

# PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

Third Series Number 4  
Fall 2002

**TWO SPECIAL SECTIONS ON  
BUDDHISM AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND  
VISIONS AND VISUALIZATION: BUDDHIST PRAXIS ON THE SILK ROAD**



*Pacific World* is an annual journal in English devoted to the dissemination of historical, textual, critical, and interpretive articles on Buddhism generally and Shinshu Buddhism particularly to both academic and lay readerships. The journal is distributed free of charge. Articles for consideration by the *Pacific World* are welcomed and are to be submitted in English and addressed to the Editor, *Pacific World*, P.O. Box 390460, Mountain View, CA 94039-0460, USA.

*Acknowledgment:* This annual publication is made possible by the donation of Buddha Dharma Kyokai (Society), Inc. of Berkeley, California.

*Guidelines for Authors:* Manuscripts (approximately 20 standard pages) should be typed double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Notes should be consecutively numbered at end of the main text, following specifications of *A Manual of Style*, University of Chicago Press. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all quotations and for supplying complete references. Clear, clean typescript is required for electronic page scanning. Please include electronic version on disk in both formatted and plain text, if possible. Manuscripts should be submitted by February 1st.

Foreign words should be underlined and marked with proper diacriticals, except for the following: arhat, bodhisattva, buddha/Buddha, dharma/Dharma, Hinayana, kalpa, karma, Mahayana, nembutsu, nirvana, samsara, sangha, shinjin, sutra, yoga. Romanized Chinese follows Wade-Giles system (except in special cases); romanized Japanese, the modified Hepburn system. Japanese/Chinese names are given surname first, omitting honorifics. Ideographs preferably should be restricted to notes.

Editorial Committee reserves the right to standardize use or omission of diacriticals. Conventionalized English form of sutra title may be used if initially identified in original or full form in text or note. Editorial Committee reserves the right to edit all submissions. Upon request, page proofs may be reviewed by the author.

Include institutional affiliation and position, or present status/occupation and place. All manuscripts submitted for publication become the property of *Pacific World*. Authors must obtain Editor's permission to publish them elsewhere before publication in *Pacific World*. Ten complimentary reprints of their articles will be sent to the authors.

#### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Richard K. Payne, Chair

David Matsumoto

Eisho Nasu

# PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

Third Series, Number 4

Fall 2002

## **TWO SPECIAL SECTIONS ON BUDDHISM AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND VISIONS AND VISUALIZATION: BUDDHIST PRAXIS ON THE SILK ROAD**

---

### **CONTENTS**

#### **SPECIAL SECTION ON "BUDDHISM AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE"**

- Buddhism and Cognitive Science: Contributions to an  
Enlarged Discourse, Symposium Proceedings  
Richard K. PAYNE 1
- A Science of Consciousness: Buddhism (1), the Modern West (0)  
B. Alan WALLACE 15
- How Do I Know Thee? Let Me Count the Ways:  
Meditation and Basic Cognitive Processes  
Eleanor ROSCH 33
- Studying "No Mind": The Future of Orthogonal Approaches  
Steven A. TAINER 55
- Cognitive Theories of Ritual and Buddhist Practice:  
An Examination of Ilkka Pyysiäinen's Theory  
Richard K. PAYNE 75

#### **SPECIAL SECTION ON "VISIONS AND VISUALIZATION: BUDDHIST PRAXIS ON THE SILK ROAD"**

- Editorial Note 91
- A Rough Sketch of Central Asian Buddhism  
Kōgi KUDARA 93
- Buddhism of Bāmiyān  
Meiji YAMADA 109

Practice of Visualization and the <i>Visualization Sūtra</i> : An Examination of Mural Paintings at Toyok, Turfan Nobuyoshi YAMABE	123
--	-----

Hidden Realms and Pure Abodes: Central Asian Buddhism as Frontier Religion in the Literature of India, Nepal, and Tibet Ronald M. DAVIDSON	153
--	-----

The Buddhist Culture of the Old Uigur Peoples Kōgi KUDARA	183
--	-----

## ARTICLES AND TRANSLATIONS

The Idea of the Last Dharma-Age in Shinran's Thought, Part 2 Kyōshin ASANO	197
---	-----

Rennyō's Theory on Amida Buddha's Name and Its Relationship to Shinran's Thought, Part 2 Kōju FUGEN	217
---	-----

An Examination of the Historical Development of the Concept of Two Aspects of Deep Belief, Part 2 Ryōshō YATA	237
---	-----

Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History Chapter Five: The Early Pure Land Faith: Southern China, and Chapter Six: The Early Pure Land Faith: Northern China Shinkō MOCHIZUKI Leo M. PRUDEN, Translator	259
---	-----

## Book Reviews

Judith Simmer-Brown, <i>Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism</i> Susan M. ABBOTT	281
---	-----

Marcia Binder Schmidt, Compiled and Edited, <i>The Dzogchen Primer: Embracing the Spiritual Path According to the Great Perfection</i> Randall STUDSTILL	288
---	-----

James W. Heisig, <i>Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School</i> Peter SUARES	292
---	-----

Richard M. Jaffe, <i>Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism</i> Kanjō ASUKA	311
--	-----

## NOTES AND NEWS

BDK ENGLISH TRIPITAKA SERIES: A Progress Report	315
---	-----



# **Buddhism and Cognitive Science: Contributions to an Enlarged Discourse Symposium Proceedings**

**Richard K. Payne**

Dean, Institute of Buddhist Studies  
at the Graduate Theological Union

## **PREFATORY NOTE**

ON FRIDAY, 10 MAY, 2002, the Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences co-hosted a one-day symposium on the topic of Buddhism and Cognitive Science. The symposium comprised four presentations, given by Richard K. Payne, Institute of Buddhist Studies; B. Alan Wallace, Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of Consciousness, Santa Barbara; Eleanor Rosch, University of California, Berkeley; and Steven A. Tainer, Institute for World Religions and the Kira Institute. The papers which follow are revised versions of the presentations given at that symposium. The symposium was organized as part of a class on “Buddhism and Cognitive Science” taught by Payne, and was supported by a curriculum development grant from the Templeton Foundation given under the “Science and Religion Course Program” coordinated by the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences.

The following introduction to the symposium proceedings seeks to identify some of the reasons why a dialogue between Buddhism, cognitive science, and phenomenology (a topic which emerged out of the symposium) is of value to the future of Buddhism in the West, including identifying some theoretical points of contact between the two.

## **WHY IS COGNITIVE SCIENCE IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF BUDDHISM IN THE WEST?**

Before progressing further with a discussion of the relation between Buddhism and cognitive science, it is important to clarify some of the terminology involved. Elsewhere B. Alan Wallace has pointed out the difficulty of applying the categories of religion, science, and philosophy—to which we might add psychology as well—to Buddhism:

To understand Buddhism on its own terms, it is imperative that we in the West recognize the cultural specificity of our own terms *religion*, *philosophy*, and *science* and not assume from the outset that Buddhism will somehow naturally conform to our linguistic categories and ideological assumptions.<sup>1</sup>

These disciplinary categories have their origins in the context of Western intellectual history, and have often been defined in terms which make them mutually exclusive. In contrast, Buddhism developed over its entire history up to the latter half of the nineteenth century in different intellectual contexts, ones which were not structured according to these disciplinary categories. As a consequence, Buddhism shares important characteristics with all of these disciplines. In the following, the category of religion as applied to Buddhism is meant in the broadest sense, one which is inclusive of scientific, philosophic, and psychological aspects.

### Living Traditions Versus Dead Ones

It seems that we can approach Buddhism in one of two ways. First, we can understand it as a living religious tradition that continues to develop in relation to the changing world within which it exists. Alternatively, we can view it as a dead system of religious doctrines to be believed despite no longer being congruent with the contemporary world.<sup>2</sup>

If we see Buddhism as a living tradition capable of making a difference in the lives of people today, then the theories and teachings must be brought into dialogue with contemporary thought. The historical development of Buddhist thought has itself been motivated by such interactions. The development of Indian Buddhism was motivated by interactions with Hindu religious traditions, while East Asian developments were in large part motivated by interaction with Daoist and Confucian systems of thought. Additionally, interaction between differing strains of Buddhist thought also contributed to the further refinement and clarification of views.

### The "Two Domains"

One of the most widely shared assumptions about the relation between science and religion is that the two form "two domains." In the two domains theory science deals with matters of fact, while religion deals with matters of value.<sup>3</sup> This intellectual distinction has a sociological analogy in the concept of "two cultures" introduced by C.P. Snow.<sup>4</sup> In Snow's view there was a moral distinction between these two forms of culture which co-



exist in American society: “one progressive and scientific, the other literary, conservative, and retrograde.”<sup>5</sup> Even more tendentious than Snow’s two cultures is the “warfare” model of the relation between science and religion, given its most classic expression in Andrew Dickson White’s *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896). In contrast to both the two cultures and warfare models of the relation between science and religion, the two domains theory seems to offer a reasonable resolution, assigning science and religion each to its own separate function. According to the two domains view, fundamentally there is no interaction between science and religion.

While the two domains view may avoid conflict, as a normative theory of how science and religion should relate to one another it does not capture the actuality of the relation. Instead of two domains, the history of the two undertakings is much more that of a “dialectical interaction.”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, some historians of science point to Christian institutions, practices, and concepts as important in the origin and development of natural science in the West.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Daoism and Buddhism have been seen as playing a central role in the history of scientific knowledge in China.<sup>8</sup> Further, it is simply not the case that Buddhism, for example, only makes assertions regarding values. The values that it does assert are not separable from the rest of the Buddhist philosophic anthropology, epistemology, psychology, and traditions of practice.<sup>9</sup>

While the two worlds view may have an initial plausibility and appeal, the ultimate consequence is to marginalize religion, trivializing it as arbitrary and speculative. As with matters of taste, matters of value divorced from the question of truth or any other contextualization simply become a matter of personal preference. Without opening the psychological teachings of Buddhism to critique in light of contemporary cognitive science, we will simply condemn it to being a dead religion, to be believed despite its lack of congruity with contemporary understandings. Better, I believe, to model ourselves on the great Buddhist teachers of the past—such as Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, and Dharmakīrti—and continue to develop Buddhist thought, even at the risk of discarding some aspects which fail in the light of contemporary understandings. Otherwise, Buddhism becomes simply a dead set of dogmas, disconnected from our contemporary realities and of only antiquarian interest.

### Primacy of the Psychological in Buddhism

The Buddhist tradition has throughout its history given attention to the workings of mind. For example, the *Dhammapada*, a collection of sayings compiled from the earliest scriptural records of the Buddha Śākyamuni’s teachings, opens with a discussion of the power one’s perception of a

situation has in determining the emotional quality one experiences in that situation:

Preceded by perception are mental states,  
 For them is perception supreme,  
 From perception have they sprung.  
 If, with perception polluted, one speaks or acts,  
 Thence suffering follows  
 As a wheel the draught ox's foot.

Preceded by perception are mental states,  
 For them is perception supreme.  
 From perception have they sprung.  
 If, with tranquil perception, one speaks or acts,  
 Thence ease follows  
 As a shadow that never departs.<sup>10</sup>

Understanding the working of mind is seen as central to progress on the path and the achievement of awakening (*bodhi*). Consequently, there are extensive discussions about the working of mind to be found throughout the Buddhist scriptures, and there are systematic treatments to be found in such schools of thought as the *abhidharma* and *Yogācāra*.

If we take these models of mind seriously, then we must be willing not simply to repeat the teachings but to engage them critically. Placing these traditional Buddhist accounts of the way in which the mind works in juxtaposition to contemporary cognitive science is one way of determining the ongoing relevance of Buddhist conceptions of mind to present-day practitioners.

### The Role of Cognitive Science: Naturalizing Buddhist Psychology

The project of juxtaposing Buddhist psychology and cognitive science should not be seen as an uncritical acceptance of the authority of science, but rather as a dialogue in which the phenomenologically-based teachings of Buddhism concerning the workings of the mind can interact critically with cognitive science. Nor is it an attempt toward some grand resolution demonstrating the perfect harmony of Buddhism and cognitive science. And, finally, it is not an appeal to the authority of cognitive science as legitimating Buddhism—an all too common project in the discourse on science and religion. Rather, the goal is twofold: to find a critical perspective from which to evaluate the contemporary relevance of traditional Buddhist teachings, and to provide Buddhist models of consciousness and

its transformation critically different from those already under consideration in cognitive science.

For the theoretical systems of Buddhist psychology to engage contemporary thought, it is necessary to find an approach to the working of mind that is congruent, i.e., one which has a similar scope of inquiry. While there have been many studies of the relation between Buddhist psychology and various psychotherapeutic theories (Freudian, Jungian, cognitive-behavioral, etc.), it is arguably the case that Buddhist psychology is not therapeutic in the sense that these approaches are. Most importantly, Buddhist psychology has no theory of pathology, and does not primarily concern itself—except perhaps metaphorically—with moving the person from dysfunctional to a normal functioning within a particular social context. The highly analytic and almost mechanical approach to the workings of the mind found in *abhidharma* and Yogācāra suggest greater affinity with cognitive science than with psychotherapeutics.

Buddhist psychology is informed both by philosophic speculation based upon fundamental doctrinal claims, and by a method of phenomenological observation.<sup>11</sup> For these claims and observations to form part of a dialogue between Buddhist psychology and cognitive science means that the concepts of Buddhist psychology need to be naturalized in the same way that recent work on the relation between phenomenology and cognitive science has sought to naturalize the concepts of Husserlian phenomenology.<sup>12</sup> While some authors simply use the term “naturalize” to mean reducing all phenomena to physics, what is meant here is the willingness to see the entities and processes described by Buddhist psychology as part of the natural world, and therefore subject to examination, study, and replication. This implies a much more complex ontology than simple materialism—for example, the existence of thoughts and perceptions as the result of causes and conditions. However, Buddhist thought has long dealt with this kind of issue.

## POINTS OF CONTACT, FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Currently, there are three alternative theoretical approaches to cognitive science: computational-symbolic, connectionist-dynamic, and embodied-enactive.<sup>13</sup> The computational-symbolic approach analyzes the mind in terms of computations and the processing of information in the form of symbols according to identifiable rules. Contributors to cognitive science rooted in applications, e.g., robotics, have demonstrated that the quantity of computations entailed in replicating a relatively simple activity are unworkable.<sup>14</sup> The computational-symbolic approach is sequential in the way that axiomatic-deductive logic is sequential. In contrast to the sequential character of the computational-symbolic approach, the

connectionist-dynamic analyzes the mind as a network which produces behavioral dynamics that are regular and definable. Both of these share a commitment to understanding the mind as a mechanism characterized by the creation and manipulation of representations. The embodied-enactive approach, however, understands cognition as emerging from the activity of embodied agents.<sup>15</sup> This approach is philosophically rooted in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout Buddhist thought one frequently finds the phrase “body, speech, and mind” as a way of describing the existential totality of human beings. This view can be understood as emphasizing the embodied nature of human existence, establishing at least a *prima facie* similarity with the embodied-enactive approach to cognitive science. The integrative or holistic orientation of Buddhism, embodied-enactive cognitive science, and phenomenology is also found in recent anthropological theory. Geoffrey Samuel’s anthropological methodology, which he refers to as the “multimodal framework” (MMF), attempts to overcome the artificial divisions between mental, social, and natural. To this end, the MMF rejects a pair of distinctions—between body and mind, and between individual and society—which have been taken largely for granted in anthropology. In place of these, Samuel suggests thinking in terms of the “modal states” of the entire “human ecosystem.” These modal states are “the patterns of relationships, both relationships among human beings and their natural environment” and at the same time “unified states of mind and body.”<sup>17</sup>

As mentioned above, both the computational-symbolic and connectionist-dynamic approaches to cognitive science are constructed around a view of consciousness as being a matter of representations: “Cognitive science assumes that the cognitive mind is a representational device—that is, a device that has states or that contains entities that are representations.”<sup>18</sup> This continues the cultural assumption of Cartesian dualism of *res cogitans* (literally, thinking being; mind and the mental) and *res extensa* (literally, extended being; body and the physical). The inner, mental world is one comprised of representations of the outer, physical world.<sup>19</sup>

One of the points of contact between Buddhist thought and phenomenology is a shared rejection of this kind of dualistic psychology. Phenomenologically, we are bodies in the world and consciousness is intentional, i.e., forms a non-dual field of perceiver and perceived (see Rosch in this issue).<sup>20</sup> Thinking of consciousness as a non-dual field can be understood through the metaphor of an electromagnetic field. The field is only created when both a positive and negative pole are present. Similarly, in this view, consciousness only exists in the field created by the perceiver and the perceived, or as the terminology of Yogācāra describes it, grasper (*grāhaka*) and grasped (*grāhya*), the dualistic interpretation of which Yogācāra identifies as a mistaken belief.<sup>21</sup>

As discussed by Wallace in his paper here, for most of the twentieth century Western psychology attempted to exclude consciousness from consideration. What may well have begun as a reasonable methodological strategy ("We can't figure out how to meaningfully study consciousness right now, so we'll set it aside until later.") soon developed into a doctrinaire claim that consciousness does not exist except as a "mere" epiphenomenon, and as such is hardly worthy of consideration. One of the values of the recent turn by some cognitive scientists to the philosophic tradition of Husserlian phenomenology is that consciousness has been of central concern to phenomenology and existentialism throughout the period of behaviorism's dominance in psychology. For example, the still-important *Phenomenology of Perception* by Maurice Merleau-Ponty was published in French in 1945, and in English translation in 1962, and remains in print today. The continuity of phenomenological concern with consciousness is demonstrated by Aron Gurwitsch's *The Field of Consciousness*, which was published in French in 1957 (English translation, 1964), and Henri Ey's *Consciousness: A Phenomenological Study of Being Conscious and Becoming Conscious*, which appeared in French in 1963 (English translation, 1978). As often seems to be the case, disdain for philosophy means that psychology has to recapitulate much that has already been thought through. A unified or non-dual view of human cognition, which is a potential for cognitive science under the embodied-enactive approach, can provide a means of discussing practice and its effects in such a fashion as to avoid implicitly reinstantiating dualistic conceptions of the body and mind.

Buddhism, cognitive science, and phenomenology all make claims regarding human cognition, and often these claims are asserted as applying to all humans no matter when or where they lived. In Buddhism, for example, we find such claims as all human existence is marked by dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*), and that full awakening is possible for all humans—or even more universally, for all sentient beings. For most Buddhists it would seem that these and similar universal claims are accepted on the basis of the authority to whom the claims are attributed, whether the Buddha Śākyamuni, or one of the later masters such as Dharmakīrti, Tsong khapa, Zhiyi, or Shinran.<sup>22</sup> In phenomenology, such universal claims are supported by the epistemological value of the phenomenological method—*epoché* and reduction.<sup>23</sup> Cognitive science can provide additional tools for the evaluation and understanding of such claims about consciousness. For example, in Pascal Boyer's application of cognitive science to religion the constraints of conceptual organization and the recurrence of religious phenomena provide the means by which claims about human consciousness can be evaluated. According to Boyer, constraint by the organization of concepts has two dimensions, an internal and an external. By internal he means "what holds a category together and makes it a mental structure that can encompass various objects or events or thoughts." External aspects of

conceptual constraints refers to “the way different categories are related, the type of ‘networks’, ‘theories’ and other complex structures in which categories are embedded.”<sup>24</sup> The recurrence of a particular religious phenomenon, that is, its transmission from one generation to another, provides a way of understanding the cognitive contribution to religious traditions. Boyer has also discussed this under the theme of “belief fixation,” which, while encompassing a “series of different questions, to do with the acquisition of concepts, the processes of persuasion, the memorisation and transmission of particular items of knowledge, etc.” has as its unifying theme the metatheoretical assertion that “a proper theory of religious symbolism should have at least a minimal account of the processes whereby certain ideas and actions are made intuitively plausible to human subjects.”<sup>25</sup>

One of the key issues for contemporary thought is in fact a very old philosophic problem, that of the universal and the particular, or yet another version of the argument over nature versus nurture. This relates to Buddhist discussions about the universality of awakening, and such ideas as inherent awakening and buddha-nature. One of the extreme versions of postmodernism asserts that all aspects of human existence are particular, i.e., are conditioned by culturally and historically specific factors. This continuation of Romantic themes has been in reaction to modernist assumptions of human uniformity. For cognitive science this may be phrased in terms of the autonomy of culture versus the role of the biological universals, what has also been called “the problem of the given and the made.”<sup>26</sup> Put strongly: are the characteristics of cognition solely the result of cultural constraints, which are distinct from one culture to another, or is cognition the result of biological constraints which are invariant across the species? What cognitive science can contribute to this discussion is information about the role of development in creating innateness—it is not simply the case that there are certain innate structures which are determined genetically, but rather that interaction between the genetic coding and the environment during the developmental process creates what appears to be invariantly innate at a later stage; the environment is itself a changing category from this perspective as it extends across the womb environment of the embryo, the physical environment, as well as the linguistic, social, and cultural environments.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the distinction between particular and universal is not one that is black and white, and would appear not even to be black and white with a range of greys in between, but rather only a range of greys out of which we fabricate black and white categories. The effect of the interaction between cultural context and cognition over the developmental course of a lifetime suggests the importance of viewing the Buddhist teachings as heuristics (*upāya*), in that different kinds of teachings may be appropriate to different people, and even to the same person at different times in their life.



Finally, one area in which cognitive science may stimulate Buddhist thought further is in the area known as “distributed cognition.” While Buddhism has long recognized the conventional, or socially constructed character of concepts (*prajñapti*), it does not seem to have any corollary to the idea that thinking goes on as a group activity, or that cognition is a social function. As conceived by the theory of distributed cognition, cognition is not something that takes place in isolation inside one person’s head. Citing Boyer again, he refers to the work of L.S. Vygotsky, an approach which “clearly locates cognitive development in its social contexts and traces patterns of development as a function of interaction.”<sup>28</sup> Beyond the developmental question, however, distributed cognition highlights the need to “reconsider human cognition as distributed beyond the compass of the organism proper in several ways: by involving other persons, relying on symbolic media, and exploiting the environment and artifacts.”<sup>29</sup> For Buddhism to integrate a view of cognition as distributed should not pose insuperable difficulties. The idea of interdependence (*pratītyasamutpāda*) and the familiar metaphor of Indra’s net would seem to offer ways of pursuing such an integration.

This introduction has briefly discussed four aspects of the dialogue between Buddhism, cognitive science, and phenomenology: the view of body, speech, and mind as forming a non-dual, integrated whole; the utility of the methods of cognitive science; the contribution of a developmental perspective to Buddhist understandings of universal human potentials; and the problematic question of distributed cognition. Some—but certainly not all—of the other themes which will continue to inform this dialogue are: creating a contemporary understanding of the efficacy of Buddhist practice such as meditation and ritual; the implications of human cognitive structures and conceptual constraints in the formation and historical development of various doctrinal claims; and various potentially problematic areas, such as innate cognitive structures versus developmental process and neuronal plasticity, and the role of socialization and enculturation such that what is culturally specific, i.e., contingent upon historical development, is experienced as simply given or natural.<sup>30</sup> Given Buddhism’s long history of placing primary emphasis on consciousness in the transformation of human existence, the future development of Buddhist thought would seem to necessarily entail a continuing dialogue with cognitive science.

## NOTES

1. B. Alan Wallace, "Introduction: Buddhism and Science—Breaking Down the Barriers," in B. Alan Wallace, ed., *Buddhism and Science: Breaking New Ground* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 5.

2. Or, in a perverse sense that would have delighted Tertullian, the early Church Father who asserted "I believe because it is absurd" (*credo quia absurdum est*), and Søren Kierkegaard, the existentialist who asserted that religious faith is simply a "leap of faith" and not a matter of reason, to be believed despite not being congruent with the contemporary world.

3. The easy plausibility of the two domains doctrine suggests that it is based on older models. In this case it may, perhaps, go back as far as the late medieval dispute between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor regarding who held authority. The Papacy argued that the Pope held both religious and civil authority, while the Imperial forces argued that the two authorities are appropriately divided between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. This division is echoed by the division between church and state at the heart of American political organization.

4. Charles Percy Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

5. James Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 5.

6. Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture*, p. 3.

7. See for example, Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992); John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1986).

8. The most extensive treatment is the now famous study edited by Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956–2003). In his view, scientific knowledge was fostered by Daoism, but hampered by Buddhism. His understanding of Buddhism, however, is limited by the stereotype common to the period in



which he was writing, i.e., the image that Buddhism is a world-denying asceticism, nihilistic in philosophy and negative in attitude. Although this one-dimensional stereotype of Buddhism has largely faded in the past half century, Needham's views still seem to have currency in the study of science in East Asia, perhaps because it is the only major work on the subject.

9. Conversely, Buddhist meditation is not simply a value-neutral technology which can be divorced from its religious significance—the goal of awakening.

10. John Ross Carter and Mahinda Palihawadana, trs., *The Dhammapada* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 13.

11. By a phenomenological method here I mean a trained, systematic report of first-person experience—a description of phenomena. I am focusing here on method, rather than on the philosophic goals of Husserl's phenomenology when he defined it as a "transcendental idealism": "an investigation of those conditions through which we experience and think that are not readily apparent while we are experiencing and thinking" (Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih lun* [London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002], p. 11). The usage here is perhaps in fact closer to the pre-Husserlian meanings as found, for example, in W. Brede Kristensen, *The Meaning of Religion: Lectures in the Phenomenology of Religion* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).

12. See, for example, David Woodruff Smith, "Intentionality Naturalized?" in Petitot, et al., eds., *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 83–110.

13. Jean-Michel Roy, Jean Petitot, Bernard Pachoud, and Francisco J. Varela, "Beyond the Gap: An Introduction to Naturalizing Phenomenology," in Petitot, et al., eds., *Naturalizing Phenomenology*, pp. 1–80.

14. See for example, Andy Clark, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), ch. 1.

15. In addition to Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), see also Horst Hendriks-Jansen, *Catching Ourselves in the Act: Situated Activity, Interactive Emergence, Evolution, and Human Thought* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1996); S.L. Hurley, *Consciousness in Action* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1998); also cf., Ron McClamrock, *Existential Cognition: Computational Minds in the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

16. See particularly, Varela, et al., *The Embodied Mind*. See also Eleanor Rosch, "The Environment of Minds: Toward a Noetic and Hedonic Ecology," in Morton P. Friedman and Edward C. Carterette, eds., *Cognitive Ecology* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), pp. 3–27, and "Transformation of the Wolf Man," in John Pickering, ed., *The Authority of Experience: Essays on Buddhism and Psychology* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997), pp. 6–27.

17. Geoffrey Samuel, *Mind, Body and Culture: Anthropology and the Biological Interface* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 152. See also Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993).

18. Barbara Von Eckardt, *What is Cognitive Science?* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), p. 161.

19. See Gary Hatfield, "Descartes' Physiology and Its Relation to His Psychology," in John Cottingham, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 335–370.

20. Understanding consciousness as involving a non-dual relation between subject and object in Buddhist thought has its parallel in the issue of intentionality in contemporary cognitive science and throughout phenomenology. "Intentionality" is used as a technical term to refer to the idea that the every conscious awareness is an awareness of something, and is not to be confused with "purposeful." According to Franz Brentano, Husserl's teacher, the idea of intentionality can be traced back even further, through the medieval scholastics to Aristotle's conceptions of the soul (Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* [Antos C. Rancurello, D.B. Terrell, and Linda L. McAlister, trans. London and New York: Routledge, 1973], p. 88, n. ‡). This is one of the points at which Buddhism diverges radically from much of the rest of Indian religious thought which holds that there is an object-less consciousness. This latter view has come to be fairly influential in contemporary Western discussions of mysticism. See for example, Robert K.C. Forman, *Mysticism, Mind, Consciousness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), and Robert K.C. Forman, ed., *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

21. Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, p. 1.

22. For a discussion of the role of the argument from authority in Buddhism, see Roger R. Jackson, *Is Enlightenment Possible?: Dharmakīrti and rGyal tshab rje on Knowledge, Rebirth, No-Self and Liberation* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1993).

23. Maurice Natanson, *Edmund Husserl: Philosopher of Infinite Tasks* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973), ch. 4, "Phenomenological Method," pp. 63–83.

- 
24. Pascal Boyer, "Cognitive Aspects of Religious Symbolism," in Pascal Boyer, ed., *Cognitive Aspects of Religious Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 28.
25. Boyer, "Cognitive Aspects of Religious Symbolism," p. 27.
26. Donnel B. Stern, *Unformulated Experience: From Dissociation to Imagination in Psychoanalysis* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: The Analytic Press, 1997), p. 3.
27. See for example, Jeffrey L. Elman, et al., *Rethinking Innateness: A Connectionist Perspective on Development* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), and Esther Thelen and Linda B. Smith, *A Dynamic Systems Approach to the Development of Cognition and Action* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996).
28. Boyer, "Cognitive Aspects," p. 34. See also William Frawley, *Vygotsky and Cognitive Science: Language and the Unification of the Social and Computational Mind* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).
29. D. N. Perkins, "Person-plus: A Distributed View of Thinking and Learning," in Gavriel Salomon, ed., *Distributed Cognitions: Psychological and Educational Considerations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 89. See also Edwin Hutchins, *Cognition in the Wild* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995).
30. Exemplary of the range of concerns that fall within this discussion is the second part of Wallace's new work, *Buddhism and Science*, "Buddhism and Cognitive Science." The four contributions there discuss: (1) the pragmatic character of Buddhist philosophy of mind as directed toward awakening (Dalai Lama), (2) theories of the self (David Galin), (3) the relation between suffering and cognition (William S. Waldron), and (4) the relation between practice and imagination and perception as cognitive capacities (Francisco J. Varela and Natalie Depraz).



# A Science of Consciousness: Buddhism (1), the Modern West (0)

**B. Alan Wallace**

Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of  
Consciousness, Santa Barbara

## INTRODUCTION

IN HIS CLASSIC WORK *Science and Civilization in China*, Joseph Needham explored the historical reasons why China, for all its long civilization, never developed science as we understand it in the modern West, namely a quantitative, technologically driven science of the outer, physical world. In this paper I shall first outline some of the reasons why Western civilization has never developed a science of consciousness. I shall then argue that Buddhism has made major strides in developing such a science, and that the contemplative refinement of attention, and the subsequent utilization of such attention in exploring the mind firsthand, plays a crucial role in such an endeavor. Such training of the mind is vital for *investigating* the nature of consciousness, and it is also an important prerequisite to *transforming* consciousness in the pursuit of mental health and genuine well-being. While Buddhism has a rich contemplative tradition for the first person exploration of states of consciousness, it never developed the sciences of the brain and behavior that we have in the modern West. So the integration of the first person methodologies of Buddhism with the third person methodologies of the cognitive sciences may lead to a richer understanding of consciousness than either Buddhist or Western civilization has discovered on its own.

## HISTORICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO THE EMERGENCE OF A SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WEST

When asking why the West has yet to develop a science of consciousness, I turn first to the twin roots of Western civilization: the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian traditions. In general, a pivotal element in the emergence of a new science is the development and refinement of instruments to precisely observe and possibly experiment with the phenomena under investigation. Galileo's use of the telescope to examine the sun,

moon, and planets signaled the emergence of the science of astronomy, much as Van Leeuwenhoek's use of the microscope in observing minute life forms was instrumental to the emergence of modern biology. It is therefore reasonable to assume that if there is to be, or ever has been, a science of consciousness, it will be heralded by the development and refinement of an instrument with which states of consciousness can be observed with rigor and precision. The only instrument humanity has ever had for directly observing the mind is the mind itself, so that must be the instrument to be refined. The untrained attention is habitually prone to alternating bouts of agitation and dullness, so if the mind is to be used as a reliable tool for exploring and experimenting with consciousness, these dysfunctional traits need to be replaced with attentional stability and vividness.

While the philosophers of ancient Greece were certainly interested in the nature of the mind, there is little evidence that they developed any sophisticated means for refining the attention. The Pythagorean brotherhood and the mystery schools may have devised such methods, but if they did, such knowledge has not been preserved. Jewish mystics also wrote extensively on the nature of consciousness,<sup>1</sup> but the development of techniques to cultivate attentional stability and vividness for the rigorous exploration of consciousness was not a strong suit of this tradition either. The Greeks did coin the term *eudaimonia*, commonly translated as genuine happiness, or human flourishing, referring to "the perfect life" insofar as perfection is attainable by humanity. For Plotinus, the source of genuine happiness lies within the human spirit, but when the concept of *eudaimonia* was absorbed into the Christian tradition, Augustine insisted that the soul must look outside itself—to God—for such perfection.<sup>2</sup> However, it must be added that a principal way he taught to go about this endeavor was through a contemplative process that draws the attention *inwards*, going beyond the self to a direct encounter with God, the very source of *eudaimonia*.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, perhaps the fundamental difference between Plotinus and Augustine has to do with their views on the parameters of human identity, the boundary between the human soul and the divine.

Within the Christian tradition, the early desert fathers were certainly aware of the need to calm the mind, as is evidenced in the seminal fifth-century volume on contemplative practice entitled *The Conferences of Cassian*.<sup>4</sup> But it is not clear that Christian contemplatives of that period or the later medieval era devised effective means for training the attention as a means for observing mental events. This failure may be at least in part responsible for the widespread conclusion among Christian mystics that the highest states of contemplation are necessarily fleeting, commonly lasting no longer than about half an hour.<sup>5</sup> This insistence on the fleeting nature of mystical union appears to originate with Augustine,<sup>6</sup> and it is reflected almost a millennium later in the writings of Meister Eckhart, who

emphasized that the state of contemplative rapture is invariably transient, with even its residual effects lasting no longer than three days.<sup>7</sup>

With the advent of the Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution, the gradual decline of Christian contemplative inquiry into the nature of consciousness rapidly accelerated. Given the Protestant emphasis on the Augustinian theme of the essential iniquity of the human soul, and man's utter inability to achieve salvation or know God except by faith, there was no longer any theological incentive for such inquiry. Salvation was emphatically presented as an undeserved gift from the Creator. So genuine happiness, which is to be truly experienced only in the hereafter, is in no way earned by understanding the mind or achieving exceptional states of mental health and balance.

Descartes, whose ideological influence on the Scientific Revolution is hard to overestimate, was deeply committed to the introspective examination of the mind. But like his Greek and Christian predecessors, he did not devise means to refine the attention so that the mind could reliably be used to observe mental events. On the contrary, he naively believed that anything that was clearly and distinctly perceived by means of introspection was invariably valid—an assumption that was effectively refuted by William James at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in a theological move that effectively removed the human mind from the natural world, Descartes decreed that the soul is divinely infused into the body, where it exerts its influence on the body by way of the pineal gland. It was this gland, he believed, that, on decision of the soul, induces the voluntary actions of the body, while all other actions are reflexive. This philosophical stance probably accounts in large part for the fact that the Western scientific study of the mind did not even begin for more than two centuries after Descartes. And until the last three decades of the twentieth century, the pineal gland was uniquely neglected by physiological and biochemical investigators. Although various factors may be responsible for the scientific avoidance of this region of the brain, it seems plausible that one reason was that, given the special status attributed to it by Descartes, it was still considered to be outside the proper domain of natural science.

Another trend in Europe at the dawn of the modern era provided yet a further incentive for not delving deeply into the human mind, and that was the witch-hunting craze from the late fifteenth century through the mid-seventeenth century. During this period, anyone who exhibited exceptional mental powers, including the power of spiritual healing, was immediately suspect of being a witch. While many traditional societies have believed in witchcraft or something much like it, the Christian tradition in particular attributed the powers of witches to the Devil, which is the rationale for the Biblical commandment that such people are to be put to death.<sup>9</sup> The common belief that demons and other spiritual entities roved about in the natural world (sometimes taking possession of human



souls) was of course deeply incompatible with the emerging mechanical view of the universe. After all, scientists couldn't very well establish orderly physical laws in the objective world as long as there were immaterial spirits roving about, intervening at will in the affairs of man and nature. So, many natural philosophers of the late sixteenth century simply dismissed them as illusions. Newton, on the other hand, who devoted much of his time to developing his own theology, withdrew evil spirits from the objective physical world and placed them inside the human mind in the form of mental disorders. God's outer creation had now been cleansed of these contaminating influences, leaving only the inner being of man defiled. It would take another two hundred years before Western psychoanalysts would have the nerve to begin the scientific exploration of these dark inner realities.

In short, the trajectory of Western science from the time of Copernicus to the modern day seems to have been influenced by medieval Christian cosmology. Just as hell was symbolized as being in the center of the earth, and heaven was in the outermost reaches of space, the inner, subjective world of humankind was depicted as being the locus of evil, while the objective world was free of such moral contamination. It hardly seems an accident that the science that initiated the Scientific Revolution was astronomy, and it took a full three hundred years for the scientific discipline of psychology to begin. And it was only in the closing years of the twentieth century that the scientific community began to regard consciousness as a legitimate subject of scientific inquiry.

Why did it take psychology—which itself emerged only after many scientists felt that they had already discovered all the principal laws of the universe—a century before it began to address the nature of consciousness? This was due in large part to the fifty-year domination of academic psychology by behaviorism. In 1913, the American behaviorist John B. Watson declared that psychologists must avoid the use of all subjective terms such as sensation, perception, image, desire, purpose, and even thinking and emotion as they are subjectively defined. And he attributed belief in the very existence of consciousness to ancient superstitions and magic.<sup>10</sup> Forty years later, B. F. Skinner echoed this theme by asserting that mind as such does not exist at all, only dispositions for behavior. It took another decade before the futility of equating subjective mental processes with "objective" behavioral dispositions became increasingly apparent to the scientific community. The behaviorist approach did nothing to explain the nature of the mind, let alone consciousness; it just reduced these subjective phenomena to a class of objective processes they *could* study with the available tools of science.

With the emergence of cognitive psychology during the 1960s, subjective experience was once again allowed back into the realm of scientific research, but the role of introspection in exploring the mind was still



marginalized in this field, just as it is in the rapidly progressing discipline of neuroscience. Rather than equating mental processes with behavioral dispositions, cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists now equate them with neural events. As neurologist Antonio R. Damasio recently commented, “the biological processes now presumed to correspond to mind processes in fact *are* mind processes and will be seen to be so when understood in sufficient detail . . . the private personal mind . . . indeed *is* biological and will one day be described in terms both biological and mental.”<sup>11</sup> However, what neuroscientists actually *know* is that specific neural events (N) are correlated to specific mental events (M), such that if N occurs, M occurs; if M occurs, N occurs; if N doesn’t occur, M doesn’t occur; and if M doesn’t occur, N doesn’t occur. Such a correlation could imply that the occurrence of N has a *causal* role in the production of M, or vice versa; or it could imply that N and M are actually the same phenomenon viewed from different perspectives. There is not enough scientific knowledge at this point to determine which of these types of correlation is the correct one. But Damasio seems to overlook this ambiguity and simply decrees the equivalence of mental and neural processes, without any logical or empirical justification. In other words, this equivalence is simply a metaphysical belief.

While writing this essay, I questioned Damasio on this point, and he responded that in his book *The Feeling of What Happens*<sup>12</sup> he goes to great pains to explain that neural patterns are *not* equivalent to mental images. There is an explanatory gap, he points out, regarding the process by which a neural pattern is converted to a mental image; and neuroscience, in particular, and science, in general, may never be able to bridge that gap. He further acknowledges that the “physicality” of mental phenomena has not yet been identified scientifically; it is simply a working hypothesis. As hard as I try, I just can’t see the logic in his position. To say that A *is* B implies an identity, not a causal relation between two distinct entities A and B. He seems to be saying that mental phenomena are biological phenomena produced by prior biological phenomena. But that still implies that mental phenomena are equivalent to some kind of biological phenomena. So the distinction between mental and neural processes fades out immediately.

In the book cited above, Damasio explains why neuroscience has been wrong about not making clear the distinctions between first person and third person views regarding discussions on mind and consciousness. This is an important and valid point. At the same time, he seems to advocate that in the final analysis, mental processes *are* their neural correlates viewed from a first person perspective; and neural processes *are* their mental correlates viewed from a third person perspective. But this widespread belief is just that—a speculative hypothesis—and not a scientifically demonstrated conclusion, despite the fact that it is commonly taken for granted by researchers in this field.

How does Damasio explain the fact that the neural processes that he equates with mental processes have the capacity to be *about* other things? This question, called the *hard problem*, is regarded by many philosophers as a formidable, unsolved mystery. But Damasio assures his readers that this turns out to be no mystery at all: “[e]volution has crafted a brain that is in the business of directly representing the organism and indirectly representing whatever the organism interacts with.” Brain cells are, he declares, “designed to be *about* other things and other doings.”<sup>13</sup> In short, his solution to this problem is that the brain has the capacity to represent other things because it was designed that way “by evolution.” This “explanation” obviously illuminates nothing other than the fact that Damasio has great faith in the mysterious ways of evolution, which for the biologist here takes on the role theologians have long ascribed to God.

Mental events viewed introspectively appear to be radically different types of processes than neural events viewed objectively. Moreover, if one confines oneself to the introspective examination of the mind, one evidently learns little if anything about the brain. And if brain scientists were to confine their research to the brain alone, without reference to any first person reports of mental experience, they would learn little if anything about the mind. Indeed, they would have no reason, on the basis of neural events alone, to conclude that they are correlated to any mental events at all. Damasio accounts for this disparity as follows: “The appearance of a gulf between mental states and physical/biological phenomena comes from the large disparity between two bodies of knowledge—the good understanding of mind we have achieved through centuries of introspection and the efforts of cognitive science versus the incomplete neural specification we have achieved through the efforts of neuroscience.”<sup>14</sup>

Many contemporary scientists and philosophers would challenge his assertion that we now have “a good understanding” of the mind as a result of centuries of introspection and discoveries in cognitive science. Biologist Edward O. Wilson maintains that logic launched from introspection is limited and usually unreliable, which is why even today people know more about their automobiles than they do about their own minds.<sup>15</sup> The general consensus among psychologists is that introspection is an unreliable means for investigating the mind. As for our current understanding of the mind and consciousness, two of America’s most prominent philosophers of mind comment, “Consciousness stands alone today as a topic that often leaves even the most sophisticated thinkers tongue-tied and confused,”<sup>16</sup> and “where the mind is concerned we are characteristically confused and in disagreement.”<sup>17</sup> The real gist of Damasio’s assertion seems to be that we already have enough understanding of mental processes themselves, so now the emphasis should be placed on neuroscience to explore the biological processes that are, after all, the same as mental processes, just viewed from an objective perspective.

If scientists were presented with a new instrument for observing a specific type of natural phenomena, the first logical step for them to take before using this instrument would be to examine its nature and capacities. Does this instrument present the scientists merely its own artifacts, like looking through a kaleidoscope, or does it provide them with data that exist independently of it? If it does yield such information, does it distort it in the process of bringing it to them, or does it provide them with truly objective data from a source independent of the instrument? Only after they have understood the design, functioning, reliability, and capacities of the instrument could they confidently use it to collect data.

The primary instrument that all scientists have used to make any type of observation is the human mind. Does this instrument provide us only with its own artifacts, without any access to any objective reality existing independently of the mind? Or if the mind provides us with information about the objective world, does it distort it in the process? For reasons outlined above, the scientific study of the mind in the West was delayed for three centuries after the inception of the Scientific Revolution, which is tantamount to using an instrument for three hundred years before subjecting it to scientific scrutiny.

What kind of scientific worldview has emerged as a result of this profound oversight and the enormous disparity of our understanding of the mind and the rest of the natural world? Wilson expresses the view of many scientists when he asserts that outside our heads there is an independent, objective world, and inside our heads is a reconstitution of reality based on sensory input and the self-assembly of concepts. The proper task of scientists, he claims, is to correctly align our inner representations of reality with the world outside our heads.<sup>18</sup> The problem here, which he openly acknowledges, is that scientists have no body of external objective truth by which the alignment of scientific theories and the world outside our heads can be calibrated. In other words, the empirical data that we perceive, together with our scientific theories that account for them, all consist of mental representations “within our heads” and we have no objective yardstick with which to compare those representations with what we assume to be the “real world.”

How are we to get out of this conundrum? Wilson suggests, “Criteria of objective truth might be attainable through empirical investigation. The key lies in clarifying the still poorly understood operations composing the mind and in improving the piecemeal approach science has taken to its material properties.”<sup>19</sup> Like Damasio, Wilson assumes that the mind is actually composed of brain processes, but as I have already pointed out, at this point such an assertion is simply a metaphysical belief, not a scientifically established fact. Given how little scientists presently understand about the relation between the mind and brain, it would be far more objective to regard this as a topic to be researched with an open mind, rather

than assuming (or demanding) that science will one day confirm our current materialistic biases.

In order to understand the relation between scientific theories and the objective phenomena they ostensibly represent, we clearly need to have a more thorough, scientific understanding of the mind. As I commented earlier, the first step in developing a science of any kind of phenomena is to develop and refine instruments that allow one to observe and possibly experiment with the phenomena under investigation. The only instrument we have that enables us to observe mental phenomena directly is the mind itself. But since the time of Aristotle, the West has made little if any progress in developing means of refining the mind so that it can be used as a reliable instrument for observing mental events. And judging by the writings of many scientists, such as E. O. Wilson, there continues to be considerable resistance against developing any such empirical science even today.

Thus, if we follow this present materialistic trend, no such empirical science of consciousness is likely to emerge in the foreseeable future. Rather, if the cognitive sciences continue to be constrained by the metaphysical dictates of scientific materialism,<sup>20</sup> all we will do is reduce consciousness to something that can be explored and understood within the parameters of that dogma, as various researchers, such as Crick and Koch,<sup>21</sup> are already attempting to do. Just as kinematics (the phenomenological study of matter in motion) must precede mechanics in the study of physics, the rigorous, firsthand investigation of consciousness must precede any formulation of the mechanisms that account the emergence of consciousness.

Modern science has never developed a rigorous introspective methodology for observing the phenomena of conscious mental processes and states. William James, the foremost pioneer of American psychology, acknowledged the importance of studying behavioral and neural correlates to mental processes, but he emphasized the primary role of introspection in this endeavor.<sup>22</sup> However, the untrained mind, which is prone to alternating agitation and dullness, is an unreliable and inadequate instrument for observing anything. To transform it into a suitable instrument for scientific exploration, the stability and vividness of the attention must be developed to a high degree. James was well aware of the importance of developing such sustained, voluntary attention,<sup>23</sup> but he acknowledged that he did not know how to achieve this task.<sup>24</sup>

To sum up, the modern West has developed a sophisticated science of behavioral and neural *correlates* of consciousness, but no science of consciousness itself, for it has failed to develop sophisticated, rigorous means of exploring the phenomena of consciousness firsthand. And this is the first step towards an empirical science of *any* class of natural phenomena. Thus with regard to exploring the nature, origins, and potentials of consciousness, cognitive scientists and neuroscientists are more like astrologers

(who carefully examine *correlates* between the celestial and terrestrial phenomena) than astronomers (who carefully examine celestial phenomena themselves).

A second result of the historical development of science is that the modern West has an elaborate science of mental illness, but no science of mental health. Indeed there is hardly any scientific consensus on the criteria by which to identify mental health. Nor do we in the West have any science that shows how to cultivate extraordinary mental health or genuine happiness. In short, the theme of *eudaimonia*, a state of human flourishing sometimes glossed as a "truth-given joy," has been forgotten in modern science,<sup>25</sup> and the very existence of a truth that yields such well-being has no place in the scientific view of human existence or the universe at large.

In short, the West presently has no *pure* science of consciousness that reveals the nature, origins, and potentials of this natural phenomenon, and it similarly lacks an *applied* science of consciousness that reveals means for refining and enhancing consciousness and thereby achieving *eudaimonia*. But the fact that the West has failed to develop such a science does not necessarily imply that all other human civilizations throughout history have been equally deficient in this regard.

## THE BUDDHIST SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Over the course of its 2,500-year history, Buddhism has developed rigorous methods for refining the attention, and then applying that attention to exploring the origins, nature, and role of consciousness in the natural world. The empirical and rational investigations and discoveries by such great Indian contemplatives as Gautama the Buddha profoundly challenge many of the assumptions of the modern West, particularly those of scientific materialism. This meeting of Buddhist and modern Western science also challenges our very notion of "metaphysics." In the nineteenth century, the origins of the physical universe, the constitution of distant galaxies, and the internal structure of molecules were all metaphysical issues. At that time, there were no known ways of exploring these topics empirically, but that is no longer the case. In the twenty-first century, the nature, origins, and destiny of human consciousness are still metaphysical issues for the West, but are they similarly clouded in mystery within the Buddhist tradition?

As new empirical strategies are devised for exploring phenomena, metaphysics gives way to science, mere belief is supplanted by knowledge. The approach that has repeatedly allowed for this gradual illumination of the natural world is called the *scientific method*. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines this as follows: "Principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge involving the recognition and

formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experiment, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses." Does Buddhism include this procedure in its inquiry into the nature of the mind and consciousness? In general, the framework of Buddhist theory and practice consists of the Four Noble Truths: the truths of suffering, the source of suffering, the cessation of suffering together with its source, and the path leading to that cessation. While Buddhist contemplatives have always placed a primary emphasis on fathoming the nature of the mind, their orientation to this endeavor has been fundamentally pragmatic. Their first task is to recognize the nature and full range of suffering to which humans are vulnerable. The First Noble Truth formulates that as the problem to be addressed. The Second Noble Truth presents the hypothesis that the essential causes of suffering are to be found within the mind, specifically in terms of cognitive, emotional, and attentional imbalances. The Third Noble Truth hypothesizes that these afflictive tendencies can be irreversibly dispelled from the mind. And the Fourth Noble Truth presents detailed procedures for collecting data by observing mental processes and experimenting with techniques for transforming the mind and eliminating its afflictive elements.<sup>26</sup>

The very notion of observing the mind with the mind appears problematic to many thinkers, for it does not allow for the separation of subject and object that characterizes other kinds of scientific observations. This is a legitimate concern. Is it even possible to observe mental states and processes with the mind? Even with no mental training, we can detect our emotional states, we can observe thoughts and images arising in the mind, and we can introspectively recognize from moment to moment whether our minds are calm or agitated. On a more basic level, we can perceive that we are conscious—we are aware not only of objects of consciousness but of the presence of our own consciousness of other things.<sup>27</sup> And this faculty of mental perception is the only instrument we have for directly observing any mental phenomena. While it is true in this case that there is no absolute separation between the instrument of observation and the observed phenomena, this fact does not necessarily ban the whole procedure from the realm of scientific exploration. After all, the inextricable relation between the system of measurement and the measured phenomena is a familiar theme in quantum mechanics, but no one has suggested that such measurements be banned from physics.

In Buddhist contemplative practice, the experiential investigation of the mind, including the nature, origins, and potentials of consciousness, is of paramount significance. But for such exploration to be penetrating and reliable and for the insights gleaned from this process to be thoroughly assimilated, the attentional imbalances of laxity and excitation must first be dispelled. Only when the attention is lucid and calm can it be used effectively in this venture.<sup>28</sup> The qualities of luminosity and stillness are



actually innate to the relative ground state of individual mind, so the central challenge of this training is to settle the attention in that ground state. One of the remarkable discoveries of Buddhist contemplatives who have penetrated to this ground is that this stratum of consciousness is imbued with an innate quality of bliss. In other words, when the attention is settled in a deep state of equilibrium, temporarily free of laxity and excitation, one spontaneously experiences a sense of inner peace and well-being. In order to penetrate to this substrate consciousness, a necessary prerequisite is the cultivation of a wholesome way of life that supports mental balance and harmonious relations with others. This is the essence of Buddhist ethics, which is the foundation of all Buddhist practice.<sup>29</sup>

According to generations of Buddhist contemplatives, simply settling the attention in the substrate consciousness, with a high degree of attentional stability and clarity, is not enough to irreversibly free the mind of afflictions and obscurations. For this one must penetrate to the ultimate ground state of consciousness, prior to the conceptual demarcations of subject and object, mind and matter, and even existence and nonexistence. This primordial consciousness is metaphorically described as being empty and luminous, and it has never been sullied by afflictive imbalances of any kind. The realization of this state of consciousness is said to yield a state of well-being, or *eudaimonia*, that transcends the imagination, and it is the unified culmination of the Buddhist pragmatic pursuit of freedom from suffering and the epistemic pursuit of knowledge. With such insight, one comes to understand not only the nature of consciousness but the relation between mental representations and their referents in the objective world.

With this understanding of three dimensions of consciousness—ranging from the psyche that can immediately be viewed introspectively, to the substrate consciousness, to primordial consciousness—the Buddhist view of the mind challenges many common assumptions in the modern West. According to many psychologists today, the normal mind is deemed to be healthy, but it is nevertheless subject to a wide range of mental distress, including depression, anxiety, and frustration. But these can be managed with drug therapy and counseling when they become excessive. While unhappiness comes simply from being human, happiness comes from outside: from the sensual and esthetic enjoyments, from possessions, from other people, and, according to religious believers, from God. The modern Western view of the mind is still influenced by the Aristotelian assertion that all emotions, in the appropriate circumstance and in moderation, are to be accepted.<sup>30</sup> This belief has been incorporated into the theory of evolution, which maintains that all our emotions and other mental traits must have served us well through human evolution, otherwise we wouldn't have them.

In stark contrast to the above views, Buddhist contemplatives state that the ordinary mind is dysfunctional, for it oscillates between states

of (1) being obsessive/compulsive (succumbing to compulsive ideation and obsessively grasping onto thoughts and emotions) and (2) slipping into a stupor. We have grown habituated to experiencing such a dysfunctional mind and mistakenly take for granted the resultant mental discomfort, believing this to be normal and reasonably healthy. With this basic sense of inner dissatisfaction, we then take solace in outer and inner pleasurable stimuli, which veil the symptoms of our dysfunctional minds. While the normal mind is *habitually* prone to states of attentional, emotional, and cognitive imbalances, it is not *intrinsically* dysfunctional. By refining the attention we can make the mind serviceable and thereby rediscover the innate sense of well-being that emerges spontaneously from a balanced mind. And by fathoming the nature of consciousness to its primordial ground, all the obscurations of the mind may be removed, resulting in irreversible freedom from suffering and its source.

## CONCLUSION

While the scientific study of consciousness has come into vogue in recent years, it is overwhelmingly dominated by the metaphysical dogma of scientific materialism. The influence of this belief system does little to impede progress in the physical sciences, but its stifling effect is evident in the biological sciences (including medical science) and even more so in the cognitive sciences. One of the most limiting aspects of this dogma is that it places a taboo on the empirical investigation of subjective events from a first person perspective. And there is a widespread refusal among researchers in this field even to consider the possibility that mental events may be immaterial in nature, and not simply epiphenomena of the brain. Given the scientific ideals of empiricism and skepticism, it is ironic that the scientific community shows such resistance to the first person, empirical investigation of subjective mental events (as opposed to their neural correlates) and that they show so little skepticism toward the metaphysical claims of scientific materialism.

