the U.S. Government, Chambers of Commerce, political leaders, libraries, publishing houses, labor unions, and foreign cultural institutions.

After four years, we had to cease publication, primarily due to lack of funds. It was then that I vowed to become independently wealthy so that socially beneficial projects could be undertaken without financial dependence on others. After founding the privately held company, Mitutoyo Corporation, I was able to continue my lifelong commitment to disseminate the teachings of Buddha through various means.

As one of the vehicles, the Pacific World was again reactivated, this time in 1982, as the annual journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. For the opportunity to be able to contribute to the propagation of Buddhism and the betterment of humankind, I am eternally grateful. I also wish to thank the staff of the Institute of Buddhist Studies for helping me to advance my dream to spread the spirit of compassion among the peoples of the world through the publication of the Pacific World.

Yehan Numata
Founder, Mitutoyo Corporation

In Remembrance

In May of 1994, my father, Yehan Numata, aged 97 years, returned to the Pure Land after earnestly serving Buddhism throughout his lifetime. I pay homage to the fact that the Pacific World is again being printed and published, for in my father's youth, it was the passion to which he was wholeheartedly devoted.

I, too, share my father's dream of world peace and happiness for all peoples. It is my heartfelt desire that the Pacific World helps to promote spiritual culture throughout all humanity, and that the publication of the Pacific World be continued.

Toshihide Numata
Chairman, Mitutoyo Corporation