If, as I have argued in this essay, the Buddhist tradition has developed a science of consciousness, why is this not commonly acknowledged? On the one hand, it emphasizes an introspective approach to the study of the mind, the value of which is not commonly accepted among scientists. But there are other compelling reasons as well. Over the centuries Buddhism became decreasingly empirical in its orientation to understanding human existence, and in the process elements of dogmatism and scholasticism have become increasingly prevalent.<sup>31</sup> This degenerating trend has been exacerbated by much modern academic scholarship in the field of Buddhist Studies, which tends to ignore the exceptional experiences and



insights of Buddhist adepts, refusing even to consider the possibility that they may have made extraordinary discoveries that may be pertinent to our contemporary understanding of the mind and its role in nature. In the most extreme cases, Western Buddhologists even go so far as to make the absurd claim that experience has never played a prominent role in Buddhist practice.<sup>32</sup> But the problem is not just in the *representation* of Buddhist practice in this West. Over the centuries the spirit of open-minded inquiry seems to have faded among both Buddhist scholars and contemplatives. This has gotten to such a point, according to one contemporary Tibetan Buddhist scholar, that the primary concern of many Buddhist meditators is mainly to ensure that they are following the correct procedure of a meditation technique, rather than rigorously exploring the nature of the mind or anything else.<sup>33</sup>

During the Renaissance, Europe emerged from the shackles of religious dogma in part because of the influx of fresh and provocative ideas from classical Greece and the Arab world. Now the West (and all other countries dominated by the West) is in need of a Renaissance to free it from the intellectual tyranny of scientific materialism, which is often falsely conflated with science itself. The Buddhist tradition, especially if it is re-instilled with the spirit of empiricism and skepticism, may play an important role in such a Renaissance.

Researchers in the mind/body problem commonly appeal to the authority of future scientists to confirm their present materialistic assumptions about the nature of consciousness. Antonio R. Damasio, for example, claims "it is probably safe to say that by 2050 sufficient knowledge of biological phenomena will have wiped out the traditional dualistic separations of body/brain, body/mind and brain/mind."<sup>34</sup> It took the scientific community fifty years to recognize that the mind couldn't meaningfully be reduced to a set of behavioral dispositions. Hopefully it will not take that long before neuroscientists open their minds to the possibility that the mind may not be meaningfully reduced to neural mechanisms either.

While science characteristically embraces the "disturbingly new," it has a much harder time embracing the "disturbingly old," namely, discoveries that were made long ago (let alone in an alien civilization), prior to the Scientific Revolution. Many Buddhists, on the other hand, rely so heavily on the insights of the Buddha and later contemplatives of the past that they have a hard time embracing disturbing new discoveries that challenge Buddhist beliefs. Scientific materialists are so confident that the mind is nothing more than a biological phenomenon that they confuse this belief with scientific knowledge. Similarly, many traditional Buddhists are so confident of the validity of their doctrine that they confuse their belief with contemplative knowledge. In his book *The Discoverers: A History of Man's Search to Know His World and Himself*, historian Daniel J. Boorstin refers to "the illusions of knowledge" as the principle obstacles to discovery. The

great discoverers of the past, he declares, “had to battle against the current ‘facts’ and dogmas of the learned.”<sup>35</sup>

The scientific tradition has now joined the Buddhist tradition in its pursuit of understanding the nature, origins, and potentials of consciousness. At this point in history, it may be said that neither embodies a rigorous, unbiased, multifaceted science of consciousness. But as scientists and Buddhists collaborate in the investigation of this phenomenon so central to human existence, perhaps such a science may emerge to the benefit of both traditions and the world at large.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Daniel C. Matt, "Ayin: the Concept of Nothingness in Jewish Mysticism," in Robert K. C. Forman, ed., *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), and *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995).
2. John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (1938; Norwich: The Canterbury Press, 1991), pp. 47–49.
3. Dom Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism: The Teaching of Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life*, 3rd ed., with "Afterthoughts" by David Knowles (London: Constable, 1967), pp. 28–29.
4. Owen Chadwick, trans. and ed., *The Conferences of Cassian in Western Asceticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958).
5. Butler, *Western Mysticism*, p. 26.
6. Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, pp. 52 and 67.
7. M. O. C. Walshe, trans., *Meister Eckhart: Sermons and Treatises*, vol. 1 (Longmead: Element Books Ltd., 1979), p. 7.
8. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1 (1890; New York: Dover Publications, 1950), pp. 191–2 and 197–8.
9. Exodus 22:18, in *New International Version*.
10. John B. Watson, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It," *Psychological Review* 20 (1913), pp. 158–77.
11. Antonio R. Damasio, "How the Brain Creates the Mind," *Scientific American* 12, no. 1 (2002): p. 7.
12. Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998).
13. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
15. E. O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Knopf, 1998), pp. 96–97.
16. Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1991), pp. 21–22.
17. John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), p. 247.

18. Wilson, *Consilience*, pp. 60–61.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
20. Cf. B. Alan Wallace, *The Taboo of Subjectivity: Toward a New Science of Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
21. F. Crick and C. Koch, "Towards a Neurobiological Theory of Consciousness," in *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Güzeldere, eds. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 277–292.
22. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, p. 185.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 416–424.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
25. One very promising development in modern psychology in this regard is the emergence of "positive psychology." See C. R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez, eds., *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
26. For a more detailed presentation of these Four Noble Truths within a contemporary context, see B. Alan Wallace, *The Bridge of Quiescence: Experiencing Tibetan Buddhist Meditation* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), pp. 29–101.
27. The process by which the mind can attend to consciousness itself is addressed in B. Alan Wallace, "The Buddhist Tradition of *Samatha*: Methods for Refining and Examining Consciousness," in *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6, no. 2 and 3 (1999): pp. 175–187.
28. For a detailed account of this type of attentional training, see Wallace, *The Bridge of Quiescence*.
29. For a lucid presentation of Buddhist ethics presented within a modern, secular context see H. H. the Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999).
30. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Terence Irwin, trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985).
31. For a discussion of scholasticism within Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, see José Ignacio Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).
32. See Robert H. Sharf, "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experiences," *Numen* 42 (1995): pp. 228–283; and "Experience," in Mark C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 94–116.
33. Personal communication from Geshe Thupten Jinpa, June 6, 2002.

---

34. Damasio, "How the Brain Creates the Mind," p. 9. See also Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, p. 100.

35. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers: A History of Man's Search to Know His World and Himself* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. xv.



# How Do I Know Thee? Let Me Count the Ways: Meditation and Basic Cognitive Processes

**Eleanor Rosch**

Department of Psychology  
University of California, Berkeley

ONE OF THE BEST KEPT SECRETS of the last several centuries may be that the study of religious experience conceived broadly can have something fundamental to contribute to scientific psychology. One hundred years ago William James suggested this radical idea in his classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, yet today mainstream psychology is no closer to considering the idea than it was in 1902. Surely one root of this blindness is the way in which the categories and imagery of our society envisage an otherworldly religion and a naturalistic psychology which are on different planes of existence altogether and cannot communicate with one another. The distrust of first person experience, which B. Allan Wallace discusses (this volume), is one important aspect of this divide. I believe that the Eastern meditation traditions, particularly Buddhist thought and meditation, can help to bridge the divide and thereby show a new direction in which the study of the kinds of experience that our society has classified as religious can impact research in psychology and the emerging cognitive sciences.

This is not purely an academic issue. Religion is deeply important to people. It deals with, in the words of William James, “whatever is seen as most primal and enveloping and deeply true.”<sup>1</sup> Our world is being torn apart by the chaos that can result when people feel their religion deeply violated. Yet modern psychology, like modern politicians, seems able only to talk *at* religions rather than to listen to them.

Once we have divided the world into natural and *supernatural*, noting that these are our own conceptual categories, and defined religion as being about the latter, then the direction of causal explanation in naturalistic science can flow in only one direction—from psychology and cognitive science to religious beliefs and feelings. This has typically meant a reductionist-materialist “explaining away” of various aspects of religion. Religious faith may be explained in terms of psychoanalytic childhood experiences—as has been done since Freud; supernatural beings explained by the “theory of mind” that children develop by age four,<sup>2</sup> or “oceanic” medita-

tion experiences explained by particular patterns of brain activity.<sup>3</sup> What contribution could possibly come from the other direction?

What William James did, and in this he has been followed by many other researchers in what is now called the “qualitative study of religion,” is to catalog and classify many striking examples of religious experiences. The virtues of this approach are that it captures our attention; it allows the mind to resonate with the experiences described; and it may stimulate inquiry. The core problem with this approach is that it identifies religious experience with special states of mind, states of mind that are essentially different from “normal waking consciousness,” states which are often called mystical. It does not challenge our image of what normal consciousness itself may be. Indeed, the very term *mysticism*, throughout its history of use in the West, may be seen as a way of marginalizing an entire mode of understanding. Whether denigrated as a medical symptom or exalted as a religious ideal, either way, to classify something as mystical is to dismiss it as serious commentary on the nature of the human mind, body, or environment. This is where the Eastern traditions can play a crucial role. The theistic religions of the West may claim that man was created in God’s image, but it is left to Hinduism, Daoism, and especially Buddhism to challenge what that image actually is.

Here is the image of a human in present experimental psychology and cognitive science: the human mind is seen as a determinate machine. Isolated from the environment within the biological body, the mind peers tentatively out at a piecemeal and initially incomprehensible world, seeking to find the simplest possible predictive contingencies between objects and events so that it may survive. It stores the results of its experience in memory to form a coherent but inherently indirect and abstract representation of the world and of itself. Its ideas, emotions, actions, and consciousness have evolved to fulfill the only originating value which is to survive and reproduce in an evolutionarily successful manner in a world of limited reward and much threat.

Such a portrait is not alien to the Eastern traditions. In Buddhism it is somewhat analogous to *samsara*, the wheel of existence to which sentient beings are bound by their habits; in Hinduism it might be depicted as lower states of consciousness; and in Taoism it might be portrayed, with a smile, as the activities of the monkey in us. All three Eastern traditions agree that in this habitual state of mind, we are mistaken about everything important—about who and what we are, what is real, and how to act. But this is not the only possible mode of knowing the world. The alternative? Tibetan Buddhism proclaims a primordial wisdom, a basic state of knowing that is “not fabricated by mind”; Zen speaks of original mind and “no-mind”; Hinduism has the Self; and Taoism talks about the Tao or the “Source.”<sup>4</sup> All agree that “this” is our original, natural, fundamental state, what we are right now, *not any particular or special experience*. When we realize this



wisdom, the phenomenal world, including the sense of self and all other problems, is known as the timeless perfect radiance of that basic ground from which actions of integrity and compassion flow in effortless nonaction. When we do not realize this wisdom, we run around like madmen and destroy ourselves and our world—as our species is now doing. We also make silly theories about things.

For clarity let us call our more limited habitual mode of knowing *consciousness* (Skt: *vijñāna*, Tib: *nam she*) following the technical vocabulary of Buddhist psychology in the *abhidharma*,<sup>5</sup> and let us call the alternative more comprehensive form of knowing *awareness*.<sup>6</sup> Note that we do not have to assume that the basic state spoken of by different traditions is the same—who could know?—in order to discuss an alternative mode of knowing.

Were awareness available only to a few religious athletes, it would be of little use either for daily life or for science. But it is said to be widely available, in fact closer to us than our own eyes. The trick is that consciousness and awareness are not actually two separate things—and this is where talking about such matters becomes elusive—because all experience is actually made out of awareness. This is analogous to Plotinus' "what sees is not our reason, but something prior and superior to our reason."<sup>7</sup> And Rumi reminds us: "We seldom hear the inner music; But we're all dancing to it nevertheless."

This point might be clarified, hopefully, by a computer analogy. The consciousness mode of knowing the world can be likened to a particular computer program running on a more basic operating system. In daily life and in cognitive science we mistake the limited consciousness program for the whole system. We keep trying to study how the system works, but all we can see is the functioning of the program in which we are confined. Every attempt to see beyond or get out of the program, either in science or in religious striving, is frustrated because to try to get out, we are only using the operations of the program itself.

Such a possibility ought to give scientists of the mind some pause because it implies that the very techniques, rules, hypotheses, assumptions, tests, and suspicions designed to make study of the mind, or religion, objective are themselves but products of operations of that same program. Let us take as an example the issue which Wallace's paper analyzes—the validity of first person knowledge as a part of cognitive science. What the Eastern traditions, and Buddhism in particular, have to contribute to this issue is to ask, Who is that first person? If one takes for granted the picture of a person in standard cognitive science, one may well doubt that person's authority to speak, but awareness might lead one to challenge all of our accumulated foundational assumptions.

How do we do that? How do we get out of the program? Where is the exit key? There are at least six major methods common, in varying degrees,

to all the world religions: (1) Go directly to awareness, if such a thing is possible. Since the senses and thoughts are manifestations of consciousness, eliminate them. (2) Find awareness in the everyday experiences of consciousness itself, *including* the senses, which are but awareness after all. To do this, cultivate intense mindfulness and intimacy with ongoing experience. (3) Begin by working with the body; find its energy aspect (*prāṇa, chi, lung*); and from there ascend to increasingly subtle modes of knowing. (4) Practice open-hearted devotion to personifications of the ultimate. (5) Identify with and imitate exemplary beings, such as saints. (6) Work in service to other beings.

All of these paths exploit the characteristics of consciousness to find the more fundamental ways of knowing of awareness in order to pursue spiritual goals, and all of them to some degree are included in each of the world's major religious traditions. I would argue that, from the point of view of psychology and cognitive science, the second path, that of mindfulness of experience, is the most immediately useful since it involves closeness, familiarity, and investigation of the very activities, emotions, and concepts of daily life with which psychology and cognitive science are concerned. It is Buddhism which has specialized in this path. That is what makes conferences and discussions of Buddhism and cognitive science particularly relevant and why most of the following discussion will be grounded in Buddhist thought and practices.

It is the understanding that consciousness is really awareness in disguise that makes our endeavor possible. Consciousness is constantly making gestures toward its more basic knowing capacities. I like to think of the following categories in this paper as the Six Great Gestures. Let's now look at some of the most psychologically relevant gestures and intimations of wisdom awareness as they may appear in ordinary life.

## I. PACIFYING: FINDING THE UNBIASED MIND

Try the following exercise: stop what you are doing for a moment, settle down, take a few deep breaths, and just listen. Relax the ears and let sounds come in. No need to think anything about the sounds. Traffic noises, the chirping of birds, the hum of appliances, human voices . . . just listen. If the mind starts to wander, relax and come back to listening. Does this feel different from the way one normally hears things? How?

The mind operating from consciousness does not ordinarily simply let in or allow experience. Consciousness is attracted and repulsed by polarities: pleasure versus pain, gain versus loss, praise versus blame, fame versus disgrace . . . Polarities are centered around Me, the ego, and what I want, don't want, and don't care about. This has been noted by psychology: according to appraisal theories of affect,<sup>8</sup> appraisals of how an event may

affect the self are the source of the basic emotions. Economic theories, increasingly the form of psychology which influences public policy, are based on the assumption that choice behavior, all of it, is rooted in self-interest. Yet the mark of religious and meditative experience (or at least doctrine) is the capacity to give up or go beyond one's limited ego and the subsequent ability to perform genuinely compassionate acts. Such possibilities have scarcely entered psychological theory. The Buddhist sensibility would seem to provide a bridge.

Before we argue about whether self-interest reigns supreme, what is meant by self? The argument of this paper is that we are not limited to what our "daylight consciousness" might imagine us to be. In Buddhist psychology that consciousness is described as follows: in each moment of consciousness there is a sense of a perceiver, an object of perception, and a relationship between the perceiver and the object. Look at the wall in front of you right now—is this not true? The perceiver seems inherently separate from the object. That object, that world, is seen as either desirable or threatening or boring to the perceiver who then has the impulse to act towards the world on the basis of his/her conceptions and past habits, grasping after the desirable, rejecting the undesirable, and ignoring the irrelevant. Such cognitions and actions only breed further habits. Desires can never be satisfied because to obtain a desired object only strengthens future habits for either grasping-greed-passion or, in the negative case, fear-aversion-aggression, or in the neutral case, indifference-stupidity-ignorance. Relationships with other people can only be governed by self-interest since they are based on desire, aggression, or ignorance. A being operating from consciousness is trapped in systems, or realms of the self-perpetuating logic of these three basic impulses; for example, the present escalation of world conflict can be seen as a classic example of the way in which aggression feeds back upon and perpetuates itself. The name for this whole system in Buddhism is *samsara*, the wheel of existence, to which sentient beings are bound by their habits and in which they will remain until, through training in meditation, they become aware, rather than mindless, of their mental processes and actions in everyday life. Analogous descriptions of lower levels of consciousness abound in Hinduism and Taoism. And in Western religions such a state might be called sin or the experience of separation, or apparent separation from God.

Is there any alternative? The listening meditation with which this section began was perhaps designed to give a quick glimpse of an alternative way of using the mind in relation to the world, a glimpse of a mode of knowing which simply allows and is not thrown off balance by experiences. Beginning Buddhist meditation techniques, such as focusing on the breath, typically have similar goals but also involve an element of concentration which generally requires more time to develop.

The development or discovery of the awareness mode of knowing is sometimes described in terms of four kinds of Buddha activity,<sup>9</sup> the first of which is called *pacifying*. The idea behind pacifying is that our basic mental state of knowing is a very simple one that is without the biases of polarized desires and aversions. But we need to settle down in order to open to this. I've suggested a listening practice here because the pacifying, settling, and opening qualities of the ear and of hearing, i.e., ordinary sensory processes available to everyone, have been long known in a number of traditions. For example, in some Chinese medical systems the ear and hearing is the water element so that simple listening can pacify even the body. And Freud advised psychoanalysts to listen to the patient with "evenly suspended attention"<sup>10</sup> and to "simply listen, and not bother about whether [one] is keeping anything in mind."<sup>11</sup> You might want to try the listening exercise again, now extending the scope of the practice so that you are "listening evenly to" thoughts and emotions when they occur, as well as listening to external sounds.

Once the mind is settled somewhat, it can begin to open to experience, any experience, in an unbiased way. People may describe such a relationship to experience as feeling-centered, unable to be knocked off base by the pulls and pushes of experience, or as centerless, able to include and be with all experiences equally. Note that this is not indifference which is one of the motivations of the more limited consciousness. Awareness is perhaps closest to the appreciative mode with which we experience the arts. Have you ever noticed that, since you know you're not the character in a book or film, you can identify and participate sometimes more fully than in real life in the vividness of that character's delightful or horrific life and world?

Emotions and emotionality, as known by awareness, have various levels of implication for psychology and cognitive science. In the first place, there is the attentive observation which mindfulness allows of the ongoing stream of feelings. Affect psychology is just starting to discover by experimental means some of the features of emotions that meditators have known for centuries. Among such discoveries: emotional responses are not continuous but rise and fall in waves; emotions have both a bodily and a conceptual component; emotions are influenced by egocentric appraisals of the situation; changes in appraisal can change emotion although the situation remains objectively the same; negative emotions can be counteracted by evoking positive feelings; and positive emotions can be explicitly cultivated.<sup>12</sup> Less easy to operationalize by specific experiments are research questions concerning the useful energy available in negative as well as positive emotions; the fate of satisfied desires (anticipatory satisfactions dissipate when goals are achieved)<sup>13</sup>; and the clinical usefulness of treating emotions as something that one can experience but about which one need do nothing further.<sup>14</sup>

There are deeper issues which such investigations might reveal; William James, that master of expression, again gives us a glimpse. "The more commonplace happinesses which we get are 'reliefs,' occasioned by our momentary escapes from evils either experienced or threatened. But in its most characteristic embodiments, religious happiness is not a mere feeling of escape. It cares no longer to escape. It consents. . . ." <sup>15</sup>

## II. ENRICHING: INCLUDING EVERYTHING

### A. Expansiveness, Panoramic Vision

Awareness does not stop with pacification. Once one has found the mode of knowing that is not pushed and pulled by the content of experience, awareness can encompass and include all sides of experience. One can start to know the world in an inclusive rather than an exclusive manner. This is part of the second Buddha activity, that of *enriching*.

Think of a time when you were driving along a winding mountain highway and stopped at a vista point. Remember what it was like to look out, to feel the sense of mountains, valleys, sky, and space around you, and, perhaps, the awareness of your own body and senses as a small point within this vast surround. Or perhaps such an experience has happened to you in a city with tall buildings. Or amongst people, as in playing a team sport in which, for a moment, the movements of all the other players seem known as a whole. Martial artists and star basketball players frequently report experiences like this. To make the demonstration more pointed, you might wish to stop for a moment and perform a short exercise. Let your eyes focus on a small object in front of you such as a spot on the wall, a pen, or the journal in which you're reading this. Then, keeping the central focus, become aware of your peripheral vision, and, let peripheral vision expand. Remain that way for a few moments. Now find a focus inside your body such as the center of your chest, or belly or head. Then let awareness expand to surround the body (front, back, sides, above, and below); let it expand further to the walls of the room, and further into space.

In this exercise, we've used not the ears but the visionary quality inherent in the eye and vision. The mind of awareness is vaster than we may ordinarily think, and this is potentially relevant to our cognitive sciences. As the meditation practitioner tunes into a more basic and more integrated sense of being and knowing, a realization quite revolutionary to our psychology may begin to dawn: perceiving and knowing are not something limited to a personified consciousness confined behind the eyes peering out at a separated world, but are something happening from all of it together: environment, mind, and organism. The supposed knower is just a part or aspect of this knowing field.

Our present science of perception, both physiological and psychological, is based on investigating how information from an external world can be picked up and interpreted by the sensory systems and brain of a separated and self-enclosed organism. What religious, meditative, and often artistic experience suggests is a kind of knowing in which one is not separate. Accounts of conversion or inspiration are filled with moments in which the speaker experienced being "at one with all creation." These kinds of statements are usually dismissed by science as the province of incomprehensible everything-is-one mysticism. What Buddhist thought and meditation provide is the possibility that this nondualistic mode of knowing the world is literally true of the way the senses function in ordinary life. This is something of which ordinary people, and particularly artists, can have strong intuitions. Consider, for example, both our exercises here, but also Chinese landscape painting.

The kind of knowing in which mind and world are not separate has not gone entirely unnoticed by perceptual psychology. The major figure in this arena has been J. J. Gibson. "To perceive the world is to coperceive oneself . . . . The optical information to specify the self . . . accompanies the optical information to specify the environment . . . . The supposedly separate realms of the subjective and the objective are actually only poles of attention."<sup>16</sup> Perception is *direct* for Gibson in that it is the percept, with all of its immediate information about both subject and object, which is primary. Gibson backed up his insight with a new way to describe the world called ecological optics. Gibson's program of ecological psychology has spawned a robust research tradition,<sup>17</sup> in the process, however, Gibson's experimental demonstrations have come to predominate and his overall vision appears to be presently in eclipse.<sup>18</sup> Several more recent biological accounts have focused on the relationship between the organism's sense receptors and its environment.<sup>19</sup> These accounts are driven by the experimental finding that the same environmental stimulus produces markedly different electro-physiological responses in the brain depending on the context of the stimulus and the state of the organism at the time the stimulus is delivered. Thus we cannot speak of a stimulus as something independent of the organism. Jarvilehto argues that biological science (and by extension other fields) must view and work with organism and environment as a single system. While neither Gibsonian ecological psychology nor biological systems thinking have yet penetrated mainstream perceptual research, they do indicate the kind of synergy that can exist between meditation experience and concrete research strategies.

The expansiveness of awareness also has clinical importance. When people feel small, limited, fenced in, and estranged they feel bad; when they feel at one with something larger they feel better, sometimes remarkably so. In William James' words "when we have a wide field we rejoice."<sup>20</sup> Creative action too stems from a wide field; again James'



eloquence: "Your great organizing geniuses are men with habitually vast fields of mental vision, in which a whole programme of future operations will appear dotted out at once, the rays shooting far ahead into definite directions of advance."<sup>21</sup>

Note here how theoretical basics and clinical usefulness go together. It is a shift in one's basic mode of cognition, the functioning of the senses themselves, rather than any change of mental contents, which can affect such a radical change. The "new being"<sup>22</sup> born of meditative or contemplative insight can have both personal and scientific import. The theme that finding one's more basic forms of cognition heals will be continued throughout our observations.

### B. Causality: Interdependence, Top-Down Influences

Enriching expansion is also available to the operations of the intellect which, as academics know, has its own visionary capacities. Try the following exercise: Look at the piece of paper on which this is printed. On what does the existence of this paper depend? A cloud may seem remote from the paper, but "Without a cloud there will be no water; without water trees cannot grow; and without trees, you cannot make paper." And sunshine? "The forest cannot grow without sunshine, and we as humans cannot grow without sunshine. So the logger needs sunshine in order to cut the tree, and the tree needs sunshine in order to be a tree. Therefore, you can see sunshine in this sheet of paper. And if you look more deeply . . . with the eyes of those who are awake, you see not only the cloud and the sunshine in it, but that everything is here, the wheat that became the bread for the logger to eat, the logger's father—everything is in this piece of paper . . . this paper is empty of an independent self. Empty, in this sense, means that the paper is full of everything, the entire cosmos. The presence of this tiny sheet of paper proves the presence of the whole cosmos."<sup>23</sup> From the perspective of panoramic awareness, what we call an object or event is seen as part of an interdependent whole rather than as something with a separate identity. You might try looking at a bite of food in this way at your next meal.

The limited and enclosed consciousness attempts to see the world in terms of separate billiard balls striking each other with consequent results; expanded awareness tunes into networks of relations beyond what reason can consciously analyze. The expanded field view of phenomena has several implications for treatment of causality in psychology and cognitive science. For one, it challenges completely materialistic or bottom-up assumptions. From the point of view of interconnected wholes, causal routes and the possibility of our engineering changes in the field can come from many different directions. Prior to the twentieth century, it was not uncom-



mon to hold that causal influence traveled along the "great chain of being"<sup>24</sup> from the least material, most subtle, and most spiritual to the most material rather than vice versa. It is the intuition of the possibility of top-down causality which seems to have motivated Descartes' now much vilified puzzlement about how immaterial causes could affect the material body. Today, it is increasingly accepted in mind-body medicine that the mind can originate changes in the body. However, with a few exceptions such a stance is not pursued in cognitive science and certainly not in the newly burgeoning field of cognitive neuroscience.<sup>25</sup> In this respect, the applied clinical wing of science, with its pragmatic stance, may be ahead of what we think of as basic science. Challenges to the accepted image of the mind bring with them the possibility of causal routes originating from what we currently classify as the less material or even nonmaterial.

Perhaps even more obviously, a field view challenges reliance on single causes; in fact it may challenge the notion of cause altogether. Modern physics notwithstanding, the image of causality in most psychological and cognitive science experimental research is still that of individual billiard balls. Experiments are most easily performed and communicated, and are considered most elegant, when manipulation of a single variable can be tied to a single outcome. But psychologists have persistent intuitions that this is not the whole story. There is a push for developing new multivariate statistical tools so that many factors may be modeled at once. Practical "situated cognition" is the focus of another set of projects.<sup>26</sup> And various systems analyses are being attempted, such as the use of dynamical systems theory in developmental psychology.<sup>27</sup> (The reader might bring to mind his/her own favorite radical systems: feminist critiques of objectivity, chaos in society-movement writers, probability theorists. . . .) Such endeavors might find new stimulation and direction in the overarching vision of interdependence provided by meditative and contemplative insight. When consciousness has to cope with many variables at once, it becomes confused; when many factors are incorporated into the enriching expansiveness of awareness, the knowing mind can remain one pointed and simple even as it expands. Out of this state, many new understandings may arise.

An understanding of interdependence has clinical significance. It can provide people who suffer from guilt, depression, or anxiety with a vision of themselves as part of an interdependent network in which they need neither blame themselves nor feel powerless. In fact it may be that it is only when people are able to see the way in which they are not responsible for events that they can find the deeper level at which it is possible to take responsibility beyond concept and—depending upon the terminology of one's religious affiliation—repent, forgive, relax, or have power over the phenomenal world. More will be said of nonconceptual levels in subsequent sections.

Interdependence also has societal implications. The mandate for designing psychological experiments virtually demands that the form of the argument be posed as an opposition between single rival factors: nature *versus* nurture, form *versus* function. This is part of a general cultural pattern: our legal system, press reporting, talk shows, contests—all tend to be set up in terms of single oppositions. Anthropologist Deborah Tannen calls this “the argument culture,” of which the United States is an extreme example.<sup>28</sup> Not all cultures see things this way. Many legal systems emphasize mediation rather than adversarial procedures. Talk shows in Japan typically feature several speakers with a panorama of viewpoints who seek to come to a mutual understanding in the discussion. The concept of deep ecology originated in the Scandinavian countries. And in recent social psychology<sup>29</sup> a general cultural attitude called “naive dialecticism” has been identified as characteristic of Chinese thought in which human and natural characteristics are considered the product of ever-changing multiple circumstances, rather than as fixed, and in which compromise is considered a cognitive as well as social virtue which leads not only to social harmony, but to truth. We think of the way we structure scientific debate and experimentation as inherent to having an objective science; might it instead be the product of a particular cultural metaphysic?

There is a tendency for academics to blame the simplistic thinking in public life on a lack of reasoning ability in ordinary people. If religion is thought of at all, it is usually considered part of the problem. What we are suggesting here is that simplistic oppositional thinking is engendered by the absence of awareness and can be cured by the development of a genuinely meditative and contemplative sensibility in which enriching awareness need not to be seen as confusing or fearful.

### III. MAGNETIZING: INSPIRING, UNIFYING

#### A. Directness: Unmediated, Real

Now that many things have been brought together under the purview of enriched awareness—magnetism! In sociology this principle is sometimes called “meeting and mating.” You look at a picture, read a book, do research on a project . . . and suddenly you get it. It happens. It’s all there together at once. Here we have the third Buddha activity, that of *magnetizing*. When the mind, its objects, and the other polarities of life are joined fully together with nothing left over, a new mode of direct knowing can blossom. We could call it direct experience.

Unbiased knowing may sound abstract or removed from experience, but mindful observation reveals that it is consciousness which appears abstract, filtered as it is through the dualism of subject and object and the ensuing tangle of memories, wishes, narrative, biography, and

conceptualization. I've heard Tibetan Buddhist meditators describe the emotions of the self-referential consciousness as two dimensional, like cardboard cutouts interacting. It is the inclusive knowing of awareness that allows the mind to get closer to experience, to be intimate with experience, to *be one's* experience. The result? One feels real.

Contemplation: It may be difficult to evoke a sense of direct experience because it is so close. It is like looking for your eyeglasses when you are already wearing them, are in fact using them to search. You might think of a time when you felt real, even hyper-real, alive, truly yourself. Try reliving the memory, intensifying it. Alternatively you might think of this as your last moment alive. Focus on the senses: the last visual image, the last sound, the last thought, the last pain. Do the memories or perceptions have a different quality than usual?

The state of unmediated direct knowing has implications concerning what should serve as the basic building blocks of cognitive science: "... a concrete bit of personal experience may be a small bit, but it is a solid bit as long as it lasts; not hollow, not a mere abstract element of experience ... It is a *full* fact, even though it be an insignificant fact; it is of the *kind* to which all realities whatsoever must belong; the motor currents of the world run through the like of it; it is on the line connecting real events with real events."<sup>30</sup> In contrast, in present cognitive science the major building blocks of theories tend to be cognitive representations which are abstract. J. J. Gibson argued vehemently against representations, but that aspect of his work has been largely ignored. There is much talk of embodiment at present, but introducing a bodily component into one's theory will not necessarily satisfy the intuition of a direct form of knowing. Neither will talk of *qualia* or other supposedly first person attributes as long as what we mean by first person is limited to the view from consciousness.

There are social and clinical implications to the issue of direct cognition. As documented by sociologists and illustrated in contemporary art, many people feel disconnected and alienated. People may try to "get real" by amping up sensory stimulation or by taking risks. From the Buddhist point of view, the cardboard cutout version of emotions and goals is like a printed menu that the starving try to eat as a substitute for food. Direct experience may satisfy and empower in ways abstracted consciousness never can. This is another example of the way in which basic cognition itself might serve as therapy.

## B. Time: Timelessness

Consciousness is obsessed and controlled by time: the past, the future, memories, reliving of defeats, replays of emotion good and bad, plans, hopes, worries, fears, boredom. In the direct experience of awareness, there is another way of knowing time.

Contemplation: Recall an experience where time seemed to stand still or where life seemed to be complete in a single moment. It might be a moment of great personal meaningfulness such as a near death experience or a moment of love (Joan Baez sings, "Speaking strictly for me, I could have died right then . . ."). Or, it could be in a completely ordinary moment, such as walking down the street. Normally such experiences cannot be provoked, but you might try, for a moment, "recollecting in tranquility" some previous period of personal turmoil.

In Tibetan this other way of knowing time is called the fourth moment (Tib. *dus bzhi pa*) and described thus: "All phenomena are completely new and fresh, absolutely unique and entirely free from all concepts of past, present and future, as if experienced in another dimension of time."<sup>31</sup> An analogous description of time figures in many experiential reports of Zen *kensho*; for example, "This is the eternal state of affairs. . . . There is nothing more to do. . . . There is nothing whatsoever to fear."<sup>32</sup> *A Course in Miracles* brings a similar sense of time into a Christian context. Art has various devices for conveying such experiences such as the climax or denouement in narratives. The meditation traditions that talk in this way also say that every moment is like this, born afresh with no past from a timeless source.

We don't generally believe such talk. How can any experience be unmediated and free of time when we can so plainly see that the present experience is the result of who I am, my beliefs, feelings, expectations, and all my past experiences? This may be true and wisely seen, but it applies only to the *content* of the present experience. All of the interdependent past is causally gathered into the microcosm of the moment of present experience, but that does not mean that the basic mode of apprehending the present moment becomes somehow filtered or distorted or abstractly representational. Think instead, perhaps, of the present experience as enriched and magnetized, as a harvest of all the fruits of a life.

One might still object: even if true, how could such a vision apply to the demands of daily life? The answer may be that it is actually much simpler to live timelessly: "Of Saint Catharine of Genoa it is said that 'she took cognizance of things, only as they were presented to her in succession, *moment by moment*.' To her holy soul, 'the divine moment was the present moment, . . . and when the present moment was estimated in itself and in its relations, and when the duty that was involved in it was accomplished, it was permitted to pass away as if it had never been, and to give way to the facts and duties of the moment which came after.'"<sup>33</sup>

Meditative and contemplative experience of time would seem to contain two messages. One is for science. Since at least the time of Greek philosophy, Western conceptions of knowledge have been at war with temporality. Although each sensory experience is unique, fleeting, and of a particular thing, for the Greeks knowledge was necessarily only of what was universal and stable. In present cognitive science it is taken as unques-

tionable that both the subject and object of knowledge must last through time. Hence the reliance on cognitive representations, which are presumed to last, as building blocks. Yet, everything happens in the present; how could it be otherwise? Whatever effects one wants to attribute to the past, it is only the way they exist right now that can have influence in the future. To say that an organism has learned something means that the organism has changed in a specific way. To say that the organism remembers means that he is in a certain state in the present. For a human to say she has a memory means that she has something going on in her mind right now that she labels a memory. A representation of the future is still a present representation. Because of this, there may be a good deal more freedom built into the system and a good deal more potential for change than our primarily stochastic models acknowledge.

The other message is for contemplatives and meditators. It has become fashionable to talk of staying in the present moment—you won't lose your car keys and you don't worry as much. Good practical advice it is and should be honored as such. However, the present is also the only moment of awareness and of realization of whatever deep truths one's tradition has to offer—however that may be expressed: a sense of sacredness, "the nature of mind," God's love, redemption, liberation. . . . The philosopher may object that the present moment is specious, nonexistent. Just so, says the Buddhist meditator, and that is precisely what makes it the gateway to knowing reality in a way that the temporal mind of consciousness cannot; it is what makes it the portal to the mind of openness and of freedom.

#### IV. RELEASING: FREEDOM, OPENNESS, EMPTINESS

The climax, the denouement, then releases us from the story. This is often called the Buddha activity of *destroying*, but that word may have the wrong connotation for us in this context. According to Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism, each moment is inherently not only timeless but also open ("empty"), and free ("self liberated"). Both meditation and transmission from dharma teachers are designed to point this out.

Ah, but ordinary life does too; humor is one of the most immediate ways. Laughter releases! As a contemplative exercise, think of times that it did it for you. Hearing about people who have everything but still feel miserable also seems to release—as in our fascination with tales of tortured movie stars and the life of the Buddha alike. Actually, shock itself releases. In real life, we may be too busy coping with the implications of the shocker for our survival to notice the open instant, but think of the effect of the juxtaposition of images in a *haiku* or those beloved scenes in classic horror movies where the audience screams. As a matter of fact every moment releases; this is one of the open secrets of life.

Emptiness (*śūnyatā*), as used by Buddhists, does not mean that one's consciousness sits somewhere behind the eyes looking out at blankness, though with effort one can certainly produce such experiences. Rather it is that the knowing of what is real changes fundamentally in awareness. This is sometimes described as a certain nakedness of mind. From the point of view of awareness, "naked I came into the world" applies to every moment.

There are clinical implications to all this. One small example: remember a time when you heard a really good joke about something that was bothering you at the time, e.g., teenage children, parents, dieting, or doctors. Can you remember the feeling of gentleness that settled in for a moment thereafter? If the bothersome person or situation was at hand or came to mind just then, how did you feel or act towards them? Releasing also means releasing into action—as in the Japanese archery practice *kyudo* when the arrow is finally released from the taut bow and flies to the target. Ideally action that one has come to in this way—through awareness rather than consciousness—flies accurately and effortlessly like the arrow.

In Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism it is said that the experience of openness is inseparable from the arising of compassion. It suggests that the greatest personal changes may not be wrought simply by replacing one cognitive-emotional state by another somewhat better one (an endeavor which has been likened by some contemporary Buddhists to rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic) but by tuning into the naked, open, and free nature of all states. And who knows what this might not do for our sciences?

## V. RETURNING HOME: INHERENT VALUE

So what's so good about being released? It's that one returns home—or realizes that one was there all along. If we were to think of all the aspects of awareness which we have discussed as having the form of a *maṇḍala*, this one would be the center. This is not spoken of as one of the Buddha activities because the unconditional center never "does" anything. When we are deeply struck, for example, when the terrible climax of a tragedy is known and felt as perfect, we seem to catch a glimpse of a mode of being that has nothing to do with survival or achievement or any of our usual motivations.

In science and education, facts and values are considered indisputably two separate things, but in Buddhist meditation, deeply looking into the nature of what it is to know and to be a knower leads to a vision of the world as *unconditional*. The closest English word to that sensibility seems to be *value*.

The unconditional is probably the most difficult intuition to evoke directly by contemplation because it is what we are made of; to try to find



it is like looking elsewhere for one's head or heart. But despite the compulsive grip of the conscious mind on conditional values (success versus failure, pleasure versus pain, good versus bad), humans retain intuitions of their basic state. Consider the concept of unconditional love: how many Westerners blame their mothers for not having given it to them—or, now with advances in sexual equality, their fathers too? Grouchiness about imperfection means that one has some intimation of perfection. Note how profoundly people embrace commitment to principles or causes beyond reason, long for undying love beyond surface attributes or events, and cleave to an unconditional God beyond limitation or understanding. How many remarkably ill-written romances become wildly popular if they can successfully trigger a glimmer of deathless love? Look at all the trouble theologians have made for philosophy as they try to reconcile the intuition of the unconditioned with anthropomorphic imagery.

In academia we are as allergic to taking value seriously as we are to religion. Might the introduction of contemplative and meditative insights allow value to start to be explored in a more meaningful manner in psychology?

## VI. ACTION; SPONTANEOUS ACTION

Action is the fruition of realization. In Buddhism, *intentional actions* are actions that originate in consciousness, and thus are controlled by habits and what is wanted or not wanted by the small ego self. *Nonaction*, or in Vajrayāna Buddhism, *the wisdom of all accomplishing action*, is spontaneous action which arises from the expanded field of awareness and the depths of openness. It is compassionate and it can be shockingly effective. Western religions also teach of a way of living that comes from beyond one's limited self. "There is a state of mind, known to religious men, but to no others, in which the will to assert ourselves and hold our own has been displaced by a willingness to close our mouths and be as nothing in the floods and waterspouts of God."<sup>34</sup> Recall Mother Theresa's famous, "I am only a pencil God uses to write with."

Even the habitual actions of daily life can gesture in the direction of this wider field. Think of the spontaneity of conversing with friends (you're not reading your replies off a teleprompter), or the sudden clarity of writing a paper when the deadline looms. Note how the concepts of *flow* and of *being in the zone* have captured the popular imagination. And then there are those actions that just seem to pop up out of nowhere, as in discovering that one has dived into icy water to save a drowning child, uttered an unusual but magically appropriate statement to comfort a friend (most clinicians have at least one story in which this happened with a client), or executed a complex martial arts maneuver before the cues showing the need for it were available.



Psychology has long been in conflict over the issue of action: should it be conceived as stimulus and response or as part of a top-down information processing system? Does consciousness actually affect behavior, or is it an epiphenomenon? Presently there is great excitement over experimental demonstrations of behaviors that might appear voluntary but actually precede conscious intentions or are dependent on experimenter-manipulated variables outside of the subject's cognizance.<sup>35</sup> Psychology and cognitive science tend to assume that if behavior occurs outside of consciousness, it must be the product of low level automatic mechanisms. What the experience gained by religious contemplation and meditative awareness have to offer to the sciences in this regard is the distinction between automatic behavior, which stems from habitual impulses, and another kind of spontaneous action which can come from the wider field of awareness.

Action has still another face; it affects the mind. Mercy is twice blessed because it touches the giver as well as the receiver. Social psychology has long documented the sometimes strikingly counterintuitive influences that actions can have on beliefs, exemplified in sections on cognitive dissonance, attitude change, or attribution in any social psychology textbook. The self-transformative powers of virtuous action are celebrated in all religions. Most self-improvement regimes in popular culture are based on similar premises. Buddhism goes one step further. In Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism, wisdom and compassionate action are seen as co-defining and inseparable. That is how a path is possible. This is why it is so useful to find and follow the gestures made by the everyday mind toward awareness. It is how service to other beings can form a viable path. Imitating the mind-set of wisdom (as in meditation) or the actions of compassion can bring about the real thing, and Buddhism, like other traditions, has a veritable arsenal of practices designed to tap into that capacity. Such an insight supplies the final piece to the puzzle of how one can ever exit from the imprisoning consciousness program; one does not need to exit but only to find the active compassionate wisdom of awareness that lies at the heart of consciousness itself. In a troubled world, the possibility that religion, meditation, and psychological science might combine to offer a path of compassionate action is hardly to be dismissed.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

Study of the kinds of experience that our society classifies as religious, when done through the medium of contemplative and meditative awareness, can contribute, in quite specific terms, to cognitive science and clinical practice as they are presently done. Beyond that, this kind of study offers a radical new paradigm and mode of investigation, for it calls into question

the accepted understanding of the person or self, both as the subject of investigation and as the investigator. The portrait of a person or self that emerges from these six themes of awareness is fundamentally different from the person or self in either folk or psychological conceptions. We think of the person as a limited and bounded entity, yet the knowing we have discussed crosses person and environment. We think of the bounded self as subject to specific causal contingencies, but this sense of knowing perceives a vast web of interconnectedness. The familiar understanding of a person involves extension of the self through time by means of personal autobiographical memories and projected future plans, while the sense of a self in awareness is momentary, present, and timeless. The ordinary sense of self-knowledge involves a separated knower which knows itself and everything else by means of abstractions and concepts, whereas awareness-knowing is unmediated and direct. We think of the actions of the self as the products of conscious or unconscious intentions and decisions; however, here we have actions arising from something more inclusive, compassionate, and effective than one's personal motivations. The ordinary notion of the self is of someone who strives ceaselessly after conditional values, but the awareness sense of knowing is in touch with unconditional value. Value goes even beyond the self as knower and the self as actor to address the self as desirer—even as lover (as in the title of this paper which refers to the Elizabeth Barrett Browning poem "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.") This sense of awareness knows that there is nothing inherent to strive for, that it already has, and had before it ever began, the heart of the heart's desire. It is on this basis that it can ceaselessly act and create within and for the world.

The limited self should not be the basis of daily life (note the bumper sticker "Don't believe everything you think"), and it cannot serve as the only basis for psychology as a science, either in the first or the third person. But awareness-knowing may have a different kind of authority. Cognitive science asks how consciousness is built up out of progressively simpler and less intelligent material components; contemplative and meditative practitioners might well ask how the vast, deep, and sacred mind of awareness can become constricted into the so familiar consciousness by which we run our affairs.

In this paper, I have tried to show how the study of contemplative and meditative insights can serve as a bridge between scientific psychology and the kinds of experience that our society has classified as religious. Perhaps such study can be the spark that at last unites the two outstretched hands of Michelangelo's fresco—however one may wish to interpret those hands.

## NOTES

1. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902; New York: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 34.
2. Pascal Boyer, *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 150.
3. Andrew Newberg, Eugene d'Aquili, and Vince Rause, *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), pp. 30–31.
4. Dainin Katagiri, *Returning to Silence* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988); Livia Kohn, *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 11; Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), chap. 4; Tsognyi, D., *Carefree Dignity* (Boudhanath: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 1998); Vivekananda, *Living at the Source: Yoga Teachings of Vivekananda* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1993), pp. 2–4.
5. Herbert V. Guenther and Leslie S. Kawamura, translated, *Mind in Buddhist Psychology* (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1975), p. 15; Mahā Thela Nārada, translated, *A Manual of Abhidhamma: Being Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Bhaddanta Anuruddhacariya* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1975), p. 8; Chögyam Trungpa, *Glimpses of Abhidharma: From a Seminar on Buddhist Psychology* (Boulder, CO: Prajna Press, 1981), pp. 62–65, 69.
6. From a path perspective Skt: *vipaśyanā*, Tib: *lhagthong*; from the more fundamental perspective of nondual awareness (Skt: *vidyā*, Tib: *rig pa*).
7. Plotinus, *The Enneads*, translated by Stephen MacKenna, 3rd edition (London: Faber and Faber, 1962).
8. Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
9. Chögyam Trungpa, *Orderly Chaos: The Mandala Principle* (Boston: Shambhala Press, 1991).
10. Sigmund Freud, *Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psychoanalysis* (1912), in *Standard Edition*, vol. 12 (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 120.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
12. R. W. Levenson, "Emotion: Form, Function and Dysfunction," *Psychophysiology*, in press.
13. Knutson, B., Fong, G., Adams, C. S., and Hommer, D., "Dissociation of

Reward Anticipation Versus Outcome with Event-related FMRI," *Neuro Report*, 12 (2001): pp. 3683–3687.

14. Eleanor Rosch, "Transformation of the Wolf Man," in John Pickering, ed., *The Authority of Experience: Essays on Buddhism and Psychology* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), pp. 18–19.

15. James, p. 55.

16. James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), p. 116.

17. See for example, Ulric Neisser, ed., *The Perceived Self: Ecological and Interpersonal Sources of Self-Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

18. Eleanor Rosch, "The Environment of Minds: Towards a Noetic and Hedonic Ecology," in *Cognitive Ecology*, 2nd edition, edited by Morton P. Friedman and Edward C. Carterette (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), pp. 3–27.

19. Walter J. Freeman, *Societies of Brains: A Study in the Neuroscience of Love and Hate* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Erlbaum, 1995); Jarvilehto, T., "The Theory of the Organism-Environment System: I. Description of the Theory," *Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science*, 33 (1988): pp. 321–334.

20. James, p. 231.

21. Ibid.

22. Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955).

23. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987), pp. 45–46.

24. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936).

25. See Freeman, *Societies of Brains*; Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

26. Lawren B. Resnick, "Situated Rationalism: Biological and Social Preparation for Learning," in Lawrence A. Hirschfield and Susan A. Gelman, eds., *Mapping the Mind: Domain Specificity in Cognition and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 474–493.

27. Esther Thelen and Linda B. Smith, *A Dynamic Systems Approach to the Development of Cognition and Action* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

28. Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue* (New York: Random House, 1998).

29. Peng, K. and Nisbett, R. E., "Culture, Dialectics, and Reasoning about Contradiction," *American Psychologist*, 55 (1999): pp. 1–14.

30. James, p. 499.

- 
31. Khentse, D., unpublished transcript of a talk.
  32. James H. Austin, *Zen and the Brain: Toward an Understanding of Meditation and Consciousness* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 537–538.
  33. Thomas Cogswell Upham, *Life of Madame Catharine Adorna*, 3rd edition (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858), p. 289.
  34. James, p. 47.
  35. *American Psychologist* 54 (1999), no. 7, whole issue; Benjamin Libet, Anthony Freeman and Keith Sutherland, eds., *The Volitional Brain: Toward a Science of Free Will* (Thorverton, UK: Imprint Academic, 1999).



# Studying “No Mind”: The Future of Orthogonal Approaches

**Steven A. Tainer**

The Institute for World Religions, and the Kira Institute

THIS IS A PAPER ON COGNITIVE SCIENCE and Buddhism. I will comment on the consequences of living in a world increasingly framed by science, and ways in which the situation may change as both cognitive science and the contemporary practice of Buddhism mature and—perhaps—influence each other.

## “MY BRAIN IS ANGRY,” AND OTHER CALLS TO ARMS

Many years ago, when I first began studying Buddhism in a serious, formal way, I was visited in Berkeley by a friend, at that time a fledgling biochemist but already a most confirmed *Scientist*. Like characters in an updated version of Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, we were both young and excited, certain we had embarked on vast exploratory journeys . . . but explorations that stood in an unclear relation to one another. Curious (and I think, suspicious) about my new pursuits, he asked me for an account of Buddhism.

I gave him the history—once upon a time there was this person who made extraordinary efforts to see to the heart of the human situation, had a supremely great awakening, shared his insight with the rest of us, and urged us to follow his teaching (*dharma*). My friend listened very patiently, and sat in thoughtful silence when I’d finished. Finally he said: “If I understand you correctly, you’re trying to find something that somebody else already found a long time ago.” I had to admit this was true.

So he went on, “But what *I’m* trying to do is to find things that nobody has ever discovered before!” This time I was the one to fall silent . . . I’d never considered prior to this conversation how complex a difference might lie between scientific and spiritual investigations. His comment opened worlds of worry for me—people might now really think that spirituality was something like a quest for facts, that it was optional or even best handled via the kind of specialization or division of labor that’s common in science. Someone studies astronomy, someone else investi-



gates ethico-spiritual matters, and everyone concentrates on the newest findings and ideas. What a nightmare! Or people might consider spiritual concerns to be more like feelings, the objective then being to have the most satisfying, uplifting feeling (or "experience"), without gaining any new *understanding* about human existence. Or more likely, spirituality might be dismissed altogether.

Can people really ignore the possibility that there is something fundamentally insightful and of overarching importance to us all, in every century, and that it's incumbent upon everyone to address this "something," to see with the aid of its light? Yes, it is more than possible.

At least in my own teaching at the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery (Institute for World Religions) and elsewhere, I thankfully do not encounter indifference to the spiritual side of life. My students are self-selected, and thus, predictably, quite interested in spiritual practice and perspectives. But like all people today, they are deflected by mental whispers from their internalized quasi-scientific critics: "Meditation is pointless, except perhaps as stress reduction . . . You're just a body, the world is simply whatever science finds it to be, there's nothing else . . . 'Mind' is merely a word for the function of the brain, it offers no salvation and enlightenment is—if anything—just an altered state. . . . Compassion is only an evolutionarily adaptive trait, it has no spiritual significance. . . . Stop wasting time on such things, go do something productive!" So my role includes helping people to climb out from their own conceptual traps, practice awakening to what they are, and give full credit to science without misusing it.

But what does it mean to see "what we are," and how else are we to understand it than by the light of science? Yes, this question still remains, and it's a very important one. So I and some colleagues in academia and science formed the Kira Institute, seeking to tackle such questions as rigorously and honestly as we could within present-day knowledge and conceptual schemes. A favorite motto of ours is, starting with science, "What else is true?" I had regularly used this quip in my meditation classes, responding to my students' tendency to think ill of themselves or of the world, to look at the negative side and not appreciate the rest. "What else is true?" But I also found a more technical use for it when these same students tripped over scientific ideas that stood as roadblocks to their practice rather than as theories offering explanatory power and insight in well-defined contexts.

In theoretical terms at least, it was only a short step from my casual response to students' discouragement, to the full-blown Kira project. I hope this project will be passed on to future generations of thinkers concerned with the full spectrum of "knowing" and being human. As of this year (2002), Kira will have held five summer schools for graduate and postdoctoral students from most parts of the world. Our interaction

with these students has been tremendously fulfilling and challenging, but has also frequently reactivated my original worry—the world is becoming increasingly comfortable with or reconciled to the notion that knowledge and insight are what science gives us, and that nothing else counts as “knowing.”

We may see the seduction of this scientific perspective not only in people around us, but in ourselves, our coworkers and friends, even in works by people who think they are helping to resist it. For example, my students often take me aside and express difficulties with meditation practice like the following: “I can’t practice because my brain is angry and I don’t know how to get it to leave me alone. Can you give me a technique to make my brain less angry?” Or someone suffers grief due to a death in the family and is reassured by a well-meaning and very sophisticated scientific colleague that grief is “reasonable” because it has been shown that a certain neurotransmitter is affected in such cases. Or someone becomes distressed by personal difficulties or the state of the world, and then takes unconscious refuge in the consolation that the problem is “just a brain state,” or the world is “just atoms” anyway.

Given our culture’s unconscious reconceptualization of the person as a mechanism or a nervous system, it’s not surprising that ethics is now often held to be just a particular set of conventions, aesthetics merely a matter of feelings (in the pejorative sense). Similarly, spirituality and religion are interpreted as beliefs (“creeds”) and nothing more—they may provide the ground for valued feelings or experiences, but not objective understanding or insight, certainly nothing that bears on fundamental questions. Otherwise, religion is stampeded into being taken as belief in propositions that are putatively true in the same sense that statements about other “matters of fact” might be, concerning for instance the temperature of boiling water, or the existence of other galaxies, or the force exerted by an impact. These are foolish and fatal concessions to scientism. Ultimately, all such misconstruals of aesthetic and ethico-spiritual matters fail to give us the proper basis even for respecting our status as human beings, with human sensibilities, judgments, and responses.

## SCIENCE AND OUR SELF-UNDERSTANDING

The above comments are meant to illustrate a trend that I think is widespread and inevitable. Contemporary scholars in the sociology of science point out that science does not exist in isolation . . . it is not an island, immune to the influences of the cultures that contain it. I would make the converse point—that the influence also spreads in the other direction. There is a pervasive back-propagation from scientific theory and discovery

to culture, technology, all major media and entertainment, our language, our ways of life . . . and hence, to our self-understanding. And it is this understanding that's now at stake.

The phenomenon of conceptual back-propagation figures in the general subject of "science and spirituality," and becomes particularly crucial when the science in question is cognitive science, and when spirituality is represented by Buddhism, a tradition that in its very essence and in all of its language is concerned with knowing, seeing ourselves and our condition as clearly as possible. I am concerned that our self-understanding as human beings, and our insight into the human condition provided by traditions like Buddhism, will continue being replaced by an unconscious and uncritical application of scientific metaphors and analyses. Will the development of cognitive science contribute to this unfortunate trend? Will cognitive science help us appreciate our humanity better, or render the latter notion superfluous?

Of course science should not be held hostage to nonscientific concerns and agendas, certainly not to the perspectives and priorities of spiritual traditions. But the implications of science should also not be overstated, and this is hard to avoid or counter when scientific perspectives are so pervasive and effective in their proper sphere. How can we resist such success? How can we put science in its proper place, particularly if the only models of human cognition which science offers do not describe or even credit features of our explicitly lived status as knowers, ethical agents, and as practitioners of contemplative spirituality? It's difficult for us to hold our ground, to explore and celebrate our humanity directly, when even our (science-influenced) language and concepts cease to frame such an exploration as valuable or intelligible. While not usually seen as science's problem, this is definitely *our* problem, our challenge.

In a recent conversation with a noted physical scientist, I described these misgivings at some length. He replied that this was not a problem because the cognitive sciences were in their infancy, and that in a few hundred years they will reach a maturity comparable to that of present-day physics. In other words, science will sort these problems out . . . eventually. Such a view takes us back to the neighborhood of my friend the biochemist, who thought in terms of a division of labor and couldn't *personally* see a reason to bother with the issues and aspects of life highlighted by an ancient spiritual insight.

I would say instead that *we should not wait for science to tell us who we are—nor believe that it even could, in the ways that matter most.* The full extent of our humanity would not survive such a wait, even for a day, much less for generations. It's not the purpose of science to replace a life lived fully and on its own terms, with a scientific theory, not even a mature theory of human cognition. Our self-understanding can benefit enor-

mously from scientific studies, as from other learned perspectives, but we must still give primary status to a more direct apprehension of and participation in our human nature and human life, the joys, tragedies, and significance of it all.

This is a point Buddhism shares with various ancient and modern strands of Western philosophy, and it is emphasized to an extraordinary degree in the C'han and related contemplative traditions of Buddhism, in the Vajrayāna, and also in yogic teachings. It presupposes a very important role for culture and language, but also an ability and a necessity to engage in and explore our existence directly in a way that is not restricted to our culture's ideologies, norms, language, and conceptual schemes. For Buddhism, these latter—even as offered by Buddhism's own teachings—are only "skillful means," and necessarily vary from place to place, time to time. Ideally, they provide a supportive context for *beginning* an exploration, but do not constitute its fruit. They help raise our explicit awareness of spiritual dimensions and issues that are truly fundamental to our nature, not merely viewpoints or dogma. Since the time of the Buddha, the *primary* emphasis has been on direct discovery and confirmation, not on unquestioning faith in the tradition's founder, scriptures, or community (sangha). This was a very innovative position to take millennia ago, and is slightly reminiscent of the modern scientific methodology based on working hypotheses and testability.

The question for us now, millennia later, is how the Buddhist orientation and that of modern science will coexist. Despite the shared emphasis on investigation and confirmability, science and spiritual traditions like Buddhism are intrinsically *orthogonal*, working in different ways and at right angles to one another. Science depends on abstractly stated theories that can be tested in whole or part by some satisfactory linkage with observed phenomena (observable by the ordinary mind and senses). Buddhism relies on a fully-awake, direct knowing (*vidyā*), rather than ordinary conditional forms of knowing "in terms of" one thing or another. (Buddhism considers the latter type of knowing as really an "unknowing," tainted by a fundamental "ignorance" or heedlessness regarding both our spiritual resources and lapses.) The objects of these two investigations—secular versus soteriological—are also profoundly different.

Must the orthogonality of science and Buddhism necessarily mean they work at *cross purposes*? Or that they'll remain *oblivious* of each other? Neither possibility is very appealing. Could they rather be mutually intelligible and accommodating, despite their orthogonality? Might they maybe even collaborate and thus aid our search for full self-understanding? How? To what extent is this possible, even desirable . . . or impossible, or undesirable? I will consider a few aspects of these questions in the remainder of my paper.

## HUMAN NATURE AND NATURE

I think scientists generally grant that physical science is about investigating law-like regularities in nature, and perhaps we could say that psychology and cognitive science will help us understand aspects of human nature and cognition (at least as defined within various theoretical frameworks). Despite the fact that references to nature and “human nature” have a somewhat medieval flavor, and will never figure explicitly in any technical statement of a scientific theory, they still serve well for nontechnical characterizations of the scientific enterprise. However, they are much less central to contemporary *nonscientific* concerns—“nature” now refers primarily to natural resources and their economic value, the politics of national boundaries, perhaps to ecology. People are far more concerned with the media than with nature (even the nature outside their windows).

For very different reasons, the term “nature” was similarly absent during the first eight years of my study of Buddhism, which centered around Indian Buddhist philosophy. Although the Indians were great investigators of astronomy and medicine, Indian culture’s Vedic orientation emphasized the formal, timeless, and transworldly. Mathematics, philosophies of mind, language, epistemology, logic, and soteriologically-oriented metaphysics (fundamental ontology) flourished to a remarkable degree, and this was as true of Indian Buddhist philosophy as of other Indian traditions. But it would be difficult to find an Indian Buddhist text that concentrates on a study of nature, either in terms of the correlative thinking (mythic stories, familiar cycles, etc.) so common among other ancient cultures, or anticipating the modern scientific fashion seeking predictive explanations. And of course the Buddhist interest in enlightenment, by definition a transmundane (*lokottara*) realization in Indian terms, also was a primary factor in the otherworldly cast of much Indian Buddhist teachings.

Moreover, since Indian Buddhist thinkers were elaborating on a no-self, no-thing doctrine, they were eager to separate themselves from Vedic and Hindu orientations that emphasized an ontology of enduring or eternal essences. For Buddhists, epistemology fit the form of the orthodox much more readily than did ontology, which tended to run afoul of accusations of heresy both in India and later in Tibet. One exception was the “buddha-nature” (*buddhatā*), and also in some of the highest teachings, the “nature of mind.” These were considered of crucial importance, made respectable by a vigorous application of the de-ontologizing scrubber called “*śūnyatā*,” no-thingness or openness. (In Mahāyāna Buddhism, *śūnyatā* serves as a protective gate through which no extreme view, metaphysical assumption, or reification may pass.)

Chinese and other Asian Buddhists did not have this indifference to nature, or uneasiness with all intimations of a fundamental ontology. They thought in terms of an ontology based not on “things” and existence claims, but on degrees of appreciating facets of “suchness” (*tathatā*; a major term in both Indian and Asian Buddhist traditions). For their challenge was to preserve what, over several centuries of assimilation, they discovered to be the essential point of Buddhism (the buddha-nature and nature of mind, and hence the possibility of complete awakening to enlightenment), while staying true to cultural insights that emphasized the fundamental status of nature and the human nature’s relationship to nature on various levels. They welcomed the study of the actuality and full dimensionality of our situation and world (nature), which they took to necessarily contextualize all discourse, thought, and spiritual sensibilities as well.

The Chinese therefore defined spirituality in relational terms—the relationship to other human beings (Confucianism), to living nature (Taoism), and finally to the timeless nature of the Buddha. Thus, the Chinese orientation not only put legs under “buddha-nature,” but a whole human body, a society, and even an entire world. They interpreted samsara as disconnection from the world prompted by the small self or selfish self, meditation as a way to become aware of disconnection and to reconnect, to rejoin a defining and edifying context. The emphasis is less on mind and “experience” in the Western sense of an internalist preoccupation or withdrawal, and much more on participation. Here participation in what I’ve called the “full dimensionality of the natural world” was understood to encompass not only an appreciation of body and nature and natural functions, but an appreciation of our full humanity or humane-ness (Chin: *ren*). This explicit articulation counts as a remarkable theoretical leap, and was later echoed and expanded upon in many Asian cultures.

In sum, both Indian and Asian Buddhism acknowledge access to a kind of knowing that is the very basis of buddhahood or enlightenment (the awakening to nirvana). Indian teachings put this in the context of an extraordinarily fine-grained analysis of degenerate cognitions (the very stuff of samsara), plus a detailed philosophy of mind and a sophisticated epistemology. Asian teachings add an explicit account of appreciating (cognizing) and enacting our human nature and its place in Nature, where “Nature” is open-ended and “human nature” refers not only to our organism but our humanity. Nature, “the natural,” then grounds both fundamental human(e) values and an apprehension of these values that is central to our humanity. As a contribution to Buddhism, the latter account afforded more thematic continuity than epistemological studies could between ordinary personal (human) maturation and competency in the world, and eventual awakenings to the bodhisattva’s responsive, compassionate action and even to buddhahood itself.



We modern people and scientists must now decide whether and how all these dimensions of knowing figure in the scientific study of cognition in general, and particularly in scientific representations of quintessentially *human* (i.e., fully appreciative, humane) cognition. The tradition of science is very different from those I have just summarized, but it shares with some of them the orientation towards understanding *in some form* of “naturalist” terms.

### THE GREATEST DISCOVERY OF SCIENCE

During its short history to date, science has been remarkably successful in providing informative reconceptualizations of many different domains, many facets of Nature. But I think science’s greatest discovery has been *science itself*, the unearthing of an approach to knowledge that offers unprecedented scope and explanatory power. In part, this involved the discovery of a nature framed in abstract, minimalist terms that expose a universe amenable to rational understanding and even afford tremendous theoretical generality, but that do *not* bear or cater to many aspects of human values, perceptions, or notions of what is significant.

Science has found a way to filter much of the human and humane *out* of nature, literally a fantastic accomplishment that could not have been easily imagined by the ancients. Science’s success in this regard is so great that today we sometimes assume we simply “see” this objective world (including ourselves) everywhere we look, so great that we cannot easily picture any other sort of basic natural order, any other fundamental aspect of our human nature than the physical or the organismic.

My characterization of science’s “great” achievement here may appear deliberately ironic, but I really do mean to praise science—it provides us with a clarity that was hard won, and immensely valuable. It was the movement towards minimalism and abstraction by Copernicus, Newton (who sought the “system of the world”), and others that made modern science possible, and science’s continuing expansion of this view has yielded many advantages. Studying something has come to mean seeing it as a natural phenomenon and working out ways in which it could be fully “naturalized,” explicitly incorporated within a theory of natural processes *without importing any extraneous dimensions*.

Such resistance to introducing extra considerations *without empirically compelling reasons* is considered central to the integrity of the scientific method. But is this kind of “naturalization” too limited? I want to raise the possibility that in the case of scientific forays into the study of human cognition, the answer may be “Yes.” And this may be so either in a way that science itself will acknowledge, or in extra-scientific ways that still matter to a general understanding of cognition. Science’s current



approach to naturalized explanations may be left intact, but we may then have to become more modest, revising our understanding of what science can and can't give us . . . or of what science itself *is and isn't*, in a larger view of things. Or we may come to understand "empirically compelling" in a new way, one that can cogently recognize additional (*humane*) facets of our human nature and our direct experience. Or we may find a use for the latter as essential but preliminary grist for a theoretic mill that produces new theories, but of a fairly conservative type.

There are many possibilities, and I think the task of cognitive science forces them upon our attention to an unprecedented degree. If the greatest discovery of science is science, what will science look like after it has wrestled with the problem of cognition? *And might the "second greatest" accomplishment of science not be the discovery of ways of opening up the scientific view*, so it may (theoretically or meta-theoretically) include some of what was removed in the first great framing of science and nature?

Now in stating this possibility, I don't mean to suggest that for cognitive science we must reverse the trend of science's many Copernican revolutions, and go back to some sort of hybrid comparable to that of Tycho Brahe. Brahe retained the ancient "stationary, central Earth" picture, applying Copernicus's heliocentrism only to the other planets, thereby splicing the Copernican theory with the old Ptolemaic system. Certainly the reintroduction of anthropocentrism or folk psychological notions about "mind" aren't wanted or needed for the study of cognition. But it is still very important to recognize more of what a human being *is*, including our spiritual nature and ground. How might this happen?

#### WHAT THE NEW NATURALIZATION MAY NEED TO INCLUDE

Sometimes naturalization in science is related to an ambitious vision called the Unity of Science program. This sees all branches of science as related, much like the branches of a tree, all connected to one fundamental picture or ontology—that of *physics*. The hope has been that eventually this connection will be explicitly stated in the branches' theories of nature, or at least rendered "sayable" in principle.

At present, such a project is only becoming realizable for chemistry, not yet for other physical sciences, much less for life sciences like biology. But I want to draw the reader's attention to the *idea* behind the Unity of Science program—it's meant to stress that *there are no special sciences*. For if there were a special (anomalous) science then this would suggest that there are phenomena in the universe that are unrelated to all other phenomena. Without continuity in nature, we would be left with an extremely disturbing discontinuity in explanation and understanding.

The “cosmos” (a “well-ordered whole”) would be lost, turned irrational. This specter sometimes seems to be what is threatened both by psychological sciences, studying a “mind” that resists reduction to physics, and far more so by traditions like Buddhism, which bolster the view that there is more in our world than is currently dreamt of by science.

But on the level of implementation, actually doing science, the situation is not so restrictive and scientists not so fearful. Leaving spiritual considerations aside, even the most ordinary notion of cognition is going to be tackled by cognitive science in ways that *avoid* entanglement with the Unity of Science program’s reductive physical ontology . . . neurology and other brain sciences will certainly compete for center stage here, but not physics. Many psychologists do believe “everything is ultimately physics,” but they usually still concede that this metaphysical faith affords no traction in making theories of cognition, and they see little prospect for any theoretical linkage between psychology and physics. (Here I’m ignoring the many popular-level discussions about alleged connections between quantum mechanics and consciousness.) As the scientist Michael Polanyi put even the most optimistic case, which assumes we *can* work from physics up to the highest levels, “lower levels do not lack a bearing on higher levels; they define the conditions of their success and account for their failures, but they cannot account for their success, for they cannot even define it.”<sup>1</sup>

So naturalization in cognitive science is in practice fairly free, and will necessarily take new forms, compared to its history in physical science. Two main types are easily distinguished: bottom up (primitives leading to cognition, if organized in the right way), and top down (conceptions of what cognition is). The “bottom” will also be understood in many new ways, partly owing to cognitive science’s unusually interdisciplinary character—the perspectives of psychology, biology, linguistics, mathematics, computer science, artificial intelligence research, various neurosciences, and philosophy may all figure, with each contributing its own sense of “ground”. . . interpretations of evolutionary theory and specifically of perception in an evolutionary context, epistemology and philosophy of mind, theories of computational complexity, normative concepts, and phenomenology will all be applied in efforts to render “cognition” less opaque. They may be used to frame new definitions as well as approaches, “tops” as well as “bottoms.”

Spiritual perspectives of human “being” and cognition also suggest relevant bottoms and tops. For Buddhism, the bottom is samsara (cycling around endlessly in a less-than-optimal way of being). Specifically, it’s a certain kind of cognition that’s co-dependent with existentially compromised stances centering around identification with a circumstantially-defined “self,” with attendant selfishness and suffering. The top is then our

buddha nature, the authentic being from which we so commonly and blindly stray.

Of course neither of these is a *theory*, and I'm no longer using "bottom" and "top" to refer to building or defining cognition. But acquaintance with these "spiritual" issues certainly suggests systematic descriptions, hence Buddhist "philosophy," plus celebratory tantric texts, poetic articulations of enlightenment, and sacred art, all of which can—with the right preparation—make an intelligible point. Familiarity with such fundamental facets of human existence may even help us make more insightful scientific theories of cognition.

At this point I admit to taking the side of a C'han teacher, a position which considers it impossible to fully understand what "mind" and "cognition" are unless they're seen in their complete context, as excerpts from the "nature of mind" that's central to Buddhist contemplative traditions. So the C'han tradition views them as degenerate cases, collapsed or compromised forms of a cognizance (*vidyā*) that is intrinsically pure, directly encompassing, veridical, and spiritually relevant. This is the ultimate form of a "top-down" understanding (not a theory) of all cognition. If appreciated even slightly, it would help us conceive of very new meanings for "a being," "life," "world" (as context for perception), "body" (as basis of perception), and "act of perception."

This subject has also been given a very profound treatment by the Vajrayāna tantras, which like C'han, do not theorize but *show* the existential character of such facets of being. For the advanced Vajrayāna practitioner, the embodiment of authentic being arises within and as the freedom of empty/fullness (not the consequence of prior actions and lower-level processes), and stands in potent, satisfied, and self-certain significance at the very center of an always-original, harmonious realm (*dhātu*) or sphere which reveals the multifaceted fullness of that being (everything is gathered to it in no-time), and also demonstrates that being's nature as everywhere manifest in the encompassing "surround" (everything in this *maṇḍala* expresses it).

Such perfection is what ordinary samsaric mind has blurred past in ordinary time, and the dynamic features of this inauthentic way of being (blur) can be studied quite precisely. Moreover, our pure, always-original mind is what ordinary mind keeps borrowing from, in its compulsive grasping to set up independent existence as an agent and owner (and bearer of the burden of unwanted consequences, a self passing through myriad confusing physical environments of challenge, deficit, and conflict, all of which naturally accrue to that un-knowing stance). In samsara, "cognition" becomes dedicated to narrowly-defined organismic needs and preoccupations, where neither the latter nor their embodied presuppositions can themselves be seen with much clarity or objectivity.

Vajrayāna literature and practice offer many-sided treatments of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of such correspondences between features of our spiritual nature (plus appreciative cognitions of a contextualizing “pure realm”), and aspects of our ordinary existence. The latter includes our bodies, physical and emotional needs, sense perception, and co-dependent ways of knowing. These high-low correspondences may seem suspiciously formulaic and even arbitrary to modern scholars, because the Vajrayāna “code” can only be cracked by engaged practice, by a direct apprehension that is itself of the nature of the “deity” being “practiced” (Tib: *yidam*). (It cannot be fully built up from below via a collection of concepts or “meanings.”) But once this insight becomes accessible to more *people* (who are also scientists), at least some small part of the implications may jump the boundaries that have so far separated science and spirituality.

### COSMOS REGAINED

As I’ve already granted, we mustn’t try to force science to accept any perspective—the latter should be recommended by scientifically-compelling considerations. But what will those be? We should remember that at this point in time, even the most conservative approach to defining aspects of cognition may have to stretch, to appeal to much higher-level concepts than have been required in the physical sciences. Perhaps for some influential theorists, even insights drawn from contemplative spirituality will help shape those concepts.

Since the most rudimentary type of cognition is still presently a mystery to science, it might seem very premature to discuss appealing to or attempting to scientifically represent insights from spiritual traditions concerning much loftier forms of cognition. Perhaps . . . or perhaps that is precisely what’s needed to make a sound beginning, even for simple cases . . . or to renovate the field’s theoretical framework later in its development, generations from now. The only way we’ll ever really know is to leave science alone and let it determine what it will accept as a useful point of departure. But this still allows room for contributions from Buddhism and other spiritual traditions. The reason (as I just suggested) lies in what it means to “leave science alone.”

Early in this paper I mentioned that science is not an island, and I worried about the potentially diminishing or flattening influence of conceptual back-propagation from science to life, to our self-understanding. Commensurate with this worry, *I draw comfort from the fact that this influence also moves in the other direction, forward from people to our explanatory systems.* Modern people will certainly come to have an advanced grounding in Buddhist practice and realization, and they will go on

to shape culture as well as being shaped by it, by changing language or writing novels or doing science, or philosophy, or art. Will such people and others sharing their culture forever compartmentalize and insulate their thinking about cognitive science, continuing to channel it along standard lines, when their view of cognition (and the world being cognized) has been significantly enlarged and deepened, in some cases by actual contemplation of the fundamental “nature of mind”?

I think such conceptual insulation is impossible. People (scientists too) simply don’t work that way, and the field itself mandates a new theoretical openness and a departure from using physicalist reductionism as the only source of explanations.

The harmony of Cosmos may therefore be retrievable, but in a “messy” way not anticipated in the heyday of the old physicalist and positivist programs. First, for the next century or so, scientific theory may have to live with a nondisruptive stratification between physical and psychological sciences. The latter are “special” after all, on the level of explanation, if not on the level of basic ontology. Second, even while science remains unchallenged as the authoritative way to answer certain sorts of questions, it will no longer maintain either the myth of apparent immunity to outside influences, or its dominance in the territories of “knowing” and “understanding.” For from this time on, a profound and creative tension may explicitly exist *forever* between two orthogonal kinds of understanding—abstract statements of scientific theory, and directly perceived and lived views afforded by mature, practiced insight.

#### A SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE BUDDHIST CONTRIBUTIONS TO COGNITIVE SCIENCE

One of the most important and difficult challenges to undertaking a scientific study of cognition concerns the basic view—what sort of thing *is* cognition? Regarding the related faculty known as “perception,” psychology has undergone a revolution in determining, within the past forty years, that the right way to reframe this question is “What is perception’s *job*?” And that in turn has been seen to involve the question “What is perception’s *real context*?”

Here I’m referring obliquely to the ideas of J. J. Gibson, the specifics of whose late work in ecological psychology are still hotly contested, but who indisputably (even according to his critics, like the neurophysiologist and artificial intelligence theorist David Marr) made enormous contributions to the “top level,” *framing the problem*. After Gibson, it has been impossible to overlook the importance of answering “top-” or “view-” level questions by appeal to the ecological and evolutionary context of percep-

tion—the actual environment of the organism and the active, mutually-defining relationships between environment and organism that add up to a life.

Before Gibson made this clarification, the psychology of perception was framed in more abstracted, laboratory-based approaches motivated by traditional optics, which made the problem easier to formalize and study, but had the defect of not always being very insightful, not very reflective of the real high-level issues that needed to be addressed. After Gibson, the challenge for theorists of all stripes has been to find ways to be true to these latter issues, while retaining scientific rigor, formal definition and analysis, and the study of perception's implementation mechanisms and relation to other faculties (providing continuity with other sciences). At first, introducing perspicuous top-level definitions of what a given phenomenon really *is*, often seems to just make trouble—things get much harder to frame and study—but in the long run experimentalists do find clever ways to use the new handle on things and move forward with their work. I believe something of this sort may happen in the case of cognition, and may even enable very high-level and seemingly “nonscientific” views of cognition, like those arising from Buddhist practice, to be *at least scientifically suggestive* and thus to contribute someday to new scientific “view” formulations.

More specifically, science may come to understand us “sentient beings” better by revisiting the sharply debated issue of the degree to which we are and aren't directly and intimately connected to our environment—the idea that it and we are mutually, co-dependently defined. (The popular translation, “sentient being,” is misleading—the word [as in Tib: *sems-chan*] really means “samsaric mind”-bearing beings.) Biological theory is already moving in this direction. Eventually judgment will be passed on Gibson's specific notion that perception involves direct perceptual access to features of the environment. His claim was that we can “pick up” these features through vigorous exploratory interaction, rather than having only indirect, mediated access and thus necessarily needing to “reconstruct” or represent them through processing informationally-impoverished sensory data that could be interpreted in many different ways. Gibson's ideas have been heavily used by visual media and research into virtual reality technology (a fact that would have given Gibson no satisfaction), but have not yet been successfully integrated into large areas of psychology.

Whatever is decided about the scientific value of Gibson's particular way of framing the idea of “direct perception,” the more basic issue of our connection to and disconnection from our context and source seems important for many aspects of both spiritual and scientific renderings of cognition. Below, I hesitantly offer a *very speculative* summary of related spiritual points and their possible “suggestiveness” for cognitive science.



1. *the ground of mind*: Some Mahāyāna Buddhist sutras, the C'han/Zen tradition, and higher levels of Vajrayāna all emphasize that the "top-level" ground and real nature of mind is a timeless, originary purity. I see no way this level of realization could be represented in a scientific theory in the near future, but I definitely think it would inform the scientist herself, in her understanding of what science does and doesn't give us. So here "understanding" splits between that yielded by science and that vigorously held by the human being *whether science can credit it or not*.

2. *the job of cognition*: Cognition is relational, linking us to our defining context and thereby preserving some degree of appreciation of our own significance.

3. *the character of cognition in the mature human being*: Following from the previous point, the central organizing theme of cognition is the appreciation of our own worth as human or humane, and the connection to our fellow human beings as a shared commitment to upholding this significance.

4. *the full range of cognition's substance and function*: This is seen in the Vajrayāna practice I mentioned, where the connection is represented as a center/periphery without distance or loss of the essential character (acknowledging satisfaction and celebration).

5. *the principle of its operation*: The *maṇḍala* level of cognition is made possible by a higher kind of time that enfolds everything and does not obscure the link back to the center.

6. *degenerate cases*: Each of the above admits of down-shifted versions where the essential point of connection and preservation of significance is retained only negligibly, hence apparently not at all (like collapsed dimensions that appear to have zero extent). We are left with only intransigent "facts," distinct circumstances and compelling needs that do not admit of complete satisfaction in the circumstantial domain.

What is at issue in all these suggestions is a larger sense of the context or ecosystem of cognition that preserves the spiritual aspects of our nature, and the further notion that ordinary cognition is an excerpt that exists co-dependently with other limited representations of that original context. Direct access and satisfying intimacy become distance, effort, and frustration in a landscape where fundamental significance seems fictional (it can



only be constructed, somewhat arbitrarily). Mind and connection to the world appear to be emergent and computed, respectively, not fundamental and direct. The latter level certainly can be studied by science. But perhaps it should not be understood or studied in such isolation, as a closed system.

The main objection to even considering a high-level theory of cognition prompted by the above considerations is the concern about contamination from *folk psychology*—ordinary ideas about mind drawn from convention or introspection. I cannot treat this concern at length in the present paper, but I'll note that Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophical analyses were motivated by this same worry, and sought to root out every vestige of such ordinary (false) notions. Moreover, Buddhist practice and the realization of an appreciative capacity quite beyond the ordinary mind may protect against even subtle forms of folk psychology to which scientific theorists themselves are still oblivious.

#### A TRANSFORMED LANDSCAPE OF "UNDERSTANDING"

I have attempted to describe a new situation in human history, in which two types of understanding coexist. And I have speculated that each may bear on the other, and in particular that the one based on direct insight may influence or even redefine the other (science). This trend of re-dimensioning science in humane and spiritual terms may be inevitable . . . but not in a straightforward sense that can ever be considered final.

Assume for the sake of argument that fairly standard science soon becomes capable of producing a "good" theory for cognition—one that fits the central data we can formalize and test for—even if some of our questions and intuitions about cognition are left woefully unaddressed, even if the theory's larger implications regarding our status as knowers remain uncertain. (It's really not science's job to be totally responsive to all of our questions.) Such a neat theoretical resolution to the "cognition" puzzle would not be the last word, simply because science will no longer be our sole way of understanding. On the other hand, standard science's claim to perspectival supremacy will never be definitively overthrown either.

*Scenario One:* science produces a model of cognition that is conservative, consistent with more basic physical science or psychological science, and that is not indebted to any spiritual insight or perspective.

*Scenario Two:* science becomes less conservative, more influenced by spiritual insights, and produces a new kind of theory of cognition, judged by new rules of adequacy.

In the first case, spiritual insights will *still* be loose in the population, and will eventually prompt scientific ideas that contend with the theory of cognition, opening it up or reframing it. In the second case, a (relatively) more purist or narrow sense of science will *still* remain an option, and may at any point suggest a theory of cognition that's free of the "extraneous factors" introduced by contemplative insight. *No final winner can ever emerge in this new, complex landscape of competing types of understanding*, although conservative science will have an edge over less tried-and-true reformulations of science . . . an edge that will be gradually eroded by further reformulations, and also by influence from perspectives afforded by spiritual insights into an extended sense of ecology.

This competition will also play out on a more basic level, as I said earlier, where the issue is our understanding of what *science itself* is and isn't—of its status in a larger scheme suggested by spiritual experience, versus our understanding of *the status of spirituality* in a broad explanatory scheme proposed by an ever-evolving science. Here too, no final winner can emerge, even though spiritual perspectives may have an edge for the people who actually enjoy them in an advanced form. To explain this last comment, we might look at another way of comparing the scope of scientific and spiritual perspectives—*containment relations*.

*Which contains which?* My Buddhist teachers were all convinced that the nature and expanse discovered by traditions like Buddhism *contains* the realm of phenomena studied by science. The latter realm is seen as part of what is given co-dependently with the five senses and related type of ordinary, samsaric mind. On the other side, scientists studying brain scans of religious contemplatives are starting to argue that spiritual experience ("God," etc.) may be understood (and explained away?) in neurological terms, perhaps even evolutionary terms.

It is this new complex environment of orthogonal types of understanding that I believe will contextualize us and our self-understanding from now on. So to summarize the complex, many-sided relationship involved here: First, science and spirituality (taken as a way of knowing) do *talk* to each other, indirectly by sharing a culture. Second, they cannot *refute* each other. And despite the latter, third—they are not *immune* to each other's critiques.

To elaborate—first, it is not the two "non-overlapping magisteria" picture (NOM[A]) defined by Stephen J. Gould in his book *Rock of Ages*, where science and religion peacefully (obliviously) coexist without any mutual interchange or influence. This view was strenuously recommended by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, whose neo-orthodox compromise

“protected” religious thought by separating it so radically from the domain of science that it has now become almost incoherent, i.e., it leaves religion and spirituality with no apparent connection to the world (“God” is “wholly other”). I suggest that this view gives away far too much.

Second, it does not suggest science could refute core Buddhist *insights* (for example), because by their orthogonality I do mean to imply they really are different kinds of enterprises, with different “rules” and dimensions or domains of application, even different ontologies in some refined sense of the term. Of course, if an overzealous Buddhist from the nineteenth century CE had tried to bolster the dharma’s position by proclaiming that Mount Meru must constitute the center of the physical universe discovered by astronomers, then he would have mistakenly recast Buddhism as a proto-science, confusing a spiritual pointer with an empirically-testable claim about physical phenomena (a claim that happens to be false). I think it’s clear the central insights of Buddhism are not claims of this sort, and cannot be refuted in this way.

Finally, I do not mean to say that Buddhist tenets (statable positions and philosophical analyses) are unfalsifiable or unchallengeable. On the contrary: any tenet that can meaningfully be framed as a testable proposition can be falsified, and so even beyond inappropriate reifications of Buddhist themes (like the Mount Meru example above), there are doubtless many features of Buddhist theory, especially when interpreted in modern Western psychological ways, that may arguably be falsified by science or critiqued by modern philosophy. So be it. Orthogonality does not protect Buddhism in *this* way.

Buddhist theories of mind and perception are traditionally understood as literally debatable elaborations, and as ornamentations of the directly encountered “core insights” that are not entirely reducible to a tenet, or sect, etc. We do not construct such insights or hold them in our ordinary mind, but trim down to their givenness (*tathatā*, suchness). If science or philosophy could critique a Buddhist theory (tenet, position), this critique would simply help the spiritual enterprise along, on the level of articulation. In the same fashion, a specific psychological (scientific) account of mind might be very effectively branded as obtuse by an advanced practitioner of contemplation—if she also happens to be a respected scientist, and if the time is right to frame the critique cogently in scientific terms!

## CONCLUSION

Earlier I decried the trend towards interpreting scientific *study* as synonymous with *reducing* us and our world to scientific terms. I also mentioned that there are more things in our world than are currently dreamt of by science. The latter claim does not mean that there are esoteric

or peculiarly “spiritual” *phenomena* in the world that are not covered by science . . . rather, my point was that *everything in life is this “more.”* Framing spirituality as being about explicitly statable but novel phenomena (happenings, qualities, etc.) is again buying into an inappropriate form of reductionism.

Rather than rejecting or hiding from science, we should embrace and respect it as offering a major path to understanding. And we should learn to exercise our humanity and status as spiritual beings, for that will give us access to another, vital way of knowing. This means *throwing open the boundaries to inquiry in both directions*. Let science study everything (that it can find an approach to studying), including spiritual experience. Let spiritual insight regarding our participation in a larger, more fully-dimensioned context, bear on everything . . . including science.

In this way, the development of cognitive science, and the assimilation and clarification of the essential points of Buddhism by our culture, may over time become mutually-informed—and even mutually-inspired—enterprises. Perhaps we will thus realize a previously unattainable, integrated vision of the very rich world that we are in, and that we *are*.

## NOTE

1. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

# **Cognitive Theories of Ritual and Buddhist Practice: An Examination of Ilkka Pyysiäinen's Theory**

**Richard K. Payne**

Dean, Institute of Buddhist Studies  
at the Graduate Theological Union

WHILE WE ARE HERE CONCERNED with the cognitive theory of ritual put forward by Ilkka Pyysiäinen, it is important to note at the start that Pyysiäinen's project is much more ambitious. It is nothing less than a cognitive theory of religion as a whole. As a consequence, it will be necessary to contextualize his treatment of ritual in terms of the theoretical bases of his larger project.

## **THE "COUNTER-INTUITIVE": BASIS OF PYYSIÄINEN'S THEORY**

Pyysiäinen's general theory of religion works with a notion of the counter-intuitive as the necessary—though not sufficient—marker of religious beliefs:

Religious representations, considered in isolation, are not a unique type of mental representation, and 'religion' does not refer to objects with distinctive causal properties. It is a more or less arbitrary process whereby certain counter-intuitive representations become selected for a use such that they are regarded as instances of religion.<sup>1</sup>

Pyysiäinen's approach to understanding religion in terms of the counter-intuitive contrasts with approaches frequently found in anthropology and religious studies, which employ such categories as "the supernatural" or "the superhuman." However, these categories in turn depend upon what is understood as "natural" and "human," categories which are not stable across cultures, or even in different contexts within the same culture.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, what might be considered "natural" or "human" varies so

greatly across religious cultures that no universally applicable understanding of religion can be developed from these categories. For these reasons Pyysiäinen argues that the categories of “the supernatural” or “the superhuman” are inadequate for application across different religious traditions.

However, there are universal standards of intuitive reasoning based on what are known as “intuitive” or “natural ontologies.” These are categories of existence which appear to be universally shared by all humans, but which are not fixed—they change and develop over time.<sup>3</sup> Intuitive ontologies are most clearly revealed in developmental studies of children’s cognition. Pascal Boyer has developed the research on intuitive ontologies as an approach to cognitive theories of religion, and is one of the primary sources for Pyysiäinen. Boyer explains that,

Children, whose vocabulary does not include abstract terms like “event,” “property,” and “living kind,” nevertheless make clear distinctions between these ontological categories. The ontological “tree” is of course gradually developed, mainly by subdividing categories that originally merge two or more adult categories.<sup>4</sup>

In relation to religion Boyer makes the point that “Religious representations typically center on claims that violate commonsense expectations concerning ordinary things, beings and processes.”<sup>5</sup> Boyer further specifies that such religious claims range over four different “repertoires”: representations concerning ontological categories, causal relations, actions or episodes, and social categories.<sup>6</sup> These repertoires are inter-related: for example, a deceased ancestor (ontological) may when angry cause disease (causal) to his or her descendants (social), requiring a sacrificial offering (event). Out of these four repertoires Boyer focuses on the ontological, and is followed in this by Pyysiäinen. To establish the intuitive or natural character of ontological representations, Boyer cites the work of Frank C. Keil.<sup>7</sup> In his experimentation with children—who are not able to explicitly express abstract, general categories—Keil found that they still worked with “implicit ontological categories, for example, EVENT, OBJECT, LIVING THING, ANIMATE, HUMAN, and so forth, which are (1) organized in a hierarchy and (2) made manifest by predicate selection.”<sup>8</sup> The hierarchical nature of concepts refers to the way in which there are more general categories which subsume more specific ones: oranges are members of the category fruit. That these implicit ontological categories are made manifest in predicate selection means that children will attribute thought to humans, while they will not do so to objects.

With this background Pyysiäinen uses the term “counter-intuitive” with a very specific meaning: “‘Counter-intuitive’ means ‘violating panhuman intuitive expectations’ in a well defined fashion.”<sup>9</sup> While the



kinds of “natural” or “intuitive” categories established by Keil’s research grounds the notion of the counter-intuitive, Pyysiäinen cites Boyer for two specific ways in which counter-intuitive ideas are created: transference of qualities appropriate to one category to another where those qualities are not appropriate, and violation of the boundaries of an intuitive category:

It is important to bear in mind that counter-intuitiveness consists precisely of violations against or transferences across the boundaries between ontological categories. “Counter-intuitive” is not by definition the same as “false,” “ridiculous,” or “odd.” Counter-intuitiveness also contradicts *intuitive* expectations; it is therefore possible that a believer finds some familiar counter-intuitive representations as being quite natural, because this judgement is made at the level of *explicit* knowledge.<sup>10</sup>

This notion of the counter-intuitive is strengthened as a definition for religion by recent research that has demonstrated the fact that counter-intuitive ideas are more memorable than intuitive ones: “optimally counter-intuitive ideas are better recalled than ordinary or overly counter-intuitive ones, and thus are also more effectively distributed.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, if an idea is unusual but not obviously implausible, then we are more likely to remember it, and it is more likely that we will share it with others. If we consider the prevalence and similarity of miracle stories in so many different religious traditions, as well as the speed with which conspiracy theories propagate in society, this concept may be less implausible than it perhaps seems upon first hearing. “Counter-intuitiveness has also been shown to enhance the recall of items in experimental conditions. This enhanced recall may explain—*ceteris paribus*—why counter-intuitive representations seem so easily to become widespread in and across cultures.”<sup>12</sup> As explained in the notion of “optimally counter-intuitive,” religious representations are not simply counter-intuitive, but rather form part of a system of beliefs, some of which are intuitive, while others are counter-intuitive:

[C]ounter-intuitive representations form only one aspect of religious cognition, the other being that counter-intuitive representations are embedded in intuitive ones. . . . It is the intuitive aspects of religious representations that make them understandable and learnable, but it is the counter-intuitive aspect that makes them religious.<sup>13</sup>

The idea that there are benevolent elders, perhaps aunts and uncles, who might come to one’s assistance in times of need is an intuitive one based on our experience of social categories, causal relations, ontological statuses,

and episodic events. Disembodied benevolent others—deceased ancestors, saints, bodhisattvas—located in some non-physical reality who can come to one's assistance in times of need is a counter-intuitive category.

## ON RITUAL

Pyysiäinen's treatment of ritual draws on Harvey Whitehouse's studies of ritual in Melanesia.<sup>14</sup> The cognitive character of Whitehouse's anthropological studies is found in the way in which he bases his distinction between two modes of religion—imagistic and doctrinal—on two kinds of memory—episodic and semantic, respectively. The connection between these two kinds of memory and the two kinds of religious practice is that in general the doctrinal mode of religion is given its sense of validity through repetition and is a part of semantic memory, while the imagistic mode of religion is given its sense of validity through emotional stimulation and is part of episodic memory.

Whitehouse bases his link between mode of religion and frequency of ritual performance on psychological studies of memory. Episodic memory (also known as autobiographical memory) involves "recollections of specific events" and this is "the way people remember revelatory rituals, the specific moments when their understandings about the nature of the world were violated or transformed."<sup>15</sup> Infrequent and highly emotionally charged rituals, such as the Melanesian initiatory rites Whitehouse has studied, are according to this theory remembered as specific episodes, including such things as the identity of the specific participants. Infrequency, episodic memory, and dramatic uniqueness form an integral relation in Whitehouse's theory:

The transmission of imagistic practices depends upon the unique and intense quality of ritual experience. It is not conducive to the cultivation of such messages to repeat them very often. Repetition deprives the experience of its uniqueness.<sup>16</sup>

Semantic memory, on the other hand, deals with frequently repeated events which are "repetitive and predictable" and are remembered in the form of "scripts or 'schemas'."<sup>17</sup> Frequently occurring rituals, such as a Sunday service in Christianity, are not remembered as specific episodes, but rather as a typical sequence of familiar events. While dramatic rituals recorded in episodic memory and performed infrequently provide opportunities for revelatory shifts of how one understands the world, familiar rituals recorded in semantic memory and performed frequently are opportunities for inculcating a specific doctrinal perspective. Indeed,

Whitehouse argues that the creation of repetitive ritual is actually more important in the history of religion than the creation of print media:

[N]otwithstanding those historians who emphasize the importance of printing in the Reformation, it must be appreciated that ideas contained in print were only able to exercise a sustained and uniform influence on those they reached in so far as the written words were continually reviewed and, in practice, rehearsed in countless speech events.<sup>18</sup>

In some places Whitehouse writes as if he thinks of the two modes of religion as forming something of a dialectic. The repetitive quality of doctrinal religion leads to boredom, and this sets the stage for imagistic practices to be appealing.

Pyysiäinen borrows this fundamental three-fold distinction (religious mode, frequency of ritual performance, and type of memory involved) and applies it to the way in which religious belief is created by ritual practices: “[B]elief in the truth and importance of religious beliefs is created in two ways: through repetition and through emotional stimulation.”<sup>19</sup> These different ways of creating religious belief correlate with different kinds of rituals. Rituals which are performed repetitively inform doctrinal understanding, and rituals which are performed irregularly create a memorable experience. Pyysiäinen notes that the two are not mutually exclusive of one another—while repetitive rituals are not specifically intended to create emotional responses, emotional reactions to such rituals may still occur. However, “these emotional experiences are soon interpreted according to the prevailing doctrinal schemata.”<sup>20</sup> When that happens, the memories become depersonalized, and are remembered in semantic rather than episodic memory. Emotion is still the key here according to Pyysiäinen, as it is emotion that establishes the sense of commitment to religious doctrines (or what he calls “schematized religious representations”), despite their counter-intuitive character. Further, “doctrines too may be enhanced by imagistic experiences.”<sup>21</sup> According to Pyysiäinen, “religious belief” is defined by this emotionally-rooted commitment. In contrast to religious belief is “religious experience” which Pyysiäinen defines as “emotion-laden thoughts and perceptions that come to be encoded in episodic memory as unique events.”<sup>22</sup> Pyysiäinen then attempts to ground both religious belief and religious experience in a neurophysiology of emotion: “The emotions that characterize both belief and experience are bodily states that mark religious representations and bodily reactions that are experienced as fear, sadness, happiness, anger or disgust.”<sup>23</sup>

Pyysiäinen draws on Damasio’s “somatic marker hypothesis” for his link between the emotional basis of religious belief in the bodily responses of fear, and so on, and the character of religious experience produced by

different ritual types. Damasio's hypothesis is that there is an emotional reaction which precedes rational decision-making.<sup>24</sup> This has the evolutionary benefit of reducing the number of alternatives between which a person has to choose. These responses can either be positive or negative, and "may operate covertly (without coming to consciousness)."<sup>25</sup> It is the strength of these bodily responses that give religious beliefs their resilience, despite the counter-intuitive character of those beliefs.

These somatic markers force particular attention on the negative outcome of the possible rejection of religious belief. . . . Although this holds in most non-religious cases as well, religious thinking is special in that it involves counter-intuitive representations more difficult to process than representations merely confirming domain-specific intuitive ontology.<sup>26</sup>

For Pyysiäinen, then, the two ways of creating religious belief (repetition and emotional stimulation) serve to identify two kinds of ritual (frequent and irregular), which utilize two kinds of memory (semantic and episodic) and characterize two different modes of religion (doctrinal and imagistic). These can be schematized as follows:

MODE OF RELIGION	IMAGISTIC	DOCTRINAL
kind of memory	episodic	semantic
kind of ritual	irregular	frequent
ways of creating belief	emotional stimulation	repetition

According to Pyysiäinen's theory, religious beliefs are counter-intuitive, the commitment to which is grounded in the bodily, preconscious emotional response formed under these two modes of religion.

There is a greater variety to the types of rituals and to the ways in which they may effect us cognitively than Pyysiäinen's bipartite theory would indicate. That Whitehouse has only considered two modes of religion—justifiably so on the basis of his research field—does not mean that there are not more.

### PERFORMATIVE MEMORY

Cognitive studies of memory have pointed to a third form of memory—procedural memory. Procedural memory is evidenced by knowing how to do things, and is therefore also sometimes referred to as "procedural

knowledge."<sup>27</sup> As Alvin I. Goldman has pointed out, the "phrase 'how to do things' first brings to mind motor skills, because these are the most concrete examples of procedural knowledge."<sup>28</sup> However, it can also be taken to include "cognitive skills such as decision making, mathematical problem solving, and language generation."<sup>29</sup> In other words, cognitive skills involving "how to do things" as well as specifically motor skills are understood to be part of the same cognitive faculty—procedural memory.<sup>30</sup> Studies of brain activity have found "that extensive practice on a task often produces a shift in the brain pathways used to complete the task."<sup>31</sup> This shift of brain pathway is linked with increased facility in task performance.

Procedural memory does not appear to be as well-studied as other forms of memory.<sup>32</sup> One of the leading contemporary memory researchers, Daniel L. Schacter, tells us that it was only in the early 1980s he began "to take seriously the idea that memory is not a single thing. Laboratory evidence pointed toward three different long-term memory systems: *episodic* memory, which allows us to recollect specific incidents from our pasts; *semantic* memory, the vast network of associations and concepts that underlies our general knowledge of the world; and *procedural* memory, which allows us to learn skills and know how to do things."<sup>33</sup> The procedural memory system "is selectively involved in 'knowing how' to do things: ride a bicycle, type words on a keyboard, solve a jigsaw puzzle, or read words in mirror-image form."<sup>34</sup>

The character of Buddhist ritual practice—repetitive but not semantic, experiential but not emotionally charged—suggests that it employs procedural memory to produce its effects. This appears to also be the case in traditions of Japanese arts (Jpn. *dō*), which employ very repetitive forms of practice emphasizing physical activity. In contrast to the dichotomy proposed by Pyysiäinen, such ritualized practices do not primarily depend on verbal information, i.e., are not primarily semantic; nor do they employ intense emotional experiences. Dorinne K. Kondo has discussed this as a "theory of pedagogy." She says of these "methods of learning and self-cultivation" that

[O]ne first learns through imitation. Stereotyped movements are repeated endlessly; for example, as a student of tea ceremony, one begins with seemingly simple tasks such as how to walk properly, how to fold a tea napkin, how to wipe the tea utensils. Unlike similar movements in everyday life, these are precisely defined, to be executed "just so." Later these learned actions are orchestrated into a ceremony that is the epitome of "natural," disciplined grace. The martial arts, also arts of "the way" (*dō*), practice their *kata*, patterned movements, until the movements are inscribed in muscle memory.<sup>35</sup>

Kondo's "muscle memory" is procedural memory. This kind of approach to pedagogy is found not only in Buddhist ritual practice and Japanese arts of "the Way," but also informs neo-Confucian educational practice as well. In the following we will explore the tantric tradition of ritual practice found in the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism.

#### SHINGON BUDDHIST RITUAL PRACTICE: EMPTINESS AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF

One of the teachings central to Mahāyāna Buddhism is the emptiness of all existing things, including both objects and persons. Today, from the Mahāyāna perspective, this idea is identified most clearly with the Mādhyamika school of thought from which the terminology of emptiness derives. However, emptiness of the self does have precursors all the way back to Śākyamuni Buddha under different terminology.

The emptiness of the personal self means that there is no permanent, eternal, absolute, or unchanging essence, and not—as the idea of emptiness is misunderstood to mean—that there is no personal self. Rather than a permanent or unchanging self, the personal self as empty does exist as a construct. It is not a given and it is never fully stable. It is, rather, an ongoing construction which may be interpreted as the interface between attempts to preserve our own sense of self-identity—whether positive or negative—in the face of changing situations and expectations.

As cognitive beings we hold mental images, memories, narratives, and so on about the world of our experience.<sup>36</sup> Because we are also self-consciously aware, one of the images that we hold is an image of our self. This self-image is constructed out of our own experience, including what others reflect back to us. The malleability of the self-image suggests that it can be purposely reconstructed.<sup>37</sup>

One way of framing the issue of awakening, then, is how to transform this self-representation from one of a foolish being (Skt. *prtagjana*, Jpn. *ishō*), to one of an awakened being. This suggests that a self-representation is the basis for living life from an awakened perspective, changing the way that one not only thinks of oneself, but also the ways in which we engage with others and the world around us. This way of framing the issue purposely attempts to shift the understanding of awakening from being conceived as a sudden, transformative "mystical" experience, to a conception which acknowledges the importance of the interpersonal, social, and cultural construction of such a sense of self-representation. The category of mystical experience introduces a set of problems about defining mysticism and the attendant issues of mediated versus unmediated experience that have proven to be so intransigent that one may reasonably conclude that the problem has been so poorly stated that it is a pseudo-problem. Further,



the rhetoric of transformative experience generally ignores both the social nature of humans and the way in which culture itself molds the developmental process. It assumes that there is an individual person who is separate from both the others around him/her, and separate from the effects of the culture within which the person has grown up. The view being developed here is that one's self-identity is constructed specifically out of interaction with both society and culture, and is fully interdependent with both society and culture. This interdependence is one of the reasons that change is often so difficult—existing ways of being are “over-determined,” that is they are supported both by a person's own self-conception and by the conceptions that others have of that person, manifested in the ways that they act toward the person. Consequently, there can be no unmediated, transformative experience occurring to the separate self, since the separate self does not exist. It is important to note that this approach to awakening does not deny the existence or value of transformative experience, but rather intends to open up an understanding of how such experiences become transformative in a particular way, i.e., become defined as Buddhist experiences of awakening.

The emptiness of the self, its constructed nature, matches the findings of cognitive science across the range of different theoretical approaches to cognitive science—computational, connectionist, embodied-enactive. From a religious perspective, the question which needs to be asked then is: How can the nature of the self-representation, the sense of self-identity, be changed, particularly if it is so over-determined?

Turning specifically to the Shingon tradition, as an esoteric or tantric Buddhist tradition, the actual performance of ritual practice is only done by initiates. Different kinds of ritual practices may be performed by different kinds of initiates, from very simple meditative rituals for what may be called “lay initiates” to very complex rituals performed by full initiates (Skt. *ācārya*, Jpn. *ajari*). While there are many different strands making up any polythetic definition of tantra, in this case it is the use of ritual identification that is important to our discussions here. Ritual identification refers to the central ritual action in almost all Shingon rituals—the identification of the practitioner with the deity evoked in the ritual. In the parlance of Shingon ritual manuals, this is known as *nyū ga, ga nyū* (Skt. *ahamkāra*) or “me entering, entering me.” Through the unity of one's body, speech, and mind with the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha, one gradually learns to live from a perspective of being awakened. The theoretical background for this is the idea that all living beings are already inherently awakened (Jpn. *hongaku*), and that it is possible for human beings to become aware of this state in this very lifetime (Jpn. *sokushin jōbutsu*). According to traditional Shingon interpretations, ritual practice leads to this awareness through three stages.



First, the inherent principle of being awake (Jpn. *rigu-jōbutsu*), which refers to the view that the *dharmakāya*, i.e., Mahāvairocana Buddha, is the actual existence of all things as empty. Second, practice toward being awake (Jpn. *kaji-jōbutsu*), which refers to the power inherent in ritual practice to activate the compassionate response of the awakened consciousness of the Buddha, is itself nothing other than the awakened nature of one's own consciousness.<sup>38</sup> Third, realization of being awake (Jpn. *kendoku-jōbutsu*), which refers to the revealing (*ken*) and acquiring (*doku*) of the awakened character of one's existence.

The hypothesis that I am suggesting here, then, is that the repetitive practice of ritual identification in the course of Shingon training serves to transform the self-image through embodied action recorded in procedural memory. Shingon ritual practice does not fit into either of the two categories of ritual discussed by Pyysiäinen. This would seem to be too sharp a dichotomy for an adequate treatment not only of Shingon, but also of much of Buddhist practice, which works on a repetitive experiential approach. While not disconnected from doctrine (note that the doctrine versus experience dichotomy needs also to be questioned), much practice in the Buddhist tradition is repetitive and primarily experiential. Contrary to Pyysiäinen's use of Whitehouse's paired categories, Buddhist practice is often repetitive without being semantic, and experiential without being highly emotional. It is, however, strongly embodied, a fact reflected in the slogan by which Shingon Buddhism is often characterized: *sokushin jōbutsu*. *Sokushin jōbutsu* literally means "becoming buddha in this body," despite it often being taken to refer to "this lifetime." Conversely, the emphasis on embodiment implies that the obscurations (Skt. *kleśa*, Jpn. *bonnō*) which impede us from living as awakened beings are not simply mental in character. Such mistaken conceptions and misplaced affections are themselves embodied activity that we repeatedly perform (Skt. *saṃsāra*) despite its unsatisfactory outcome (Skt. *duḥkha*). The third form of memory, procedural memory, fits Buddhist ritual practice much more adequately than do either semantic or episodic memory. The constructed character of the self suggests that the self-image can be transformed through embodied activity, and the work of Varela, Thompson, and Rosch has shown that embodied activity is central to cognition.<sup>39</sup>

#### THE CONTRIBUTION OF BUDDHISM TO A COGNITIVE THEORY OF RITUAL

In Pyysiäinen's view, repetition is linked with the acquisition of doctrinal claims as discursive elements in semantic memory in such a fashion that they are held as true beliefs, despite their counter-intuitive status. "Rituals form an artificial reality of sorts, set apart from ordinary

life, in which counter-intuitive representations acquire an aura of factuality."<sup>40</sup> In contrast, dramatic, emotionally charged events form the basis for episodic memories, ones which are highly specific in nature—one remembers not only the content of the initiatory teaching, for example, but also the specific participants in the ritual as well. This mode for Pyysiäinen is an emotional one in which brief, intense experiences provide religious experiences which serve to complement religious beliefs. This dichotomy between imagistic and doctrinal modes of religion, or put more simply the dichotomy between emotion and reason, is rooted in the Enlightenment recovery of Platonism, and is such a fundamental assumption in Western society that it has informed the modern study of religion from its origins in the nineteenth century to the present.<sup>41</sup> This suggests that the mind-body, reason-emotion, semantic-episodic distinction serves as a prototypical ontology structuring thought about ritual, but one which does not include Buddhist ritual in its scope.

#### RELIGIOUS PROTOTYPES IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND RITUAL

Ilkka Pyysiäinen opens his *How Religion Works* by noting that the study of religion has depended upon intuitive folk-categories informed by the religious traditions that are most familiar to the scholar. He distinguishes between the category of "religion" as an academic construct, and the phenomena that we identify as religious. The academic construction of the category "religion" does not mean that "scholars have also *invented* religion as a phenomenon." As a constructed category, however, "To the extent that the scholar is guided by the specific tradition(s) with which he or she is most familiar, those traditions exercise a prototype effect on the way the scholar recognizes something as an instance of religion."<sup>42</sup> By "prototype effect" Pyysiäinen is referring here to a cognitive, rather than logical, approach to concept formation.

The classic Aristotelian, or logical, model of concepts is known as "genus and species," meaning that one has a general idea of a category of things or genus, and then a set of discriminating characteristics which identify more specific items within the genus. The paradigmatic example is defining humans as "rational animals." Here humans are defined as being members of the genus animals, the defining characteristic of which is their rationality. While this may be useful epistemologically, it does not represent the way in which we actually form concepts.

Prototype theory, largely the work of Eleanor Rosch, suggests that we have a primary experience which then goes on to serve as the fundamental model for other members of the category. For example, for many people, robins are the prototypical bird. They are much more readily recognized as

members of the category of birds than, for example, penguins or even chickens might be.<sup>43</sup> As Pyysiäinen suggests, this insight is important in a critical approach to the way in which theories of religion are formed. Cognitive theories will need to not only take into account the universal characteristics of human cognition as Pyysiäinen has attempted to do, but also recognize the effects on theory when different religions are prototypical for the theorist. Buddhist thought and practice is important then to the development of a cognitive theory of religion, since it can not only provide important test cases for a cognitive theory of religion, but more fundamentally a radically different prototype for understanding what religion is.

## NOTES

1. Ilkka Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works: Towards a New Cognitive Science of Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 1–2.
2. Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works*, pp. 13–14.
3. Note that these are cognitive categories, i.e., psychological in character, and not proposed as metaphysical categories. I would myself understand these as an interaction between the experienced world and the developing cognitive abilities which are shared by humans. There is, perhaps not surprisingly, continuing debate over these ideas, much of which centers on the question of the influence of socially based linguistic categories. See Melissa Bowerman and Stephen C. Levinson, eds., *Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
4. Pascal Boyer, "Cognitive Constraints on Cultural Representations: Natural Ontologies and Religious Ideas," p. 401 in Lawrence A. Hirschfeld and Susan A. Gelman, eds., *Mapping the Mind: Domain Specificity in Cognition and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 391–411).
5. Boyer, "Cognitive Constraints on Cultural Representations," p. 393. See also Pascal Boyer and Sheila Walker, "Intuitive Ontology and Cultural Input in the Acquisition of Religious Concepts," in Karl S. Rosengren, Carl N. Johnson, and Paul L. Harris, eds., *Imagining the Impossible: Magical, Scientific, and Religious Thinking in Children* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 130–156), and Pascal Boyer, "Causal Understandings in Cultural Representations: Cognitive Constraints on Inferences from Cultural Input," in *Causal Cognition: A Multidisciplinary Debate*, Dan Sperber, David Premack, and Ann James Premack, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 615–644).
6. Boyer, "Cognitive Constraints," p. 395.
7. Frank C. Keil, *Concepts, Kinds, and Cognitive Development* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989). Keil himself discusses three different sorts of concepts: natural kinds, nominal kinds, and artifacts (see "Chapter 3: Natural Kinds, Nominal Kinds, and Artifacts"). See also Frank C. Keil, "The Birth and Nurturance of Concepts by Domains: The Origins of Concepts of Living Beings" in Hirschfeld and Gelman, eds., *Mapping the Mind* (Pp. 234–254).
8. Boyer, "Cognitive Constraints," pp. 400–401.
9. Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works*, p. 23.

10. Ibid., p. 20.
11. Ibid., p. 20.
12. Ibid., p. 23.
13. Ibid., p. 21.
14. Pyysiäinen's treatment of ritual *per se* occupies something under one third of one chapter (twenty pages out of a 236-page work), comprising first a critical review of some of the familiar theories of ritual, and then a constructive section, which is almost entirely based on two sources—Harvey Whitehouse's anthropological study of ritual in Melanesia, and Robert N. McCauley's critique of Whitehouse based on his own cognitive approach to the study of religion (with some references to McCauley's joint work with E. Thomas Lawson).
15. Harvey Whitehouse, *Arguments and Icons: Divergent Modes of Religiosity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 50.
16. Ibid., p. 110.
17. Ibid., p. 50.
18. Ibid., p. 153.
19. Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works*, p. 140.
20. Ibid., p. 140.
21. Ibid., p. 140.
22. Ibid., p. 140.
23. Ibid., p. 141.
24. Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon Books, 1994), esp. pp. 165–222. See also Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt, 1999).
25. Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, p. 174. The somatic marker hypothesis has some very close parallels in Buddhist *abhidharma* descriptions of mental processing. Pursuing this comparison, however, falls outside the scope of this essay.
26. Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works*, p. 141.
27. See for example Timothy P. McNamara, "Single-Code versus Multiple-Code Theories in Cognition," in Robert J. Sternberg, ed., *The Nature of Cognition* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), p. 116.
28. Alvin I. Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 369.
29. Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p. 369.

30. According to another author, such procedural knowledge also includes perceptual skills as well as motor and cognitive. Hans J. Markowitsch, "Neuroanatomy of Memory," in *The Oxford Handbook of Memory*, Endel Tulving and Fergus I. M. Craik, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 466.
31. Daniel L. Schachter, Anthony D. Wagner, and Randy L. Buckner, "Memory Systems of 1999," in *The Oxford Handbook of Memory*, p. 636.
32. For exemplary brief discussions of procedural memory, see George Botterill and Peter Carruthers, *The Philosophy of Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 37, and Francis Crick and Christof Koch, "Towards a Neurobiological Theory of Consciousness," in Ned Block, Owen Flanagan, and Güven Güzeldere, eds., *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 279.
33. Daniel L. Schachter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), pp. 134–135.
34. Schachter, *Searching for Memory*, p. 170.
35. Dorinne K. Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 106. Internal reference deleted.
36. The circumlocution here is to avoid use of the term "representations" which has become a key term for particular theories of cognition, i.e., the computational and connectionist approaches. On these matters, see Joseph de Rivera and Theodore R. Sarbin, eds., *Believed-In Imaginings: The Narrative Construction of Reality* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1998).
37. I employ the term "self-image" here in preference to such apparently synonymous terms as "self-representation" or "self-identity" in order to avoid many of the connotations those other terms carry. Self-image is intended simply to identify the full array of ways in which we represent ourselves both to others and to ourself. The dialectical or recursive nature of the process by which self-images are constructed, maintained, projected, and responded to by others not only represents the complexity of the process, but the difficulty of discussing it.
38. This interpretation is informed by the distinction clarified by Jacqueline Stone between two models of *hongaku* thought—one which sees the inherent awakened mind as occluded by obscurations and requiring cleansing, and the other in which all things simply as they are are awakened, buddha-nature. See Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

39. Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993). The embodied-enactive approach to cognition has received convincing support from work in robotics. See Andy Clark, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997).
40. Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works*, p. 140.
41. See Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), and Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
42. Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works*, p. 1.
43. Barbara Knowlton, "Declarative and Nondeclarative Knowledge: Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience," in Koen Lamberts and David Shanks, eds., *Knowledge, Concepts, and Categories* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 232.



## **Editorial Note: Visions and Visualization: Buddhist Praxis on the Silk Road**

It has long been thought that the changes Buddhism underwent as it moved over what we know as the Silk Road were influential in the development of Pure Land Buddhism. Most importantly, the kinds of visualization practices which are represented in Central Asian art seem to reflect the same kinds of practices that informed early Pure Land Buddhism. The following articles collectively give us a broader picture of the nature of Buddhism in Central Asia.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and the Stanford Buddhist Studies Center jointly hosted an international symposium on Silk Road Buddhism on Friday, 22 March 2002. The participants included Prof. Kogi Kudara (Ryukoku University), Prof. Meiji Yamada (Ryukoku University), Prof. Nobuyoshi Yamabe (then Kyushu Ryukoku Junior College, currently Tokyo University of Agriculture), and Prof. Ronald Davidson (Fairfield University), with Prof. Bruce Williams (IBS, Graduate Theological Union) as discussant.

We are pleased to present here revised versions of the papers presented at the symposium, together with an additional paper by Prof. Kudara which he has kindly allowed us to publish as well. We wish to extend our thanks to the participants, the Stanford Center for Buddhist Studies, and especially to Dr. Wendy Abraham for her assistance with this program. Additional support was received from the IBS's Japan Foundation endowment.

### **Richard K. Payne**

Dean, Institute of Buddhist Studies  
at the Graduate Theological Union



# A Rough Sketch of Central Asian Buddhism

**Kōgi Kudara**

Ryukoku University, Kyoto

## I. THE EVE OF THE JOURNEY TO CENTRAL ASIA

### 1. Shapeless Buddhism

The teachings of the Buddha (Gautama Siddhārtha) were compiled after his death and edited by his disciples to create the Buddhist scriptures. Originally the teachings were transmitted orally and did not exist as written texts. Writing systems existed in India during the time of the Buddha, but, according to Indian tradition, letters are for secular functions, not for recording the words of holy persons. The words of holy persons are to be recited aloud.

Indian people also refrained from depicting the physical form of holy persons. Although reliefs displaying the life story of the Buddha are found on the gates and fences of early *stūpa*-s erected to enshrine the Buddha's relics, the Buddha himself never appears; instead, the presence of the Buddha is expressed symbolically by a *bodhi* tree, a *dharm* wheel (*dharmacakra*), or his footprints. In this respect, similarly to the treatment of scriptures, Buddhists adhered to the contemporaneous Indian tradition not to express the physical form of holy persons. Buddhists in India maintained this tradition during the 400–500 years in which Buddhism remained within the Indian world. The tradition was broken when Buddhism spread to other countries.

### 2. Alexandros, Aśoka, and Kaniṣka

The Greek and Macedonian king Alexander the Great (Alexandros III, r. 336–323 BCE) waged a successful military campaign to defeat the Achaemenes Empire (550–330 BCE) in Persia. At one point he crossed the Indus River and entered India (326 BCE). In the wake of this eastbound campaign, many Greeks settled in the areas extending from present-day Iran through western Turkistan and northwest India and established cities named Alexandria in various places. After Alexander's death, the vast territories he had conquered were split into three countries following

struggles among his successors (Greek, *diadokoi*). The area between the Iranian plateau and west Turkistan eventually fell into the hands of the Seleuchos Empire of Syria (312–63 BCE). When the power of Seleuchos declined in the mid-third century BCE, independent countries emerged by seceding from the Syrian Empire.

Among these, three countries later encountered Buddhism. They were the Greek kingdom of Bactria (255–139 BCE) based around the upper Amu River and extending into northwestern India; the Iranian kingdom of Parthia (Arsakes, 248 BCE–226 CE) based around the southeastern part of the Caspian Sea; and the Indo-Scythaeon kingdom of Saka.

In the Indian subcontinent, the Indus River basin area, which had been a subject of Archaemenes Persia after the area was conquered by Dareios (Darius I, r. 522–486 BCE) in 520 (?) BCE, came under the control of the Greek powers after Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great. Meanwhile, in another part of India, King Candragupta (r. 317–293 BCE) established the Mauryan Empire with its capital city located in Pātaliputra (modern Patna). The expanding military force led by King Candragupta eventually swept the Greek powers out of the Indus River basin. At this time the Greek envoy Megasthenes, dispatched to settle a peace treaty with the Mauryan Empire, visited Pātaliputra and remained in India for the next ten years. After returning to Greece, he wrote a book entitled *Indika*, which is a valuable resource for historical materials on India at the time.

The fragmented Indian subcontinent was finally unified by King Aśoka (r. 268?–232? BCE), the third king of the Mauryan Empire. King Aśoka, whose empire included many different ethnic groups, sought for the ideals of nation-building and policy-making in the teachings of the Buddha and promoted these Buddhist ideals in the form of edicts issued throughout the empire. His edicts, known as the Aśokan Inscriptions, were carved on polished cliffs or stone pillars. The edicts discovered in north-west India (northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan) are written not only in the Brāhmī script for transcribing Indian languages, but also in Greek, Kharoṣṭhī, as well as Aramaic, because, as I mentioned above, Greeks and Iranians lived there. The Aśokan Inscriptions are one of the oldest existing written records in India and provide us with extremely significant linguistic and historical information.

King Aśoka promoted Buddhism by sending Buddhist missionaries to neighboring countries. These missionaries were perhaps also sent as the king's foreign ambassadors, and this represents the first time Buddhism traveled beyond the Indian world to become a world religion. It is known that the Aśokan missionaries first transmitted Buddhism to Sri Lanka. It is recorded that Buddhist missionaries were sent even as far as "Yonaloka" (a region inhabited by Greeks [*Ionial*]) to the north-west of India, probably in Bactria.

When the power of the Mauryan Empire declined, various tribal groups from Central Asia began invading its territories in the northwest. First the Greeks of the Bactrian kingdom arrived, invading as early as the second century BCE. When they lost their homeland in Bactria during the latter half of the second century BCE, they moved the base of their kingdom to the Panjab region. Among the Greek kings who migrated to India, Menandros (a.k.a. Milinda) is particularly noteworthy. According to a Buddhist text entitled *Milindapañhā* (*The Questions of King Milinda*), the king converted from his Greek religion to become a Buddhist as a result of his dialogues with the Buddhist monk Nāgasena.

The power of Greek kings declined during the first century BCE, and the Sakas and Parthians, Central Asian nomadic tribes, began invading northwest India. Then, in the latter half of the first century CE, the Kushana tribe moved south to invade northwest India. The Kushana tribe was an Iranian nomadic people who first spread into Central Asia. As their power increased, they began expanding their territory and invaded northwest India, eventually pushing deep into the Indian continent and occupying the central part of the Ganges River basin.

Buddhism's second step in becoming a world religion occurred during the reign of King Kaniška (r. 130?–155?, or 78?–103?) of the Kushan Empire as the religion was spread into Central Asia. The Kushan Empire also included many different ethnic groups within its territory. King Kaniška rose to power in about the first or second century of the common era. It seems that he promoted Buddhism *not out of belief* but because he had to adopt its egalitarian ideals in order to manage the different ethnic groups under his reign. He would not be able to reign over diverse ethnic groups by forcing the supremacy of either Indians or Iranians. The Kushan Empire established its capital city in Purushapura (modern Peshawar) in Gandhāra. To the south, the empire's territory reached to the central part of the Ganges River basin; to the north, it occupied the area where East and West Turkistan meet—a strategically significant point in Central Asia. Thus, situated between Han China in the east and the Roman Empire in the west, the Kushan Empire controlled the major east-west trading routes for the exchange of rare goods and cultural information. This afforded Buddhism an easy opportunity to expand to both the east and west.

### 3. Visualized Images and Texts

Let me return to the issue of representation that I began my presentation with. Greeks and Iranians, newly converted to Buddhism, were not bound by the Indian traditions that refrained from giving concrete expression to sacred objects or beings. They began transcribing the Buddhist

scriptures and producing images of the Buddha and bodhisattvas. This marked the birth of Buddhist statuary. Scholars have not yet determined whether the first Buddhist statues were created in Gandhāra or in the Indian region of Mathurā. Either way, it happened under the reign of the Kushan Empire. The transcription of Buddhist scriptures and the production of Buddhist statues occurred under similar circumstances. Once the Indian taboo was broken during the second century CE, the Buddhist scriptures transcribed into visible form and the visually appealing Buddhist statues became very effective means for the propagation of Buddhism, especially to the general public.

During this period, there also emerged a reform movement against the established sects of Nikāya Buddhism. This movement is known as Mahāyāna. The Mahāyāna movement was led by progressive Buddhists who possessed knowledge of broader world communities through encountering different ethnic groups and different cultures, as examined above. They invented new manners of expression in Buddhist thought as Buddhism met with the emergence of the new age. Mahāyāna Buddhists popularized Buddhism through the use of visualized forms of Buddhist statues and scriptures. Buddhism was now ready to spread into Central Asia.

After this point, the history of northwest India includes many unclear points. However, it is certain that it was a stable Buddhist area by the ninth century CE. During the time, numerous Buddhist temples, *stūpa*-s, monasteries, and cave temples were built and great numbers of Buddhist statues and scriptures were dedicated and enshrined in them. In Bāmiyān, two enormous Buddha images were carved into the mountains. In the seventh century, the Chinese monk Xuanzang (602–664) recorded that one of the two great Buddha figures shone with a gold color, which suggests that this statue (53 m) might originally have been decorated with gold leaf.

During the mid-seventh century CE, as Islam spread through the Iranian plateau, a dark shadow was cast over this Buddhist area. Since the establishment of the Turkish Ghazna (962–1186) and Ghor (1148?–1215) empires in Afghanistan, the area has been dominated by Muslims who destroyed Buddhist temples and their related facilities. The faces of the two great Bāmiyān Buddhas, including the forehead, eyes, and nose, were destroyed during this period. Because of this circumstance, we can study Buddhism in northwest India only through archaeological excavations of the sites of destroyed temples and *stūpa*-s. It is well known that many statues of Gandhāran Buddhas have been recovered from the earth, and that a large number of Indian Buddhist manuscripts were discovered in the caves of Gilgit in Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

Recently, Afghan refugees escaping the persecution of the Taliban regime by hiding in caves in the Bāmiyān valley discovered Buddhist

statues and several jars containing over ten thousand fragments of the ancient Indian Buddhist manuscripts. The manuscripts were secretly carried out of the country and, through a variety of routes, the majority of the manuscripts came into the possession of the Norwegian collector Martin Schoyen. A small portion of the manuscripts is also in the possession of a certain Japanese collector. The discovery of these Buddhist manuscripts (2nd–8th centuries CE) may well be compared with the Christian discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Although they are fragments, they are extremely important to academic studies because they were discovered within the Indian cultural area. An international research team has already been organized, and the results of its research are gradually becoming available. The first volume of the manuscript collection was published in the fall of 2001.<sup>2</sup> We expect great studies to come out of the research. These manuscripts may raise a host of new questions related to the study of early Mahāyāna Buddhism.

I am particularly interested in this collection because it includes the manuscripts of Bactrian Buddhist texts. Considering the historical circumstances, it was thought that there must be Buddhist texts in the Bactrian language, and it has been proven so. One such manuscript is written in cursive Greek script and contains passages praising various Buddhas. It is noteworthy that the name of Lokeśvararāja Buddha (*λογασφαροραζοβοδδο*) is included, which implies the existence of the worship of Amida Buddha among the people.<sup>3</sup>

Besides this Schoyen collection, the fragments of twenty-nine volumes from Gandhāra must be remarkable, too. These seem to be found in Hadda and are Buddhist texts written in Kharoṣṭhī script on birch skin during 1st–2nd centuries CE. The manuscripts are preserved in the British Library and studies of them are now being published.<sup>4</sup>

## II. Buddhist Eras in Central Asia (2nd–14th Centuries)

### 1. West Turkistan (2nd–8th Centuries)

Iranian people living in the western half of Central Asia (Western Turkistan) originally followed the Iranian religious tradition of Zoroastrianism. But because of the circumstances outlined above, some of them began to accept Buddhism. The major countries in this region were known in China. In the Chinese records, Parthia in northeastern Iran was known as Anxi; Kushana, established by the Kushan Empire, was Yueshi, or Yuezhi; and Sogdiana appears as Kangju. Buddhist monks from these countries traveled with merchants and came to China to propagate Buddhism.



We need to remember that those who first introduced Buddhism to China and participated in the early translations of Buddhist sutras into the Chinese language (early translation period, 178–316 CE) were not Indian monks but Iranian monks and lay persons (merchants). This is known from the names of the translators, who used the names of their home countries as their surnames. For example, An Shigao was from Parthia (Anxi); Zhiqian and Zhilou Jiachen were from Kushana (Yuezhi); and Kang Sengkai was from Samarkand (Kangju). Among the thirty-seven known names of translators active in the old-translation period, the majority are from countries in the Iranian cultural sphere.

These countries were eventually absorbed by Sasanian Persia (226–651). Sasanian Persia was established with the ideal of restoring Archaemenes Persia, which had been destroyed by Alexander the Great. Zoroastrianism was declared the state religion, but the practice of other religious traditions was tolerated. Therefore, within its territory, Buddhists, Christians (especially Nestorian Christians), Jews, and, later, followers of the Iranian religion Manichaeism, coexisted peacefully.

However, the age of Buddhism in the western part of Central Asia was overshadowed with dark clouds when the Sasanian Empire was destroyed in 651 by the attacks of rapidly emerging Islamic powers. In the eighth century, the Islamic armies began invading Turkistan. First they entered Sogdiana, and after winning a battle against the army of Tang China at the Talas River in 751, their invasions intensified. By the latter half of the ninth century, Islamic powers completely dominated the region of western Turkistan. As a result of the series of invasions by the Islamic powers, many Buddhists and Christians living in the areas, including Samarkand, Ferghana, Tashkent, Herat, and Bactria, either reluctantly converted to Islam or fled to eastern Turkistan.

Because western Turkistan was converted to Islam in this early period, it was long assumed that there was no chance that Buddhist texts would be discovered in this area. However, this assumption was shattered by the discovery of a group of manuscripts in northern Afghanistan. In the 1990s the manuscripts were taken out of Afghanistan and were eventually purchased by the British Library. Among the Bactrian manuscripts discovered in northern Afghanistan (most are official documents and secular writings), there were two Buddhist texts.<sup>5</sup> The texts mention “all Buddhas” and introduce the names of the six past Buddhas before Śākyamuni as well as the names of various bodhisattvas and other Indian deities. These texts are highly valued as Bactrian Buddhist texts discovered in western Turkistan. Because of the historical context mentioned above, it is highly possible that there might be Buddhist texts in the Parthian language here. However, such texts have yet to be discovered.

## 2. East Turkistan (2nd–14th Centuries)

### A. Early Buddhist Period (2nd–9th Centuries )

Moving to the eastern half of Central Asia (East Turkistan), it will be easier to understand the situation if we divide the area further into two parts: east and west. Iranian and Indian people were living in the oasis cities in the western part of East Turkistan, and Chinese were in the eastern part. The contact point between these two areas was around Turfan.

For the sake of convenience, I would like to list the major oasis city-states (including the names established later) from the western side: Shule in Kashgar, Yutian in Khotan on the southern route of the Western Regions, Guici in Kucha on the northern route of the Western Regions, and Gaochang in Turfan. Dunhuang is located in the east of Turfan and was essentially a Chinese city.

Iranians and Indians lived in the major cities on the Silk Route, such as Kashgar and Khotan, and Buddhism flourished. In the latter half of the tenth century, however, these cities fell to the hands of Islamic powers. In the areas around Kucha and Turfan, by the ninth century the ethnic composition was relatively complex, consisting of a mixture of Iranians, Indians, Tokharians, and Chinese peoples.

### Major Buddhist Cities

(1) Kashgar/Shule: A Buddhist city that flourished from the early period. In the latter half of the tenth century, it became a subject of the Islamic Qara Khan Empire and Buddhism was terminated.

(2) Khotan/Yutian: The Indian tradition of Buddhism flourished in this city from the early period. For example, in the remains of the city a manuscript of the *Dharmapada* in Gāndhārī transcribed in Kharoṣṭhī script around the second century CE was discovered. It is considered to be the oldest existing Buddhist manuscript. The king's family escaped to Dunhuang during the surge of Islamic powers.

(3) Kucha/Guici: Iranians, Indians, and Tokharians lived together in this city. The city maintained contacts with India. For example, the famous translator monk Kumārajīva of the fourth century CE is from Guici in Kucha. According to his biography, his father was an Indian who came to Kucha and married a daughter of the king's family. As a child, he was sent to north Indian countries to study. He later became famous in China as a translator of Buddhist

scriptures. This shows that there existed a strong international network of Buddhist society at that time. It also reflects the rich international flavor of the city. Many Indian Buddhist scriptures (mainly of Nikāya texts) as well as some Buddhist texts in the Tokharian language were discovered here. On the outskirts of Kucha, in Kizil and Qumtura, many cave temples with wall paintings were constructed.

(4) The significance of Tokhara may need further explanation. Tokharians were ethnically Indo-European. However, linguistically they are not related to the eastern branch of Indo-Iranian language families. Their language is closer to the western branch of Indo-European languages, such as Greek or Latin. This ethnic group was supposed to have moved to the European continent in the west, but for unknown reasons they strayed into the northern edge of the Taklamakan desert in the east and settled near Kucha and Turfan.

(5) Turfan / Gaochang: Turfan is an oasis city surrounded by mountains. It flourished as a center of Buddhism in East Turkistan until the fourteenth century. Many different ethnic groups coexisted in this area, including Iranians, Indians, Tokharians, and Chinese. Various languages, scripts, and religious traditions could be found in Turfan. In the outskirts of the city, in Bezeklik, Toyoq, and Murtuq, many cave temples with wall paintings were constructed.

(6) Dunhuang: Chinese settled in this city from the early period. Although occasionally the city was occupied by Tibetans, it was generally maintained as a stronghold of Chinese Buddhist society. It is an important site for Buddhist cultural heritage, as seen in Magaoku, the Cave of One Thousand Buddhas. In Dunhuang, the Archives Cave (Cave 17) became particularly famous for the discovery of tens of thousands of Buddhist manuscripts. These manuscripts were sealed for about one thousand years, and since many of them are lost or unknown in China, their academic value is enormous. The majority of the discovered manuscripts are written in Chinese, followed by Tibetan texts. The collection also includes Buddhist texts written in Uigur, Sogdian, as well as Tokharian, but the numbers of these are very small. The Archives Cave appears to have been sealed in the first half of the eleventh century.

## B. Later Buddhistic Period (9th–mid-14th Centuries)

As examined above, during the early Buddhist period different ethnic groups and tribes maintained their own cultural identities. While the degree of influence from Indian, Iranian, or Chinese cultures varied depending on the geographical area, each group encountered Buddhism and accepted it. However, the social context allowing for a balanced coexistence of different ethnic groups faced a drastic change from the ninth century. The change started with the expansion of the Turkish Uigur people along the Silk Route which eventually created the situation in which Central Asia could genuinely be called Turkistan (“domain [*stan*] of the Turks”).

Turks were originally nomadic people living in the Mongolian steppes. During the mid-eighth century CE, the Empire of East Uigur Khagan was established and controlled the Mongolian steppes for the next hundred years. In this period the Uigurs were introduced to Manichaeism by the Sogdian people. They also created a writing system for their language based on Sogdian scripts, resulting in a relatively advanced civilization within the empire. The Uigur Empire was destroyed by the Turkish Kirghiz people around 840 and dispersed into tribal groups. Some Uigur tribes moved into Shazhou, the Turfan basin, and Kucha to survive and eventually established two kingdoms.

One of these was the Kingdom of Tianshan Uigur centered in Beiting (Biš Baliq in Uigur) and Qočo (Turfan). This kingdom, together with the Mongol Yuan Dynasty, lasted for three hundred years, until the mid-fourteenth century. The other was the Kingdom of Hexi Uigur established in Gansu. This kingdom existed for about 130 years until it was destroyed by the attacks of Xixia.

The influences brought by Uigurs in the history and culture of the Silk Route area are very significant. The Uigurs flourished by occupying the major trading centers on the Silk Route. They actively absorbed the cultural heritages of the earlier Buddhist residents. Gradually they blended ethnically with Iranians, Indians, and Tokharians, who are Caucasians and whose languages are Indo-European.

One more thing that is noteworthy about the role of the Uigur people is their activities under the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Mongolian leader Chinghiz Khan (r. 1205–27) began his campaign for world domination. At that time, the Uigur people voluntarily became Mongolian subjects and offered their support for the Mongols’ plan. This was a great boon to the Mongols, because the Uigurs, with three hundred years of experience along the Silk Route, were culturally advanced and had accumulated a high level of knowledge about the ethnic groups, geography, languages, and religious traditions both in the

east and the west. Behind the establishment of the Mongolian Empire was the great contribution of knowledge and information by the Uigur people. Due to those contributions, the homelands of the Uigurs were protected by the Mongols—very exceptional treatment for a minority ethnic group under the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1260–1367). Uigur people were granted the status of second rank in the empire's ethnic hierarchy and played significant roles in politics, economics, culture, and religion as the leaders of "people of colored eyes."

For example, the Mongols, who did not have a writing system, first borrowed Uigur scripts to eventually develop Mongolian scripts. Most Uigur civilian officers working in the Mongolian capital city Dadu (modern Beijing) as officers of the "people of colored eyes" were Buddhists. They used blockprinting, the most advanced printing technology of the time, to publish great numbers of Buddhist texts and sent them to the people living in their homeland in the Turfan area. Many printed texts discovered in East Turkistan were texts published during the Yuan Dynasty, and most of the printed materials are Buddhist texts. They are printed not only in Uigur but include texts in Sanskrit and Xixia language. It is known that the people who printed and bound these texts were Chinese because the page numbers are in Chinese characters.

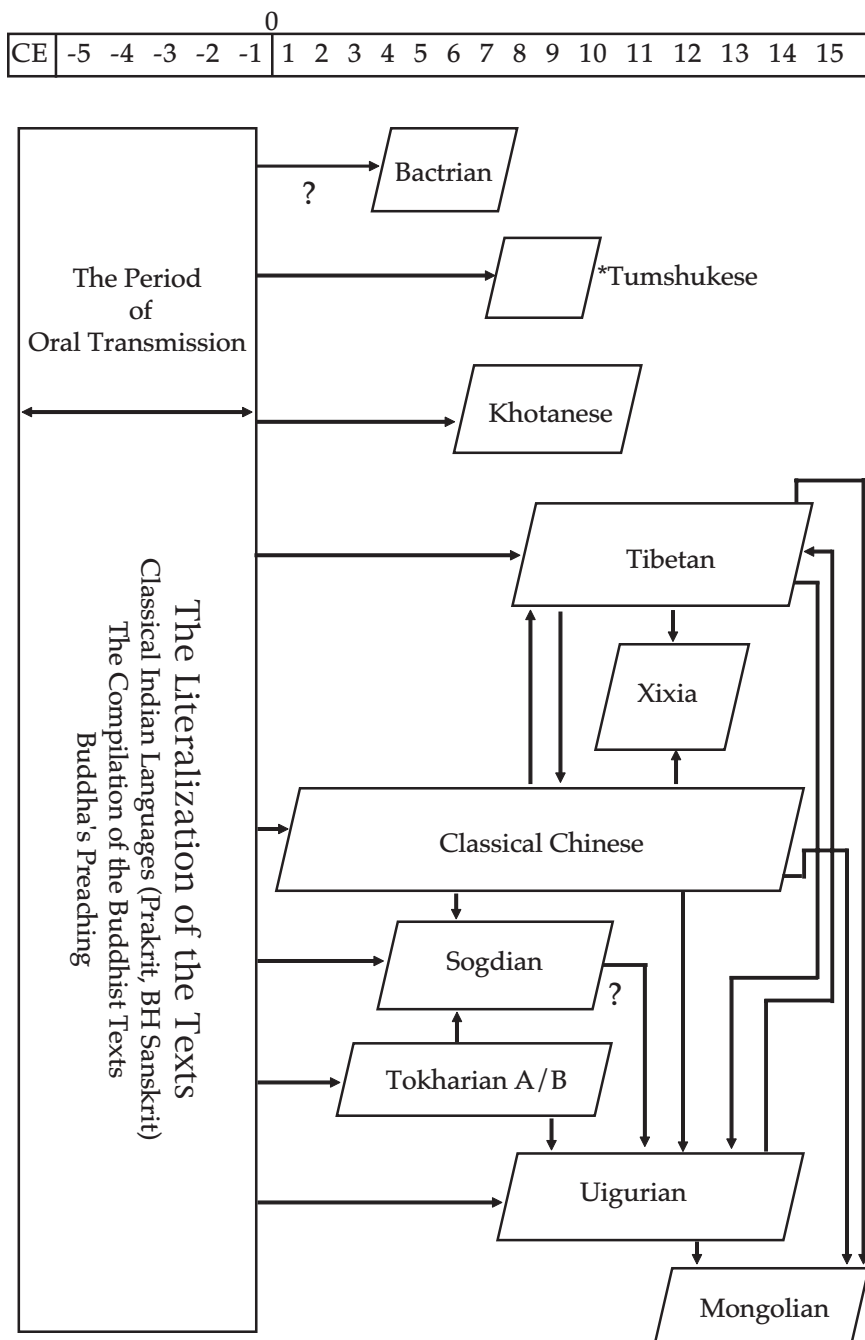
Here I would like to point out the number of languages from which Uigurs were translating Buddhist texts into their own, as shown in Chart A.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the Uigurs followed the tradition of their predecessors to restore the cave temples, add balcony temples, and repaint Buddhist wall paintings at such sites as Bezeklik.

Uigur Buddhism was the last of the Buddhist cultures that flourished in East Turkistan and came to the end in the mid-fourteenth century together with the destruction of the Yuan Empire.

### III. Results of the Philological Studies on Central Asian Buddhist Texts

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the major powers in Europe and Japan began sending expeditions to excavate Buddhist sites in eastern Turkistan. The Japanese Otani expeditions and German expeditions were both focused on the area between Turfan and Kucha. Their collections are, therefore, related to each other. The textual material collected by the German expeditions reportedly includes twenty-four writing systems in seventeen languages, a fact which stunned the academic circles of Oriental Studies of the early twentieth century. A part of the collections from the Otani expeditions<sup>7</sup> is stored at Ryukoku University—where I am currently affiliated—and I have examined the existing text materials and discovered that they include thirteen writing systems in fifteen languages.<sup>8</sup>

Chart A: Outlook of the Translation Relationship of the Buddhist Texts in Central Asia



Since 1965, we have been involved in a cooperative research project with German scholars working on the Buddhist texts discovered at Turfan. This cooperative study includes research on Buddhist materials in Chinese,<sup>9</sup> Uigur,<sup>10</sup> and Sogdian<sup>11</sup> languages. We have already made public some of the results of our research project, and we will continue to publish them in the future. I would like to discuss a few issues that have come out of the cooperative research project and which I believe are significant in the philological study of Buddhist texts.

The texts include previously unknown Buddhist materials. In China, Buddhist scriptures were compiled into the Chinese Buddhist canon, which includes texts translated into Chinese and Chinese commentaries on the translated texts. However, we should not trust that all the Chinese Buddhist scriptures are preserved in the currently existing Chinese Buddhist canon. There were many Buddhist texts that never reached the center of Chinese culture (modern Xian) and were not incorporated in the Chinese canon (i.e., Buddhist texts that were not introduced to Central China). Some texts reached Central China and their existence was once recorded, but they were lost before they were included in the canon due to wars or other circumstances (i.e., Buddhist texts that were lost in China). Some of these Chinese texts have now been discovered in Central Asia.

For example, the fragments of Chinese Buddhist texts discovered in Turfan include a formerly unknown Chinese translation of the *Wu liang shou jing* (cf. Plate A).<sup>12</sup> The text was translated from *Sukhāvatiyūha* in Sanskrit. However, this text is not included in the Chinese Buddhist canon. This is just one of the examples of lost Chinese Buddhist texts.

The Uigur materials include a collection of manuscripts with the abbreviated title Abitaki. Abitaki is a phonetic transcription of the Chinese title *Amituo jing*. Among the texts important for the worship of Amida Buddha and his Pure Land, there is a sutra of the same name, *Amitou jing*, translated by Kumārajīva, but the Uigur manuscript is not a translation of Kumārajīva's work. The Uigur text is in four volumes and consists of citations of different types of scriptures (sutras, commentaries, records of doctrinal discussions, and biographies of monks and lay persons) related to Amida worship.<sup>13</sup> It is certain that the text was translated from sources originally written in Chinese. The Chinese originals, however, have been lost in China. By studying these Uigur translations, it is possible to reconstruct the lost original Chinese texts to a certain degree of accuracy. I believe we can publish the results of this cooperative research project in English within a few years.

This concludes my outline of Central Asian Buddhism and discussion of some of the most recent information and research on Central Asian Buddhist materials.



Plate A: A Fragment of an Unknown Chinese  
Version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*



## NOTES

1. Nalinaksha Dutt, et al., eds., *Gilgit Manuscripts*, 4 vols. (Calcutta: J.C. Sarkhel, vol. 1, 1939; vol. 2, 1941, 1953, and 1954; vol. 3, part 1, 1947; vol. 4, 1959).
2. Jens Braarvig, ed., *Buddhist Manuscripts*, 2 vols., Manuscripts in the Schoyen Collection (Oslo: Hermes, 2000–2002).
3. Nicholas Sims-Williams, "A Bactrian Buddhist Manuscript," in Jens Braarvig, ed., *Buddhist Manuscripts*, vol. 1, pp. 275–277; esp. verso 3.
4. Richard Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhi Fragments* (Seattle: The British Library and University of Washington Press, 1999); Richard Salomon, *A Gāndhārī Version of the Rhinoceros Sutra*, Gandhāran Buddhist Texts 1 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); Fumio Enomoto, "The Discovery of the Oldest Buddhist Manuscripts," *The Eastern Buddhist* 23-1 (2000): pp. 157–166; Mark Allon, *Three Gāndhārī Ekottariāgama-Type Sūtras*, Gandhāran Buddhist Texts 2 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).
5. Cf. Nicholas Sims-Williams, "New Findings in Ancient Afghanistan: The Bactrian Documents Discovered from the Northern Hindu-Kush," <http://www.gengo.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~hkum/bactrian.html>.
6. This chart also appears in my article, "The Buddhist Culture of the Old Uigur Peoples," *Pacific World*, Third Series, 4 (2002): p. 189, in this issue and is further explained there.
7. Concerning the historical background and the academic significances of the Otani expeditions, cf. Kudara Kogi, "Silk Road and Its Culture: The View of a Japanese Scholar," in *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berichte und Abhandlungen*, Band 6 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1999), pp. 331–347.
8. The thirteen writing systems are: Brāhmī, Tibetan, Karoṣṭhī, Runic, Manichean, Sogdian, Syrian, Uigur, Mongol, Arabic, Chinese, Xixia (Tangut), and 'Phags-pa scripts. The fifteen languages are: Sanskrit, Prakrit, Middle Persian, Khotan-Saka, Parthian, Sogdian, Tokharian B, Syrian, Chinese, Tibetan, Old Turkish, Uigur, Xixia (Tangut), Mongolian, and Arabic languages.
9. *Katalog chinesischer buddhistischer Textfragmente*, Band 1, Berliner Turfantexte VI (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975); *Katalog chinesischer buddhistischer Textfragmente*, Band 2, Berliner Turfantexte VI (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985).
10. Kudara Kogi, "Zwei verirrte Blätter des uigurischen Goldglanz-Sutras im Etnografiska Museum, Stockholm," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen*

*Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Band 132-2 (1982): pp. 336–347 (with Klaus Röhrborn); “Uigurische Āgama-Fragmente (1),” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 10-2 (1983): pp. 269–318 (with Peter Zieme); “Die Alttürkischen Abitaki-Fragmente des Etnografya Müzesi, Ankara,” *Turcica: Revue d’Etudes Turques*, Tome 16 (1984): pp. 13–28, Pl. i–v (with Ahment Temir and Klaus Röhrborn); “Fragmente zweier unbekannter Handschriften der Xuanzang-Biographie,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 11-1 (1984): pp. 136–150 (with Peter Zieme); *Uigurugo no Kanmuryōjyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1985) (with Peter Zieme); “Chinesisch-alttürkische Fragmente des ‘Schwitzbad-Sutras,’” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 15-1 (1988): pp. 182–191 (with Peter Zieme); “Uigurische Āgama-Fragmente (2),” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 17-1 (1990): pp. 130–145, tafel. III–VIII (with Peter Zieme); “Uigurische Āgama-Fragmente (3),” *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū shi* 34 (1995): pp. 23–84 (with Peter Zieme); “Two New Fragments of the Larger *Sukhāvativyūhasūtra* in Uigur,” *Nairiku Ajia Gengo-no Kenkyū* 12, (1997): pp. 73–82 (with Peter Zieme).

11. Kudara Kōgi, “Fragmente einer soghdischen Handschrift des *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 15-1 (1988): pp. 174–181, tafel. I–II (with Werner Sundermann); “Fragmente einer soghdischen Handschrift des *Viśeṣacinti-brahma-paripṛcchā-sūtra*,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 18-2 (1991): pp. 246–263, tafel. I–II (with Werner Sundermann); “Ein weiteres Fragment einer soghdischen Uebersetzung des *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaidūrya-prabhatathāgatasūtra*,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 19-2 (1992): pp. 350–358 (with Werner Sundermann); *Irango danpen shūsei: Ōtani tankentai shūshū Ryūkoku daigaku shōzō Chūō Ajia shutsudo Irango shiryō*, Ryūkoku daigaku zenpon sōsho, vol. 17, (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1997) (with Yutaka Yoshida and Werner Sundermann); “A Second Text of the Sogdian *Viśeṣacinti-brahma-paripṛcchā-sūtra*,” *Nairiku Ajia gengo-no kenkyū* 13 (1998): pp. 111–128 (with Werner Sundermann).

12. Kudara Kōgi, “Kanyaku *Muryōjyū* no shinihon danpen,” *Indo tetsugaku to Bukkyō: Fujita Kōtatsu hakase kanreki kinen Ronshū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1989), pp. 373–394.

13. Peter Zieme and Kudara Kōgi, *Uigurugo no Kanmuryōjyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1985), pp. 23–24.



# Buddhism of Bāmiyān<sup>1</sup>

**Meiji Yamada**

Ryukoku University, Kyoto

## I. INTRODUCTION

IT APPEARS THAT THE NOMADIC people of the arid world did not attach much importance to documentary records. Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism have an abundance of textual materials, but not a single text belonging to Afghanistan Buddhism has been found. A few Buddhist texts have been unearthed from archeological sites, but they are all items transmitted from India.

Various sorts of inscriptions have also been exhumed, but all are exclusively based on non-native characters such as Aram and Greek, as well as Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī characters of India. Having no written language of their own, any will on their part to inscribe something in writing is practically undetectable. Here, the characteristic of Afghanistan Buddhists—weak in conceptual ideality, yet active and pragmatic—is clearly evident.

Although Bāmiyān Buddhists handed down no records at all of their own activities or ideas, they left behind an enormous amount of material objects associated with their ideas and faith. That very few matters were recorded while a great many objects were produced reveals one aspect of the characteristic of Afghanistan, or Western Turkistan Buddhism. The existence of objects left behind in great quantities certainly informs us that Buddhism took root and prevailed in this area. However, they merely continue to exist in silence and do not clearly tell us about the contents of that form of Buddhism.

## II. THE ACCOUNTS OF HSÜAN-TSANG

The only materials which contain mention of Bāmiyān Buddhism are the accounts of Hsüan-tsang and Hui-ch'ao, and even they are not very detailed. This is a summary of the accounts referring to Buddhism in the records of Hsüan-tsang's travels, *The Record of the West in the Great T'ang Period*:

1. The religious minds of people in Bāmiyān are deeper than of those in Tokharistan (northern Afghanistan); they revere everything from the Three Treasures to the one hundred deities. The heavenly deities reveal good omens to the traders who go to and from this land.
2. There are scores of monasteries, and thousands of monks who study the Lokottara-vāda.
3. To the northeast of the king's palace is a stone image of a standing Buddha; it is 140–150 feet in height and its color is a brilliant gold.
4. To the east of the eastern temple built by the previous king is a statue of a standing Śākyamuni Buddha made of brass, over 100 feet in height.
5. In a temple located about half a mile from the palace is a statue of a reclining Buddha about to enter nirvana; it is over 1,000 feet in length.
6. The king has established a "great assembly of indiscriminate giving" and is fervent in the practice of making donations.
7. There is a monastery over 60 miles to the southeast;<sup>2</sup> there they preserve the "Buddha tooth," "pratyeka-buddha tooth," "golden-wheel king tooth," and robe and bowl of Arhat Sanakavasa.

The accounts set out in the biography of Hsüan-tsang contain no great discrepancies from the ones noted above. It just mentions, in one description not conveyed in the *Record of the West*, that two scholar-monks with profound understanding of the teaching of Mahāsaṃghika, that is, Āryadaśa and Āryasena, guided Hsüan-tsang.

Hui-ch'ao did nothing more than report about the state of Buddhism that, "Everyone from the king to the chief governors and the common people greatly revere the Three Treasures. There are many temples and monks. They practice the teachings of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna." In contrast to Hsüan-tsang, who states that they study the Lokottara-vāda, and the biography of Hsüan-tsang, which states there are scholar-monks of the Mahāsaṃghika, Hui-ch'ao reports that they are studying both the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna.

### III. SECTS AND TEMPLES

Although it contains barren and arid regions in its interior, India is basically a warm and moist agricultural region of abundant harvests.



Religions bred here were quite rich in speculative thinking, which was characteristic of a farming culture, conjoined with a conceptuality that was essentially Aryan. They exhibited remarkable advances in doctrinal rather than in intuitive respects.

On the other hand, the arid regions of Asia that stretched out to the west to its border at Gandhāra did not represent a soil accepting of a high degree metaphysical discussion or complex doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Much less so would the Buddhists of Afghanistan have been able to understand the intricate sectarian debates developed in India, which was so different in language, ethnicity, climate, and culture. We are only able to get a sense of doctrine from Bāmiyān through Hsüan-tsang's accounts that the Lokottara-vāda were engaged in studies and the several copied manuscripts that have been unearthed. As we will explain later, these copies did not exist as doctrinal tracts, but were regarded as the objects of worship. The kind of Buddhism that is seen here was filled with visual objects of worship extraordinarily exaggerated both in quality and quantity.

#### IV. EXCAVATED MANUSCRIPTS

From Afghanistan, including Gandhāra, to western Turkistan, present Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tadjikistan, surprisingly few manuscripts have been excavated in comparison to the large number of excavated Buddha relics. In particular, when one compares them to the large number of manuscripts exhumed from Khotan, Turfan, and Lu-lan in the Takla-makan area of Xingjiang Province in China, one might say that they are almost non-existent. An example of this scarcity can be found in Bāmiyān. The only reports of manuscripts beside those involve the ones thought to be second to fourth century Nikāya texts excavated from the Kara-tepe Temple located in the outskirts of Termez on the northern shore of the Oxas River, the manuscripts with unidentified contents from the Gyaaur-kara excavation in the vicinity of Merv in Parthia, and the Kharoṣṭhī fragments obtained in the Tapa Sardar excavation.

A rare example of manuscripts in the west of Pamir is a group discovered in Bāmiyān by M. Hackin in 1930 within a stone cave on the eastern side of a great Buddha image, which was some 38 meters (at the time it was believed to be 35 meters) in height. Its birch bark fragments had rotted away to the state where they could not be saved. Among the several palm leaves that were barely salvaged, nine pieces were reported on by Sylvain Lévi.<sup>4</sup> Other than the two written in slanting Gupta-style characters, they are clearly from discontinuous, separate texts and are not related with each other. It is reported that the place of their discovery was beneath a collapsed ceiling and that they were located between carvings on the face of the wall.



The circumstances of the excavation of the manuscripts and the composition of the copies' contents themselves clearly tell us that they were not texts used for the purpose of reciting the sutras or for study. This group of manuscripts is a compilation of single pages from expositions likely from the Sarvāstivāda traditions, as well as Mahāsaṃghika *vinaya* tracts respectively. Their various contents are completely disjointed.

A small number of palm leaf manuscripts have been recovered in Afghanistan from the ruins of the citadel of Shahr-i-Zohak located on a precipice some 10 miles to the east of Bāmiyān.<sup>5</sup> A complete one-page document is a medical text unrelated to Buddhism. There are also three slightly larger sheets, which originally formed a single leaf that was torn into three parts. Together they belong to the later Gupta Brāhmī characters of the sixth or seventh centuries. The former consists of four lines while the latter includes six lines, and they are clearly from different texts. In addition, a small fragment of a manuscript written in Kharoṣṭhī characters was exhumed along with them. In any event, none of them are thought to be texts used for the purpose of study.

What significance can be drawn then from the manner in which these manuscripts have survived? To the monks and lay followers in Afghanistan the manuscripts of texts written in Sanskrit, which had come in from India, were considered more as relics of the Buddha that were to be enshrined within the *stūpa*-s than as books conveying doctrine or theory. Their existence was thought to be sanctified since they represented the sacred Buddha. Thus, rather than objects of study they were looked upon as objects of worship.

As a result of conflict and hostilities that took place continuously since 1979, there were no discoveries for over ten years of new historical materials related to Afghanistan's ancient history. However, within a few years some surprising, newly discovered historical materials were reported. They are:

1. The Robatak Inscription of Kaniṣka in the Bactrian language was found in 1993 at the Robatak Pass, 30 kilometers north of Surkh-kotal, where an inscribed Kaniṣka image had been found.
2. Twenty-nine birch bark scrolls that had been stored in five pots, which were thought to have been unearthed in Hadda, Afghanistan. These Kharoṣṭhī scrolls, which were acquired by the British Library in 1996 or 1997, are thought to be from the first or second century CE, and are perhaps the oldest Buddhist manuscripts known.
3. Over ten thousand Buddhist fragmental manuscripts on palm leaves, birch bark, leather, and other materials, which were added to the collection of Martin Schøyen of Norway.

These items are well known among scholars, having been introduced by Nicholas Sims-Williams of the University of London, Richard Solomon of the University of Washington, Jens Braarvig of the University of Oslo, and others. These materials are all important for research into Afghanistan's ancient history and Buddhist history as well.

The fragments referred to in item three above were reported to have been scattered about in a natural cave some 30, 50, or 90 kilometers north of the Bāmiyān Valley. It was said that they were brought out of the country to Peshawar by an Afghan refugee. After passing through many hands, they came into the possession of a dealer in London. Mr. Schøyen from Norway bought up ten fragments, and a Japanese individual purchased around one hundred fragments. Very possibly, some more fragments belonging to the same group will come out to the market.

From the form of the characters of these manuscripts, it is known that the oldest manuscript belongs to the second century CE, and the latest ones to the eighth century. According to a report by a research group at the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Oslo, they include such Mahāyāna scriptures as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, and the *Śrīmālādevī-siṃhanāda-nirdeśa* (Jpn. *Shōmangyō*), as well as the *Mahāsaṃghika Vinaya*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, and so on.

I find it quite shocking that these were discovered in the northern areas of Bāmiyān. As I have previously mentioned, the Buddhism that had gained popularity in Afghanistan did not focus on monks who held doctrine in high regard. Rather, I believe that it was a Buddhism centered on lay followers who worshipped religious relics, made offerings, and engaged in supplicatory prayer. Such Buddhism was supported in particular by merchants and commercial traders. However, these many texts from the periphery of Bāmiyān are not objects of worship. They were discovered in the form of texts written for educational purposes.

Prof. Kazunobu Matsuda of Bukkyō University in Kyoto is a member of the Oslo research group, and continues to do research on the Schøyen Collection. He conducted an extremely interesting lecture in Kyoto, upon his return from Norway. In it, he confirmed that a fragment from the Schøyen Collection was one of the manuscripts from Bāmiyān about which Sylvain Lévi had written a paper in the *Journal Asiatique* in 1932. He made this report as he showed slides of the manuscript. The manuscript about which Sylvain Lévi had written was later stored in the Kabul Museum. In 1997, I found the Kabul Museum was ruined, and the items in its collection completely missing.

Now there is no longer any need to believe the story about how an Afghan refugee accidentally discovered the manuscripts in a cave near Bāmiyān and brought them to Peshawar. Those manuscripts were very possibly part of the collection formerly stored in the Kabul Museum. Moreover, the existence of that cave near Bāmiyān is also doubtful.

However, this is no reason to decrease the value of these manuscripts. I would like to devote more time and thought to this issue. I simply mention it to you now because there is value in reporting to you these facts, which have only recently come to light.

## V. THE STRATIFIED STRUCTURE OF THE BUDDHIST ORDER

The Buddhist order possessed a two-layered structure from the earliest times. There were the groups of monks or renunciants who sought emancipation through the rigorous practice of the three types of learning (*tisrah śikṣāḥ*)—*sīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā*. The second group was that of laypersons or householders who aspired for prosperity (*hita*) and happiness (*sukha*) in the world to come through the accumulation of roots of merit (*kuśala-mūla*) derived from the practices of giving (*dāna*), veneration (*pūjana*) and worship (*vandana*). The former can be said to correspond to a "Buddhism of emancipation," that is, where one seeks to attain the Other Shore of enlightenment through one's own efforts in studying the doctrine, upholding the precepts, and engaging in *dhyāna* practices, principally meditation and contemplation. The latter might be referred to as "Buddhism of salvation," that is, one in which a person prays for salvation through the power of the transcendent Buddha as a recompense for one's accumulated merit.

The Pali *Mahāparinibbana-suttanta*<sup>6</sup> contains an account in which Ānanda asks Śākyamuni Buddha about how to treat Śākyamuni's body after his death. In response, Śākyamuni states,

O Ānanda. You should not be worried about venerating the remains of the Tathāgata. O Ānanda. You should strive to realize the highest good. You should practice the highest good. You should dwell in the highest good, with diligence and devotion and without self-indulgence. O Ānanda. There are scholars of Kṣatriya class, scholars of the Brahman class, and scholars among the householders who harbor faith in the Tathāgata. These people will venerate the remains of the Tathāgata.

This account, as well as the famous legend of the division of the Buddha's relics into eight parts,<sup>7</sup> gives clear expression to the notion that participation in veneration of the Buddha's remains, that is, *stūpa* worship, was mainly undertaken by lay householders and not by renunciants.

The unique feature of Buddhist relics in the regions to the west of northwestern India (not only Bāmiyān) is the existence of an overwhelmingly large number of sacred places such as *stūpa* or *caitya* in comparison with the number of *vihāra*, or monasteries where monks reside. In the areas

surrounding them a great many miniature votive *stūpa*-s and other votive articles have been unearthed, but few Buddhist texts, the existence of which would suggest the flourishing of doctrinal developments, have been recovered. Further, we must take note of the narrative elements, as well as elements of folk belief which can be richly seen in the relics of antiquarian art. Their unique feature lies in their having a character which coincided with a form of faith possessed by lay believers, but which was, within the actual undercurrent of Indian Buddhist history, seldom outwardly manifested as such in Buddhist literature.

## VI. MIXTURE WITH LOCAL FOLK BELIEFS

It is unthinkable that the development of Buddhism in India could have been shouldered solely by practicing monks or by scholar-monks in the upper stratum of the *saṃgha*. Common lay believers rarely make appearances in Buddhist literature. Yet, any attempt to undertake a reconstruction of Indian Buddhist history while ignoring the existence of an overwhelmingly large number of householders who supported the foundations of the Buddhist order would limit one's understanding to dogmatic or doctrinal aspects. If one were to discuss Central Asian Buddhism only from the side of dogmatic or doctrinal history, one would not be able to see very much there.

Viewing Buddhism from the standpoint of its transmission through three countries—India, China, and Japan—would disclose the development of a theoretical Buddhism that was filled with metaphysical debate. It would not reveal the overall character of Buddhism, which brought together the faith and beliefs of many ignorant and illiterate common people during nearly a thousand years in the non-agricultural regions of Central Asia. As we have stated above, the character that one can strongly sense in the Buddhism of Central Asia is that of a Buddhism of the *caitya*, that is, a Buddhism of worship and salvation, which was completely different in nature from a Buddhism of doctrine and emancipation centered on the *vihāra*, or, monastery.

It is clear that the phrase "one hundred deities" that appears within Hsüan-tsang's writings regarding Ghazni refers to non-Buddhist deities, while the phrase "heavenly deity" is a reference to a Hindu deity, possibly *Sūrya*, the Sun-deity. However, it is not known whether "heavenly deities" also refers to deities of other paths in general, or whether it is limited to Hindu deities. Most likely it is the former. In any case, this state in which a "myriad monks and followers" in this land who "revere the Three Treasures" of Buddhism while they also "pray to the one hundred deities" are "learning the Mahāyāna teaching" creates the strong sense of a fairly chaotic hodgepodge of magical beliefs. Further, the character of the "heav-

only deities" who, even among the one hundred deities, attracted particular reverence was to "bring to fulfillment the aspirations of those who seek and believe, and bring calamity upon those who slight them." This bears a close resemblance to the attitude of faith of lay believers who prayed for benefit and reverently brought offerings to the *stūpa* in search of prosperity.

## VII. TEMPLES AS SACRED PLACES

The central portion of Tapa Sardar, Ghazni, is filled with excessively adorned objects of worship. On the right-hand wall of the shrine in chapel twenty-three on the southern side of the central *stūpa* there remains part of a mud image of Durga, a female deity (*mahīśāsura-mardini*) slaying a demon with the head of a water buffalo. Nothing remains of the principal Buddha on the front facade, but on the left-hand wall a Buddha image survives. The mixture with Hindu images can be clearly seen, corresponding with Hsüan-tsang's accounts. It is also thought that a *vihāra* might have existed at the foot of the hill. Despite that, however, we can only think that the entire rise must have been a mammoth sacred place. Aside from that, in the surrounding areas there are many complicated and strange objects the use of which is difficult to explain. The area, however, has had the misfortune of being embroiled in recent hostilities, and as the result, the excavation was suspended and reports about it are only being partially made.

At the temple ruins of Fondokistan as well it appears that a single hill was made into a shrine.<sup>8</sup> The treeless peak in the shape of an inverted mixing bowl towers in height approximately 100 meters over the village at its base. In the middle courtyard at the summit are the ruins of a *stūpa*. The wall around its perimeter contains only worship halls filled with niches for Buddha images and there is no room there to construct a *vihāra*.

In Tapa Shotor near Hadda as well there are few elements that would make up a monastic temple. It is believed to be a sacred place for pilgrimages, which were made primarily to *stūpa*-s. The periphery of the main monument in the *stūpa* temple is fully encircled with the small votive *stūpa*-s. The outer balcony is lined with niches for the placement of images and, beginning with a fish-porch of odd construction which is thought to represent a scene from a fable centering around Apalala, the Dragon King, there are certainly many elements which appeal to one's visual sense.

The neighboring *caitya* to the north is famous for its image of Hercules holding a *vajra*. Besides that, other curious items include the ten great disciples found on the surface of a wall of a long and narrow hall, which is halfway underground, and the wall painting with a skeleton at its center. This hall, with its long and narrow shape, its mural suggestive of meaning and, its half-way underground structure having its air of mystery could not

have been an assembly hall. Instead, one has to believe that it was the site of some kind of ritual or a place to undergo the practice of contemplation on the impurity of the body.

The same kind of curiously constructed cave temple and *stūpa*-s can be found in Haibak, which is to the north over the Hindu-kush mountains.<sup>9</sup> At the summit of 40 meter-high limestone hill, there is a *stūpa* some 8 meters in diameter carved out by digging down into the corridor portion at the circumference (a circle path). A square structure, which appears to be a place for the enshrinement of relics, has been carved out on the top of the *stūpa*. This room for enshrining of relics can be seen only if one views it from close to the top of the hill. From below, it is impossible to see that a large *stūpa* has been chiseled out to look as if it were buried in the ground.

In the southern foot of the northern mountain there are five stone caves, which line up facing the hill of the *stūpa*. The first and third caves are shrine caves that come together in an antechamber, and along the surface of their walls there are niches. The second cave, which lies between them, can only be considered to be a place in which special rituals were performed. The construction of the fourth and fifth caves is even more curious, and we are completely unable to understand what they might have been used for. The only way to make sense of the construction of this group of caves is to surmise that they were involved in fairly unique rituals. The structures that remain make us wonder whether they might have been esoteric in nature, or whether they might have involved a mixture of folk beliefs.

Among the unique features of the Buddhist relics in Afghanistan are:

1. The great number of shrines and *stūpa* and objects of worship such as Buddha and bodhisattva images is disproportionate to the number of *vihāra*.
2. There are a large number of narrative elements.
3. A confusing mixture with other religions can be seen. This includes not only the religions of India, Greece, and Persia, but also local folk beliefs.
4. There is an overabundance of decorative adornments.

In the background of these features we can easily read between the lines to perceive a flourishing of activities that involved giving and making reverential offerings, as well as worship and pilgrimage, and a manner of faith that tended strongly toward prayer rather than religious practice.

Further, there is a tendency to give visible expression to the transcendent and universal nature of the Buddha and bodhisattvas through massive and abundant Buddha and bodhisattva images. The strength of this tendency reveals an emotional religious sense weak in conceptual ideality and speculation. Moreover, the state of unearthed scriptural texts indicates



that the scriptures as well were regarded purely as objects of worship and were thought to possess a kind of mystical power.

Two inferences can be drawn from the large number of these objects of worship: first, pilgrimages took on a form in which activities of worship were able to develop; second, the practice of indiscriminate giving (*dāna*) flourished. This makes us think that both represent a conspicuous trend toward the development of a lay Buddhism.

Buddhism was introduced to Afghanistan in the third century BCE by Aśoka, but there is absolutely no evidence that Buddhism took root at that time. The only Buddhist remains that can be traced back prior to the common era are several items from within the *stūpa* at Jaralabad. It is believed that Buddhism emanated extensively around the beginning of the common era, in particular, after the formation of the Kushan empire in the first century CE. Coupled with the rise of the Roman Empire during this period, contacts between the East and West developed rapidly. Buddhism spread to Afghanistan through the medium of caravans engaged in trade, but such Buddhism was under the influence of the Buddhism of Gandhāra, the great commercial city that connected India with the outside world.

Gandhāra was an international city in which there existed a mixture of Indian and western things. From such epoch-making events as the existence of a Buddhist *stūpa* at Sirkap in Taxila<sup>10</sup> and the appearance of Buddha images that flourished in Gandhāra in the latter half of the first century CE, we can infer without difficulty that Buddhism surely took root there at around the beginning of the common era. This area was a typical terminus zone in which there existed a confusing mixture of different cultures. Buddhism here ushered in people from many different races and, rather than requiring them to learn complicated doctrine and perform difficult practices, it taught them a simplistic practice which gave lucid promise of a desirable and fortunate outcome. That is to say, it was a lay-oriented Buddhism, in which one could hope to receive the salvation of the Buddha as the reward for performing such simple practices as giving, making offerings in reverence, and worship, which was most easily accepted by people of different races.

Of course, inscriptions and Buddhist transmissions attest to the existence of the Sarvāstivādin order, and the *Milinda-pañhā*<sup>11</sup> tells of the intense philosophical interest in Buddhist doctrine by the Greek King Menandros. However, it cannot be believed that the traders of Central Asia, who were engaged in everyday commerce, understood such metaphysical discussions.

It is possible to say that the Buddhism that found acceptance in Afghanistan placed primary value in objects of art such as objects of worship like *stūpa*-s and newly added Buddha images. They later came to include the images of bodhisattvas, which the people were probably brought to feel close to as a result of the newly emerging Mahāyāna



ideology. Although they were not of course produced as works of art, these were in fact visual objects of art, which by themselves could appeal directly to the religious sense of the people.

## VIII. PRAYERS AND SALVATION

The sixth chapter of the accounts of Hsüan-tsang's *Record* relates that the Bāmiyān king frequently arranged an event called the "great assembly of indiscriminate giving" at a Buddhist monastery. The temple, which enshrined an image of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, was located half a mile from the castle city. He would give away everything—from his wife and children to the country's treasures. When the national treasury became exhausted, he would even endeavor to give himself away. It would then be the duty of his retainers and court officials to buy back from the *saṃgha* the king, his family, and the objects that he had donated to the monastery.

In the central Bāmiyān cliff alone there are over seven hundred stone caves just among those exposed at the surface, including the ones containing the two great Buddha images. We do not know how many more would be uncovered were there to be an excavation of the lower portion of the cliff wall. Further, if we should look at the group of temple caves at the Kakrak and Foladi valleys, or take a survey of all of the caves which extend across areas covering a much wider range, we could not help but surmise that there must have been a flourishing practice of indiscriminate giving that was beyond our imagination.

It is hard to believe that the donations supporting the great number of cave temples were made by the inhabitants of the valley, including members of the royal family, alone. Looking at Bāmiyān as a whole, the only rich oases were those surrounding the main cliffs by the castle town. Aside from those, there were no oases to be seen. Here, the accounts set forth in Hsüan-tsang's *Record* are brought to mind. The wealthy merchants and traders who traveled back and forth in thriving commerce might not have distinguished between the Three Treasures and the one hundred gods, but they probably would have made large contributions out of their wish for happiness and prosperity.

Until about the middle of the sixth century the road going north from Gandhāra across the Karakorum mountains was the principal route taken by Buddhist pilgrims and commercial traders. For that reason Gandhāra was the hub of Buddhism; filled with a large number of sacred grounds and monasteries, it also prospered as a commercial and economic stronghold. However, as the result of the occupation of Gandhāra by Hephtal until the first half of the sixth century, Buddhism in this region was devastated, with monks and followers scattering into the interiors of India or to China. With the weakening of Hephtal due to pressure from the forces of Turkic and

Sasanian rulers, Gandhāra also lost its position as a commercial and economic base. After that the new trade route passed through Gandhāra without stopping and stretched to the north of Hindu-kush by way of Kapisi and Bāmiyān. In this way, Kapisi and Bāmiyān took the place of Gandhāra as the hubs of trade and Buddhism.

From the very earliest times, Chinese Buddhist scriptures included texts that gave instruction on the contemplation on the Buddha. The *Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (Jpn. *Hanju zammai kyō*), *Śūraṅgama-samādhi Sūtra* (Jpn. *Shuryōgon kyō*), *Sūtra on the Samādhi of Sitting Meditation* (Jpn. *Zazen zammai kyō*), and *Sūtra on the Ocean of the Samādhi of Contemplation on the Buddha* (Jpn. *Kanbutsu zammai kai kyō*) are representative of the many scriptures which are compiled in volume fifteen of the *Taishō Daizōkyō*.

The “*samādhi* of contemplation on the Buddha” (*kanbutsu zanmai*) which is taught in these scriptures often places “contemplation on the Buddha image” at the very first stage of practice. This attests to the fact that the existence of a Buddha image is indispensable to the “*samādhi* of contemplation on the Buddha.” In the *Sūtra on the Ocean of the Samādhi of Contemplation on the Buddha*,<sup>12</sup> which is thought to be an apocryphal sutra arising from China, there are expressions that cannot be understood without presupposing the existence of a Gandhāran Buddha image in particular. It makes one mindful of the prevalence of the “*samādhi* of contemplation on the Buddha” in Gandhāra. We can see that the existence of massive and abundant Buddha images from Gandhāra to the worlds outside of India suggests an inclination toward the practice of “*samādhi* of contemplation on the Buddha” among the renunciant monks.

There is a theory that seeks to attach a relationship between the large Buddha images of Bāmiyān and descriptions of the massiveness of the body of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life in the *Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*.<sup>13</sup> Yet, they do not necessarily have a direct relationship with that sutra alone. Still, the “*samādhi* of contemplation on the Buddha,” which has as its initial stage the contemplation on the Buddha image, and the existence of large Buddha images raise a plausible issue to which attention should be given. In any case, it causes us to consider that, more so than abstract doctrinal debates, the tendency to pray for salvation through the supernatural power of the Buddha took root deeply among renunciant monks as well.

The *Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*, which was translated in the early part of the fifth century CE, takes on a form similar to other Buddha-contemplation sutras translated during about the same period of time. Yet, in terms of its content, it must be considered to be one of the Pure Land sutras in that it urges the practitioner to aspire for birth in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss by saying the Name of Amida Buddha. The so-called “six contemplation sutras,” in which this sutra is

often included, are all apocryphal scriptures; that is, they are all thought to be sutras that came into existence in China. However, the elements making up their contents include many that were transmitted from India and Central Asia. A great many things could be discussed in regard to these sutras,<sup>14</sup> but we will omit them here. By raising only those points which are related to the main thesis of this paper, we are able to get a detailed look at the process through which the practice of the "*samādhi* of contemplation on the Buddha" underwent an extreme simplification, becoming the act of saying the Buddha's Name.

From the earliest days, Buddhist texts flowing into China from Central Asia reached the extremes of miscellany. Even the distinction between Mahāyāna and Nikāya remained unclear, and so the Chinese people had no choice but to accept all of the texts as sacred Buddhist scriptures. For that reason, Chinese Buddhists were forced to struggle hard with an abundance of scriptures, each of which taught that its own ideas and methods of practice—each mutually distinct from the others—were peerless and superlative. Soon, however, the Chinese people became aware of the distinction between Mahāyāna and Nikāya, and the differences between the Theravāda and Mahāsaṃghika traditions. As a result, they classified the scriptures into categories and made judgments as to their relative value. They began to make efforts to discover a sutra, from among the extensive groups of scriptures, which would teach that it was the fundamental reason why the Buddha appeared in the world. These studies in pursuit of a critical classification of the Buddhist teachings (Jpn. *kyōsō hanjaku*) led to the systematization of Chinese Buddhism and the establishment of order within it. As a consequence, Chinese Buddhists became unavoidably sensitive to the distinctions between Mahāyāna and Nikāya, and to the differences between lineages of transmission.

For that reason it is likely that whenever Hsüan-tsang visited a monastic temple, he tried to report, as far as possible, the school to which it belonged. However, Buddhists in the Afghanistan region did not have the background of a speculative culture like that of China. Both monks and lay followers were more deeply concerned about the Buddha than the Dharma, more concerned about worship and making offerings, as well as contemplating and praising the Buddha than about dogma or doctrine. They were unconcerned with the distinctions between Mahāyāna and Nikāya or about differences between the various Buddhist schools. Since in many cases the standards for making such judgments did not exist, on many occasions Hsüan-tsang was probably unable to make any sectarian references. If we look at the entirety of Hsüan-tsang's *Record*, there are indeed few references to the schools to which the Buddhists belonged.

## NOTES

1. This article is based on the author's article published originally in Japanese as "Bāmiyān no Bukkyō," in Higuchi Takayasu, ed., *Bāmiyān: Afuganisutan ni okeru Bukkyō sekkutsu jīin no bujutsu kōkogakuteki chōsa 1970-1978 nen*, vol 3, Honbun-hen (Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1984), pp. 218–239 [chapter 4 of the part 2, kenkyū-hen], and subsequent writings by the author.
2. The distance of one *li* in Hsüan-tsang's text appears to correspond to approximately 400–440 meters. For reference see Mizutani Shinjō, "*Saiiki ki no ichiri no nagasa*," in Genjō, *Daitō Saiichi ki*, Mizutani Shinjō, trans., *Chūgoku koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 22 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971), p. 416, supplemental note 2.
3. This is discussed in more detail in my article, "Indasu kara Pamīru e," in *Shiruku rōdo no shūkyō: Maboroshi no jīin o tazune te*, Nakamura Hajime, Kasahara Kazuo, and Kanaoka Shūyū, eds., *Ajia Bukkyōshi: Chūgokuken*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Kōseisha Shuppansha, 1975), pp. 26, et seq.
4. Sylvain Lévi, "Note sur des manuscrits sanscrits provenant de Bamiyan (Afghanistan), et de Gilgit (Cachemire)," *Journal Asiatique* 220 (1932): pp. 1ff.
5. Bernard Pauly, "Fragments sanskrits d'Afghanistan (fouilles de la D.A.F.A.)," *Journal Asiatique* 255 (1967): pp. 3–4, pp. 273ff.
6. *Dīgha Nikāya*, 16, Pāli Text Society II, p. 141.
7. *Dīgha Nikāya*, 16, Pāli Text Society II, p. 164.
8. Joseph Hackin, "Le monastère bouddhique de Fondukistan," *Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan* 8 (1959).
9. Mizuno Seiichi, ed., *Haibaku to Kashumīrusumasuto: Afuganisutan to Pakisutan ni okeru sekkutsu jīin no chōsa 1960*, Kyoto *Daigaku Iran Afuganisutan Pakisutan gakujutsu chōsa hōkoku* (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku, 1962).
10. John Hubert Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila* (Cambridge: For the Department of Archaeology in Pakistan at the University Press, 1960).
11. Both the two fascicle (*Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 694ff.) and three fascicle (*Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 703ff.). Chinese translations of the text preserve its ancient style. The Pāli version of the *Milinda-pañhā* (London: Pali Text Society, 1880) contains many sections that were appended later.
12. *Taishō*, vol. 15, pp. 645ff, 402–412.
13. *Taishō*, vol. 12, pp. 340ff.
14. This issue is discussed in more detail in my article, "Kangyō kō: Muryōjubutsu to Amidabutsu," *Ryūoku daigaku ronshū* 408 (1976): pp. 76–95.

# Practice of Visualization and the *Visualization Sūtra*: An Examination of Mural Paintings at Toyok, Turfan<sup>1</sup>

**Nobuyoshi Yamabe**

Kyushu Ryukoku Junior College, Saga, Japan

## INTRODUCTION

WITH ITS PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION of the methods for visualizing the Pure Land presided over by Amitāyus Buddha, and with its tragic frame story of Queen Vaidehī imprisoned by her rebellious son Ajātaśatru, the *Visualization Sūtra* (*Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* 觀無量壽經, “The Sūtra on the Visualization of Amitāyus” [*Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 365]) has been a very popular text in East Asian Pure Land traditions. On the other hand, it is also a very problematic text, the geographical origin of which has been seriously debated among Buddhist scholars. Much research has been done on this sūtra, and nearly all the evidence relevant to its origin seems to have been exhaustively studied by now.<sup>2</sup> As a result, many scholars now suspect that the *Visualization Sūtra* was composed or compiled in Central Asia, more specifically in the Turfan area. However, since information concerning the origin of the *Visualization Sūtra* is very limited, their arguments inevitably have to rely (at least partially) on circumstantial evidence. Accordingly, their conclusions cannot be definitive.

The search for the origin of the *Visualization Sūtra* thus seems to have reached an impasse now, and, unless we change our approach, it will be difficult to make a significant breakthrough. Now, I believe, it is time to broaden our view and approach this problem from a wider perspective. In concrete, I would like to suggest the following two points.

First, we should not focus our attention on the *Visualization Sūtra* alone. Since Tsukinowa Kenryū published his pioneering and important work on the *Visualization Sūtra* and kindred texts,<sup>3</sup> scholars have been aware that the *Visualization Sūtra* was closely related to other texts on visualization and meditation.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, these texts surrounding the *Visualization Sūtra* have not received comparable scholarly attention thus far. The *Visualization Sūtra* needs to be studied in close conjunction with these texts, most notably the *Ocean Sūtra* (*Kuan-fo san-mei hai ching* 觀佛三昧海經, “The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the

Buddha" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643]), the *Secret Essentials* (*Ch'an mi-yao-fa ching* 禪秘要法經, "A Manual of the Secret Essentials of Meditation" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 613]), the *Cures* (*Chih ch'an-ping mi-yao fa* 治禪病秘要法, "The Secret Essential Methods to Cure the Diseases Caused by Meditation" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 630]), and the *Five Gates* (*Wu-men ch'an-ching yao-yung fa* 五門禪經要用法, "The Essence of the Meditation Manual Consisting of Five Gates" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 610]). As Tsukinowa has pointed out, all these texts have serious textual problems similar to the ones observed in the *Visualization Sūtra* and are very likely apocryphal.

To these traditionally well-known Chinese meditation texts, we should now add a Sanskrit meditation manual found at Qizil and Shorchuq, the so-called *Yogalehrbuch*.<sup>5</sup> Since one of the major difficulties inherent in the study of these Chinese meditation texts was the absence of a directly comparable Sanskrit meditation manual, the *Yogalehrbuch* is a very valuable Sanskrit source that shares many similar elements with these Chinese texts. Further, the *Yogalehrbuch* can be a significant anchor for the identification of the geographical origins of the Chinese meditation texts, because the discovery of the manuscripts leaves no doubt about its presence in Central Asia.

The *Visualization Sūtra* needs to be studied in close conjunction with these relatively unstudied meditation texts. By doing so, we shall be able to discuss the origin of this attractive but problematic text on a much more solid basis.

Second, we should not limit our scope of study to only written sources. Since the meditative methods described in the *Visualization Sūtra* and other kindred texts are highly visual, we can easily expect such practice to have left some trace in visual art. If examined properly, some pieces of art may give us valuable "hard evidence" linking the *Visualization Sūtra* (and other meditation texts) to a particular geographical area.

I believe we can find such "hard evidence" in the mural paintings of visualizing monks at the Toyok caves in the Turfan area. Some scholars have previously attempted to use artistic evidence in the study of these meditation texts,<sup>6</sup> but the materials used by them seem to me to be a little too general to pinpoint the geographical origin of these texts.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, since the mural paintings at Toyok were not introduced to the academic world until relatively recently,<sup>8</sup> they have not previously been taken into account by Buddhist scholars. These paintings, however, can be linked to the relevant texts in a more specific way and appear to be invaluable material for revealing the practical background of these texts. It is also significant that the Toyok paintings cannot be explained by merely referring to the *Visualization Sūtra* alone but can be interpreted only by looking at the entire body of relevant meditation manuals. Thus, my second point is actually closely related to my first.



By considering these elements, we should be able to discuss the background of these meditation texts, including the *Visualization Sūtra* itself, on a much more solid basis. With this intention in mind, I would like to examine the mural paintings at Toyok in some detail below.

## THE CAVES

Toyok is the oldest site of Buddhist cave temples in the Turfan area, dating approximately from the fifth century.<sup>9</sup> Since the caves are dug into fragile cliffs, many of the caves are badly damaged now. Of the surviving forty-six caves that have been assigned cave numbers, only nine retain mural paintings.<sup>10</sup> Among them, the most important caves for our purpose are Caves 20 and 42.

Cave 20 is on the western cliff of the valley and forms a part of a large temple complex. See the plan shown in Figure 1.

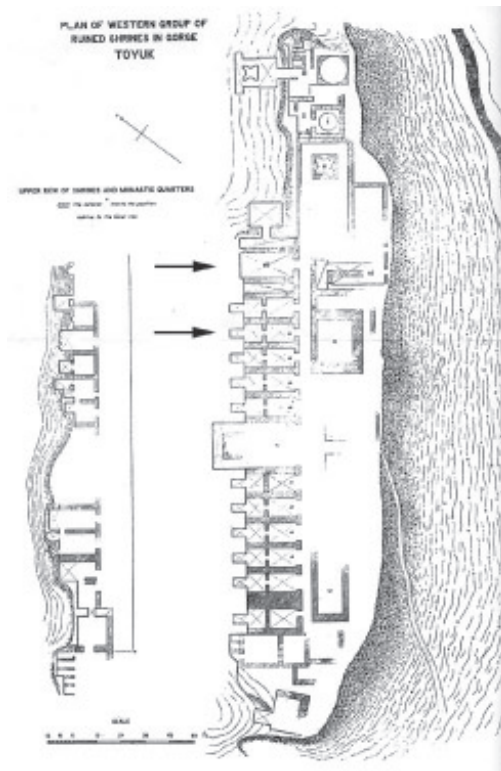


Figure 1<sup>11</sup>  
(Upper Arrow: Stein Cave VI. vii; Lower Arrow: Cave 20)



Cave 42, on the other hand, is on the eastern cliff and also constitutes part of a larger cave complex, as shown in Figure 2.

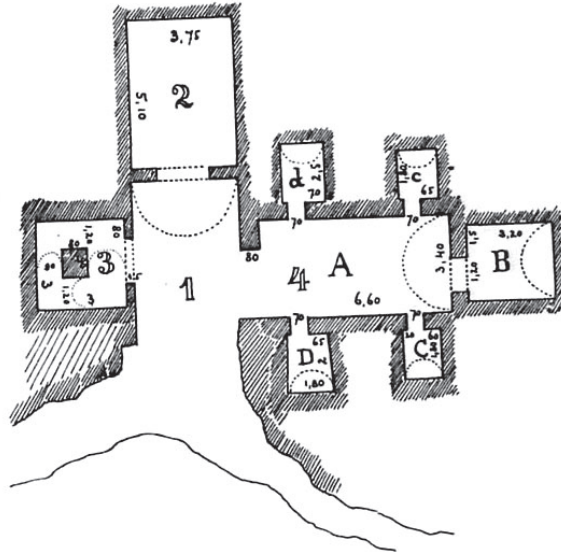


Fig. 658. Asketenhöhlen.

Figure 2<sup>12</sup>

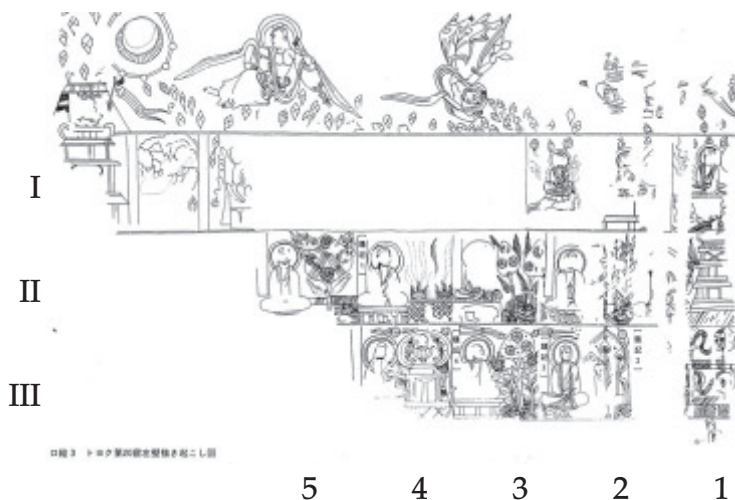
This cave-complex is what Grünwedel calls Asketenhöhlen, “Ascetics’ Caves,” and in the system of Chung-kuo Pi-hua 1990, which we follow in this paper, Grünwedel’s Caves 2, 3, and 4 are numbered respectively as Caves 41, 40, and 42. The roof of Grünwedel’s Cave 1 has collapsed, and so this “cave” is now an open space;<sup>13</sup> therefore, the original cave-complex has become three separate caves.<sup>14</sup> It is the right-hand part of the plan (Cave 42 = Grünwedel’s Cave 4) that we are going to discuss below.

Due to the structure of the caves<sup>15</sup> and the content of the mural paintings, both Cave 20 and 42 are considered to have been used for meditative visualization.<sup>16</sup> Of these paintings, the ones in Cave 20 are more directly connected to the *Visualization Sūtra*, and so I shall discuss them first. Since, however, I have discussed the paintings in Cave 20 elsewhere,<sup>17</sup> in this paper more emphasis will be placed on those in Cave 42. In any case, due to constraints of space, I cannot discuss all the relevant paintings in this paper. For the entirety of my argument, the reader is referred to my dissertation.<sup>18</sup>

## Cave 20

On the left wall of Cave 20, we see the paintings shown in Figure 3.

## Left Wall

Figure 3<sup>19</sup>

It is reported that there are four legible inscriptions,<sup>20</sup> all of which have corresponding lines in the *Visualization Sūtra*. The content of the paintings also generally agrees with the descriptions in the *Visualization Sūtra*. However, there are also significant problems.

Here, let us discuss two of the paintings.<sup>21</sup>

## II. 5

## II. 3

Figure 4<sup>22</sup>Figure 5<sup>23</sup>

Painting No. II.5 (Figure 4) retains a legible inscription, which can be translated as follows:<sup>24</sup>

The [practitioner]<sup>25</sup> visualizes sevenfold nets on the tree of [seven types of (?)]<sup>26</sup> jewels. In each net, there is . . .

This inscription is very close to the following passage from the fourth item of visualization (“the image of [jewel] trees” 樹想) in the *Visualization Sūtra*:<sup>27</sup>

Marvelous pearl nets entirely cover the trees. On each tree, there are sevenfold nets. In each net, there are fifty billion palaces of marvelous flowers, like the palace of a Brahmā king.<sup>28</sup>

In painting No. II.5, the monk is indeed looking at a tree. Further, the cross-shaped object on the tree might have been intended to be the “nets” mentioned in the inscription. However, we do not see the palaces that should appear if we assume that the illegible part of the inscription was the same as the quoted line from the *Visualization Sūtra*.<sup>29</sup>

In my opinion, the most conspicuous point here is that in the paintings (both Nos. II.5 and II.3) the trees are clearly burning, while the *Visualization Sūtra* does not state such a thing. As pictorial representations of Sukhāvati, these large flames strike us as being out of place. Since, however, the *Visualization Sūtra* does say that jewel trees in the Pure Land emit various colors of rays,<sup>30</sup> it might be possible that these flames were intended as “rays.”<sup>31</sup> This possibility is actually not negligible, since, as we shall see below, in fragments of a mural painting taken from a nearby cave, flames coming out of jewels are described in the attached inscription as “rays of jewels” 寶珠光. Therefore, we need to consider the possibility that the imagery of “rays” was confused with the imagery of “fire.”<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, even if this is the case, we should note that there are many passages from the kindred meditation texts that expressly mention burning trees. See the following quotations.

Above the jewel towers there are great jewel trees. Fire arises from all the branches and leaves of the trees, and the flames burn everything above and below [the jewel towers]. (*Ocean Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 666a10–11)

At that time, fire naturally arises from the tip of the cudgel. [The fire] completely burns this tree and leaves only the core of the tree. (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 254b24–25)

At the tip of the flower tree of the heart, among the flowers and leaves, there are minute flames just like the golden light that is emitted from the tip of [the flower tree] of the heart. (Ibid., p. 266a18–19)

[The meditator] sees the inside of his own heart. Fire gradually arises from the tips of flower trees and burns the diamond-like clouds. (Ibid., p. 266b20–21)

At that time fire naturally arises from the tips of marvelous flowers of the tree of the heart and burns the petals. Four fruits on the tree drop on the head of the practitioner. (Ibid., p. 267b1–2)

In particular, considering the fact that, in both of these paintings, the burning tree grows in a pond, the following passages are noteworthy:

The water is warm. In the water grows a tree. It is like a tree of seven jewels, and the branches and leaves are thick. On the tree there are four fruits, which ring like bells and preach suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and selflessness.<sup>33</sup> . . . Suddenly fire arises again. (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 261b9–13)<sup>34</sup>

[The master] teaches [the disciple] to observe, then, the pond in front of him. If [the disciple] says that he sees a pond, in which there are lotus flowers and trees with thick branches and leaves, after seeing this, [the disciple should] enter the water by himself and be seated by the trees. He [should] visualize that fire arises in his body and fills the pond. (*Five Gates*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 328b12–14)

Further, a similar image is found in the *Yogalehrbuch* also.

Then in the heart there is (a lotus pond) . . . [The meditator] sees a boy sunk there and absorbed in the pleasure of samādhi. A man (having) stars shining [like] charcoal seizes (the boy) in that lotus pond and lifts him up. Then the lotus pond burns. (p. 71.6–8)<sup>35</sup>

Also, several other things (e.g., the whole world, the sea, etc.) are described as burning in the *Yogalehrbuch*. The following passage is more esoteric-seeming and peculiar.

Then a sword comes out of the navel of the meditator and arranges the six parts of (?) the meditator's body separately on his skin. . . . Then, in the same way, the swords that have come out of the body of the meditator arrange the whole sea of sentient beings according

to (the six elements [*dhātu*]) and non-sentient beings according to the five. (With both hands) the [meditator] examines these elements (*dhātu*) one by one; these [elements] are equally examined. Then he says: “(This) is earth-element, this is also earth-element, this is water-element, thus (up to consciousness-element. This is devoid of Self) and its possessions, this is also devoid of Self and its possessions.” Then . . . six parts [representing] the six elements burn in the fire of aversion. (pp. 165.7–166.8)

In this last passage, the “fire” is expressly said to represent the meditator’s sense of aversion. In the other passages also, the fire must symbolize something, but what it symbolizes is not necessarily clear. Nevertheless, it is certain that the “fire” image was a popular element in these Sanskrit and Chinese meditation manuals, and it must have been this popular image that was behind the seemingly strange depiction of the trees in these paintings.

Therefore, even if the flames in the relevant paintings in Cave 20 were intended as rays, I think it is still highly likely that such representations were influenced by the descriptions found in the kindred texts quoted above. In particular, we should note that in painting II.3 (Figure 5), not only the trees but also the pond itself seems to be burning. As we have seen above, quotations from the *Five Gates* and the *Yogalehrbuch* expressly state that the ponds are burning, but the *Visualization Sūtra* does not (at least explicitly) state that the ponds in the Pure Land emit rays. For this reason also, it is difficult to explain these flames just by looking at the *Visualization Sūtra*. Only if we assume that to the people who executed these paintings the *Visualization Sūtra* was inseparable from the meditation texts quoted above, does the presence of the flames become more understandable.

When we turn our attention to Cave 42, we notice that “fire” is one of the prominent motifs in that cave also.

#### Cave 42

On both the left and right walls of this cave, there are paintings of visualizing monks (see Figures 6 [left wall] and 7 [right wall]). The paintings in Cave 42 are usually considered to be older than those in Cave 20. In Cave 42, there is no painting that can be unambiguously linked to the *Visualization Sūtra*. They are much more closely linked to the other meditation texts mentioned above. Among these paintings, let us here discuss a few particularly noteworthy ones, all of which have “flame” elements.

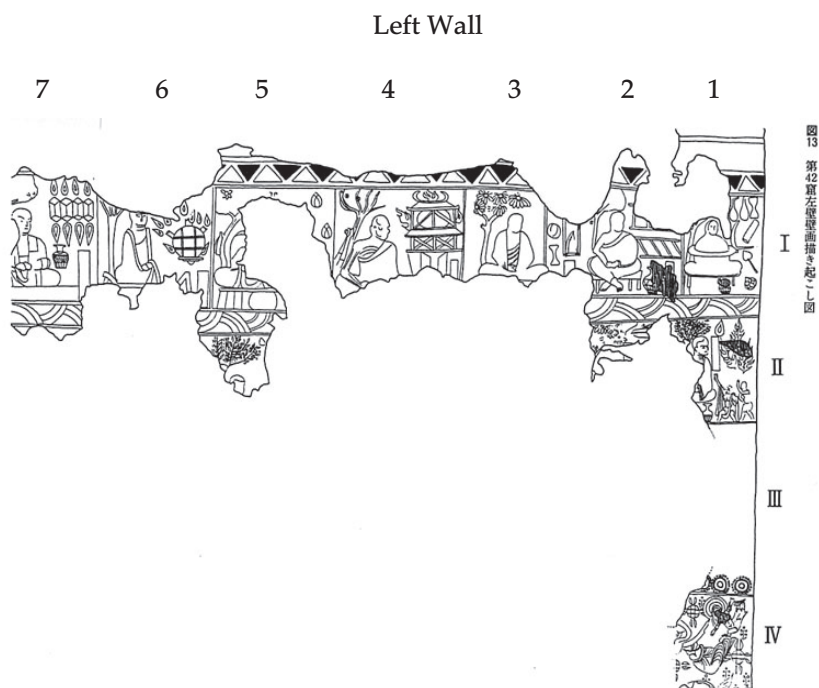


Figure 6<sup>36</sup>

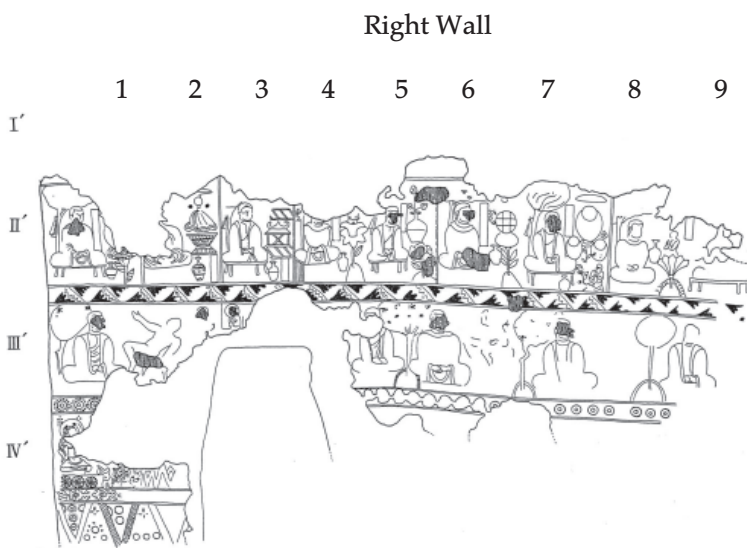


Figure 7<sup>37</sup>

## a. Demons

The most eye-catching image in this cave is the painting of two black demons with flames (II.1, III'.1).<sup>38</sup> Figures 8 and 9 show painting No. II.1.

II.1



Figure 8  
(Picture taken by the author)

These demons are holding sticks (?) in their hands, and large flames are coming up from their heads (mouths?). Unfortunately no inscription is retained in the cartouche,<sup>39</sup> but this is a peculiar image that is hard to interpret without referring to the following passages:<sup>40</sup>

Then at the tip of the flames there are five yaksas holding sharp swords in their hands. They have four mouths in their heads, and, inhaling the fire, they run. (*Ocean Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 657c8–9)

There are yaksas residing in a fire mountain who move their bodies and inhale the fire. (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 248b28–29)



There is a yaksa demon, on whose head fire arises. (Ibid., p. 249a6)

Each kumbhāṇḍa<sup>41</sup> spits out mountains of fire. (Ibid., p. 249b7–8)

[The practitioner] sees yaksas who are naked, black, and skinny. Two fangs go upward, and fire burns on their heads. Their heads are like those of oxen, and the tips of their horns rain blood. (Ibid., p. 264c19–21)

[The practitioner] also sees a hungry demon as large as one billion yojanas spitting out poison and fire. (*Cures*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 339a28–29)

They were counting their breaths in a silent place and were seized by demons. They saw one demon whose face was like a lute, with four eyes and two mouths. The whole face was emitting light. . . making the mind of the practitioner uneasy. . . . If one sees such [a scene], one should remedy it quickly. As for the way to remedy this, . . . [The practitioner] shuts his eyes and secretly scolds him [i.e. the demon], saying: “I now recognize you. I know that you are the one who eats fire and smells scent in Jambūdīpa . . . .” Then the demon will withdraw at a crawl. (Ibid., p. 341a29–b9)

Apparently, while practicing meditation one sometimes sees such terrifying scenes. These types of scenes are usually called *mo-shih* 魔事, “monstrous experiences,” and are well known in East Asia through the descriptions in the “Observation of Monstrous Experiences as Meditative Objects” (Kuan mo-shih ching 觀魔事境) chapter of the “The Great Calming and Contemplation” (Mo-ho chih-kuan 摩訶止觀, *Taishō*, vol. 46, no. 1911, p. 114c22–17a20).<sup>42</sup> Demonic beings do appear here and there in Buddhist texts, but after a survey of relevant Indian texts, I have not been able to locate passages that explain these paintings as nicely as the Chinese visualization texts quoted above.

On the basis of these observations, I strongly suspect that these paintings were specifically linked to the passages quoted above. In this connection, it is suggestive that there is another painting of a demon on the opposite side of the same cave (No. III'.1). Further, according to Grünwedel's report (1912, 330–31),<sup>43</sup> the back chamber and side chamber C of this cave also had paintings of demons, both of whom had a sword or a club.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, neither of these paintings is visible now, but this record is very interesting, because the passage above from the *Ocean Sūtra* also states that the demons are holding swords. Further, according to the same report, the demon in the back chamber B was fleeing from an ascetic (*Asket*).<sup>45</sup> This can be compared with the last passage from the *Cures*,

which describes a demon that withdraws when his identity is revealed. These agreements, to my mind, strongly suggest close ties between the Toyok caves and the visualization texts with which we are concerned. However, we should note that it is not the *Visualization Sūtra* per se that explains these paintings. We must consult the entire body of relevant meditation manuals for a likely explanation.

#### b. Burning House

There is a painting of a burning house in Cave 42 (I.4). See Figure 9.

I.4

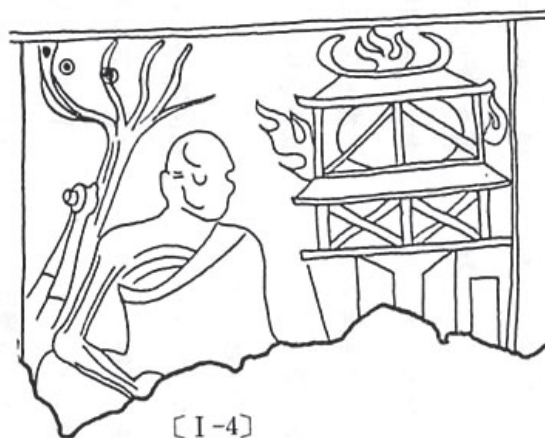


Figure 9<sup>46</sup>

This is a curious scene, and we wonder what is intended here. In Buddhism in general, the most famous source of the scene of a burning house would be the “Chapter on a Simile,” (Aupamyaparivarta 譬喻品) of the *Lotus Sūtra*,<sup>47</sup> but in this particular cave, there is no other element that suggests specific ties to the *Lotus Sūtra*. I believe we should look for an explanation in meditation texts, and the following passage might be a good candidate (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 266a18–22):

Visualization of the fire element is as follows: One visualizes the inside of the body. At the tip of the flower tree of the heart, among the flowers and leaves, there are minute flames just like the golden light that is emitted from the tip of [the flower tree] of the heart. [The flames] fill the body and go out through the pores. [Then the

flames] gradually grow larger and fill a bed. After filling the bed, they fill a chamber. After filling the chamber, they grow gradually larger and [eventually] fill a garden.

Miyaji points out the following passage from the *Ocean Sūtra* as a possible source of this scene (*Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 666a9–11):<sup>48</sup>

In many waters there are as many jewel towers as the sands of the Ganges River. Under the jewel towers there is a jewel city like the city of Gandharvas.<sup>49</sup> Above the jewel towers there is a great jewel tree. Fire arises from all the branches and leaves of the trees, and the flames burn everything above and below [the jewel towers].

In addition, we might refer to the following line from the *Five Gates* (*Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 331a23–b21):

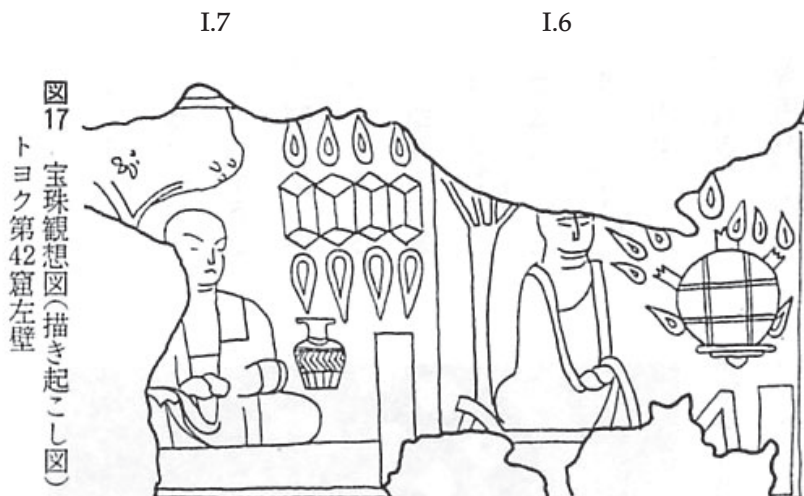
[A master] further teaches [the meditator] to visualize this. If [the meditator] says: “I see that there are ponds of blood and pus in the high hills on the four sides of the hell. In four places in the ponds, fire arises abruptly and burns the sinners. . . .” [The master teaches the meditator to visualize that] on the four sides of the ponds, fire arises. . . . [Then the master] teaches [the meditator] to visualize the four sides of the ponds. If [the meditator] says: “I see that on the four sides of the ponds towers naturally appear, and [the towers] contact flowers,” [then the master should teach the meditator] to make people quickly climb these towers to take a rest.

We should further note that *kūṭāgāra*, “vaulted house,”<sup>50</sup> which is usually translated in Chinese as *lou-kê* 樓閣, *t'ai* 臺, and so forth (thus, the *pao-lou* 寶樓, “jewel towers,” which appears in the above quotation from the *Ocean Sūtra*, also corresponds to a *kūṭāgāra*), is a prominent image in the *Yogalehrbuch*. Although I cannot find the image of a burning house in the *Yogalehrbuch*, as we have already seen, we find scenes in which various things burn in this text.<sup>51</sup> The “burning” imagery seems certainly to have been popular among meditators in Central Asia.

In this case also, we cannot observe any direct ties with the *Visualization Sūtra*. The relevant passages are found in other meditation manuals.

### c. Burning Jewels

Cave 42 has three paintings of burning jewels (I.6, I.7, II'.6).<sup>52</sup> Figure 10 shows painting nos. I.6–7, while Figure 11, painting No. II'.6.

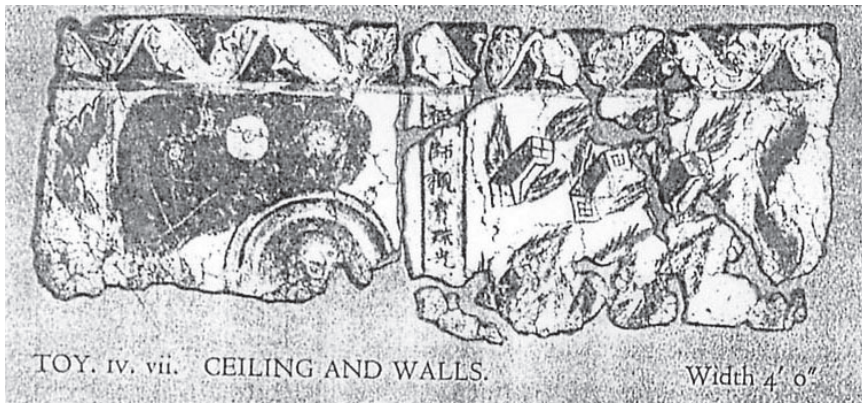
Figure 10<sup>53</sup>

No.II'.6.

Figure 11<sup>54</sup>

The imagery of a burning jewel itself is not a rare one,<sup>55</sup> but as an object of visualization, it is not a common motif.

Here again, no inscription is left in the cartouches. Fortunately, however, we have fragments of a very similar motif found in Stein Cave IV. vii,<sup>56</sup> which retain a legible inscription.

Figure 12<sup>57</sup>

This appears to consist of fragments of a painting of a meditating monk, who is watching six burning square-column jewels, very similar in shape to those seen in painting No. I.7. The important point here is that we can read the following inscription in this painting:<sup>58</sup> “The meditator visualizes rays of jewels.”<sup>59</sup>

This inscription is very significant, because we can confirm that (1) these paintings are scenes of visualization, and that (2) the burning columns in painting No. I.7 are indeed jewels.<sup>60</sup> As possible textual sources that can be linked to these paintings, I would like to suggest the following:

There are four venomous snakes holding a jewel in their mouths. They come out of flames and fly away over clouds.”<sup>61</sup> (*Ocean Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 664c28–29)

When [the practitioner] visualizes the inner fire, he sees the fire of the heart. It always has light that surpasses one hundred billion bright moons or divine jewels. The purity of the light of the heart is also similar. When he enters or comes out of *samādhi*, it is as if a man were walking carrying a bright burning jewel . . . Further he sees the king of mani jewels in the water of the great ocean, which emits flames.<sup>62</sup> (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 262c12–20)

In order to visualize the purification of one’s heart, one should first visualize the heart and make it clearer and clearer like a burning jewel. (*Cures*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 333b27–28)

A Brahmā king holds a *maṇi* mirror and illuminates the chest of the practitioner. Then the practitioner sees his own chest as if it had become a wish-granting jewel, which is clear and lovely, and has a burning jewel as its heart.<sup>63</sup> (Ibid., p. 333c1–3)

One should imagine that the rays of fire become a wish-granting jewel, which comes out of the pores [of the practitioner]. (Ibid., p. 333c25–26)

[The practitioner] says: “I see water of a great ocean, in which there is a *maṇi* jewel. Flames come out of the jewel as if from a fire.” (*Five Gates*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 329a5–6)

The important point here is that these passages describe not just burning jewels in general, but jewels seen in meditation. Here again, therefore, we can observe close ties between the quoted passages and the paintings.

## OVERALL EVALUATIONS OF THE PAINTINGS

According to Sudō Hirotooshi, “paintings of meditating monks,” *zenjō biku zō* 禅定比丘像, in which monks are depicted simply in the posture of seated meditation without any particular object in front of them, are widely seen from Afghanistan to Japan. However, the distribution of “paintings of visualizing monks,” *zenkan biku zō* 禅觀比丘像, in which meditating monks are depicted with the objects of visualization, is more limited.<sup>64</sup> Sudō’s list indicates that they are mostly concentrated in Qizil (in the Kuchā area)<sup>65</sup> and Toyok.<sup>66</sup> Sudō observes that there is a clear stylistic difference between the paintings of visualizing monks in Qizil and those in Toyok.<sup>67</sup>

In the paintings of visualizing monks at Qizil,<sup>68</sup> monks are scattered in natural settings and are depicted in a very unstylized way.<sup>69</sup> They are looking at items such as a lotus pond, coiled snakes, a skull, and so forth. By contrast, in Toyok (Caves 20 and 42), scenes of visualization are lined up horizontally and seem to presuppose detailed visualization manuals.<sup>70</sup> One of the features of the *Visualization Sūtra* and other closely related texts, namely, the *Ocean Sūtra*, the *Secret Essentials*, the *Cures*, the *Five Gates*, and so forth, is itemized systems of visualization.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the structures of these lined-up paintings and the meditation manuals seem to closely correspond.

Nevertheless, the arrangements of the paintings in both Cave 20 and Cave 42 do not agree with any available text. Even in Cave 20, where we can observe clear links between the paintings and the *Visualization Sūtra*, the disagreements are conspicuous (Table 1).<sup>72</sup>



Table 1

Painting No.	II.5	II.4	II.3	II.2	II.1
Content of the Painting	a burning tree ( <b>inscription</b> )	checkered ground	two burning trees from a pond	two flowers from a pond	a tower, musical instruments
Corresponding Item in the Visualization Sūtra	4. jewel trees	2. water	4. jewel trees(?) or <i>Ocean Sūtra, Secret Essentials(?)</i>	5. water of eight superior qualities(?)	3. ground or 6. an overall view
Painting No.	(lost)	III.4	III.3	III.2	III.1
Content of the Painting	--	a baby in a lotus ( <b>inscription</b> )	a flower tree, two flowers ( <b>inscription</b> )	flowers with strips ( <b>inscription</b> )	trees with water streams
Corresponding Item in the Visualization Sūtra	--	12. general visualization	4. jewel tree	7. flower seat	5. water of eight superior

If one looks at the numbers attached to the items of the *Visualization Sūtra*, which signify the position in the sequence of visualization, and which are given by the *Visualization Sūtra* itself, it will be evident how disorderly the arrangement of these paintings is. It is particularly noteworthy that paintings corresponding to the same item in the *Visualization Sūtra* appear more than once on this wall (painting Nos. II.5 and III.3 corresponding to item 4; painting Nos. II.2 and III.1 corresponding to item 5).<sup>73</sup> Such a chaotic arrangement is in clear contrast to the “transformation tableaux based on the *Visualization Sūtra*” (*Kuan-ching pien-hsiang* 觀經變相) widely seen from Tun-huang to Japan, in which the pictorial representations generally follow the structure of the *Visualization Sūtra*.<sup>74</sup> We should further recall here that at Toyok even the individual paintings have elements that are difficult to be explained by reference to the *Visualization Sūtra*, but can be easily explained by consulting other meditation texts.



On the other hand, the arrangements of the paintings at Cave 42 are as shown in Tables 2 and 3:

Table 2: Left Wall

I.7 burning jewels	I.6 burning jewel	I.5 [lotus flower in a jar, flames, remnant of an inscrip- tion]	I.4 burning house	I.3 musical instru- ments	I.2 ponds (?)	I.1 musical instru- ments, lotus flower
--	--	--	--	--	--	II.1 two demons, flames
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--	flying heavenly beings, burning jewels

Table 3: Right Wall

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
II'.1 lotus seat [halo and mandorla]	II'.2 bowl, cloth	II'.3 house, ponds (?)	II'.4 lotus flower, mirror (?), [parasol]	II'.5 lotuses in a pot, lotus from a pond, the face of a boy	II'.6 lotus flower from a pond, burning jewel	II'.7 three halos and mandorlas	II'.8 lotus from a pond, a boy
III'.1 demon	III'.2 damaged	III'.3 demon (?)	III'.4 some figure	III'.5 some figure	--	--	--
IV'.1 bodhisattva (?), moun- tain	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Many paintings are damaged or lost, and so the overall structure is not necessarily clear. Nevertheless, the first row of the left wall and the second and third rows of the right wall are relatively well preserved, and we can observe some sequences of images. Most of the individual items are closely tied to the Chinese meditation texts we are concerned with, but the arrangements of these items do not agree with any system of the available meditation texts.

What conclusion can we draw from these observations? One possibility is that these paintings were based on some texts that are not extant today. This is in a way an easy solution, but the difficulty is that the painters who executed the paintings at Cave 20 seem to have been familiar with the tradition of the *Visualization Sūtra* itself. Therefore, it is difficult to assume that the paintings were based on some text completely unknown to us, at least in the case of Cave 20.

This indicates that to the mind of the people who executed (or planned) these paintings, the *Visualization Sūtra* and other cognate meditation manuals were not clearly separable, distinct texts. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain the coexistence of the motifs corresponding to the *Visualization Sūtra* and other meditation texts.

It seems to me that these images were in a way “common property” widely shared by the Buddhist meditators in Central Asia. I suspect that many practitioners visualized similar images, but the combination or arrangement of these images was largely up to the individual practitioners. In this connection, we should further consider that in those days the primary means of communication must have been oral, and that the instructions on meditation were probably given orally by masters to disciples.<sup>75</sup> In such a situation, it is easily imaginable that individual masters taught largely similar but not identical methods. As if testifying to such a situation, in the relevant meditation texts themselves, similar elements appear in different orders. It is, in a way, just like people cooking very different dishes using the same ingredients. In Central Asia in those days, many different systems of visualization consisting of similar constituents seem to have been propagated and followed.

We should also take into consideration here that many painters may well have been illiterate,<sup>76</sup> unless we assume that painters were themselves monks.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, it is highly likely that monks gave instructions to the painters orally based on their own understanding. Even if the monks themselves were the painters, they must have been dependent to a large extent on the oral instructions given by their masters. It seems rather unlikely that the painters consulted the texts directly, and determined the content of what they painted.

Another noteworthy point is that the paintings at Toyok give a much more practical impression than those at Tun-huang. In most of the “transformation tableaux on the *Visualization Sūtra*” at the Tun-huang Mo-kao caves, Vaidehī is painted as the person looking at the objects of visualization.<sup>78</sup> This point gives us the impression that these paintings were intended as narrative scenes rather than as meditative scenes. Since the arrangements of the scenes also largely follow the contents of the *Visualization Sūtra*, these paintings seem to suggest that the *Visualization Sūtra* was already accepted as a scriptural authority.

On the other hand, in the Toyok paintings, monks in meditation are looking at the meditative objects, and no narrative elements are found there. Thus, these paintings are clearly intended as meditative scenes. We should further recall that the caves themselves seem to have been used for the practice of meditation. Therefore, the likelihood is great that these paintings reflect the content of visualization practiced right on the spot. The great degree of deviation from the text is also not surprising if we consider the oral nature of meditative instructions and directions given to the painters.

Considering all the evidence, I think at least in the case of the Toyok caves, it is simplistic to assume that the paintings were based on particular written texts. Rather, I think it is closer to the truth that both the texts and the paintings independently preserve different aspects of the same large stream of oral tradition. An oral tradition is like a big river with many waves and ripples on its surface. We can no longer access the oral tradition itself, which has long since died out, and accordingly most of the "waves" are also irretrievably lost to us. Fortunately, however, some of the "waves" are preserved for us through the texts and paintings that have survived to this day. Therefore, we should probably consider that these texts and paintings are individually based on the oral tradition, and not that the paintings are directly based on any particular text. Only in this way are we able to explain the situation we observe in the paintings and texts.

In order for this model to work well, the texts must be local products. If the texts were composed elsewhere and imported as already established religious authorities, one would hesitate to deviate from them too much. They would be followed respectfully as "the words of the Buddha." This seems to be the situation we observe in the Tun-huang transformation tableaux. On the other hand, if the texts were local products, and if the practical (and oral) tradition that gave birth to those texts was still alive, they would be just some examples of many possible ways of arranging and combining popular visionary images. In such a situation, even if the texts were already there, people would feel much freer to deviate from them and represent their own systems in the paintings. This seems to be the situation we observe in the Toyok paintings.

As I have discussed elsewhere,<sup>79</sup> the opinions of art historians vary concerning the dating of these paintings (Cave 42: fifth to seventh centuries; Cave 20: sixth to seventh centuries). Since the relevant meditation texts are considered to be from the fifth century, the paintings at Cave 42 might have been (nearly) contemporary with the texts, but those at Cave 20 must have been later than the texts, whichever dating we follow. Nevertheless, as I stated above, when the paintings at Cave 20 were executed, the practical tradition that served as the matrix of these texts seems to have been still active. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to explain the markedly chaotic situation we observe in the paintings of this cave.

Therefore, I believe these paintings suggest rather strongly that the *Visualization Sūtra* and surrounding texts reflect the visualization actually practiced in the Turfan area and thus these texts are themselves local products.

## NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was read at a symposium, "Visions and Visualization: Buddhist Praxis on the Silk Road," which was organized by Dean Richard Payne of the Institute of Buddhist Studies and held at Stanford University on March 22, 2002. I thank Dean Payne and Dr. Wendy Abraham (Center for Buddhist Studies, Stanford University) for their hard work to make the symposium successful. Exchanges with participants, particularly those with the discussant, Professor Bruce Williams (Institute of Buddhist Studies), were very fruitful, and I thank them for their stimulating questions and suggestions.

This paper is an abridged and revised version of Section III, Chapter 4 of my dissertation (Nobuyoshi Yamabe, *"The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha: The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asia as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra,"* [Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1999]), which is partly based on the information I obtained during the field trip to Turfan (May 6–11, 1996) of the Silk Road Project organized by Professor Valerie Hansen (Yale University). I thank Professor Hansen and other participants in the project for their many constructive suggestions. Discussions with Professors Victor H. Mair, Ma Shi-ch'ang, and Sarah E. Fraser were particularly helpful, and I express my sincere gratitude to them. I am grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation, which has funded this project. I have also greatly benefitted from exchanges with Professors Miyaji Akira and Sudō Hirotooshi during the preparation of earlier drafts of this paper. My thanks are particularly due to Professor Miyaji, who has kindly allowed me to use line-drawings published in his papers. Last but certainly not least, I thank Professor Robert Kritzer for his kind assistance with my English.

2. See, most notably, Fujita Kōtatsu, *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970); "The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*: A Canonical Scripture of Pure Land Buddhism," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Robert E. Buswell, Jr., ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 149–73; and *Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū: Kangyō shijōsho o sankan shite* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha Shūmusho Shuppanbu, 1985); Sueki Fumihiko, "Kan Muryōju kyō kenkyū," *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo kiyō* 101 (1986): pp. 163–225; "Kan Muryōju kyō: Kanbutsu to jō," in Sueki Fumihiko and Kajiya Yūichi, eds., *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, vol. 2, *Kan Muryōju kyō, Hanju sammai kyō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1992); Tsukinowa Kenryū, "Butten no shūshi," *Bungaku, Tetsugaku, Shigaku gakkai rengō henshū kenkyū ronbun shū* 4 (1953): pp. 90–91; and *Butten no hihanteki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1971).

3. Tsukinowa, "Butten no shūshi," and *Butten no hihanteki kenkyū*.

4. See, for example, Fujita, *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū* and “The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*.”

5. The *Yogalehrbuch* is edited and published by Dieter Schlingloff as *Ein buddhistisches Yogalehrbuch: Textband*, Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden, vol. 7 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964). Due to the fragmentary state of its manuscripts, we cannot confirm the original title. Therefore, we tentatively call it “*Yogalehrbuch*,” after the title of Schlingloff’s publication. For a discussion of the similarities between the *Yogalehrbuch* and the Chinese meditation texts, see Yamabe Nobuyoshi, “New Fragments of the ‘Yogalehrbuch,’” *Kyūshū Ryūoku Tanki Daigaku kiyō* 43 (1997): pp. 11–39, and Yamabe, “The Significance of the ‘Yogalehrbuch’ for the Investigation into the Origin of Chinese Meditation Texts,” *Bukkyō bunka* 9 (1999): pp. 1–74.

6. For example, see Ono Genmyō, *Kendara no Bukkyō bijutsu*, reprinted in *Ono Genmyō Bukkyō geijutsu chosaku shū*, vol. 5 (1923; Tokyo: Kaimei Shoin, 1977); Alexander C. Soper, “Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture, Part 1,” *Artibus Asiae* 12 (1949): pp. 252–83; “Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture, Part 2,” *Artibus Asiae* 12 (1949): pp. 314–30; “Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture, Part 3,” *Artibus Asiae* 13 (1950): pp. 63–85; Fujita, *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū*, pp. 124–26; “The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*,” pp. 158–59; and *Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū*, pp. 36–39.

7. Ono and Soper see ties between the *Ocean Sūtra* and Gandhāran Buddhist art (for the references, see note 6, above), but since the influence of Gandhāran art was widespread in Central Asia, these similarities are not specific enough to determine the geographical origin of the text. Nakamura Hajime (“Jōdo sanbikyō no kaisetsu,” in Nakamura Hajime, Hayashima Kyōshō, and Kino Kazuyoshi, *Jōdo sanbikyō*, vol. 2 [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964], pp. 205–6) and Fujita (*Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū*, pp. 36–39) try to link the gigantic Buddhist statues in Bāmīyān and Kuchā to the descriptions of a huge buddha and bodhisattvas in the *Visualization Sūtra*. Since these descriptions, however, may be purely imaginary, Nakamura and Fujita’s arguments are not definitive either.

8. Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch’üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, ed., *Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch’üan-chi: Hui-hua pien*, vol. 16, *Hsin-chiang shih-k’u pi-hua* (Beijing: Wên-wu Ch’u-pan-shê, 1989); Chung-kuo Pi-hua Ch’üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, *Chung-kuo pi-hua ch’uan-chi: Hsin-chiang*, vol. 6, *T’u-lu-fan* (Shenyang: Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch’u-pan-shê; Urumchi: Hsin-chiang Jên-min Ch’u-pan-shê, 1990); Hsin-chiang Wei-wu-êrh Tzû-chih-ch’ü Po-wu-kuan, ed., *Hsin-chiang shih-k’u, T’u-lu-fan Po-tzû-k’ê-li-k’ê shih-k’u* (Urumchi: Hsin-chiang Jên-min Ch’u-pan-shê; Shanghai: Shang-hai Jên-min Mei-shu Ch’u-pan-shê, 1990).

9. Hu Chi, Li Hsiao-ts'ung, Jung Hsin-chiang, *T'u-lu-fan* (San-ch'in Ch'u-pan-shê, n.d.), pp. 123–26; *Chung-kuo Pi-hua*, p. 5.
10. "Introduction," in *Hsin-chiang shih-k'u, T'u-lu-fan Po-tzû-k'ê-li-k'ê shih-k'u* (unpaginated); Chia Ying-i, "T'u-yü-kou ti 44 k'u yü Mo-kao-k'u Pei-liang Tung-k'u pi-chiao yen-chiu 44," in *1987 Tun-huang shih-k'u yen-chiu kuo-chi t'ao-lun-hui shih-k'u k'ao-ku-pien wên-chi* (Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-shê, 1990), p. 184.
11. After Aurel Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su and Eastern Iran*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), p. 27.
12. After Albert Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan: Bericht über Archäologische Arbeiten von 1906 bis 1907 bei Kuča, Qarašahr und in der Oase Turfan* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912), p. 327, figure 658.
13. The central part (Grünwedel's Cave 1) seems to have had already collapsed when he visited the site (Grünwedel reports that the rear lunette of his Cave 1 was visible above the entrance to his Cave 2). See Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 329.
14. For the correspondence between the Chinese system and Grünwedel's, see Miyaji Akira, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite: Jōdozu, Jōdo kansōzu, fujō kansōzu, part 1," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 221 (1995): p. 18.
15. In particular, Cave 42 has the characteristic structure of meditation caves, consisting of a main hall and several side chambers (probably for individual meditation). "Meditation caves" in Central Asia are considered to have originated from Indian *vihāra* caves (residential caves). In Central Asia, the side chambers attached to these types of caves generally are too small to live in, and thus scholars believe that the side chambers were used for individual meditation. See Mogi Keiichirō, "Kutsu kōzō ni tsuite," in *Tonkō sekkutsu gakujutsu chōsa daiichiji hōkokusho*, Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsu Gakubu Tonkō Gakujutsu Chōsadan, ed. (Tokyo: Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsu Gakubu Tonkō Gakujutsu Chōsadan, 1983), p. 11. See also Ma Shih-ch'ang "Shin-chiang shih-k'u-chung tē Han-fēng tung-k'u ho pi-hua," in *Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch'üan-chi: Hui-hua pien*, vol. 16, *Hsin-chiang shih-k'u pi-hua*, Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch'üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, ed. (Beijing: Wên-wu Ch'u-pan-shê, 1989), p. 47.
16. Chia Ying-i, "Toyoku sekkutsu kō," translated from Chinese by Sudō Hirotooshi, *Bukkyō geijutsu* 186 (1989): pp. 66–67; Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 19.
17. Yamabe Nobuyoshi, "An Examination of the Mural Paintings of Toyok Cave 20 in Conjunction with the Origin of the *Amitayus Visualization Sutra*," *Orientations* 30-4 (1999): pp. 38–44.



18. Yamabe, "The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi," pp. 427–97.
19. After Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite: Jōdozu, Jōdo kansōzu, fujō kansōzu, part 2," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 223 (1995), plate 3.
20. Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 2," pp. 24–27.
21. Concerning the numbering of the paintings, I follow the system used by Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite: Jōdozu, Jōdo kansōzu, fujō kansōzu," parts 1–3, *Bukkyō geijutsu* 221 (1995): pp. 15–41; 223 (1995): pp. 15–36; and 226 (1996): pp. 38–83. In this system, the rows are numbered in Roman numerals from top to bottom, and the columns in Arabic numerals from rear to front.
22. Detail of Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 56, figure 13.
23. Detail of Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 56, figure 13.
24. The original inscription is found in Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 2," p. 24. The English translation is the author's.
25. One illegible character is supplied by Miyaji, probably correctly, as *hsing* 行.
26. One character is illegible in the original inscription. *Ch'i* 七 (seven) is supplied by the author from the context.
27. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 342b7–9; Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 24.
28. We should also note that the inscriptions do not follow the text of the *Visualization Sūtra* word for word. Since, however, deviation of inscriptions from texts is not an unknown phenomenon elsewhere (Sarah Elizabeth Fraser, "The Artist's Practice in Tang Dynasty China [8th–10th Centuries]," Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley [1996], pp. 89–90), we should not put too much emphasis on this point. Perhaps the scribe who wrote these inscriptions was referring to casual excerpts from the sutra.

On the disagreements between the inscriptions and the paintings, and between the inscriptions and the *Visualization Sūtra*, Miyaji ("Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," pp. 69–70) considers two possibilities: (1) the inscriptions were added later based on insufficient knowledge, or, more likely, (2) there were collections of icons and passages excerpted from various texts intended as manuals for practice.

It is reported that there is indeed a casual excerpt from the *Visualization Sūtra* on the verso of S.2544, which apparently was used by the scribes. See Fujita, *Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū*, pp. 45–46 (the page numbers refer to those in the appendix).

There is also a collection of cartouches (Pelliot 3304; Fraser, “The Artist’s Practice in Tang Dynasty China,” p. 91) and sketchbooks (ibid., p. 25ff.). Note that Pelliot 3304 verso also contains excerpts from the *Visualization Sūtra*.

29. Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 320, n. 2) gives the following German translation (by Franke) of the inscription copied by Grünwedel: “Wer die Liebe besitzt, der shaut alle Kostbarkeiten. Auf den Bäumen sind sieben Arten von Gewändern (?); wenn die Gewänder (?) sich öffnen, so enthalten sie zweihundert . . .” (“A benevolent one sees all the jewels. On the tree there are seven types of clothes; then the clothes open, they hold two hundred . . .”). Clearly some miscopying is involved here (especially, 行者 “a practitioner,” seems to have been copied as, 仁者 “a benevolent one”; and 間, “in, among,” as 開, “to open”). We can, however, deduce from the German translation that the inscription he saw had two more characters *êrh-pai* 二百, “two hundred,” after the last character of the inscription that we can read. (Note also that partly-faded *wu* 五, “five,” might have been miscopied as *êrh* 二, “two,” by Grünwedel.) Therefore, it is likely that some words very similar to the text of the *Visualization Sūtra* followed the surviving part of the inscription.

30. “Flowers and leaves [of the jewel trees] show different colors respectively. From the color of beryl, gold rays emerge. From the color of crystal, red rays emerge. From the color of agate, rays of [the color of] the giant clam emerge. From the color of giant clam, rays of [the color of] the green pearl emerge,” (*Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 342b4–6).

31. I have profited from a discussion with Professor Bruce Williams on this point.

32. We should perhaps also consider that the Chinese characters for “ray, light” 光 is visually somewhat similar to the character for “fire” 火.

33. Cf. 其摩尼水流注華間尋樹上下。其聲微妙演說苦空無常無我諸波羅蜜 (*Visualization Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 342b29–c1).

34. Quoted in Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” p. 56.

35. Quotations from the *Yogalehrbuch* are from the edition found in Schlingloff, *Ein buddhistisches Yogalehrbuch*.

36. After Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1,” p.29, figure 13.

37. After Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 31, figure 14.

38. See Miyaji "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," pp. 49–50.

39. Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 229) already reports that all the Chinese inscriptions on this wall are damaged.

40. For a few other similar passages, see Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 50.

41. Name of a class of demons.

42. This text was based on Chih-i's 智顗 lectures delivered in 594 CE.

43. Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, pp. 330–31.

44. Further, Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 332) testifies that Klementz Cave 38, Hall B had another painting of demons.

45. According to Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 331), all the "ascetics" in this back chamber wear loincloths instead of monks' robes and have hair and beard like *Brāhmaṇa* penitents.

Further, Grünwedel (*ibid.*, p. 320) interprets a figure that is depicted in painting III' 2 on the right wall of Cave 20 as a demon fleeing from the meditating monk. Miyaji ("Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 2," p. 32) disagrees with this interpretation and suggests that this is a sick person, though he admits that the painting is faded and rather unclear.

46. After Miyaji "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 63, figure 24.

47. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, U. Wogihara and C. Tsuchida, eds. (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1958), pp. 59–94; in Kumārajīva's version, *Miao-fa lien-hua ching* 妙法蓮華經, in *Taishō*, vol. 9, no. 262, pp. 10b–16b.

48. Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 63 and p. 81, n. 86.

49. *Gandharvanagara* usually means "mirage," but I am not sure if that is the intended meaning here. Since the *Ocean Sūtra* is apocryphal, there is no guarantee that the person who wrote this passage was familiar with the usage of this Sanskrit word.

50. Concerning the meaning of this word, see Willem B. Bollee, "Le *kūṭāgāra* ou de la maison des hommes au manoir dans l'Inde orientale et l'Asie du Sud-Est," *Bulletin d'études indiennes* 4 (1986): pp. 189–214. This

word is discussed in Section III.1 of my dissertation (*"The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha"*).

51. Due to the fragmentary nature of the manuscripts of this text, the fact that the image of a burning house does not appear in the available portions of the manuscript does not necessarily prove that it was not contained in the original text.

52. Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," pp. 58–59.

53. After Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 58, figure 17.

54. Detail of Miyaji "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 31, figure 14.

55. Inamoto Yasuo ("Shōnankai chūkutsu to metsuzai no shisō: Sōchō shūhen ni okeru jissengyō to *Nehangyō*, *Kan muryōjukyō* no kaishaku o chūshin ni," *Kaon zasshū* 4 [2002]: pp. 25–26) points out that in China jewels were identified with the relics of the Buddha.

56. See Nakamine Masanobu, "Chūō Ajia Toyoku iseki Bukkyō jiin hekiga danpen ni hyōgen sareta hōju ni tsuite," *Beppu Daigaku kiyō* 21 (1980): pp. 33–38; Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 38; and Figure 1.

57. Part of Fred H. Andrews, *Wall Paintings from Ancient Shrines in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), plate 9.

58. See Nakamine, "Chūō Ajia Toyoku iseki Bukkyō jiin hekiga danpen ni hyōgen sareta hōju ni tsuite," p. 34.

59. According to the observation by Professor Ma Shih-ch'ang of Beijing University (personal discussion during the Third Silk Road Conference, July 10–12, 1998), this inscription seems to be from the fifth or sixth century (i.e., before the Sui period) judging from the calligraphic style. He further observed that stylistically this inscription is close to those in Toyok Cave 20.

60. Concerning the burning jewel (*cintāmaṇi*), see also Moriyasu Takao ("Uiguru-Manikyōshi no kenkyū," *Osaka Daigaku Bungakubu kiyō* 31 and 32 [1991]: pp. 13–15), which reports the existence of this motif in a Buddhist-Manichean double cave, Bezeklik Cave 25 (early ninth to early tenth century; *ibid.*, p. 32).

61. The text has *hsū* 虛, "empty," but I read as *yūn* 雲, "cloud," according to the variant given in the footnote of the *Taishō* canon.

62. See Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 58.

63. Namely, the meditator's heart is visible like a burning jewel in his chest, which is like a clear wish-granting jewel.

64. Sudō Hirotooshi, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 183 (1989): pp. 12–20; and "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," in *1987 Tun-huang shih-k'u yen-chiu kuo-chi t'ao-lun-hui shih-k'u k'ao-ku-pien wên-chi* (Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-shê, 1990), pp. 395–403.

65. See also Miyaji Akira, "Kijiru daiichi yōshiki no vōruto tenjōkutsu hekiga: Zenjōsō, sangaku kōzu, Miroku bosatsu no zuzō kōsei," in *Nehan to Miroku no zuzōgaku: Indo kara Chūō Ajia e* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1992), pp. 428–31.

66. Sudō Hirotooshi, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," p. 14; and "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," pp. 412–13.

67. Sudō, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," pp. 15 and 18; "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," p. 397 and pp. 400–401).

68. See Miyaji, "Kijiru daiichi yōshiki no vōruto tenjōkutsu hekiga," pp. 414–35; Sudō, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," pp. 13–18; "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," pp. 396–400.

69. This point is also noted in Liu Hung-liang, "Kao-ch'ang shih-k'u k'ai-shu," in *Chung-kuo pi-hua ch'üan-chi: Hsin-chiang*, vol. 6, T'u-lu-fan, Chung-kuo Pi-hua Ch'üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, ed. (Shenyang: Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-shê; Urumchi: Hsin-chiang Jên-min Ch'u-pan-shê, 1990), p. 11.

70. Sudō, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," pp. 18–19; "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u 285," pp. 400–401.

71. A typical example is seen in the *Visualization Sūtra*, in which the objects of visualization are numerically itemized in the following way:

1. the sun
2. water
3. the ground
4. [jewel] trees
5. water of eight superior qualities
6. an overall view
7. a flower seat
8. a statue [of Amitāyus]
9. physical forms [of Amitāyus and all the other buddhas]
10. Avalokiteśvara
11. Mahāsthāmaprāpta
12. general visualization
13. miscellaneous visualization

72. In this table, "Corresponding Item in the *Visualization Sūtra*" refers to the items of visualization listed in the previous note 71.

73. The identification of the subject of II.2 is uncertain, but the identification of II.5 and III.3 are based on the inscriptions and thus very likely. Further, note that if II.3 is also meant to be a representation of "4. jewel trees," then we have three paintings of the same topic on the same wall.

74. At Tun-huang also, there are some transformation tableaux that deviate significantly from the *Visualization Sūtra*. Nevertheless, they certainly deviate to a lesser degree than the completely disorganized paintings at Toyok. Further, we should note that at Tun-huang, the degree of deviation becomes greater in the paintings from later periods (see Sun Hsiu-shên, "Tun-huang shih-k'ü chung tê Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching pien-hsiang," in 1987 *Tun-huang shih-k'ü yen-chiu kuo-chi t'ao-lun-hui shih-k'ü k'ao-ku-pien wên-chi* [Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch'ü-pan-shê, 1990], pp. 230–33; Tun-huang yen-chiu yüan, ed., *Tun-huang shih-k'ü ch'üan-chi*, vol. 5., *Ê-mi-t'ô-ching hua-chüan* [Hong Kong: Shang-wu Yin-shu Kuan, 2002], pp. 227–28, etc.). This is an important phenomenon, but it is probably an issue to be considered separately from the paintings at Toyok.

75. Also, I myself have some personal experiences in meditation in Japanese, Sri Lankan, and Taiwanese traditions. Everywhere initial instructions are given orally. I have even been expressly discouraged from reading books (even those on meditation) during retreats in Japan and Sri Lanka.

76. I thank Professor Valerie Hansen for her helpful suggestion on this point.

77. Fraser ("The Artist's Practice in Tang Dynasty China," pp. 86–98) points out that the artists who painted the murals and the scribes who wrote the inscriptions were separate people during the T'ang period. If that is the case here also, the existence of the inscriptions does not prove the literacy of the painters.

78. It is noteworthy, however, that in the oldest extant transformation tableau on the *Visualization Sūtra* at Tun-huang Mo-kao Cave 431, a monk is visualizing the objects, as in the paintings at Toyok Caves. See Katsuki Gen'ichirō, "Tonkō hekiga no kangyō hensō jūrokkan zu ni miru jinbutsu hyōgen ni tsuite," in *Higashi Ajia bijutsu ni okeru hito no katachi*, Heisei 5–6 nendo Kagaku Kenkyūhi hojokin (ippann kenkyū A) kenkyū seika hōkokusho (1994), pp. 59–62.

79. Yamabe, "The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi," pp. 488–493.



# Hidden Realms and Pure Abodes: Central Asian Buddhism as Frontier Religion in the Literature of India, Nepal, and Tibet

Ronald M. Davidson

Fairfield University

The notable romantic interest in Silk Route studies in the last hundred years has spread far beyond the walls of academe, and is especially observed in the excessive world of journalism. In Japan, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) has produced a series of films whose images are extraordinary while their content remains superficial. The American National Geographical Society has followed suit in their own way, with some curious articles written by journalists and photographers. With the 2001 conflict in Afghanistan, American undergraduates have also begun to perceive Central Asia as a place of interest and excitement, an assessment that will not necessarily pay dividends in the support of serious scholarship. While Indian and Arab academic commentators on popular Western cultural movements want to read the lurid hand of Orientalism into such responses, I believe something more interesting is actually happening. Over the course of the past decade, I have often been struck by statements in medieval Buddhist literature from India, Nepal, and Tibet, statements that depict areas of Central Asia and the Silk Route in similarly exotic tones. Whether it is a land of secret knowledge or mystery, of danger and romance, or a land of opportunity and spirituality, the willingness of Indians, Nepalese, and Tibetans to entertain and accept fabulous descriptions of the domains wherein silk commerce and Buddhism existed for approximately a millennium is an interesting fact. More to the point, for the Buddhist traditions found in classical and medieval India and Tibet, there has been no area comparable to Central Asia for its combination of intellectual, ritual, mythic, and social impact.

Perhaps most remarkably, references to many areas of Central Asia have often been taken by scholars as signs of *Indian* Buddhism, based on the presumption that the use of Indic languages (Sanskrit, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, or Gāndhārī) is indicative of Indian presence, even though we see undeniably local Sanskrit traditions that emerge.<sup>1</sup> This Indian presumption is done with a concomitant disregard of the clear cultural disparity between Central Asia (including the Peshawar / Swat Valley /



Kabul zone) and that of India proper, a difference that has only seldom been noted. For the most part, scholars have been seduced into accepting Central Asia's promotion of itself as an indelible part of Indian cultural life, even though we can see that it may not be true. Partly the Indophilic acceptance is a result of the geography of Aśoka's "India," and partly it is a consequence of colonial hegemonic maps or post-colonial nationalist sentiment. In the former case, the presence of Aśokan epigraphs as far afield as Afghanistan has provided both nineteenth century imperialists and South Asian nationalists with an artificial horizon of state identity. This was reinforced by the British rhetoric of colonialism, that somehow the zone from Burma to Iran was but one common area for the British Indian Empire. However, as John Brough had already noted in 1965, we would be remiss if we found that our nomenclature of "India's" subcontinental geography

has lead us to underestimate the distinctive nature of the North-West, and to think of it merely as an extension in space, stretching away to the upper Indus and beyond, but otherwise a more or less homogenous continuation of the country of the Gangetic plain and Madhyadeśa. The North-West is different, in terrain and climate, and in numerous other ways, of which two are directly relevant to the present discussion: geographically, the trite fact of its location and relative accessibility from both west and east; and culturally, its development of a characteristic language.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will seek to explore aspects of the mythology of Gandhāra, Swat, Kashmir, Khotan, and even more ethereal lands in literature that has been accepted within South Asia and Tibet. In this, the paper will be informed by the critical movement in anthropology and literature known as reception theory.<sup>3</sup> In our own pursuit, we will not be concerned with the reception of Buddhism in Central Asia, but rather the reverse influence on the distinctive narratives and ideas that have been developed and propagated in these areas and reimported back into the sphere of South Asian and Tibetan societies. Because Buddhist missionaries into these regions were the transporters both of Indic systems and of the Central Asian responses, it is within Buddhist literature that we find the primary South Asian response to the Central Asian cultural horizon. In distinction, medieval non-Buddhist literature tends to be concerned with the ferocious Hūṇa peoples that threatened the classical and medieval cultures of the plains. Thus, throughout the history of Sanskrit literature, Central Asians (Śakas, Kuśānas, Yavanas, Bhoṭas, Cīṇas, and others) tended to be classed as Mleccha barbarians, although there are noted exceptions to this estimation and some Mlecchas have been influential in the minor sciences.

Perhaps stimulated by the simultaneous specter of barbarian attacks and the wealth of the trade routes, Buddhist descriptions are noted for their emphasis either on the fertile origin or on the immanent demise of Buddhist cultural and religious systems, and the authority eventually granted Central Asia spilled over into the remarkable acceptance of Silk Route doctrinal or ritual innovations in an unprecedented manner. We will find that these Silk Route areas will be depicted quite differently from other important Buddhist locales, such as Śrī Lāṅka, which has been so often represented as the abode of demons. The precise reasons for this disparity are as yet obscure, but it is my thesis that the acceptance of Indic languages as the media of official discourse, combined with the cultural geography of isolated cultures—whether through the isolation of desert travel (Khotan) or the seclusion enforced by mountain passes (Kashmir, Swat)—were strong contributing factors in their perceptions. We may also wish to reflect on Central Asia as a “frontier” zone and consider if Central Asian cultures represented such a romantic reality to Indian Buddhists for some of the same reasons as the American West was considered romantic by those in Europe and in the Eurocentric culture of the Atlantic seaboard. In all of these estimations, we may begin to take into account that no other area has had so strong an impact on South Asian and Tibetan Buddhist perceptions of Buddhism in the way that Silk Route sites have had. While art historians and archaeologists have dominated Silk Route studies, the evidence from the literary archive is only now beginning to come into its own, and it is to that archive that we may turn.

### GREEK, ŚAKA, AND KUŚĀNA INTRUSIONS

In the larger cultural sphere, fully engaged by the Indian Buddhist subculture, the Indo-Greeks and their successors, especially the Śakas and Kuśānas, have been influential beyond that of any other foreign cultures until the time of the Muslim intrusion. In some ways, we can certainly understand an Indian engagement with the Eastern Greeks, which is paralleled in our own use of the classical world as our primary reference point for art, philosophy, and politics. Yet the Indo-Greeks did not have influence in the same way in India that they have had on Europe and America. Indians, for example, remained virtually immune to the canons and functions of Hellenistic art *per se*, and there was certainly nothing like the Renaissance or the Neoclassical periods in the Northwest as revival periods for their artistic heritage. While the origin of the Buddha figure continues to be disputed, and is likely to remain so for some time, there can be no doubt that the simple fact of its dispute indicates the ambivalence observable in Indian art about the Hellenistic forms they encountered and ultimately rebuffed. One could even argue that, because of the Silk Route,

Gandhāran art has had a greater influence in China than within the borders of India proper. Indeed, outside of explicitly Buddhist ideology, we find the primary Indo-Greek and Śaka influences in the areas of cultural products and, to a lesser degree, political representations.

The contributions of Northwestern cultures are most explicitly the pervasive influence seen in the borrowing of Greek-style coinage (not the punch-mark coins of the Mauryans) and the appropriation of astrology. Coins, though, are the subject of archaeology and other disciplines studying material culture, and here we will restrict our emphasis to literary traces. In this respect, it is curious, certainly, that neither of the two writing systems widely employed for virtually all early inscriptions in the Northwest—Greek and Kharoṣṭhī—should have found much application in India *per se*, even though minor inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī have been found as far afield as West Bengal and China.<sup>4</sup> Unlike the now ubiquitous use of Indian numerals (incorrectly called Arabic numbers, as the Arabs obtained them from the Indians) in the West, neither Greek nor Kharoṣṭhī scripts took India by storm. For whatever reason, indigenous Indian developments from Mauryan Brāhmī script entirely eclipsed the employment of Mediterranean-based scripts on the subcontinent and wherever Indian influence became dominant.

Astrology, though, is a discipline apart and Indian astrology did embrace Greek-based systems. Two seminal documents point to the importance that this “science” had for Indians over time: the *Gārgīya-jyotiṣa* and the *Yavana-jātaka*. The former is in some ways the more interesting, for it not only treats the overall topic of astrology and astrological calculation according to the mythic Garga—a treatment that spawned a whole host of imitative “*Gārgīya-jyotiṣa-s*”—but also incorporated into its sixty-four chapters one that remains the only Sanskrit mythological statement devoted to groups from the Northwest: the *Yuga-purāṇa*. A mere 115 verses in the received text, the *Yuga-purāṇa* discusses the religious circumstances and social structure at the end of the cosmic cycle (*yuga*), thus integrating the appearance of Indo-Greeks (Yavana) and Śakas into a mythology of cosmic decline. Because of the thoroughly Indian nature of this appropriation of Northwest astrology, the text became very influential outside of astrological calculations. The *Yuga-purāṇa* contributed verses and other influences to such standard Sanskrit works as the *Brhatsamhitā*, the *Matsya-purāṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and so forth.<sup>5</sup> Varāhamihira, the putative author of the *Brhatsamhitā*, knew well that the source was foreign, but it mattered little in the question of astrology. “Yes, these Greeks are barbarians, but this correct science [of astrology] has somehow been found among them.”<sup>6</sup>

Just as Indianized, in its own way, was the *Yavana-jātaka*, a treatise on Greek horoscopy. This is not, as Buddhist readers might initially presume, some story of the Buddha’s previous births among the Greeks. Rather, it is a 269/270 CE versified edition by Sphujidhvaja of Yavaneśa’s 149/50 CE

prose “translation” from the lost Greek text, which Pingree maintains was originally a composition from the illustrious city of Alexandria, Egypt. That does not mean, however, that it is a simple translation in the manner we know today, for the text discourses on topics from reincarnation to Brahmins, from Buddhists to *ṛṣis*, and so forth. Thus the text is in reality an extremely interesting exercise in domestication of foreign materials, with subtle shifts in reference throughout the surviving Sanskrit so that an Indian reader (for whom else would such a text be written?) would gain immediate access to the “Greek” science, even while the transposition to the Indian cultural landscape was in process. As a measure of its success, the *Yavana-jātaka*, like the *Gārgīya-jyotiṣa*, became a seminal text that engendered a whole other series of “Yavana” works, some of them by actual Indo-Greeks or Śakas in India.<sup>7</sup>

We cannot leave the issue of the Yavana influence without mentioning that famous literary figure—the Indo-Greek king Menander. His ethnic affiliation is unquestionably declared; even in the Pāli translation of what must have been originally a Gāndhārī text, he is addressed as a Yonakarāja, that is, an Ionian king. Yet the text makes this to be an Indian curiosity, for he is granted the pedigree that all Indian kings must enjoy: he is learned in all the *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas*, all the philosophical positions and secular sciences. The text even provides Menander with the most Buddhist of backgrounds, for his previous birth story wherein he acquired merit (*pūrvayoga*) is related as part of his domestication into the Buddhist literary horizon. The redactor’s strategy is clearly to refurbish Menander as an exemplary minority figure within the Indian cultural zone, and this he does by summing up Menander’s attributes that there was no other king in Jambudvīpa so strong, quick, courageous, and wise.<sup>8</sup> As Fussman has recently pointed out, it would be difficult for an Indian reading the current Pāli text of the *Milindapañha* even to identify Menander as not Indian in either name or attributes.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the Ionian king’s interest in questioning ascetics, coupled with the involvement of Indo-Greeks with Buddhism in Gandhāra and in the Western Satrapies, sets the background somewhat apart, and appears to be an Indianized version of the Greek cultural icon of the philosopher-prince. Like the appropriation of Greek astrology, though, this is an increasingly occluded part of the representation, so that the “Greekness” of such an icon has been lost by the time the Pāli text was composed, even though the Northwest setting remains firm in the text’s eye.

Other texts take the Kuśāna developments into account, and we may observe that the physical/cultural landscape of Gandhāra played an important part in its acceptance as authoritatively Buddhist. One of the earliest descriptions is found in the narrative of the Buddha’s travels to Kashmir and Gandhāra, a story that survives in places in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya*, such as the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, and in other analo-

gous Mūlasarvāstivāda collections.<sup>10</sup> Just before the Tathāgata is to pass into his *mahāparinirvāṇa*, a Yakṣa named Kutika brings fruits, especially grapes, from Kashmir and Central Asia. As a result, the Buddha decides to make a visit to Kashmir, leaving Ānanda behind and taking the Yakṣa general Vajrapāṇi as his attendant instead. In the course of this trip, he converts the *nāga* Apalāla, along with other Yakṣas and *nāga*-s, and brings a master potter into the Buddhist fold. In the course of his sojourn, he makes some prophecies, including that of the *arhat* Madhyāntika's conversion of Kashmir. The other prophecy he makes, though, is that of Kaniṣka. Seeing a young boy playing in the dust, making *stūpa*-like figures, he prophesizes that, four hundred years after his *parinirvāṇa*, this boy will be the king Kaniṣka, and will establish a *stūpa* in the area that will "do the duty of the Buddha" after his *parinirvāṇa*.<sup>11</sup>

This is an extraordinary statement about the great Kaniṣka *stūpa*, on which was painted the double-bodied Buddha that is well recognized in Central Asian artistic renditions, and which was in close proximity to the shrine containing the ostensible begging bowl relic of the Buddha.<sup>12</sup> A similar statement about "doing the duty of the Buddha" is applied to Upagupta, who is said to become the *arhat* that overcame Māra and did the work of the Buddha following his passing.<sup>13</sup> We may not need to follow Schopen's suggestion that the relics in such *stūpa*-s somehow have been regarded the living presences of the Buddha to understand that the Kaniṣka *stūpa* was certainly qualitatively different from other *stūpa*-s in the area, many of which were ascribed to Aśoka.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the presumed relic placed in this *stūpa* is not mentioned at all in the *Vinaya* episode, and the *stūpa*'s celebrated artistic program is nowhere recognized in the surviving Sanskrit text. Instead, the literary statement is an acknowledgment that the Kaniṣka *stūpa* in Peshawar served as a focal point for Buddhists and merchants in the Gandhāra/Karakorum/Indus river corridor, and was probably the best known (and certainly largest) example of the type that informs the *stūpa* plaques, casts, and petroglyphs from Harwan and Chilas to Hunza, the Tarim Basin, and beyond.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the Mūlasarvāstivāda citation comes just before one important pronouncement of the Mahāsaṃmata story, in which the first kingship is located in Mathurā, the southern extent of the Kuśāna realm and one of the two places where images of Kaniṣka were set up in Kuśāna ancestral temples. Mathurā, we are assured, is the place where the law was founded and where *kṣatriya*-s began their dominion over the Indian political world. All told, this story from such sources as the "medical division" of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya* constitutes a statement by Gangetic Valley Indians that Central Asian Buddhism had come of age, that its overall importance for and benefit to the dispensation of the Buddha had more than exceeded the threshold required to overwhelm the indigenous xenophobia of Indians and had earned it a position in the literary archive. Yet we need

to recognize that there was exhibited a process of selectivity in this report, for not all such stories or sites were accepted to such a degree. We seem, for example, to have no surviving South Asian text that recognizes the importance of the Cave of the Buddha's Shadow, a site that so impressed the Chinese travelers like Hsüan Tsang.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the aura of Kaniṣka's *stūpa* is presented in a specifically Indian manner, with a previous-births (*pūrvayoga*) narrative sanctioning its sanctity, analogous to the *pūrvayoga* material sacralizing Menander in the *Milindapañha*.

### YOGĀCĀRA IDEOLOGY AND RITUAL

Actually, the Gandhāran self-presentation effort was sufficiently successful that one of its more important traditions was fully accepted in the Indian intellectual agenda. I am speaking of the Yogācāras, those monkish meditators whose philosophical, meditative, and liturgical developments became part of the received canon. As the human founder of the Yogācāra tradition and the well known author of the voluminous *Yogācārabhūmi*, Asaṅga became so influential that his origin is regarded as a quaint curiosity today, but virtually all of our data indicate that he and his brother Vasubandhu were the only Gandhāran authors to become so esteemed. Asaṅga's residence in Gandhāra (Puruṣapura) is attested in the earliest hagiography of him, that which is appended to Paramārtha's story of his illustrious brother, Vasubandhu.<sup>17</sup> The placement of the brothers is independently verified by data found in Yaśomitra's commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa* in conjunction with the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra*. In these works, an obscure point of doctrine is ascribed to both the Gandhāran Vaibhāṣikas and the Yogācāras, these latter described as consisting of Asaṅga, etc.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the later Chinese and Korean pilgrims tended to make all famous authors associated with Gandhāra into residents of the Kaniṣka Vihāra, the most famous monastery in the environs of Peshawar, but we have no confirmation of this rather late identification, and Dobbins has culled such traveler's tales from the translated literature.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, Asaṅga's residence in Gandhāra seems secure, with only the single instance of Hsüan Tsang—who also provides a Gandhāran origin for the Yogācāra master—relating a story about Asaṅga living at some point outside of Gandhāra, in Ayodhyā, where he was said to have had a teaching hall.<sup>20</sup> We may wonder, though, if this rather late attribution of an alternative residence is simply the result of an early medieval Indian appropriation of Asaṅga's personality, predicated on his fame.

If we recall that Asaṅga's contribution extends into the Mahāyānist liturgical venue, we can better estimate the importance of this area. One of the two standard lineages of the bodhisattva vow not only traces itself to



Asaṅga, but the form employed is found in the section on conduct found in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.<sup>21</sup> There, the aspiring bodhisattva is to find a monk or lay mentor, to set up a statue of the Buddha, and to take on the vows of the bodhisattva's discipline while visualizing all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the various world systems in the ten directions. His Mahāyānist preceptor provides him the vows, and the Buddhas and bodhisattvas themselves perceive a simulacrum of the aspirant bodhisattva receiving the vows and accepting the discipline from the preceptor. They accordingly assist the newly minted bodhisattva by helping him increase his roots of virtue and, we may suspect, provide him a degree of protection in the process.

The distribution and influence of this ritual cannot be overestimated. We find that the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* itself enjoyed a distinctive circulation, being translated three times into Chinese, twice as an independent work aside from the *Yogācārabhūmi*, by Dharmakṣema in 414–421 CE and Guṇavarman in 431 CE. We may presume, therefore, that the text was composed in the final quarter of the fourth century—probably not much before and doubtfully any later. The chapter containing the ritual became separately influential as well, with two Indic commentaries dedicated to its exegesis, those by Guṇaprabha and Jinaputra, surviving in Tibetan translation (To. 4045, 4046). The material included in the liturgical section quoted earlier was ritually so important that the virtue chapter of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* shares textual material with the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*, also translated by Dharmakṣema in 414–421 CE.<sup>22</sup> In both Central Asia and China, this liturgical text and its ritual format were emulated, spawning such apocryphal scriptures as the *Fan-wang Ching*, widely used in Chinese monasteries and employed in Japan.<sup>23</sup> The ritual was popular in South Asia as well, for a text calling itself the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa-sūtra*, apparently a later Indian work, appropriates the above ritual almost exactly verbatim.<sup>24</sup> We may suspect that, because of the way this latter work is organized, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* circulated in conjunction with another Mahāyānist ritual work, the *Upāliparipṛcchā*.<sup>25</sup> Sections from both of them were further included in the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa-sūtra*.

## THE ESOTERIC CONNECTION

The other discussion widely recognized in India and elsewhere featuring a Silk Route site as the source of the Dharma concerns the identity of Oḍiyāna as the progenitor for much of the esoteric canon. Kuwayama's 1991 rereading of previously incorrectly deciphered epigraphs has finally secured the place of the Swat Valley as Oḍiyāna, after many claims by Indian nationalists that it was to be located in Orissa, Bengal, or South India.<sup>26</sup> The aura Oḍiyāna obtained, as the esoteric canon itself, really



passed through three stages: the early collection of spells evident from the sixth century forward, the development of the Indrabhūti myth in the eighth century, and the extensive mythologization of Oḍiyāna in the *yoginī* tantras beginning in the ninth century.

The first esoteric canons were apparently little more than collections of spells (*mantra-* or *dhāraṇī-piṭaka*), and both the Mahāsāṃghikas and the Dharmaguptakas among the early schools have had such collections attributed to them.<sup>27</sup> It is further clear that an early canon of spells was strongly associated with the areas between Kashmir and the land of Uḍḍiyāna or Oḍiyāna. Already in the early sixth century, Sung Yün heard a story in Tashkurghan that the king's ancestor had studied spells in Oḍiyāna, using the knowledge to save his kingdom from a dragon who was drowning merchants and interrupting trade.<sup>28</sup> Hsüan Tsang also, in his 646 CE recounting of his travels, dismissed the ignorant users of spells that he encountered in Oḍiyāna.<sup>29</sup> Even the language of the surviving early literature, such as the early seventh century manuscript of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, affirms its association with places employing birch bark for manuscripts, notably employed from Kashmir to Bamiyan.<sup>30</sup> The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* further contributes to this sense of localization in the environs, mentioning two kinds of spells, one from the area of Gandhāra (*gāndhārī vidyā*) and one bringing visions of the future (*ikṣaṇikā vidyā*).<sup>31</sup> We have no indication that any other place in the subcontinent managed to represent their ritual phrases so effectively at such an early period.

Similarly, the Indrabhūti myth of preaching the tantras is found in an extensive form, as early as Jñānamitra's late eighth or early ninth century commentary on the *700-Verse Perfection of Insight* scripture. There, we are assured, eighteen classes of esoteric tantras of the eighth century—the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, the *Guhyasamāja*, etc.—have miraculously appeared in Zahor, to its king, Indrabhūti. The good king, though, is befuddled: he could not penetrate the understanding of the new scriptures. However, because of his supernormal insight obtained through countless lives of virtuous activity, he understood that an outcaste personality held the key. This individual was Kukurāja, who lived with a thousand dogs in Mālava, probably to be located in one of its great cities, such as Ujjain or Mahiṣmati. Indrabhūti sent a representative to invite this dog-guru to Zahor, but Kukurāja had not seen the texts, which were then dispatched to him to peruse in advance. Kukurāja, though, was equally clueless and eventually obtained the inspiration of Vajrasattva to secure their comprehension. While we may not know the precise location of Zahor, Indrabhūti's association with Oḍiyāna is affirmed in virtually all other forms of the myth.<sup>32</sup> We even see a variant in the narrative that Indrabhūti asked the Buddha to preach to him a doctrine that would allow those addicted to the senses a vehicle for liberation, and in response the Buddha preached the tantras.

Moreover, Oḍiyāna is twice mentioned in the late eighth or early ninth century autobiographical narratives on seeking the esoteric scriptures—whether the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* or the *Guhyasamāja*—by Śākyamitra and Buddhajñānapāda. The retelling of the latter’s trip to Oḍiyāna actually indicates that the land is called *guṇodaya*, the “rising of good qualities.” Vitapāda indicates that Oḍiyāna is granted this designation because it is the source of so many benefits. Buddhajñānapāda reports that his early studies were with Haribhadra in Magadha and with Vilāsavajra in Oḍiyāna.

Indeed, the importance of Vilāsavajra for the hermeneutics of the early esoteric system cannot be doubted. It is probably Vilāsavajra, residing in his Swat Valley monastery of Ratnadvīpa-vihāra, who provided the fundamental interpretation to the forty opening syllables of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, an interpretation that became embedded in virtually all commentaries following him. Thus, according to the surviving archive, each of the syllables of the opening of the text—*e-vaṃ-ma-yā-śru-taṃ*, etc.—is given a specific hermeneutic and represents an experience in the esoteric system. This interpretation has been widely accepted in Indian esoteric hermeneutics and is represented in such definitive texts as the *Pradīpodyotana* of the Tantric Candrakīrti.<sup>33</sup> Vilāsavajra’s surviving works also include the earliest citations of such seminal texts as the *Laghusaṃvara-tantra*, providing an effective chronology to the early *yoginī-tantra*s.

Finally, a later Indrabhūti reports in the opening section of his *Sahaja-siddhi* that this *yoginī-tantra* inspired system derived from the area of Oḍiyāna. According to the short lineage list and the lengthy commentarial hagiography, this Indrabhūti was the receptor of a teaching on *sahaja*, or natural reality, that began in Oḍiyāna with a princess Śrī-Mahā-Līlādevī, who based the system on her experience precipitated by an encounter with an unnamed black-headed Ṛṣi at the forest monastery of Ratnālaṃkāra.<sup>34</sup> Upon being blessed by him, she realized that she was an emanation of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi—who is identified here as the patron divinity of Oḍiyāna—and she and her five hundred ladies in waiting all received awakening into the nature of *sahaja*. The teaching on *sahaja* was then passed down in a lineage until the time of Indrabhūti, who wrote it down.

Indeed, Oḍiyāna’s gravity precipitated its almost universal inclusion in lists of the four great sites (*caturmahāpīṭha*) found in such diverse tantras as the *Hevajra* and the *Abhidhānottara*. One of the lists of these four sites eventually served to associate the “great sites” with the internal *maṇḍala*, and Oḍiyāna-pīṭha was given the preeminent position of becoming the seat or *cakra* found in the head of the esoteric yogin. Pilgrimage to the physical sites, in this reading, was replaced by pilgrimage to the internal *maṇḍala*, and we find it being identified as the wheel of great bliss and an internal site by Guḍḍipāda in his verses in the *Caryāgītikośa*.<sup>35</sup> The importance of Oḍiyāna is certainly not lost on the only Indian master to

write a comprehensive treatment of the various pilgrimage sites. Śākyarakṣita, in his *Prithādinirṇaya*, divides them up into nine grades from lesser-lesser to greater-greater, and takes as a given the importance of Oḍiyāna.<sup>36</sup> While he also lists Suvarṇnadvīpa and Singhaladvīpa, and though he acknowledges that there are important sites in Tibet and China as well, pride of place is provided the Swat Valley, the only site outside the normal boundaries of Indian culture to be so recognized.

We need only glance at Tibet to see the great importance that Oḍiyāna is accorded, primarily through its mythic association with Padmasambhava and his putative father, Indrabhūti, especially among the rNying-ma sect of Tibetan Buddhism. As a focus of Tibetan interest, Oḍiyāna spawned among the rNying-ma an entire mythic literature around Padmasambhava, his relationship with Indian kings and ministers, and Padmasambhava's various wives. Certainly this material is well known and its content is increasingly emphasized, but it might be just as important to note that the bKa'-brgyud-pa were sufficiently stimulated that two of their more illustrious members felt themselves motivated to make pilgrimages to Swat, and their thirteenth and early seventeenth century itineraries were translated by Tucci some time ago.<sup>37</sup> Both Grub-thob O-rgyan-pa (1230–1293) and sTag-tsang ras-pa (1574–1651) visited the Swat Valley at quite different stages in the history of the area, yet their respective observations continue to emphasize the miraculous and the importance of its spirituality to their respective communities.

In fact, the legend of Padmasambhava continues to motivate Tibetans in their search for sacred places, and we see the development of a previously obscure lake in Himachal Pradesh as a current focus of interest. Rewalsar, as it is known in Hindi, is about twenty-four kilometers southwest of the regional center of Maṇḍi, and has been esteemed by Tibetans as mTsho Pad-ma, the lake of the lotus-born teacher Padmasambhava. The lake's history as a Tibetan pilgrimage site is obscure to me, but until the nineteenth century it was primarily known as a lake dedicated to the Sikh guru, Gorbind Singh, and is well over five hundred kilometers by air from Saidu Sharif in the Swat Valley. Emerson's 1920 description of Mandi State indicates that the sole Tibetan monastery that had been built to that time was recent and that no ancient Buddhist remains could be found.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, the Tibetan hermits of the rNying-ma order I interviewed in the hills around Rewalsar in 1996—one of whom had been there for twenty-four years—all attested that it was the real Oḍiyāna. This is yet another example of the appropriation of sacred site designations by local groups when the original site is either lost to memory or dangerous to secure. We frequently see this movement of site names out of India to Nepal, Tibet, China, and Southeast Asia, but the reverse—a non-Indian site becoming located within India—is seldom encountered, and this is the only one to my knowledge.

## END OF THE DHARMA

At the other end of the theoretical spectrum, it is interesting to observe that sites essential to Silk Route merchants should play such central positions in the elaboration of the mythology of the Buddhist Dharma's extinction in Jambudvīpa. Given the importance of the doctrine on the Dharma's degradation and demise, we might expect that the scenario of its destruction would occur in the geographical areas of India, and in fact the majority of Buddhist narratives include exactly this proposition. However, important variants emphasize the position of Silk Route areas, especially Kashmir and Khotan.

The Kashmir connection is found in the Mahāyānist *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, a text that was to receive currency throughout East Asia and Tibet for its support of the doctrines of essential Buddha nature, the *tathāgatagarbha*. Less well understood is its position in specifying the development and demise of the Saddharma. According to the received text in Chinese and Tibetan, verified by its surviving Sanskrit fragments, there will be seven signs of the final end of the Tathāgata's truth. At the conclusion of these signs, the Saddharma will disappear into Kashmir, like mosquito urine disappears into the earth, so that Kashmir will be the final resting place of all the Mahāyāna scriptures.<sup>39</sup> There are formal similarities with this narrative and the story related by Hsüan Tsang that the life of the Saddharma is tied to the great *stūpa* of Kaniṣka. This *stūpa*, we are told, will be destroyed by fire and rebuilt seven times after the final conflagration, and the true Dharma will end on earth.<sup>40</sup>

Beyond the mention in the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, a site other than Kashmir was to provide an overwhelming level of importance to Buddhists in general and Tibetans in particular. This is the state of Khotan, well known for its archaeological remains but significant also for its literature, especially evident in the construction of an alternative narrative. Among the several important scriptures composed there, the *Samghavardhana-vyākaraṇa* narrative is a variant on the normative Kauśāmbī prophecy, a prophetic story that forms the core of so many of the "end of the true Dharma" scenarios. Nattier, who has studied these collectively *in extenso*, has pointed out that the normative story proposes that the demise of the true Dharma occurs when a Buddhist king becomes victorious over two royal enemies of the Dharma. He holds a convocation, and the two foremost monks—Śiśyaka and Sūrata—dispute the nature of the *Prātimokṣa*, so that eventually each is killed in the melee that follows. The gods declare the end of the true Dharma and the earth quakes, similar to the announcements and quaking of earth just before the moment of Śākyamuni's awakening. Even the most important iteration of this core story, the *Candragarbha-sūtra*, shows signs of Central Asian influence,

and Nattier has proposed that it received its final editing in Gandhāra or a proximate area.<sup>41</sup>

In the strongly Khotanese *Samghavardhana-vyākaraṇa* version, those without faith (in the doctrine) will be born in every country. Kings, as well, will compete in stealing each other's territory.<sup>42</sup> *Bhikṣu*-s and *bhikṣuṇī*-s will accumulate karma of the ten unvirtuous paths. They will habitually tell false stories to each other, and accumulate riches by engaging in commerce. They will raise cattle and keep male and female servants. Because of these behaviors, people will lose their faith. Consequently, they will steal the wealth donated to the Buddha and the Saṃgha. Then the few upright *bhikṣu*-s will become depressed. The monks of Khotan (who are among those few) will speak among themselves and eventually decide to leave Khotan, traveling to 'Bru-sha, that is, to the Burushaski speaking areas (Hunza, Yasin valley) in what is now north-eastern Pakistan. There the monks will elect to move on to Tibet, which will initially welcome them, but also eventually cast them out. The dispossessed clerics will then go to the lake of the nāga king Elāpatra, who served as the guardian of Gandhāra, and he will usher the monks into the court of the Gandhāran king. Unfortunately, the Buddhist king will pass away in two years, after which an unbelieving king will arise, and the monks will go to Kauśāmbī, where they will pick up the normative narrative of the conflict, as related above.

Nattier has observed that the parent narrative in the *Candragarbha-sūtra* had some influence in Tibet, and about eighty per cent of the text is cited in the *History of Buddhism* by Bu-ston.<sup>43</sup> However, the *Candragarbha-sūtra* is probably Indian in origin, even if it was edited in Gandhāra and was received by Tibetans from the Tarim Basin. More interesting, for our purposes, is that the Khotanese *Samghavardhana-vyākaraṇa* was clearly the basis for an "end of the Dharma" scenario in the thirteenth century by the rNying-ma author, mKhas-pa lDe'u, in his recently published religious history.<sup>44</sup> While his text shows some similarity with the other two Khotanese works on religious history first examined by Thomas and reread by Emmerick, there can be little doubt that the *Samghavardhana-vyākaraṇa* provided the basis for his summary. Yet the scenario articulated by mKhas-pa lDe'u is not a simple reiteration of the Khotanese work, for much of the specifically Khotanese material has simply been left out of the text, so that we are left with a bowdlerized version that elides many Khotanese place and personal names in favor of a more generalized account of the process. It is unclear whether mKhas-pa lDe'u himself, or some other editor before him, contracted the material. It is obvious, though, that the Khotanese narrative was received in Tibet with sufficient authority that an important thirteenth century author blithely included this version as the normative one in his work.

Lest we conceive of this estimation as an aberration, we might further reflect on another thirteenth century chronology of the demise of the



Dharma, that proposed sometime after 1216 CE by Sa-skya Paṇḍita, who was surely no champion of Tibetan innovations or of non-Indic materials. Yet Sa-skya Paṇḍita, who is consistently critical of others about their lack of Indic sources, neglects to mention that there was at least one time when he argued *against* Indic doctrine. In his chronological appendix to his hagiography of his uncle, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, Sa-skya Paṇḍita argues that the *Vinaya* record as calculated by Śākyaśrī in 1210 CE represented a faulty chronology, since it placed the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* in 543 BCE.<sup>45</sup> For Sa-Paṇ, the Khotanese chronology accepted by his uncle was correct, even though this calculation placed the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* in 2133 BCE.<sup>46</sup> The irony is that, while discounting the Indian oral tradition on this matter in favor of received scriptures, the Sa-skya sources for their chronology privileged pieces of Central Asian apocryphal literature.<sup>47</sup>

From these, and other examples, we can see that Tarim literature had clearly become influential in twelfth to thirteenth century Tibet. This is true whether we are speaking of the rNying-ma, the least orthodox group and the one most given to revealed literature, or the most orthodox group, the Sa-skya, the most avid defenders of Indian precedents and Indian models. Perhaps this privileging of Tarim Basin lineages is a reflection of the authority they enjoyed during the Royal Dynastic period, where meditative traditions either from or passing through Central Asia were accorded authenticity and patronage by the Tibetan emperors.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps it was a result of the heightened influence of the Tangut monks studying in Central Tibet, at a time when the Tangut Empire was at its height and prestige. In Central Tibet, both Tangut monks and Tibetan teachers were encountering Indian monks fleeing from the ravages of Islamic incursions, and the growing warfare between Hindu kings and their Turkic antagonists. From this vantage point, Tangut emperors like Jen-tsung (r. 1139–1199), whose strong Buddhist support is well authenticated, appeared the only Buddhist political hope in the twelfth century.<sup>49</sup> Between Tibetans becoming National Preceptors of Tangut princes and the imperial largess towards Buddhist teachers, Jen-tsung's charisma may have blended in Tibetans' minds into a general esteem of Central Asia.<sup>50</sup> For whatever reasons, though, the situation is clear: while orthodox exegetes like Sa-Paṇ are systematically censorious of Chinese influence in Tibetan meditative systems, Tarim mythologies and chronologies informed some of their own efforts.

### THE CULMINATION: ŚAMBHALA

Curiously, almost all of these trends come together in the story of Śambhala, a mythic land that was to seize the imagination of virtually all who considered this sacred realm, whether we are speaking of its composer in the late tenth or early eleventh century, when the myth was formulated,

or the consumers of the Shangri-la of American fiction. The texts representing Śambhala synthesize astrology, geography, esoteric meditation, gnosticism, righteous kingship, and a host of other ideas that we have already seen become important to Indian consumers of Central Asian lore. Yet the paradox of the Śambhala myth is that the fictive geography of this hidden realm and pure abode occurs exactly when the real Central Asia becomes lost to Islam. This dynamic is somewhat similar to the phenomenon observable with Oḍiyāna: just when the great pilgrimage site receives its most visible affirmation in the ninth to eleventh centuries in India, it was being submerged in Islamic aggression. Consequently, we might wonder if the aura of such sites is to a degree dependent on their being actually unavailable, and thus all the more desirable and mystical.

Another curiosity that has not received much attention about Śambhala is that its earliest textual sources do not display unanimity on its location. In the form initially encountered, that found in the first chapter of the *Laghu Kālacakra-tantra*, Śambhala is placed to the “south” of Mt. Kailāsa, perhaps in the upper Brahmaputra reaches or in the Purhang Valley, where one of the two centers of the Western Tibetan Empire were developed in the tenth century.<sup>51</sup> If this latter is the case, the author of the *Kālacakra-tantra* would have had the new principalities founded by the scions of the Tibetan royal clan in mind when he wrote of the city Kalāpa, the capital of a hidden kingdom where the Kalki kings kept the *Kālacakra* until the time for its release was correct.<sup>52</sup> Be that as it may, by the time Puṇḍarīka wrote his *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakra*, proposing that he himself was the second of the Kalki kings of Śambhala, he placed it to the north of the Śītā River, which is one of the mythic rivers reported in both Buddhist cosmologies and *purāṇic* literature.<sup>53</sup> Authors like Sylvain Lévi have maintained that the Śītā is to be identified with the Tarim River, but I believe we have lost the point here.

The point is that our earliest *Kālacakra* authorities are unable to place its location accurately. Yet it appears to me probable that Puṇḍarīka was himself from the northwest, perhaps from Kashmir, which maintained its traditional culture until the Muslim domination following the suicide of its queen, Devī Koṭa, in 1339 CE. Puṇḍarīka reports languages of the far north in the text of the *Vimalaprabhā* and was certainly in a position to understand that Śambhala could not have been located to the south of Kailāsa, which was accessible from Himalayan kingdoms like Kashmir.<sup>54</sup> The problem is made more complex by disagreements on the location of the first preaching of the received *Kālacakra*. Raviśrījñāna, the author of the *Kālacakra*-based *Amṛtakaṇikā* commentary to the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, maintained that the great Dhānyakaṭaka *stūpa* was the site of the original preaching of the tantras.<sup>55</sup> Yet Puṇḍarīka maintained that the tantra was preached by Mañjuśrī in Kalāpa, the capital city at the center of Śambhala.<sup>56</sup>



Curiously, Tibetans like Bu-ston or 'Gos-lo gZhon-nu-dpal have largely rejected Puṇḍarīka's position in favor of that stated by Raviśrījñāna.<sup>57</sup>

Be that as it may, there can be little question that the Śambhala myth is closely tied to an ideology of a Buddhist kingdom surviving the onslaughts of the Muslim armies, depicted both in the text of the received tantra and in the commentarial literature. Thus, the interest in the mythic kingdom of Śambhala combines themes already seen about the origin of the Dharma, its demise, and (in this instance) its resurrection at the hands of the victorious armies of the final future king of Śambhala, Raudrakalkin.<sup>58</sup> Orfino has pointed out that, whoever the author of the *Kālacakra* may have been, he must have had a thorough exposure to both the ideology of Islam and the violence of the Muslim armies of the day. We might observe that resurgent Islamic threats by aggressive Nakṣbandi Sufis in the Tarim Basin probably precipitated the resurgence of the Śambhala myth for the Mongols, resulting in the 1775 CE guidebook to the imaginary land by bLo-bzang dPla-ldan ye-shes, the Third Paṇ-chen Rin-po-che.<sup>59</sup>

Even with the Śambhala myth, the eclipse of Central Asia as a Buddhist domain was ultimately to cause its sites to become reidentified and relocated into South Asia, specifically Nepal. John Brough has already called attention to the identification of Swayambhū with specific Khotanese legends, and we certainly can see that the Bodhanātha *stūpa* has appropriated Tibetan legends in its search for authenticity.<sup>60</sup> The importance of Central Asia in all of this is, well, central, since Bodhanāth itself was older than Buddhism in Tibet, as our medieval Nepalese inscriptions affirm. The movement of pilgrimage sites, involving the identification of one pilgrimage site with another by changing the names or equating their designations, is a common phenomenon in South Asia. It certainly occurred before Puṇḍarīka's time and occupied much attention in Śākyarākṣita's review of such sites, where many of the pilgrimage centers are equated to each other. The same phenomenon is visible in Southeast Asia and Tibet, which have identified areas with the names of important places in Buddhist India. Yet the aura of a sanctified zone which pervades the South Asian image of Central Asia became important in the establishment of Nepalese authenticity, even with Nepal's greater antiquity.

## THE WILD NORTH ON THE FRONTIERS OF REALITY

The idea that a frontier area became influential on the parent civilization has certainly been part of the American persona since the time of Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier hypothesis." In what must be the single most influential conference paper in the history of American academia, Turner's 1893 paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," proposed that American values—the speedy integration of

various nationalities into a national identity, the emergence of the democratic ideal, and so forth—were not the result of European civilization but the consequence of our encounter with an uncivilized open land. Turner's thesis has fallen out of fashion, for many good reasons, but the idea of Central Asia as China's frontier has been employed by Owen Lattimore, as well as by others.<sup>61</sup> More recently Todd Lewis has seen the Himalayan borderlands as a frontier between Tibet and India, with Nepalese Buddhist communities effecting a network of relationships between the two cultures.<sup>62</sup> In many of these discussions, though, "frontier" has been taken as if a line in the sand, a specific margin of demarcation between the civilized world and the uncivilized. This is certainly the case with His Majesty's Government in India's designation of Peshawar, Swat, Citral, and Swat Kohistan as the Northwest Frontier Agency, for over the border were the dreaded Afghan tribes.

However, it may be more fruitful for our purposes if we understand the frontier as a zone rather than a line. Even the American frontier, in the words of an anonymous 1825 reporter, "was literally alive with a floating population."<sup>63</sup> Faragher, building on such observations, would like to understand the frontier as a zone of cultural confluence. He writes that, "The frontier was the region of encounter in between, an area of contest but also of consort between cultures."<sup>64</sup> From the view of East Asia, Lattimore emphasized that models of lineal demarcation are poorly formulated. While those in political power tend to draw such lines in the sand, sociologically the frontier can never be the same as a border. Instead he proposed a nomenclature of a "trans-Frontier" analogous to the model of a frontier zone.

The linear Frontier never existed except as a concept. The depth of the trans-Frontier, beyond the recognized linear Frontier, made possible a historical structure of zones, which varied from time to time. These were occupied by a graduated series of social groups, from partly sinicized nomads and semibarbarized Chinese, in the zone adjacent to China, to steppe peoples in Mongolia, forest peoples in North Manchuria and Urianghai, and the peoples of the plateau in Tibet, of whom the more distant were virtually unmodified by such attenuated contacts as they had with China. The oasis peoples of Chinese Turkistan formed another group, with special historical functions. Within this graduated series those groups that adjoined the Great Wall held the (inner) "reservoir" of political control over the Frontier.<sup>65</sup>

In many respects, this analysis of the constituents of a frontier develops cross-cultural themes observable elsewhere, including the comparison between the U.S. and Southern Africa.<sup>66</sup> However, for our purposes, if we

were to replace “China” in Lattimore’s statement with “India,” and spoke of the Kuśānas, the Sogdians, and others in the Western Tarim and Western Turkestan as he did for Mongols, Manchus, and others, much the same analysis would hold true.

Lattimore’s observation that the oases played a unique part may also be read into Indian literary and political history. While Puruṣapura cannot be considered an oasis on the same scale as Kucha or Turfan (for these latter are separated from other oasis cultures by weeks of travel), in the Gandhāran capital’s proximity to Jalalabad, Kapīśa, Begram, Oḍiyāna, and Bamiyan, it does share characteristics with the upper Oxus cities of Bactra, Surkh Kotal, Termez, Konduz, and Ay Khanum. The difference between the verdant landscape stretching from Lahore south is clearly evident to anyone venturing in the Northwest. These Northwest areas were the first locales to receive foreign incursions of Śakas, Kuśānas, Turks, or Mongols from the north; these were the cities and subcultures that most materially profited from the silk trade, and the ones that experienced the economic consequences of its demise.

To some degree this exercise demonstrates that the issue of Central Asia and the cities of the silk bazaars is exactly their respective positions between Persia, India, and China. The ethnic groups and migrant nations operating in these areas were not simply barbaric nomads or corpulent oasis burghers, but highly insightful actors and self-consciously opportunistic in their appropriation of selected aspects of the civilizations that brought them all kinds of cultural products and opportunities. Conversely, I would like to suggest that this specifically frontier character of Central Asia—the “in-betweenness” and fluidity of populations that have been so significant to its history, its position as the meeting ground of languages and cultures—is not simply exciting to us, but has been to Buddhist South Asians and Tibetans as well. As missionary monks encountered these zones of multicultural influences, either *in situ* or in the diasporas of the great cities of North India or China, many of them became enamored of the paradoxical presence of metropolitan sophistication and rural isolation that Central Asia afforded. Whether by chance or by design, the literary personae of such frontier zones have a decided resemblance, and they have been cast in the romantic mode by authors from Mathurā to Ch’ang-an. Inhabitants of such frontiers also found they could capitalize on their charismatic aura, representing themselves as a breed apart and the carriers of a secret knowledge developed in a distant land.

## CONCLUSION

The acceptance of Central Asian narratives in this manner was certainly assisted by the use of Indic languages as carriers of Buddhist, astrological, economic, legal, and political information. The employment

of Gāndhārī in Chorasmia, the use of Indic writing systems throughout the Tarim Basin, the development of regional varieties of Sanskrit in Kucha, Khotan, and Gandhāra, all certainly contributed to the perception of these areas as somehow Indic. Yet, much the same could be said for Śrī Lāṅka, Burma, Cambodia, or Thailand. In the former case, not only was Singhalese to become the official language, but Pāli was and is the authoritative religious language, even though both are Indo-European and doubtless from North India originally. Śrī Lāṅka, though, never enjoyed the same aura in South Asian or Tibetan literature, and the cultural memory of Śrī Lāṅka continues to be of an island of demonesses, even if it was sometimes proposed as the eventual residence of Padmasambhava, where he was to live with his consorts in his palace on Copper-colored Mountain (Tāmraparvata) surrounded by tribes of demons. Other locales, such as Pagan in Burma, certainly demonstrated the energy and wealth to be considered at least on par with even the greatest artistic and cultural areas of Bamiyan or the Kuśāna kingdoms. The Cambodian employment of Sanskrit as an inscriptional language has rightly been considered one of the more interesting linguistic developments in Southeast Asian history. Even more, though, for five centuries (8th–12th) Khm̐r monarchs worked in concert with both Brahmans and ascetics of the Śaiva Pāśupata tradition, formulating the Angkor kingdom, with its magnificent artistic and literary heritage. However, back in India, none of these areas were to receive the credit that was their due. Only the areas of Gandhāra, Oḍiyāna, Kashmir, Khotan, and the mythic region of Śambhala have captured the ancient and medieval Indian imagination and developed a following among the geographically challenged Indian intellectuals of the Gangetic Valley or their later followers in the Kathmandu Valley or on the Tibetan Plateau.

Each instance of Central Asian authority—of secret knowledge, hidden realms, quasi-pure lands, or as the source and conclusion of the Dharma—is not in and of itself so very important. In aggregate, though, there is no other area of the world that has maintained a visibility so great in the literature and landscape of South Asia. It may be because of the wealth established in these domains while silk was the central currency in the trade between China and Western Asia. It may be because Buddhism caught on in these zones in a way that was exceptional, but then we should see a similar phenomenon in Śrī Lāṅka, Burma, or in other Southeast Asian countries.

Instead, I believe that the romantic aura of the desert oasis or isolated culture, encountered after a period of hard travel by merchants (who were secured by their own wealth and influence in India), has been an important factor. All the influential areas are difficult to visit, easily the objects of romantic fantasies, and exceptional primarily in the disparities between their verdant cities and the surrounding desert. The lack of understanding of these areas contributed to their legends, and, even now, some Theoso-

phists and a few Indian Brahmins continue to maintain that Tibet is the residence of a superior class of religious personages, *avatars* of the new age, as I have occasionally been told. Those of us who know Tibet have few such illusions, but to those who have never been to the roof of the world, the esoteric sanctity of the hidden masters in the secret abode survives.

## NOTES

1. For the Northwest contribution, see Richard Salomon, "'Gāndhārī Hybrid Sanskrit': New Sources for the Study of the Sanskritization of Buddhist Literature," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 44 (2001): pp. 241–252; for examples of Kuchean Sanskrit, see articles by Heinrich Lüders, "Zur Geschichte und Geographie Ostturkestans," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1922): pp. 243–261; and "Weitere Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geographie von Ostturkestan," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1930): pp. 7–64. On the larger problem of the use of languages in Central Asia, see Jan Nattier, "Church Language and Vernacular Language in Central Asian Buddhism," *Numen* 37 (1990): pp. 195–219, and Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia: From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), pp. 248–250. I find it likely that the *Yogalehrbuch* examined by Dieter Schlingloff (*Ein Buddhistisches Yogalehrbuch: Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden*, 2 vols. [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964]) was a Tarim production, possibly in Kucha.
2. John Brough, "Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28 (1965): p. 584.
3. On this movement, see Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction*. (London & New York: Methuen, 1984).
4. Good bibliographies on Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī are found in Gérard Fussman, "Gāndhārī écrite, Gāndhārī parlée," in Colette Caillat, ed., *Dialectes dans les Littératures Indo-Aryennes*, Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, Fascicule 55 (Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 1989), pp. 433–501; and Meicun Lin, "Kharoṣṭhī Bibliography: The Collections from China (1897–1993)," *Central Asiatic Journal* 40 (1996): pp. 188–220; for the West Bengal finds, see B. N. Mukherjee, "Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)," *Indian Museum Bulletin* 25 (1990).
5. References in John E. Mitchiner's "Introduction" to the *Yuga-purāṇa*, critically edited, with an English translation and a detailed introduction by John E. Mitchiner, Bibliotheca Indica Series 312 (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1986), pp. 37–45.
6. Translation mine; quoted in in Mitchiner's "Introduction" to the *Yuga-purāṇa*, p. 11: mlecchā hi yavanās teṣu samyakśāstram idaṃ sthitam |.
7. "Introduction," in *The Yavanajātaka of Sphuṭidhvaja*, David Pingree, ed. and trans., Harvard Oriental Series vol. 48 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 23–41.



8. *Milindapañha Pāli*, Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, ed., *Bauddha Bharati Grantamala* 13 (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1979), pp. 2–3.
9. Gérard Fussman, “L’Indo-Grec Ménandre ou Paul Demiéville revisité,” *Journal Asiatique* 281 (1993): p. 68.
10. M. J. Przyluski, “Le Vinaya des Muṃḍa-Sarvaṃstivādin et les Textes Apparentés.” *Journal Asiatique*, series 11, volume 4 (1914): pp. 493–568; Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śaka Era*, Sara Webb-Boin trans. (Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, 1988), pp. 208–210; and John S. Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 26–43, surveys most of the surviving sources.
11. *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, Nalinaksha Dutt, ed., *Gilgit Manuscripts*, vol. 3, 1, The Kashmir Series of Texts & Studies, no. 71 (E) (Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Research Department and Calcutta Oriental Press, 1947), p. 2: eṣa caturvarṣaśataparinirvṛtasya mama vajrapāṇe [kuśanavaṃśyah] kaniṣko nāma rājā bhaviṣyati | so ‘asmin pradeśe stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati | tasya kaniṣkastūpa iti saṃjñā bhaviṣyati | mayi ca parinirvṛte buddhakāryaṃ kariṣyati |
12. See Kuwayama Shoshin, “The Buddha’s Bowl in Gandhara and the Relevant Problems,” In *South Asian Archaeology 1987*, vol. 2, Maurizio Taddei, ed. (Rome: Istituto Italiano per Il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990), pp. 945–978. The double-bodied Buddha is described *Ta t’ang hsi yü chi*, in *Taishō*, vol. 51, no. 2087, pp. 880a15–b3; Samuel Beal, trans., *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. 1 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1869), pp. 102–3; K. Walton Dobbins, *The Stupa and Vihara of Kanishka I*, The Asiatic Society Monograph Series, vol. 18 (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1971), p. 13. An eighth century painting from Khocho is represented in Herbert Härtel and Marianne Yaldiz, *Along the Ancient Silk Routes: Central Asian Art from the West Berlin State Museums* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982), pp. 183–4. Perhaps the most interesting example is the thirteenth century statue from Khara Khoto; see Mikhail Piotrovsky, ed., *Lost Empire of the Silk road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto (X-XIIIth Century)* (Milan: Electapp, 1993), pp. 104–5.
13. In the *Pāṃśupradānāvadāna* of the *Divyāvadāna*, P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Buddhist Sanskrit Texts*, no. 20 (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1959), p. 216; for Upagupta’s position, see Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta*, pp. 38–9.
14. *Ta t’ang hsi yü chi*, in *Taishō*, vol. 51, pp. 879c15–880b15; Beal *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. 1, pp. 99–103. Gregory Schopen has forwarded this position in his articles, “Burial ‘Ad Sanctos’ and the Physical Presence of the Buddha in Early Indian Buddhism: A



Study in the Archaeology of Religions," *Religion* 17 (1987): pp. 193–225; "On the Buddha and His Bones: The Concept of Relic in the Inscriptions of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108 (1988): pp. 527–537; and "The Buddha as an Owner of Property and Permanent Resident in Medieval Indian Monasteries," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 18 (1990): pp. 181–217. One could certainly argue that, because the statement is used to refer to both the *stūpa* and to an *arhat*, this indicates the living quality of the *stūpa*. Be that as it may, its similarity to Upagupta is predicated on, first, its real difference from the Buddha (as Upagupta was), and on the ideology of the survival of the Buddha's message conveyed through different personalities, as Upagupta's position in the lineage of Kashmiri-Gandhāran patriarchs clearly represented.

15. Martha L. Carter ("Petroglyphs at Chilas II: Evidence for a Pre-Iconic Phase of Buddhist Art in Gandhara," in *South Asian Archaeology 1991*, Adalbert J. Gail and Gerd J. R. Mevissen, eds. [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993], pp. 349–366) illustrates pre-Kuśāna *stūpa*-s, very different from the plaques illustrated in Ram Chandra Kak (*Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* [London: The India Society, 1933], pl. XVIII), which show startling similarities to the small *stūpa*-s of Turfan and Gansu discussed by Hubert Durt, et al. ("A propos de 'stūpa minatures' votifs du Ve siècle découverts à Tourfan et au Gansu," *Arts Asiatiques* 40 [1985]: pp. 92–106).

16. Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta*, pp. 28–32.

17. *P'ou sou p'an tou fa shih chuan*, in *Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2049, pp. 190c15–16; Takakusu Junjirō, "The Life of Vasu-Bandhu by Paramārtha (A.D. 499–569)," *T'oung Pao*, ser 2, vol. 5 (1904): p. 290.

18. This point is on the issue of the nature of the "roots of goodness" (three or four), and the nature of the fourth of them. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya-Vyākhyā*, ascribed to Yaśomitra, Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, ed., in *Abhidharmakośa and Bhāṣya of Aśchamrya Vasubandhu with Sphutārthā Commentary of Āchārya Yaśomitra*, Bauddha Bharati Series, no. 5 (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1970), pp. 429.23, and 795.25; *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 27, no. 1545, pp. 795c9–21.

19. Dobbins, *The Stupa and Vihara of Kanishka I*, p. 54.

20. *Ta t'ang hsi yü chi*, in *Taishō*, vol. 51, pp. 896b20–896c19; Beal, *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. 1, pp. 226–228.

21. For a full translation and discussion of the value of this section, see Ronald M. Davidson, "Mahāyāna in Gandhāra: The Problem of Artistic Representations, Textual Sources and the Public Intellectual," in *Proceeding of the International Conference on Gandharan Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Kurt Behrendt and Pia Brancaccio, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press [forthcoming]). The section is found in *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, Wogihara Unrai, ed. (1930–36, Tokyo: Sankibō

Busshorin, 1971), pp. 152.18–155.21; Nalinaksha Dutt, ed., *Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series*, vol. 7, (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1966), pp. 105.4–107.5; *Taishō*, vol. 30, no. 1579, pp. 514b11–515a9; *Taishō*, vol. 30, no. 1581, pp. 911b18–913a5; Ui Hakuji, et. al., eds., *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons* (hereafter, To.) (Sendai: Tohoku Imperial University, 1934), 4037, 82b5–84a5. Cf. Mark Tatz's translation from the Tibetan, with its interpolations, *Asanga's Chapter on Ethics With the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-pa: The Basic Path to Awakening, the Complete Bodhisattva*, *Studies in Asian Thought and Religion*, vol. 4. (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), pp. 60–62.

22. *Bodhisattvapratimokṣa*, in *Taishō*, vol. 24, no. 1500, pp. 1107a–1110a. The translation makes difficult to ascertain clues as to whether it was based on the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* or vice versa.

23. Paul Groner, "The *Fan-wang ching* and Monastic Discipline in Japanese Tendai: A Study of Annen's *Futsu jubosatsukai koshaku*," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Robert Buswell, ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 254.

24. Nalinaksha Dutt, "Bodhisattva Pratimoksa Sutra," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 7 (1931): pp. 259–286. Yamabe Nobuyoshi informs me that Fujita Kōkan ("Byan chub bzañ po cho *Bosatsu ritsugi giki* ni tsuite," *Mikkyō Bunka* 141 (1983): pp. 87–100) has identified this work in part with the *Bodhisamvaravidhi* (To. 3967) of Bodhibhadra (active ca. 1000 CE).

25. I wish to thank Yamabe Nobuyoshi for attracting my attention to this suggestion by Okimoto Katsumi, "Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 21 (1972): pp. 130–131.

26. See Kuwayama Shōshin, "L'inscription du Gaṇeśa de Gardez et la chronologie des Turki-Šāhi," *Journal Asiatique* 279 (1991): pp. 267–287.

27. *Ta t'ang hsi yü chi*, in *Taishō*, vol. 51, p. 923a8; Beal, *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. 2, p. 165; Paul Demiéville, "L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'après Paramartha," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhique* 1 (1932): pp. 60–61.

28. *Lo yang Chia lan chi*, *Taishō*, vol. 51, no. 2092, p. 1020b18; Yang Hsüan-chih, trans., *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 223.

29. *Ta t'ang hsi yü chi*, *Taishō*, vol. 51, p. 882b13–14; Beal (*Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. 1, p. 120) does not represent this section entirely accurately.

30. See *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, in Adelheid Mette, ed. and trans., *Die Gilgitfragmente des Kāraṇḍavyūha*, *Indica et Tibetica Monographien zu end Sprachen und Literaturen des indo-tibetischen Kulturraumes*, band 29 (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1997), p. 97. We notice the

maintenance of this language even in the Newari ms. transcribed by Mette (*Die Gilgitfragmente des Kāraṇḍavyūha*, p. 143). R. O. Meisezahl was also of this opinion in his work on the *Amoghapāśaḥṛdayadhāraṇī*; see R. O. Meisezahl, "The *Amoghapāśaḥṛdayadhāraṇī*: the Early Sanskrit Manuscript of the Ruiunji Critically Edited and Translated," *Monumenta Nipponica* 17 (1962): p. 270. On the topic of birch bark as a manuscript material, see Richard Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: British Library Kharroṣṭhī Fragments* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 15–22, 57–71, and 81–109; Michael Witzel, "Kashmiri Manuscripts and Pronunciation," in *A Study of the Nīlamata: Aspects of Hinduism in Ancient Kashmir*, Ikari, Yasuke, ed. (Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, 1994), pp. 6–14. The location of Uḍḍiyāna/Oḍiyāna has been finally affirmed by inscriptions; see Kuwayama "L'inscription du Gaṇeśa de Gardez et la chronologie des Turki-Ṣāhi," pp. 267–287.

31. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* VII. 47, Pralhad Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. 8 (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute; 2nd., rev. ed., 1975), pp. 424–5.

32. I have discussed the Indrabhūti preaching myth in my *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); please see it for the myth's sources.

33. Alex Wayman, *Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra: The Arcane Lore of Forty Verses* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), pp. 3–22; unfortunately, the translation of the verses is occasionally flawed.

34. *Sahajasiddhi-paddhati*, fols. 6a6–7b2 (Asc. Lha-lcam rje-btsun-ma dpal-mo [?=Devībhāṭṭārikāśrī], To. 2211, *bsTan-'gyur*, rgyud, zhi, fols. 4a3–25a1; Pe. 3108, *bsTan-'gyur*, rgyud-'grel, tsi, fols. 4b8–29a7. ); this material is given greater depth in Ronald M. Davidson, "Reframing *Sahaja*: Genre, Representation, Ritual and Lineage," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30 (2002): pp. 45–83.

35. *Caryāgītikośa* (#3, in Per Kværne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs: A Study of the Caryāgīti*, Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi II Hist.-Filos, Klasse Skrifter Ny Serie, no. 14 [Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977], pp. 48, and 86).

36. E.g., *Piṭhādinirṇaya*, attributed to Śākyarakṣita, To. 1606. *bsTan-'gyur*, rgyud, 'a, fols. 131b7–133b6.

37. Giuseppe Tucci, "Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley," *Opera Minora*, Studi Orientali Pubblicati a cura della Scuola Orientale, vol. 4., part 2 (Rome: Rome University, 1971), pp. 369–418.

38. H. W. Emerson, ed., *Punjab Gazetteers: Mandi State* (Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1920), pp. 17 and 203.

39. A Sanskrit fragment of this section from the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* is found in A. F. R. Hoernle, *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), pp. 93–97.

40. *Ta t'ang hsi yü chi*, *Taishō*, vol. 51, p. 880b12; Beal, *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. 1, p. 103.

41. Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), pp. 178 and 226.

42. Two *Samghavardhana-vyākaraṇa* versions survive in Tibetan, one canonical and one from Tun Huang, and are edited by Patrizia Cannata ("La Profezia dell'Arhat della Terra di li Riguardante il Declino della Fede nella Vera Legge," in Paolo Daffinà, ed., *Indo-Sino-Tibetica: Studi in Onore di Luciano Petech*, Università di Roma, La Sapienza, Studi Orientali, vol. 9 [(Rome: Bardi Editore, 1990], pp. 43–79) who also provides references to the manuscript of a Chinese translation found in Tun Huang. F. W. Thomas (*Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan*, Oriental Translation Fund, N.S. vols. XXXII, XXXVII, XL, [London: Luzac & Company, Ltd, 1935–55], vol. 1, pp. 41–69 and 307) discusses and translates the canonical version, and believed that it, as well as other scriptures describing Khotan, were not written there but in Tun Huang, Sha-chou or Tibet. Jan Nattier (*Once Upon a Future Time*, pp. 189 n. 98, and 194 n. 121) disputes this, maintaining their composition in Khotan, and the presence of two Tibetan and one Chinese version of the *Samghavardhana-vyākaraṇa* would seem to support her position on at least this text. For other Khotanese scriptures in Tibetan translation, see R. E. Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan*, London Oriental Series, vol. 19 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

43. Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, p. 228.

44. *mKhas pa lde'us mdzad pa'i rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa*, Chab-spel tshe-brtan phun-tshogs and Nor-brang o-rgyan, eds. (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1987), pp. 398–407. The chronology for this text has been proposed by Leonard van der Kuijp ("On Dating the two l'De'u Chronicles," *Asiatische Studien* 46 [1992]: pp. 468–491) to be in the mid to late thirteenth century.

45. Dan Martin (*Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works* (London: Serindia Publications, 1997), p. 39) indicates that Śākyaśrī is credited with three chronological calculations, 1204, 1207, and 1210. The common era equivalents for these calculations have been considered by Ariane MacDonald ("Préambule à la Lecture d'un Rgya-bod Yig-chann," *Journal Asiatique* 251 [1963]: p. 97); Yamaguchi Zuihō ("Methods of Chronological Calculation in Tibetan Historical Sources," in Louis Ligeti, ed., *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Commemorating the 200th Anni-*

versary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica, vol. 29 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, vol. 2 [1984], pp. 420–421) corrects this chronology and employs the 1207 dating of Śākyaśrī as well. I have (“*Gsar ma Apocrypha: The Creation of Orthodoxy, Gray Texts, and the New Revelation*,” in Helmut Eimer and David Germano, eds., *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism* [Leiden: Brill, 2002], p. 209) erred in giving this latter date as 544 CE.

46. *Bla ma rje btsun chen po'i rnam thar*, in *Sa-skya bKa'-'bum* (Bod Nams Rgya Mtsho, 1969), V148.1.3–2.5.

47. His sources include (148.1.6–2.4) the acceptance of the Khotanese reckoning by Grags pa rgyal mtshan, the Khotanese *Samghavardhana-vyākaraṇa* (see Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents*, vol. 1, pp. 39–69) and the *Candragarbha-sūtra* (see Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, pp. 228–77), the *\*Vimaladevīvyākaraṇa*, which is the source normatively cited for the famous line that “2500 years after my nirvana, the Saddharma will spread to the country of the red faces,” (Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents*, vol. 1, p. 139) and references to the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. For a further consideration of this issue, see Davidson, “*Gsar ma Apocrypha*,” pp. 203–224.

48. Much has been made of the Ch'an lineage of Ho-shang Mo-ho-yan, but other systems came in as well; see Marcelle Lalou, “Document Tibétain sur l'expansion du Dhyāna Chinois,” *Journal Asiatique* 231 (1939): pp. 505–523. He (I believe incorrectly) indicates these systems as primarily or exclusively Chinese. See also Jeffrey Broughton, “Early Ch'an Schools in Tibet,” in Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-yen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), pp. 1–68. Broughton sees Ch'an systems as an extension of Chinese and Korean developments, even while acknowledging the Tun Huang connection.

49. Ruth W. Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), p. 158.

50. Ruth W. Dunnell, “The Hsia Origins of the Yüan Institution of Imperial Preceptor,” *Asia Major*, ser. 3, vol. 51 (1992): pp. 85–111; and Elliot Sperling, “Lama to the King of Hsia,” *Journal of the Tibet Society* 7 (1987): pp. 31–50.

51. *Kālacakra-tantra*, Biswanath Banerjee, ed., *A Critical Edition of Śrī Kālacakratāntra-Rāja* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1985), I.150: bhūmau kailāsakhaṇḍaṃ himigisahitaṃ tat tribhāgaṃ samantāt | bāhye caikaikapatraṃ dinakaraviśayair buṣitaṃ dvīpadeśaiḥ | savyārdhe śambhalākhyam munivaranilayaṃ grāmakṛtyādhivāsaṃ | koṭigrāmair nibaddho bhavati hi viśayo maṇḍalaṃ grāmalakṣaiḥ | |

52. Roberto Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (Dharamsala: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang lo.gcig.stong 'khor.ba'i rjes.dran.mdzad sgo'i go.sgrig



tshogs.chung, 1996) pp. 153–299. Giacomella Orofino (“Apropos of Some Foreign Elements in the Kālacakra-tantra,” in Helmut Krasser, et. al., eds., *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminary of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), pp. 717–724) has discussed foreign elements in the Kālacakra, and has concluded (p. 724) that “this literature (or at least a nucleus of it) was formulated in the regions of the North-West India, a part of India that, as is well known, played a fundamental role in the formation of the Buddhist Tantras.”

53. *Vimalaprabhā*, Upadhyaya, Jagannatha, ed., Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series, no. 11 (1986), Vrajavallabh Dwivedi and S. S. Bahulkar, eds., Rare Buddhist Texts Series 12, 13 (Sarnath: Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 7–9: śītānadyuttare sucandravaineyānām ṣaṇṇavatikoṭīgrāmanivāsinām paramādibuddhatantrarājena samyaksambuddhamārgalābhāya sucandro rājā ‘bhūt bodhisattvo vajrapāṇir iti | ; cf. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* III.57; Pradhan, ed., p. 162.22–23: [himavataḥ] yataś catsro nadyaḥ sravanti gaṅgā sindhuḥ śītā vakṣuś ca | For purāṇic sources, see Dinesh Chandra Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), pp. 67–8.

54. *Vimalaprabha*, vol. 1, pp. 31–2.

55. *Amṛtakaṇikā*, p. 1, provides a quotation from the *Śrībrhadādibuddha*, but this is not found in the *Laghu-Kālacakra*: gr̥dhṛaku=ṭe yathā śāstrā prajñāpāramitānaye | tathāmantranaye proktā śrīdhānye dharmadeśanā || Also suggestive is the knowledge of Pāli exhibited in one place in the *Vimalaprabhā*, p. 31.29–31.

56. *Vimalaprabhā*, vol. 1, p. 3: yad vyākṛtaṃ daśabalena purālpatantraṃ guhyādhipasya gaditāt paramādibuddhāt | tat kālacakralaghutantraṃ idaṃ kalāpe mañjuśrīyā nigaditaṃ sakalaṃ munīnām || Analogous statements are found *Vimalaprabhā*, pp. 22–31.

57. The reference to Bu-ston’s *Dus skor chos ’byung* is in George N. Roerich, trans, *The Blue Annals*, The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal Monograph Series, vol. 7. (Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), vol. 2, p. 754, n (I do not have access to Bu-ston’s complete works at this time).

58. *Vimalaprabhā*, vol. 1, p. 26.

59. For a good consideration of the later Tibetan and Western fascination with Śambhala, see Edwin Bernbaum, *The Way to Shambhala: A Search for the Mythical Kingdom beyond the Himalayas* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1980).

60. John Brough, “Legends of Khotan and Nepal,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 12 (1948): pp. 333–339; for a discussion on the

literary history of the Bodhanāth myth, see Anne-Marie Blondeau, "Byarung Kha-shor, Légende fondatrice du Bouddhisme Tibétain," in Per Kværne, ed., *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, vol. 1 (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), pp. 31–48.

61. Owen Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History: Collected Papers 1928–1958* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

62. Todd T. Lewis, "Himalayan Frontier Trade: Newar Diaspora Merchants and Buddhism," in Charles Ramble and Martin Brauen, eds., *Proceedings of the International Seminar on the Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalaya* (Zurich: Ethnological Museum of the University of Zurich, 1993), pp. 165–178.

63. Quoted in John Mack Faragher, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays, with Commentary by John Mack Faragher* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1994), p. 239.

64. Faragher, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*, p. 239.

65. Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History*, p. 115.

66. See the comparative essays in Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Frontier In History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).





# The Buddhist Culture of the Old Uigur Peoples

**Kōgi Kudara**

Ryukoku University, Kyoto

## I. WHO ARE THE UIGURS?

**U**IGUR (ALTERNATIVELY, UIGHUR, Uygur, Uyghur, etc.) is the name of an ethnic Turkic tribe. When we hear the name Turk, or Turkey, many of us think of the modern Republic of Turkey located in the Anatolia Peninsula whose capital city is Ankara. Certainly, the majority of the people living in this country are ethnic Turks. However, it was only about five hundred years ago, in about the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries CE, that Turks began living in this area.

Or some of you may remember Turkistan, which is another name for Central Asia. The word Turkistan is a pre-modern Persian word meaning “dwelling place (*stan*) of the Turks.” Certainly in the area designated by this word, namely Tajikistan, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan in the former Soviet Union, and the Xinjiang Uigur Autonomous Region in China, most people are ethnic Turks. However, it was about one thousand years ago, or since the tenth century, that they began occupying these areas.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Turks originally inhabited Mongolia. Chinese historical records from the sixth century CE describe them as nomadic tribes. Ethnically, Turks are classified as Mongoloid and they speak an Altaic language. Here I would like to provide a brief introduction to the historical background of the old Uigur people who are closely connected to the spread of Buddhism.

Turkish people first appear in the Chinese historical records under the name Tujue, which is clearly a phonetic transliteration of Turk (*türk*). They were skilled smiths, producing armor and weapons by smelting iron ore from the Altaic Mountains. As their military power grew, they became independent. They increased their strength through the profits accumulated from the control of the east-west trade through the northern Steppe Route, and their empire extended from the Mongolian Plateau to the Caspian Sea (552–744).

The empire was split into two countries by internal disputes in 583; the East Tujue were based in the Mongolian Plateau, and the West Tujue in Central Asia. During this period the Tujue, or Turks, created a Tujue script (a rune type script) based on Aramaic. They erected inscriptions praising the deeds of their emperors (*khan*) on the banks of the Orkhon River. This script is the earliest writing system used by inner Asian nomads, and the inscriptions are a valuable academic resource both historically and linguistically. In the same period, a sixth century Chinese record states that the Northern Qi sent a Tujue translation of the *Niepan jing* (*Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*) to the Tujue upon their request. This is the first known instance that the Turks encountered Buddhism. Although there is strong academic interest in the Tujue translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, the text has not been discovered. Some scholars doubt the account in the Chinese historical record and suggest it might have been a Sogdian translation rather than a Tujue translation. West Tujue was destroyed by the Tang army in 652. Remaining forces, however, later spread west of Pamir and greatly influenced the emergence of West Turkistan.

There was also under the control of the East Tujue a tribe called Tiele. The name of this tribe is also a phonetic transliteration of Turk (*türk*). Under the Tiele, there was a smaller Turkic tribe called the Uigur. In the eighth century, the Uigur gradually accumulated power and destroyed the East Tujue in 744. In Chinese historical records, the name of the tribe is recorded as Huigu, a phonetic transliteration of Uigur. From this time the Uigur played a central role in the region. The Uigurs made the city of Qara Balghsasun (Ordu Balıq) in the Mongolian Plateau their capital and subjugated other Turkic tribes. They established the Empire of East Uigur Khagan and controlled the Mongolian steppes for the next one hundred years.

At about this time, the revolt of Anshi (755–763) occurred in Tang China. The Tang emperor Xuanzong (712–756) was unable to quell the revolt of his own forces and requested the Uigurs to provide military assistance. While fighting in various places in China, the Uigur people were introduced to advanced Chinese culture, especially in the large cities like Changan. They also interacted with Sogdian merchants from Iran and gathered various international information.

As a result, the Uigur people experienced a settled lifestyle and learned to transcribe their own language in the Sogdian script. They adopted the Iranian religion of Manichaeism as their state religion. In a very short period they were able to create an advanced culture, which might otherwise have taken a very long time if they had maintained their nomadic lifestyle. When the revolt ended, the Uigur forces returned to the Mongolian steppes, bringing Sogdians back with them as staff officers. They built the fortified city Ordu Balıq in the Mongolian steppes.

The Uigur Empire, however, came to an end around 840 when it was attacked by another Turkish tribe, the Kirghiz. The Uigurs dissolved into various tribal groups, who dispersed in all directions. One of the groups that escaped to the west invaded Shazhou, the Turfan Basin, and Kucha. This group settled in the conquered areas and eventually established two kingdoms.

One was the Kingdom of Tianshan Uigur based in Beiting (Biš Balıq in Uigur) and Qočo. The kingdom flourished for three hundred years until the fall of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in the fourteenth century. This kingdom made a great contribution to the transmission of Central Asian Buddhism. The other was the Kingdom of Hexi Uigur. This kingdom lasted for about one hundred thirty years until it was destroyed by Xixia.

The Uigurs' presence had a great impact on the history and culture of the Silk Route. They occupied the major trading posts along the route and intensively absorbed the various cultures of the resident peoples, who were mainly Buddhist. They also began ethnic amalgamation with Indians, Iranians, and Tokharians (a Caucasian tribe) who were ethnically Indo-European.

As a Turkish tribe, Uigurs are Altaic Mongoloids. However, their identity as Turkish was based on a purely patrilineal social system. In the most extreme case, if one had a Turkish father, spoke Turkish, and maintained Turkish social custom, the person was recognized as a Turk. With this kind of identity consciousness, the Turkish tribes—mainly the Uigur—occupied the oasis cities on the Silk Route, which were essentially multi-ethnic and multi-lingual societies, and further advanced the ethnic amalgamation in the area. By the end of the tenth century, the region was completely “Turkicized”—people identified themselves as Turks regardless of their physical appearance (skin, eye, or hair color). “Turkicizing” also occurred in the western part of Central Asia through the settlement of other Turkish tribes. Thus in the contemporary situation Central Asia is also called Turkistan, namely the “land (*stan*) of the Turks.”

Another noteworthy role played by the Uigurs in world history was their activities under the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Mongolian leader Chinghiz Khan (r. 1205–27) began his campaign for world domination. At that time, the Uigur people voluntarily became Mongolian subjects and offered their support for the Mongol's plan. This was a great boon to the Mongols, because the Uigurs, with three hundred years of experience along the Silk Route, were culturally advanced and had accumulated a high level of knowledge about the ethnic groups, geography, languages, and religious traditions both in the east and the west. Behind the establishment of the Mongolian Empire was the great contribution of knowledge and information by the Uigur people. Due to those contributions, the homelands of the Uigurs were protected by the Mongols—very exceptional treatment for a minority ethnic group

under the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1260–1367). Uigur people were granted the status of second rank in the empire's ethnic hierarchy and played significant roles in politics, economics, culture, and religion as the leaders of "people of colored eyes."

For example, the Mongols, who did not have a writing system, first borrowed Uigur scripts to develop Mongolian scripts. Most Uigur civilian officers working in the Mongolian capital city Dadu (modern Beijing) as officers of the "people of colored eyes" were Buddhists. They used blockprinting, the most advanced printing technology of the time, to publish great numbers of Buddhist texts and sent them to the people living in their homeland in the Turfan area. Many printed texts discovered in East Turkistan were texts published during the Yuan Dynasty, and most of the printed materials are Buddhist texts. They are printed not only in Uigur but include texts in Sanskrit and Xixia language. It is known that the people who printed and bound these texts were Chinese because the folio numbers are in Chinese characters. Uigur Buddhism was the last of the Buddhist cultures that flourished in East Turkistan and came to the end in the mid-fourteenth century together with the destruction of the Yuan Empire.

### III. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

The religious life of the Uigur people during the time that they were a nomadic tribe on the Mongolian steppes might fall into the category of shamanism or animism. As mentioned above, when they learned about Manichaeism from the Sogdians while fighting for China during the Anshi revolt, aristocratic Uigurs adopted Manichaeism and made it their state religion.

After they migrated into the oasis cities on the Silk Route in the latter half of the ninth century, some remained Manichaeans. Some aristocratic Uigurs converted to Christianity when they encountered Nestorian missionaries. However, the majority of Uigurs, including common people, became Buddhists while living in this strongly Buddhist environment. This is known from the following facts: (1) many religious texts discovered in the area are Buddhist texts; (2) the names of donors on religious documents have Buddhist names; (3) they frequently used words borrowed from Sanskrit; and (4) business transactions, such as borrowing grain or selling bondsmen, customarily required a witness, and in many cases monks from Buddhist monasteries performed this function.

Uigurs express the name of the Buddha as *bur-xan*, combining the word "buïet," the middle archaic pronunciation of the Chinese character *fo*, with the Altaic-language honorific ending *-xan* (*-qan* [*-khan* in Mongolian]). It seems that they thought that this was not enough, because they added the word *tängri* (heaven) before *burxan* and called the Buddha

*tängri burxan* (heavenly Buddha), or even more politely, *tängri tängri burxan* (the Buddha, the most heavenly among the heavily beings). The concept of *tängri* (heaven) represented the “deity who brings blessings” among Turks and Mongols, as well as among the ancient Koreans and Japanese. For the general populace, it was perhaps easier to accept Buddhism by adding explanatory titles appealing to their ethnic tradition instead of simply the title Buddha.

In an interesting and related phenomenon, Uigurs who became followers of Manichaeism called the founder Mani (216?–276?) by the name *mani burxan* (Mani Buddha). This may reflect a syncretic aspect within Manichaeism. But it also tells us how deeply Buddhism had penetrated into the lives of the Uigur people.

#### IV. TRANSLATION OF BUDDHIST TEXTS

In the mid-ninth century, Uigur people moved into the major cities in Central Asia along the Silk Route and established their nation in the area of Turfan and Kucha. There, they encountered the various Buddhist cultures of the Indians, Iranians, Tokharians, and Chinese who had been there since the second century CE. At the time, being “civilized” in this area meant to accept Buddhism. The Uigur people, horse-riding nomads from the steppes, were skilled in the military techniques of horsemanship and the use of bows and arrows. The cultural aspects of the Uigurs, however, lagged far behind the people they conquered. In order to establish and maintain their country in a respectable way in this area, they needed to adopt Buddhism at the state level. Perhaps they believed that by choosing Buddhism they could maintain friendly relations with China, the great Buddhist empire to the east. We can see some parallels with the Japanese, who introduced Buddhism as a state religion between the sixth and seventh centuries at the dawn of their nation-building so that the government could receive international recognition as a civilized state within East Asia.

However, in Japan Buddhist texts were not translated into Japanese. Chinese translations were used for about twelve hundred years, until about one hundred fifty years ago. This point shows a great difference from the Uigur people. The Uigur people began by making a great effort to translate Buddhist texts written in various languages into their own language.

Scholars have yet to come to an agreement on issues like whose Buddhism first influenced the Uigur people when they moved to the Silk Route, or from what language the Uigur people translated Buddhist texts. Some maintain that the first influence must have come from the Tokharian Buddhism of Turfan and Kucha, because some Sanskrit terms in Uigur

texts are introduced through Tokharian loan words. Other scholars suggest that it was Sogdian Buddhism because some Sanskrit terms in the Uigur texts are borrowed from Sogdian loan words, and because the Sogdians maintained colonies in Turfan and had close contacts with Uigurs. Yet others think it was Chinese Buddhism, because, as we saw with the word *burxan* (Buddha), the fundamental Buddhist terminology in Uigur texts is based on Chinese. My own view is that these terms entered the Uigur Buddhist texts from equidistant points. Since at that time people lived in multi-lingual and multi-ethnic communities around Turfan and Kucha, I think that it is not necessary to identify a single source of initial Buddhist influence upon the Uigur people.

The Uigur people, living in multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Central Asia, produced Uigur translations of the Buddhist texts available to them. For many years we have been deciphering the text fragments collected by expeditions to the area. Here I provide you a chart titled "Outlook of the Translation Relationship of the Buddhist Texts in Central Asia" (cf. Plate A), which I created so that you can see the inter-relationships between the translated Buddhist texts at a glance. The arrows (→) signify the direction toward which the translation was made. The accuracy of the directions of the arrows are certain because they are based on descriptions in the colophon attached at the end of each Buddhist text. Question marks (?) mean that, although these texts do not have descriptions in their colophons, historical circumstances and characteristics in the translations suggest this direction. An asterisk (\*) indicates that the name of the languages is not necessarily accepted by all scholars. The original chart was made in 1994 for students in my seminar. It was updated in 2000 by adding the Bactrian entry.

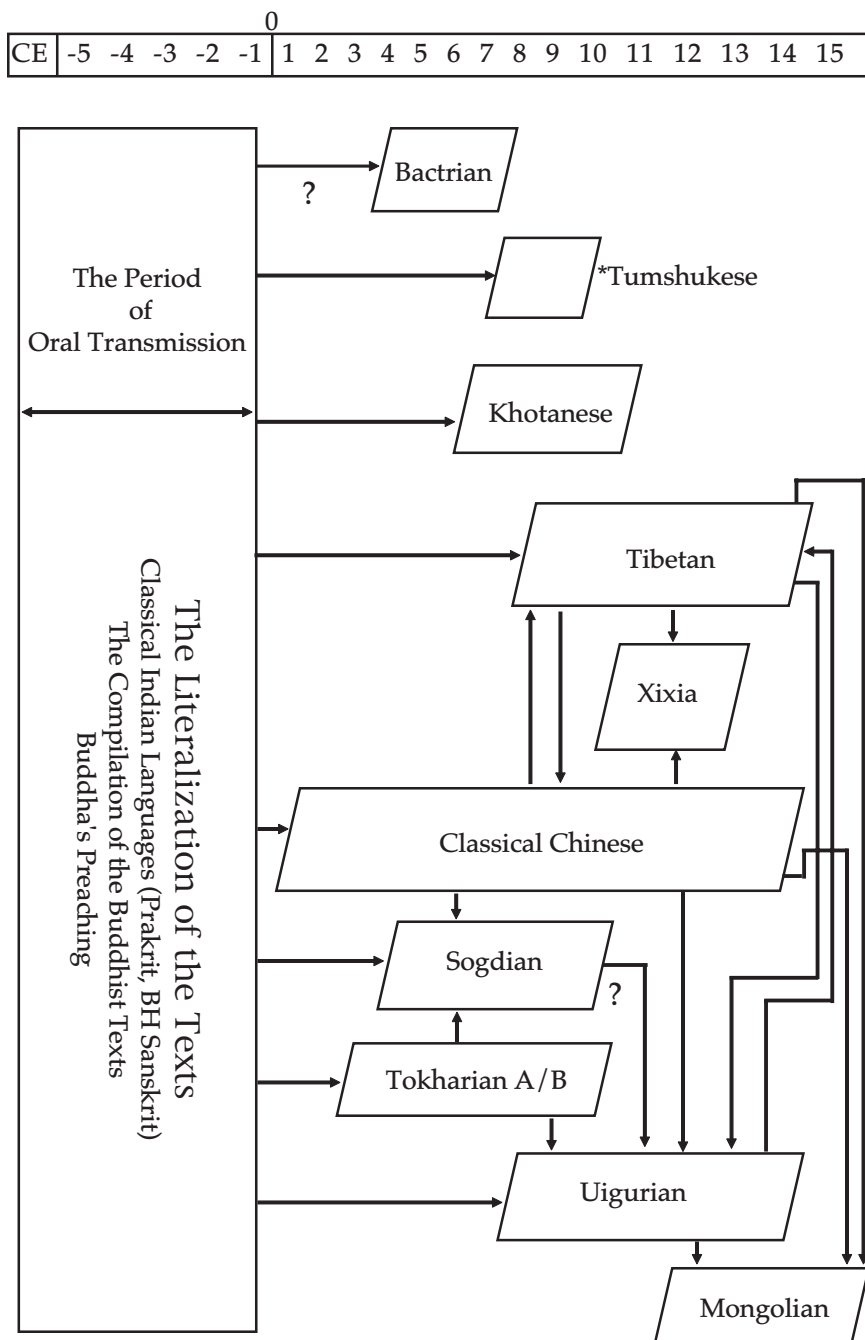
I will give a general overview of the Uigur translations of Buddhist texts. Among the early translations, the Buddhist texts translated from Tokharian and Sogdian, generally speaking, include many *avadāna* and *jātaka* tales, which derive from the Sarvāstivāda school of Nikāya Buddhism. These translations are only found in the early period of Uigur Buddhism. Among the Buddhist texts translated from Tokharian, there is a script for a play about Maitreya-worship. It is very interesting to imagine that religious dramas may have been performed in the gardens of Buddhist temples.

Translations from Chinese texts had a strong influence on Uigur Buddhism from its early period until its end. A wide variety of Chinese Buddhist texts were translated, including major Buddhist sutras of both the Mahāyāna and Nikāya, as well as commentaries, and some apocryphal texts.

Translations from Sanskrit texts are, in many cases, bilingual texts written both in Sanskrit and Uigur. The texts cite the Sanskrit word by word or phrase by phrase, followed by Uigur translations. Most of the texts use the Indian Brāhmī script to transcribe both the Sanskrit and Uigur. Run-



Plate A: Outlook of the Translation Relationship of the Buddhist Texts in Central Asia



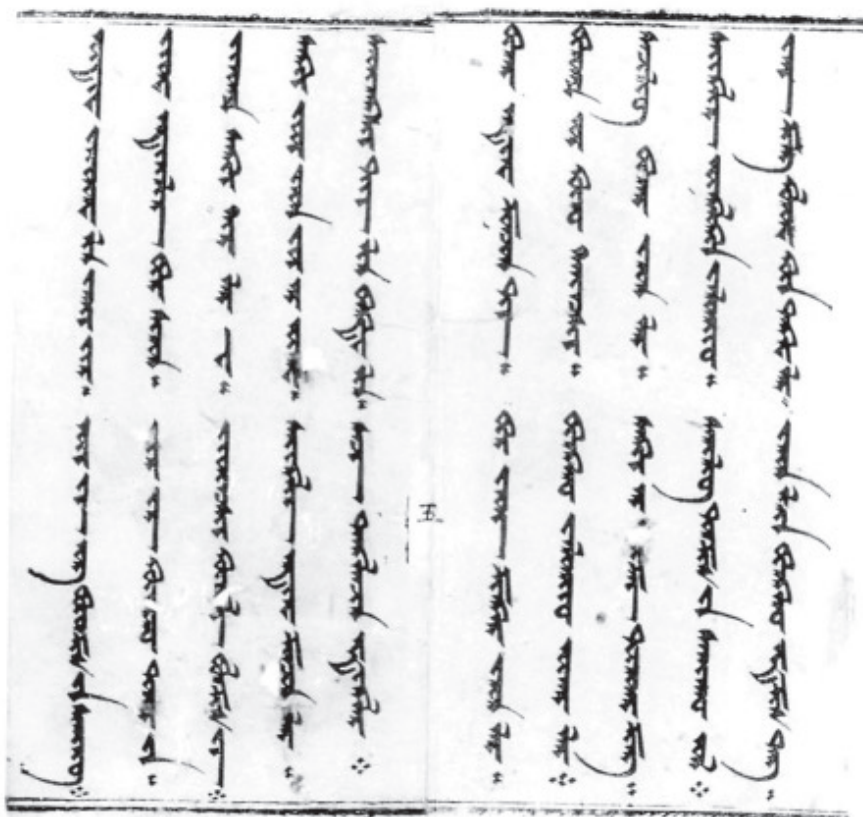
ning contrary to the expectations of many scholars, many of these texts belong to the later period. Some were translated even during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. Many are *Āgama* texts or *abhidharma* texts of the Sarvāstivāda school.

Translations from Tibetan were mainly done in Central China during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. Most are Tantric Buddhist texts. Among them, there is a brief historical text titled *History on How a Sandalwood Image [of the Buddha] Came to Be Situated in China*. This Chinese text was first translated into Uigur, then it was translated into Tibetan. This is an extremely rare Buddhist text marked clearly with the date of translation, the thirteenth day of the second month in 1263, as well as the names and backgrounds of the people who participated in its translation.

What kind of scripts did Uigur people use to transcribe their Buddhist texts? First, they borrowed scripts from the Sogdians, with whom they had strong ties. Since Uigur is linguistically different from Sogdian, the Uigur script was made by incorporating some changes at points where the Sogdian was unable to express the Uigur language adequately. Large numbers of Buddhist texts were transcribed using this script. Within the Uigur script, there are several writing styles, from square, or block style, to cursive. The square style was used for making fine copies of Buddhist texts. The Brāhmī script was used mainly for making bilingual editions incorporating the original Indian text. Sogdian and Tibetan scripts were occasionally used, but not very frequently. For non-Buddhist texts, Uigurs used the Manichaean script for Manichaean texts.

## 5. ALLITERATIVE BUDDHIST VERSES

The poetic tradition of the Turks and Mongols is represented by alliterative verses composed four lines (cf. Plate B). The Uigur people translated Buddhist texts written in a variety of languages into their own language. Undoubtedly they spent a great deal of effort in translating texts and deciding on the proper terms for translation. Sometimes, we find two different words are used to translate the same philosophical term. This may suggest that these translations were produced in different time periods. The earlier translations tend to be sluggish, descriptive, wordy, and lacking in literary appeal. In the later period from the latter half of the thirteenth century (especially during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty), the terms for translation are established, wordiness is avoided, and the translations are smooth and fluent. But sometimes such fluent translations feel distant and seem less interesting. Perhaps the Uigur people shared my feeling. While producing these perfectly fluent translations of the famous Mahāyāna sutras, they also created alliterative four-line poetry based on significant

Plate B: Uigur Alliterative Version of the *Guan wuliangshou jing*

passages from the sutras. This alliterative poetry might have appealed to their literary passions and aroused great spiritual inspiration.

Major Mahāyāna sutras like the *Guan wuliangshou jing* and *Hyanyan jing* (*Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*) were translated both in prose versions and in the poetic style. Let me introduce a few examples of poetic translation. The first example is a famous verse found at the end of a Chinese translation of the *Hyanyan jing*. The original Sanskrit text of this part is also written in verse.

願我臨欲命終時	I wish, when my life is about to end,
盡除一切諸障礙	That all my hindrances will perish;
面見彼仏阿彌陀	Coming face to face with the Buddha Amida,
即得往生安樂刹	I will instantly obtain birth in the Land of Bliss.

One Uigur poet translated the Chinese into the following alliterative four-line verse.

apam bizing bo yaš-īmz alqīnyu öd bolsar,	[a-: 13]
alqu törlüg tidiγ-īmz alqīnzun otγuraq,	[a-: 13]
amita aba burxan yūüzün yügärü biz körüp,	[a-: 15]
ariγ sukavađi uluś-ta tugalīm tärk tavraq ::	[a-: 15]

If this is our lives' ending time,  
Let all varieties of (our) hindrances perish certainly!  
We, after looking at the face of Amita-ābha Buddha in front,  
Will be born in the pure Sukhāvati Realm quickly.

Another Uigur poet translated the same Chinese verse as follows.

aytuq bolup isig öšüm üzülgü tuś-ta :	[a-: 13]
alqu qilinč-līy tidiγ-larīm yumqī tariqīp :	[a-: 14]
amita ayusi burxan manga yügärü közü[n]üp :	[a-: 16]
artuq mängilig yirtinčü-tä barīp tuγayın :	[a-: 14]

Becoming weak at the moment of my warm body's ending,  
My hindrances possessing all karma should disappear;  
Amita-āyus Buddha, for me, in front of me appears.  
I will go and be born in the World of Extreme Joyfulness.

These two Uigur verses were created using the same source text. Both of them use “a-” for making alliterative verses, but we can see a difference in the artistic sense of the two poets through their word selections. In yet another version of this same verse, the poet selected “sa-” sounds for the alliteration, even though there are very few words in Uigur begin with the

“sa-” sound. Although it was difficult to create an alliterative verse based on the sound “sa-,” the poet was able to do it by incorporating many loan words from Sanskrit Buddhist terminology. It seems that the poet was showing off his literary sophistication! From an academic point of view, it is very surprising to see that in the two verses cited above the poets were already aware of the two different Sanskrit names for Amida Buddha: Amita-ābha, “Immeasurable Light,” and Amita-āyus “Immeasurable Life.”

In addition to the verses based on Buddhist scriptures, the Uigurs wrote poetry on other popular Buddhist themes, such as dedications to buddhas and bodhisattvas, confessions of faith, and expressions of repentance. There are also verses of prayers to the Buddha asking for such things as the peace and prosperity of the Uigur imperial family; the protection and safe return of a husband who went war; and gratitude to the Buddha for the long-awaited birth of son. These verses express the real feelings of people faced with the challenges of life and are very interesting from a sociological point of view.

Also sociologically interesting are some verses directed against the spread of Islam. These were probably written in about the thirteenth century. Some attack Islam in a very straightforward manner. Others lament the decline of Buddhist society. These people who disliked Islam appear to have moved further toward the eastern regions. This is perhaps evidenced by the surprising fact that a Uigur manuscript of the *Jinguangming jing* (*Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra*) found in Gansu was copied in 1687. Although Buddhism disappeared from Turfan in the fourteenth century, the religion seems to have been maintained by exiled Uigur people in regions further east.

Plate C: The Buddha on a Boat and Caravan Leaders  
Chotcho, Tafel 28





## REFERENCES

- Elverskog, Johan. *Uygur Buddhist Literature*. Silk Road Studies 1. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997.
- Gabain, Annemarie von. "Buddhistische Türkenmission." In *Asiatica: Festschrift Friedrich Weller zum 65 Geburtstag*, pp. 161–173. Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Das Leben im uigurischen Königreich von Qočo (850–1250)*. Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica Bd. 6. 2 vols. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973.
- Kudara, Kōgi. "Silk Road and Its Culture: The View of a Japanese Scholar," (Vortrag im Rahmen der Ostasien und Pazifikwochen der Stadt Berlin am 18 September 1997). In *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berichte und Abhandlungen*, Band 6, pp. 331–347. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1999.
- Mackerras, Colin. *The Uighur Empire: According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories*. Asian Publications Series 2. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972.
- Zieme, Peter. *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen der Uiguren*. Berliner Turfantexte 13. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Religion und Gesellschaft im Uigurischen Königreich von Qočo*. Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 88. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992.
- Zieme, Peter, and Kudara Kōgi. *Uigurugo no Kanmuryōjyūkyō*. Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1985.





# The Idea of the Last Dharma-Age in Shinran's Thought, Part 2<sup>1</sup>

**Kyōshin Asano**

Professor Emeritus

Ryukoku University, Kyoto

## SHINRAN'S VIEW OF THE LAST DHARMA-AGE AS SEEN IN THE *SHŌZŌMATSU WASAN*

The Version of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* Relied upon  
by the Hongwanji Branch

We have examined above Shinran's view of the last dharma-age, as seen through his principal text, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. I would now like to look at works other than his chief writing in order to further explore his view of the last dharma-age. One can infer from its title that the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* (*Hymns of the True, Semblance, and Last [Dharma-ages]*) directly takes up the issue of Shinran's view of the last dharma-age through the use of a form of "Japanese hymns of praise" (*wasan*). In Shinran's other works there are one or two notes addressing the question of the last dharma-age, but they cannot compare with the explications in the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*. Thus, I will focus on these hymns in order to explore further Shinran's view of the last dharma-age.

In Japanese, the title *Shōzōmatsu wasan* should more precisely be the *Shōzōmappō wasan* (*Hymns of the True, Semblance, and Last Dharma-ages*). Currently two manuscript versions of the text are known to exist. The first version has a postscript that states, "First day of the third month in the first year of the Shōka era (1257), year of the fire/serpent, ninth calendar sign. I, Gutoku Shinran, wrote this at 85 years of age." This is currently stored at the head temple of the Takada branch, and is recognized as a national treasure. There is a prefatory hymn,

For Maitreya Bodhisattva,  
5,670,000 years must pass.  
But, those who have faith in birth through the *nembutsu*  
Will attain enlightenment when this life ends.

This is followed by thirty-five hymns, the first nine of which are written in Shinran's hand. The hymns are followed by a comment that refers to "the thirty-four hymns above." Next, there is a hymn with a note relating that it was told to Shinran in a dream at the dawn of the ninth day of the second month of the second year of the Kōgen era (1257). A postscript is then followed by five linked hymns.

The saying of the Name arising from true and real *shinjin*  
Is Amida's directing of virtue to beings;  
Therefore, it is called "not directing merit,"  
And saying the *nembutsu* in self-power is rejected.<sup>2</sup>

Prince Shōtoku, the prince regent of the great country of Japan  
Universally propagated the Buddhist teachings;  
His benevolent virtues were vast and profound.  
Do not neglect to praise him with reverence!

Out of deep care for the beings of Japan,  
Prince Shōtoku, appearing from his original state,  
Widely proclaimed the Tathāgata's compassionate Vow;  
Let us rejoice and reverently praise him!<sup>3</sup>

Karmic evil is from the beginning without real form;  
It is the result of delusional thought and invertedness.  
Mind-nature is from the beginning pure,  
Thus, beings are in themselves buddhas.<sup>4</sup>

Although ignorance and dharma-nature differ,  
The [two] minds are actually one [non-dual].  
This mind is itself nirvana;  
This mind is itself Tathāgata.

The second manuscript version of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* was copied by Kenchi, who added the colophon, "This is an early draft, [copied on the] twenty-fourth day of the ninth month in the second year of the Shōka era (1258). Shinran is 86 years of age." The manuscript begins with an excerpt from the Shan-tao's *Pan-chou-tsan* (*Hymns of All Buddhas' Presence*). It is followed by a prefatory hymn with a note that it was told to Shinran in a dream at the dawn of ninth day of the second month in the second year of Kōgen (1257). Under the title *Shōzōmatsu wasan*, the hymns address the right, semblance, and last dharma-ages, beginning with the first hymn,

It is now more than two thousand years  
Since the passing of Śākyamuni Tathāgata.

The right and semblance ages have already closed;  
So lament, disciples of later times!<sup>5</sup>

Almost all of the thirty-five hymns present in the first manuscript are also found here, although in different order. In addition, the hymns are expanded to fifty-eight in number. The hymns end with the comment, "Here ends the Hymns of the Right, Semblance, and Last Dharma-ages. Fifty-eight hymns." The next group of twenty-two hymns is entitled, "Gutoku's Hymns of Reflection," which conclude with the words, "Here ends the hymns pertaining to the offense of doubt. Twenty-two hymns." There is also an appended note, "These hymns reveal the depth of the offense of doubting the Buddha's wisdom. This refers to the difficulty of birth in the borderland, the realm of indolence and pride, and the womb palace."

Next, there are the eleven hymns presented as "Gutoku's Hymns of Lament and Reflection," which conclude with the statement, "The above thirty-three hymns are Gutoku's reflections of grief and lamentation." In addition, there is a concluding note that, "This is an early draft." Following this the date of the copy made by Kenchi is recorded as "In the hour of the tiger, on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, in the third year of Shō-ō (1290), I was allowed to finish transcribing this copy." The Kenchi manuscript ends with the following two passages:

The *Nirvana Sūtra* states:

[His] face is like the pure, full moon; [his] eyes are like blue lotus blossoms. The waters of the great ocean of the Buddha-dharma flows into the heart of Ānanda.

The *Kuan-nien fa-men* (*Methods of Contemplation on Amida Buddha*) states:

Further, I respectfully say to all who aspire for birth: if you hear these words and follow this voice, [Amida's] compassion will rain like tears. Throughout continuing *kalpas* and overlapping *kalpas* you should repay with gratitude the benevolence of the Buddha, even though your bodies be crushed, and your bones be ground into dust.

The version of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* currently used by the Hongwanji branch does not contain a postscript written by Shinran. This version was included in the *Sanjō Wasan* (*Collection of Hymns in Three Volumes*), which was published by Rennyo in the third month of the fifth year of Bunmei (1473), and thus is referred to as the Bunmei version. It begins with the prefatory hymn, which, according to Shinran, was told to him in a

dream during the hour of the tiger on the night of the ninth day of the second month in the second year of Kōgen (1257). The work is entitled *Shōzōmatsu Jōdo Wasan* (*Pure Land Hymns of the Right, Semblance, and Last [Dharma-ages]*), by Gutoku Zenshin. This version of the text uses the exact same fifty-eight hymns present in the Kenchi manuscript.

The twenty-two "Hymns on the Offense of Doubting the Primal Vow" have been increased to twenty-three hymns. The same twenty-two hymns from the Kenchi manuscript are used here, although their order has been changed. The additional hymn is the second of the group,

Doubting the inconceivable Buddha-wisdom,  
People devote themselves to saying the *nembutsu* in self-power;  
Hence they remain in the borderland or the  
    realm of indolence and pride,  
Without responding in gratitude to the Buddha's benevolence.<sup>6</sup>

This group of hymns concludes with Shinran's note that, "The above twenty-three hymns were composed in order to awaken people to the offense of doubting the Primal Vow that embodies inconceivable Buddha[-wisdom]." Next is a set of eleven hymns entitled "Hymns in Praise of Prince Shōtoku, by Gutoku Zenshin." This group concludes with the note, "Here ends the Hymns in Praise of Prince Shōtoku. Eleven hymns."<sup>8</sup> This is followed by a group of hymns entitled "Gutoku's Hymns of Lament and Reflection," the first hymn of which states,

Although I take refuge in the true Pure Land way,  
It is hard to have a true and sincere mind.  
This self is false and insincere;  
I completely lack a pure mind.<sup>9</sup>

This group is made up of the same eleven hymns that are present in the Kenchi manuscript and five additional hymns. They conclude with the comment, "The above sixteen hymns are my reflections, expressing my grief and lamentation. It is saddening to see the behavior of the monks of the major temples and monastic complexes at present, whether high-ranking monks or 'teachers of dharma.' Composed by Shaku Shinran."<sup>10</sup>

This version of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* next contains the five so-called "Hymns on Zenkō-ji Temple."<sup>11</sup> Following this is recorded the so-called passage "On Jinen-Hōni," which is a "writing by Shinran at age eighty-eight."<sup>12</sup> Finally, two concluding hymns are added at the end of this volume.

While persons ignorant of even the  
    characters for "good" and "evil"

All possess a sincere mind,  
I make a display of knowing the words "good" and "evil";  
This is an expression of complete falsity.

I am such that I do not know right and wrong  
And cannot distinguish false and true;  
I lack even small love and small compassion,  
And yet, for fame and profit, enjoy teaching others.<sup>13</sup>

Above we have taken a brief look at the order of the contents of the extant versions of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*. Looking at them superficially we can see a development from the thirty-five hymn manuscript in Shinran's handwriting, to the Kenchi manuscript, and then to the Bunmei version. Since it could be said that the Bunmei version is the most fully developed, from the standpoint of content, we will focus upon that version as we inquire into Shinran's view of the last dharma-age, as seen in the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*.

In this connection, a perusal of the postscripts contained with these three versions of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* reveals that the hymns were developed from the time when Shinran was eighty-three, until he was eighty-five or eighty-six years old. When we also consider that these versions of his hymns must have been given to his followers, it would appear that the incident involving Shinran's eldest son, Zenran, was a backdrop for the hymns.<sup>14</sup> The essential form of Amida's salvation during the period of the last dharma-age is expressed in these hymns. Thus, we can view the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*, and particularly the "Hymns on the Offense of Doubting the Primal Vow," as admonitions against those, starting with Zenran, who held views that diverged from that.

### The View of the Yearly Progression of the Last Dharma-Age as Seen in the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*

We will begin our examination of the view of the yearly progression of the last dharma-age, as seen in the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*, by citing the hymns that directly mention it. (The numbering of the hymns corresponds to the order in which they appear in the Bunmei version.)

1. It is now more than two thousand years  
Since the passing of Śākyamuni Tathāgata.  
The right and semblance ages have already closed;  
So lament, disciples of later times!<sup>15</sup>

2. Now, amid the five defilements in the last dharma-age,  
Sentient beings are incapable of practice and realization;  
Hence the teachings that Śākyamuni left behind  
Have all passed into the *nāga's* palace.<sup>16</sup>
3. During the right, semblance, and last ages,  
Amida's Primal Vow has spread.  
At the end of the semblance and in this last dharma-age,  
Good practices have all gone into the *nāga's* palace.<sup>17</sup>
4. The *Great Collection Sūtra* teaches  
That we are now in the fifth period of five hundred years;  
Because people are resolute in conflict and dispute,  
The pure dharma is concealed in dormancy.<sup>18</sup>
10. Without trusting themselves to the  
Tathāgata's compassionate vow,  
No sentient beings of these times—the last dharma-age, and  
The fifth five-hundred year period since  
Śākyamuni's passing—  
Will have a chance of parting from birth-and-death.<sup>19</sup>
17. With the advent of the semblance and last dharma-ages, and  
this world of the five defilements,  
The teachings left by Śākyamuni entered into concealment.  
Only the compassionate Vow of Amida becomes  
widely known,  
And attainment of birth through the *nembutsu* spreads.<sup>20</sup>

In these hymns, the years marking the beginning and end of the right, semblance, and last dharma-ages are not expressed; nor is the time of the extinction of the dharma to be seen. Hence, it is impossible to confirm, other than through conjecture, that the yearly progression of the dharma-ages is the same as that found in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*; that is, the period is five hundred years for the right dharma-age, and one thousand years for the semblance dharma-age. However, according to hymn #1 above, it was produced more than two thousand years after the Buddha's passing. The hymn states, furthermore, "The right and semblance ages have already closed." Thus, we are informed that we have entered the last dharma-age. For that reason, hymn #2 makes a direct reference to sentient beings living "amid the five defilements in the last dharma-age."<sup>21</sup> As we can see in hymns #4 and #10, this era of the last dharma-age is described as being the "fifth five-hundred year period since Śākyamuni's passing," based



on the theory of the five five-hundred year periods set forth in the *Great Collection Sūtra*.

From this we can discern that we exist between the 2001st year and the 2,500th year after the Buddha's demise. In other words, we are now living within the ten thousand year period of the last dharma-age. These expressions of the yearly progression of the last dharma-age, it could be said, are identical to those that we found above in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. That is to say, in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* it is calculated that 2,183 years had passed from the year of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* up to first year of the Gennin era. That date is considered to be the 683rd year of the last dharma-age. These calculations are in agreement with both Tao-ch'o's explication and with the passages cited from *Great Collection Sūtra* in the *Mappō tōmyōki*.

#### The Internal Features of the Last Dharma-Age as Seen in the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*

What then are the internal features of the last dharma-age? First of all, we know from hymns #1, #2, #3, #4, and #7 above that the last dharma-age is a period in which "[s]entient beings are incapable of practice and realization," "the pure dharma is concealed in dormancy," and "the teachings that Śākyamuni left behind have all passed into the *nāga's* palace."

Further, Shinran states this in hymn #55,

Although we have the teachings of Śākyamuni,  
There are no sentient beings who can practice them;  
Hence, it is taught that in the last dharma-age,  
Not a single person will attain enlightenment through them.<sup>22</sup>

In the last dharma-age, we are told, all that remains is the verbal teaching of Śākyamuni. No one is able to practice those teachings, however, and so "[n]ot a single person will attain enlightenment through them." Needless to say, this statement that only the verbal teaching exists and that there is neither practice nor enlightenment is made with regard to those who have adopted the standpoint of the Path of Sages, in which they seek to attain enlightenment through self-powered practice. Thus, in hymn #10 Shinran strongly emphasizes that enlightenment would be impossible for everyone in this world to attain through the self-powered practices of the Path of Sages.

He also asserts that the position held by the Path of Sages in the last dharma-age applies to the semblance dharma-age as well. We can see this in his statements, "At the end of the semblance and in this last dharma-age, good practices have all gone into the *nāga's* palace" (hymn #3) and "[w]ith

the advent of the semblance and last dharma-ages, and this world of the five defilements, the teachings left by Śākyamuni entered into concealment" (hymn #17). In these hymns, the compound phrases, "semblance and last dharma-ages," make mention of the semblance dharma-age. Yet, even though teaching and practice are both present, no one attains enlightenment during this period. Hence, it is identical to the last dharma-age, in which neither practice nor enlightenment exists.

Because the semblance dharma-age follows after the right dharma-age, it is generally regarded as being relatively better than and certainly not identical to the last dharma-age since, although no one attains enlightenment, Buddhist practices are still being performed (albeit formalistically).

Let us assume, for now, that the semblance dharma-age and the final dharma-age are not identical. In that case, Shinran's descriptions of the semblance dharma-age in terms of "the end of the semblance and in this last dharma-age" and "the advent of the semblance and last dharma-ages, and this world of the five defilements" would seem mean that he is using it here to indicate the "final period of the semblance dharma-age," as stated in the *Mappō tōmyōki* passage cited in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The reason is that the final period of the semblance dharma-age verges upon the period of the last dharma-age. Thus, the circumstances of its inner reality are not so different from those of the last dharma-age.

However, we discussed previously that the Path of Sages only exhibits efficacy in attaining enlightenment when the world is in the period of the right dharma-age. We emphasized that the Path of Sages is completely ineffective during the semblance and last dharma-ages, as well as the age of the extinction of the dharma. Based on that stance, Shinran now strongly asserts that the expression, "the end of the semblance and in this last dharma-age," points to the two periods—the semblance and last dharma-ages—and equates the semblance dharma-age with the last dharma-age. We can see this in hymn #28,

Even the wise who lived during the semblance dharma-age  
Put aside the various teachings of self-power  
And entered the gate of the *nembutsu*,  
For it is the teaching in accord with the times and with beings.<sup>23</sup>

This hymn expresses the idea that, even during the semblance dharma-age, persons of superior wisdom take refuge in the gate of *nembutsu*, which is the "teaching that accords with the times and with beings." In other words, the Path of Sages, which emphasizes the self-powered performance of meritorious actions, is regarded as a teaching that does not accord with the times or beings during the semblance dharma-age. Since Shinran simply mentions here "the wise who lived during the semblance dharma-age," we cannot know with certainty to whom he might be referring. However, he

is no doubt pointing to those practitioners of the Buddhist path in India and China during the period of semblance dharma-age who aspired for birth in the land in the western direction.

We can certainly understand the irony in the expression "even the wise" when made from the perspective of Shinran, who sought to equate the semblance dharma-age with the last dharma-age. That is to say, for him, persons of wisdom were those who aspired for birth in the land in the western direction; foolish beings were those who stubbornly continued to uphold the various teachings of self-power and who were out of touch with the current situation of the times.

In any event, Shinran states that the path that enabled persons to attain true enlightenment during the semblance dharma-age was not Path of Sages, but the teaching of the *nembutsu*. For him, when the question involves the attainment of enlightenment, the semblance dharma-age is identical to the last dharma-age.

The second internal feature of the last dharma-age may be stated in this way: The idea of attainment on the Path of Sages does not accord with either the times or beings during the last dharma-age; nor can it effectively reveal the true attainment of emancipation. In contrast, the teaching that truly brings about the attainment of emancipation in the last dharma-age is the path of birth through the *nembutsu*. This is clearly expressed in words of hymn #3, "During the right, semblance, and last ages, Amida's Primal Vow has spread," hymn #10, which states, "Without trusting themselves to the Tathāgata's compassionate vow, no sentient beings of these times—the last dharma-age, and the fifth five-hundred year period since Śākyamuni's passing—will have a chance of parting from birth-and-death," and the words of hymn #17, "[o]nly the compassionate Vow of Amida becomes widely known, and attainment of birth through the *nembutsu* spreads."

Here, Shinran reveals that the teaching of Amida Buddha's salvation—birth through the *nembutsu*—was widely transmitted throughout the right, semblance and last dharma-ages. As we have discussed above, one would expect that that teaching of the *nembutsu* would be superior in bringing about the attainment of emancipation during an age when the practices of the Path of Sages are without benefit. However, it is more than somewhat questionable that the *nembutsu* of Amida Buddha would spread even during right dharma-age, when the Path of Sages was effective. Shinran answers that question in the following way,

14. We may think that these times belong to the  
right dharma-age,  
But in us—the lowest of foolish beings—  
There is no mind that is pure, true, or real;  
How could we awaken the aspiration for enlightenment?<sup>24</sup>

15. The aspiration for enlightenment through  
self-power taught in the Path of Sages  
Is beyond our minds and words;  
We foolish beings ever sinking in transmigration—  
How could we awaken it?<sup>25</sup>
16. Under the guidance of Buddhas who appeared in this world,  
Three times the sands of the Ganges in number,  
We awakened the aspiration for supreme enlightenment,  
But our self-power failed, and  
we continued to transmigrate.<sup>26</sup>

That is to say, even in the right dharma-age (the perfect age in which to practice the Buddhist path), the minds of “the lowest of foolish beings,” or, “foolish beings ever sinking in transmigration,” which ought to be “pure, true, and real” serve as the starting point for self-powered practices, which were in reality merely useless, blind passions. Because such persons were unable to persevere through the practices of self-power, it was impossible for them to attain emancipation through the Path of Sages. Thus, during the right dharma-age the path of attaining emancipation through the *nembutsu* was broadly spread by Śākyamuni as the teaching that could effectively bring “the lowest of foolish beings,” or, “foolish beings ever sinking in transmigration” to the attainment of enlightenment.

This point of this is that the *nembutsu* became widespread even during the right dharma-age. For this reason, it goes without saying that persons were able to attain emancipation through *nembutsu* during the right dharma-age. During the inferior and unfavorable periods of the semblance and last dharma-ages, in which the Path of Sages is not able to lead to the attainment of emancipation, the *nembutsu* is the exclusive path for attaining emancipation. For this reason, the *nembutsu* could bear the title of “true and real teaching.”

Further, hymn # 16 indicates that we had been born during times past, prior to Śākyamuni, when Buddhas more numerous than three times the sands of the Ganges River appeared in the world. We endeavored to attain emancipation through self-power, but those practices were of no effect, and we continued to transmigrate. Even though we might have been born during Śākyamuni’s presence in the world, or during the right dharma-age, we were foolish beings who had not been able to attain emancipation through self-power and so had been transmigrating from the distant past. We would continue to transmigrate, unavoidably, as long as we relied upon the Path of Sages. However, because Śākyamuni had already expounded the teaching of Amida Buddha to such “lowest of foolish beings” (Shinran explains that we are “foolish beings sinking in the depths of blind passions. We who are possessed of blind passions,” in a left-hand note<sup>27</sup>),

he had revealed the efficacy of the teaching of Amida Buddha even in the right dharma-age. The efficacy of this teaching is revealed in the *Contemplation Sūtra* and is further explained in the narrative of King Ajātaśatru's attainment of faith in the Chapter on Shinjin in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.<sup>28</sup>

The reasoning behind Shinran's assertion that the teaching of Amida Buddha was broadly spread during the right dharma-age is apparent. From the opposite perspective, even if Shinran himself had been born during the time that the dharma existed in this world, it would have been impossible for him, as "the lowest of foolish beings," to attain emancipation through the self-power practices of the Path of Sages. However, if he were able to encounter the Śākyamuni's exposition of the teaching of Amida, then it would have been possible for him to be assured of attaining emancipation during that period. Thus, shifting to his own era, Shinran would have no reason to rush around in a panic, even though he was transmigrating in the last dharma-age. In the same way, if he had been born during the semblance dharma-age, it would have been impossible for him to realize attainment on the path through self-power. Nevertheless, just as wise persons in the semblance dharma-age were able to overcome the causes and effects of transmigration by taking refuge in the teaching of Amida, he would have had the potential to take refuge in the teaching of Amida himself.

In spite of that, shifting again to his own era, Shinran states that, as a person born during the last dharma-age, he was even now continuing in transmigration, and had himself not even one opportunity to encounter either the right or semblance dharma-ages. For him, both the right and semblance dharma-ages had already passed by. His lamentations were insufficient to express his sense of sadness. The sorrow that he felt was overwhelming. This was his sorrowful lament: Even though the auspicious periods of the right and semblance dharma-ages had existed, he had not been born into those worlds, but instead was born during the present last dharma-age. For that reason, hymn #1 states with sorrow, "The right and semblance ages have already closed; so lament, disciples of later times!"

Next, we come to the third internal feature of the last dharma-age. As hymns #4 and #17 tell us, the world is indeed "resolute in conflict and dispute." It is an evil world replete with "the five defilements," brewing up only the karmic causes for transmigration. We can examine the content of this feature in more detail by citing other hymns from the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*. For instance,

5. When sentient beings' life-span of tens of thousands of years,  
Through a gradual decline of their karmic reward,  
Decreased to twenty thousand years,  
The age came to be called the "evil world of the  
five defilements."<sup>29</sup>

6. As the time of *kalpa*-defilements advances,  
The bodies of sentient beings gradually grow smaller;  
Their evil and wrongdoing amid the five defilements increase,  
So that their minds are like poisonous snakes and evil dragons.<sup>30</sup>
7. Ignorance and blind passions abound,  
Pervading everywhere like innumerable particles of dust.  
Desire and hatred arising out of conflict and accord  
Are like high peaks and mountain ridges.<sup>31</sup>
8. Sentient beings' wrong views grow rampant,  
Becoming like thickets and forests, bramble and thorns;  
Filled with suspicion, they slander those who  
follow the *nembutsu*,  
While the use of violence and the  
poison of anger spread widely.<sup>32</sup>
9. With life-defilement, the untimely end occurs in a moment,  
And both forms of recompenses—  
oneself and one's environment—perish.  
Rejecting right and turning to wrong prevails,  
So that people senselessly injure others.<sup>33</sup>
12. With the advent of the age of the five defilements  
Both monks and laity have fallen into contention;  
When they see persons who have entrusted themselves  
to the *nembutsu*,  
Filled with suspicion, they slander and attack them.<sup>34</sup>
13. Those who, it appears, will never attain enlightenment  
All attack the practice of solely saying the Name.  
The mark of destroying the teaching of sudden attainment  
Is that for them, the vast sea of birth-and-death  
will have no end.<sup>35</sup>
40. "Among my disciples, who will give themselves to doing evil,  
Wrong views and self-indulgence will flourish,  
And in the last age they will destroy my teaching."  
Thus Śākyamuni foretells in the *Lotus Face Sūtra*.<sup>36</sup>
41. Sentient beings who slander the *nembutsu*  
Fall into Avici hell  
And suffer great pain and affliction without respite  
For eighty thousand *kalpa*-s; thus it is taught.<sup>37</sup>



45. If we had not encountered  
 Amida's directing of virtue for going forth and returning,  
 Our transmigration in birth-and-death would have no end;  
 What could we do then, sinking in this sea of pain?<sup>38</sup>

With these hymns Shinran discusses the results that will be attained by those who habitually possess the "five defilements" and "resoluteness of conflict and dispute" in the last dharma-age. All of the "five defilements" are given detailed mention in these hymns: *kalpa*-defilement (hymn #5), defilement of sentient beings (hymn #6), defilement of blind passions (hymn #7), defilement of views (hymn #8), and life-defilement (hymn #9). Needless to say, the state of the world prior to Śākyamuni's appearance therein was already that of an evil world of the five defilements. Śākyamuni began his practice in order to overcome the five defilements, and the path he taught to overcome them was none other than the Buddhist path. However, the Buddhist path itself does not reform the evil world of the five defilements. Rather, it enables the individual to overcome those defilements. Hence, the world of the five defilements does not change even as the era shifts from the right dharma-age to the semblance dharma-age.

The current, last dharma-age is no exception—it is a world of the five defilements. For this reason, Shinran refers to the last dharma-age using compound phrases such as "sentient beings of the five defilements in the last dharma-age" (hymn #2) and "the semblance and last dharma-ages, and this world of the five defilements" (hymn #17). Further, during the right dharma-age it was possible for individuals themselves to overcome the five defilements through self-power. Since this is impossible during the last dharma-age, it could be said that the last dharma-age is itself a concrete manifestation of the true state of the five defilements themselves. Thus, Shinran talks about "the advent of the age of the five defilements" (hymn #12), "sentient beings of this evil world of the five defilements" (hymn #30),<sup>39</sup> and "sentient beings of this defiled world" (hymn #32).<sup>40</sup> He considers this as the true state of the real world and of human beings who have been born in the last dharma-age. That being the case, persons of the world of the five defilements habitually act in accordance with the five defilements, without any self-reflection. With "desire and hatred arising out of conflict and accord," they use "violence and the poison of anger," "reject right and turn to wrong," "slander those who follow the *nembutsu*"; they have "distracted minds and self-indulgence," possess "wrong views and self-indulgence," and "do evil." Certainly, the description "resolute in conflict and dispute" fits them perfectly.

These five defilements, moreover, are the result of transmigration based in one's own five-fold defiled nature. As we see in Shinran's phrase, "casting off the pain of [transmigrating in] birth-and-death since the beginningless past" (hymn #49),<sup>41</sup> this transmigration is also the result of



our having transmigrated in samsaric existence since the beginningless past. It follows that, as long as we are always in the state of the five defilements and of evil and false views, the world will truly be a “vast sea of birth-and-death [that has] no end” (hymn #30), which is replete with blind passions, false views, slandering of the dharma, and destruction of the dharma. The inevitable result will be that we will “fall into Avici hell and suffer great pain and affliction without respite for eighty thousand *kalpa-s*” (hymn #41), and will not be able to escape from “transmigration in birth-and-death [that has] no end; . . . this sea of pain” (hymn #45).<sup>42</sup> The sixteen verses of “Gutoku’s Hymns of Lament and Reflection,” which are appended to the end of Shinran’s *Shōzōmatsu wasan*, represent the sorrowful laments of a person squirming within his five-fold defilements, lamenting over his wretched form, and comprehending the concrete aspects of the five defilements in his actual existence.

Next, Shinran indicates that the fourth internal feature of the last dharma-age consists of all aspects of salvation through the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha—the exclusive path for attaining emancipation in the last dharma-age. As we have already seen, his hymns state, “During the right, semblance, and last ages, Amida’s Primal Vow has spread” (hymn #3), “Without trusting themselves to the Tathāgata’s compassionate vow, no sentient beings of these times will have a chance of parting from birth-and-death” (hymn #10), “Only the compassionate Vow of Amida becomes widely known, and attainment of birth through the *nembutsu* spreads” (hymn #17).

The ultimate essence of salvation through the Primal vow of Amida is expressed in the hymn, which Shinran was told in a dream, at the outset of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*.

In 1257, on the night of the ninth day of the second month,  
during the hour of the tiger, I was told in a dream:  
Entrust yourself to Amida’s Primal Vow.  
Through the benefit of being grasped, never to be abandoned,  
All who entrust themselves to the Primal Vow  
Attain the supreme enlightenment.<sup>43</sup>

As we have discussed above, for Shinran, even a foolish being who is transmigrating within the five defilements with evil and false views will be able to attain unsurpassed enlightenment (emancipation) by having faith in the Primal Vow. Shinran clearly records that he received this hymn in a dream during the night (the hour of the tiger) on the ninth day of the second month, when he was eighty-five years old. In this way, he is declaring that the only way to attain emancipation during the last dharma-age is through the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. At that time Shinran was troubled day and night by many issues. We know from the dates found on some of his

extant letters that he was receiving many visits by his followers from the northern regions who came to ask him a myriad of questions. He was also concerned about the heretical ideas that were being spread by his eldest son, Zenran. As these troubles became compounded, however, the salvation of Amida was manifested to him in the form of a declaration in a dream, and with a content consistent with the assertions that had had been making every day. This could be seen as virtually incontrovertible proof of the working of Amida's salvific activity in this life. That being the case, we can recognize that Shinran recorded the date of the dream with great care.

Shinran describes salvation through Amida Buddha's Primal Vow in the following way,

18. Of the Vows embraced as supreme and all-surpassing,  
Selected through five *kalpa*-s of profound thought,  
The Vows of immeasurable light and life  
Were made the foundation of the working of great compassion.<sup>44</sup>
37. When we reflect on the establishment of the Vow,  
We find that the Tathāgata, without abandoning  
sentient beings in pain and affliction,  
Has taken the directing of virtue to them as foremost,  
Thus fulfilling the mind of great compassion.<sup>45</sup>
52. Amida, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta  
Ride on the ship of the great Vow;  
Going out on the ocean of birth-and-death,  
They call to beings and bring them on board.<sup>46</sup>
31. The Buddha of Unhindered Light declared:  
"To benefit the sentient beings of the future,  
I entrust the *nembutsu* of wisdom  
To Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta."<sup>47</sup>
48. Casting off the pain of birth-and-death since the  
beginningless past,  
We are certain of attaining supreme nirvana.  
This is through Amida's directing of virtue for  
going forth and returning;  
Our gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence is  
truly hard to fulfill.<sup>48</sup>
50. The directing of virtue embodied in *Namu-amida-butsu*  
Is, in its benevolent working, vast and inconceivable;

Through the benefit of the directing of virtue for going forth,  
We enter the directing of virtue for returning to this world.<sup>49</sup>

51. Through great love, which is Amida's directing of virtue for  
our going forth,  
We attain great compassion, which is  
Amida's directing of virtue for our return;  
If not for the Buddha's directing of virtue,  
How could we realize enlightenment in the Pure Land?<sup>50</sup>

As we can see from these hymns, Amida Buddha's salvation does not abandon sentient beings in pain and affliction. In other words, the Buddha's fundamental aspiration is to save sentient beings in pain and affliction. Hence, the foremost character of that Buddha—to direct the virtues of the Buddha's power to save sentient beings—has been fulfilled. Directing the virtues of the Buddha's power to beings means that, since sentient beings themselves possess only karmic evil that binds them to transmigration, the Buddha himself bestows them with (that is, directs the virtue of) the power to sever that karmic evil and attain emancipation.

Hymn #50 sets out the aspect of going forth to the Pure Land and the aspect of returning to this world. The aspect of going forth corresponds to attaining enlightenment oneself, while the aspect of return corresponds to returning to benefit others. These phases identify the essential condition in Mahāyāna Buddhism for attaining enlightenment. That is, the bodhisattva seeks to attain the realm of Buddhahood by performing the two practices of self-benefit and benefiting-others. However, sentient beings in the current, last dharma-age are the lowest of foolish beings who are not able to persevere in the practices of self-power. Because of this, Amida Buddha personally bestows (directs) the virtues of these two kinds of benefiting upon foolish beings. They are then able to attain emancipation and realize unsurpassed enlightenment through the aspect of going (self-benefit) and aspect of returning (benefiting-others), which have been directed to them. Thus, according to hymn #49, "casting off the pain of birth-and-death since the beginningless past, we are certain of attaining supreme nirvana." This is due to the benevolence of "Amida's directing of virtue for going forth and returning."

For this reason, the true cause of the salvation of sentient beings, as well as the recitation of the *nembutsu* that accompanies this salvation, is all due to the directing of virtue by the Tathāgata. Foolish beings, who are possessed only of karmic evil that binds them to transmigration, need only entrust themselves to this salvation.

24. Persons who truly realize *shinjin*,  
Which is directed to them through Amida's Vow of wisdom,

Receive the benefit of being grasped, never to be abandoned;  
Hence, they attain the stage equal to perfect enlightenment.<sup>51</sup>

27. Having immediately entered the stage of the truly settled  
On realizing true and real *shinjin*, a person will,  
Being the same as Maitreya of the rank of succession  
To Buddhahood, attain supreme enlightenment.<sup>52</sup>
42. Receiving the true cause of birth in the true fulfilled land  
Through the words of the two honored ones,  
We dwell in the stage of the truly settled;  
Thus, we will unfailingly attain nirvana.<sup>53</sup>
38. The saying of the Name arising from true and real *shinjin*  
Is Amida's directing of virtue to beings;  
Therefore, it is called "not directing merit,"  
And saying the *nembutsu* in self-power is rejected.<sup>54</sup>

Through these hymns we clearly know that both *shinjin*, the true cause of birth, and saying the Name are both directed to beings by Amida. Further, at the same moment that one receives faith one enters into the ranks of the truly settled, whereby one is assured of attaining birth and enlightenment (attaining emancipation).

In this section we have examined Shinran's view of the last dharma-age, as seen in the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*. As a result, we can understand how rigorous the foundation and basis of his faith-experience truly was.

Finally, in this study we have considered Shinran's view of the last dharma-age, based on the descriptions found in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* and the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*. The descriptions of the last dharma-age in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, however, do not involve as full a discussion of the Primal Vow of Amida, which is the true essence of the Pure Land way, as we find in the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*. However, when we consider the discussion presented in the first five chapters of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, which have no direct connection with the section on the last dharma-age, we could say that absolutely no difference can be seen between the two texts. Thus, it could be said that Shinran's view of the last dharma-age flows continuously even through those portions of his work that do not touch directly upon his understanding of the last age. Unfortunately, because we tend to concern ourselves only with arguments apparently being made, we must probe more deeply into Shinran's understanding, so as not to lose his real message. Finally, Shinran also describes the last dharma-age in some of his other writings. I hope to be able to consider them in a future study.

## NOTES

1. This is the second part of an article that was originally published in Japanese as “Shinran Shōnin ni okeru mappō shisō,” the fourth chapter of Kyōshin Asano, *Shinran to Jōdokyōgi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998). Part 1 was published in *Pacific World*, Third Series, 3 (2001): pp. 53–70. For the most part, the English translations of passages from Shinran’s texts have been taken from The Shin Buddhism Translation Series, *The Collected Works of Shinran* (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997) (hereinafter CWS).
2. See *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 2 (hereinafter SSZ II) (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1983), p. 520; CWS, p. 408.
3. See SSZ II, p. 527; CWS, p. 419.
4. Although the last lines of hymns differ, see the hymns at SSZII, p. 528 and CWS, p. 423 for reference.
5. See SSZ II, p. 516; CWS, p. 399.
6. SSZ II, p. 523; CWS, p. 413.
7. SSZ II, p. 525; CWS, p. 417.
8. SSZ II, pp. 526–7; CWS, pp. 418–420.
9. SSZ II, p. 527; CWS, p. 421.
10. SSZ II, p. 529; CWS, p. 424.
11. SSZ II, p. 529; CWS, pp. 425–6.
12. SSZ II, pp. 530–1; CWS, pp. 427–8.
13. SSZ II, p. 551; CWS, p. 429.
14. A letter written in Shinran’s own hand, know as the letter in which he disowns Zenran, is currently housed at the Senju-ji temple. At the end of the letter are the notations, “Fifth month, twenty-ninth day (arrived: sixth month, twenty-seventh day) [written seal], Reply to Jishin-bō, copied for reference: Kenchō 8 [1256], sixth month, twenty-seventh day, copied: Kagen 3 [1305], seventh month, twenty-seventh day.” See CWS, p. 584. We can see from this example that, during this period, Shinran sent many letters, written by himself, to his followers in the Kanto region.
15. SSZ II, p. 516; CWS, p. 399.
16. SSZ II, p. 516; CWS, p. 399.
17. SSZ II, p. 516; CWS, p. 399.
18. SSZ II, p. 516; CWS, p. 399.

19. SSZ II, p. 517; CWS, p. 401.
20. SSZ II, p. 518; CWS, p. 403.
21. In the early 35-hymn manuscript version of the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*, this section read, "Sentient beings at the end of the semblance and in this last dharma-age." It now reads, "Sentient beings amid the five defilements in the last dharma-age." This revision is an example of Shinran's emphasis on the last dharma-age.
22. SSZ II, p. 522; CWS, p. 412.
23. SSZ II, p. 519; CWS, p. 406.
24. SSZ II, p. 518; CWS, p. 402.
25. SSZ II, p. 518; CWS, p. 402.
26. SSZ II, p. 518; CWS, p. 403.
27. CWS, p. 402.
28. Chapter on Shinjin, SSZ II, pp. 81–97; CWS, pp. 125–143.
29. SSZ II, p. 517; CWS, p. 400.
30. SSZ II, p. 517; CWS, p. 400.
31. SSZ II, p. 517; CWS, p. 400.
32. SSZ II, p. 517; CWS, p. 400.
33. SSZ II, p. 517; CWS, p. 401.
34. SSZ II, p. 517; CWS, p. 402.
35. SSZ II, p. 518; CWS, p. 402.
36. SSZ II, p. 521; CWS, p. 409.
37. SSZ II, p. 521; CWS, p. 409.
38. SSZ II, p. 521; CWS, p. 410.
39. SSZ II, p. 519; CWS, p. 406.
40. SSZ II, p. 519; CWS, p. 406.
41. SSZ II, p. 521; CWS, p. 410.
42. SSZ II, p. 521; CWS, p. 410.
43. SSZ II, p. 516; CWS, p. 397.
44. SSZ II, p. 518; CWS, p. 403.
45. SSZ II, p. 520; CWS, p. 408.
46. SSZ II, p. 522; CWS, p. 411.
47. SSZ II, p. 520; CWS, p. 406.
48. SSZ II, p. 521; CWS, p. 410.
49. SSZ II, p. 522; CWS, p. 411.

- 50. *SSZ II*, p. 522; *CWS*, p. 411.
- 51. *SSZ II*, p. 518; *CWS*, p. 405.
- 52. *SSZ II*, p. 519; *CWS*, p. 406.
- 53. *SSZ II*, p. 521; *CWS*, p. 409.
- 54. *SSZ II*, p. 520; *CWS*, p. 408.



# Rennyo's Theory on Amida Buddha's Name and Its Relationship to Shinran's Thought, Part 2<sup>1</sup>

**Kōju Fugen**

Professor Emeritus

Ryukoku University, Kyoto

## VI.

IN THIS SECTION, I WILL EXAMINE Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name (六字釈 *rokuji shaku*) as the relationship between practitioners and Amida's Dharma (機法門 *kihōmon*). In the *Letters* (Gobunshō, 3–7), Rennyo writes:

[F]ull realization of the significance of the six characters “na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu” is the substance of decisively settled faith. That is, the two characters “na-mu” indicate the receptive attitude of the sentient beings (機 *ki*) who entrust themselves to Amida Buddha. Next the four characters “a-mi-da-butsu” signify the dharma (法 *hō*) through which Amida Tathāgata saves sentient beings. This is expressed as “the oneness in ‘namu-amida-butsu’ of the person [to be saved] and dharma [that saves]” (機法一体 *kihō ittai*).<sup>2</sup>

This is one of the most commonly found examples of Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name. In these passages, Rennyo explains that “na-mu,” or “taking refuge” (歸命 *kimyō*), is on the side of sentient beings (*ki*) who entrust Amida Buddha; and “A-mi-da-butsu” is the Dharma (*hō*), or the power of Amida Buddha who saves sentient beings entrusting him. Rennyo identifies “beings” with the first two characters (南無 *na-mu*) and “Dharma” with the following four characters (阿弥陀仏 *a-mi-da-butsu*) in his understanding of “Namu Amidabutsu” as the oneness of practitioner and Dharma of Amida Buddha (*kihō ittai*). Rennyo interprets “na-mu” as the entrusting mind of sentient beings, or practitioners, who rely on Amida Buddha who saves them.

In the *Letters* (4–14), he then correlates the mind “aspiring for birth and directing virtue” (発願回向 *hotsugen ekō*) with the phrase “Amida-butsu is the practice” (即是其行 *sokuze gogyō*) which is the Dharma of Amida Buddha.

First, the two characters “na-mu” mean to “to take refuge.” “To take refuge” expresses the [entrusting] mind of sentient beings who rely on Amida Buddha to save them, [bringing them to buddhahood] in the afterlife. Then, “aspiring for birth and directing virtue” expresses the [Buddha’s] mind that embraces and saves sentient beings who entrust [to Amida]. This is the precise meaning of the four characters “a-mi-da-butsu.”<sup>3</sup>

Here, Rennyo explains the phrase “to take refuge” from the perspective of practitioners, that it is the entrusting mind of sentient beings who rely on the afterlife. He interprets “aspiring for birth and directing virtue” by applying the perspective of the Dharma of Amida Buddha as a manifestation of the mind of Amida Buddha embracing and saving sentient beings who entrust him.

In another *Letter* (3–6), Rennyo discusses the relationship between practitioners and Amida Buddha in the reverse order.

When we cast away the sundry practices and miscellaneous good acts and entrust ourselves to Amida Tathāgata with the single practice and single-mindedness, awakening the one thought-moment of taking refuge in which we realize that he saves us, [Amida] graciously sends forth his all-pervading light and receives us. This is precisely what is meant by the four characters “a-mi-da-butsu” and, also, by “aspiring to be born and directing virtue.”<sup>4</sup>

In these passages, Rennyo explains “Amida Buddha” as the light embracing sentient beings (光明摂取 *kōmyō sesshu*), which is then identified with the mind of sentient beings aspiring to be born and directing virtue toward them (*hotsugen ekō*).

In his *Letter* (5–13), Rennyo again writes about “na-mu” from the perspective of practitioners.

Shan-tao explains the six characters of this “na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu,” saying “‘Namu’ means ‘to take refuge.’ It also signifies aspiring to be born and directing virtue. ‘Amida-butsu’ is the practice. Because of this, we unfailingly attain birth.” How should we understand this explanation? [The answer is that] if, with [the awakening of] the one thought-moment [of entrusting], a person takes refuge in Amida Buddha—even if [his is] an existence like ours, burdened with evil karma and blind passions—[Amida], knowing that person, will save him without fail. In other words, “taking refuge” means that we entrust ourselves [to Amida] to save us. [Amida’s] bestowal of unsurpassed and great benefit on sentient beings who

entrust themselves in the one thought-moment is called "aspiring to be born and directing virtue."<sup>5</sup>

Rennyo interprets "taking refuge" as sentient beings' mind of entrusting Amida from the perspective of practitioners (約生 *yakushō*), and "aspiring to be born and directing virtue" as the Dharma of Amida which is his directing of unsurpassed and great benefit accomplished to sentient beings. However, he does not explain the meaning of "amida-butsu." A similar interpretation is also found in his *Letters* (5–5).

For within the one thought-moment of taking refuge—"namu"—there is aspiration for birth and directing of virtue. This, in other words, is the *mind* [*kokoro*] that Amida Tathāgata directs to ordinary beings. In the *Larger Sūtra*, this is explained as "enabling all sentient beings to fulfill their virtue."<sup>6</sup>

In this *Letter*, "aspiration for birth and directing of virtue" is understood as the *mind* (*kokoro*) of Amida Tathāgata whose great benefit of the birth in the Pure Land is directed to sentient beings. In these passages Rennyo does not explain the meaning of the phrase "Amida-butsu is the practice" because the unsurpassed and great benefit of Amida is itself the content of Amida's practice.

This interpretation is based on Shinran's understanding of the "mind aspiring for birth and directing virtue" discussed in the Chapter on Practice of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in which he states "the mind of the Tathāgata who, having already established the Vow, gives sentient beings the practice necessary for their birth."<sup>7</sup> Based on this passage, Rennyo interprets the "aspiration for birth and directing of virtue" as Amida's *mind* of directing unsurpassed and great benefit to ordinary beings. The practice of sentient beings, therefore, is the practice directed from Amida Buddha which is the unsurpassed and great benefit for sentient beings creating the cause for their attainment of birth in his Pure Land. Therefore, Rennyo does not need to discuss the phrase "Amida-butsu is the practice."

Rennyo does, however, at one point interpret the phrase "Amida-butsu is the practice" from the perspective of the Dharma of Amida without discussing the meaning of the "aspiration for birth and directing of virtue." In the *Letters* (4–8), Rennyo says that "it must be understood that the decisive settling of faith in our tradition is expressed by the six characters (na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu),"<sup>8</sup> and then he explains the reason as follows.

Shan-tao explained long ago in his commentary: "'Namu' means 'to take refuge.' It also signifies aspiring to be born and directing virtue. 'Amida-butsu' is the practice." When sentient beings take refuge in Amida—"namu,"—Amida Buddha, fully knowing those

sentient beings, bestows on them the virtue of a myriad good deeds and practices, countless as the grains of sand in the river of Ganges. This is what is meant by “Amida-butsu is the practice.” Those who take refuge (“namu”) are therefore one with the saving dharma of Amida buddha; we speak of “the oneness in ‘namu-amida-butsu’ of the person [to be saved] and dharma [that saves],” indicating this point.<sup>9</sup>

In this *Letter*, Rennyo interprets Shan-tao’s phrase “Amida-butsu is the practice” to mean that Amida Buddha transfers his great virtue to sentient beings, and Rennyo thereby implies that “aspiration and directing of virtue” is directed from Amida Buddha to sentient beings. Therefore, Rennyo does not need to explain the meaning of “aspiration for birth and directing of virtues.” In this *Letter* “namu” is identified as the *shinjin* of the practitioners who take refuge in Amida Buddha, and “Amida-butsu is the practice,” as Amida’s Dharma in which his mind of “aspiration and directing of virtue” to sentient beings is embodied.

As examined thus far, Rennyo’s interpretation of the six-character Name has four characteristics. First, based on the passage of the fulfillment of the Primal Vow, he discusses it as the content of Other Power *shinjin* (section 2).<sup>10</sup> Second, based on Shinran’s interpretation on the Name, Rennyo discusses the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioners and Amida’s Dharma by reinterpreting Shan-tao’s interpretation of the six-character Name explained as the practitioners’ aspiration and practice (sections 3 and 5).<sup>11</sup> Third, Rennyo interprets “taking refuge” as sentient beings’ *shinjin* (*ki*) which is the “entrusting mind of sentient beings who rely on the afterlife” from the perspective of practitioners (*yakushō*). Fourth, he interprets both “aspiration and practice” and “Amida-butsu is the practice” from the perspective of Amida Buddha (約仏 *yakubutsu*) and synthesizes them by introducing the perspective of the oneness of practitioner and Dharma of Amida Buddha (*kihō ittai*). In the next section, I will discuss the influence of Shinran’s interpretation of the Name on Rennyo’s interpretation.

## VII.

As I have discussed in a previous section (section 4),<sup>12</sup> Shinran’s interpretation of the six-character Name appears in the *Songō shinzō meimon* and the Chapter on Practice in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. In the former text, Shinran explains the Name from the perspective of practitioners (*yakushō*) and in the latter text from the perspective of Amida Buddha (*yakubutsu*). The relationship between these two perspectives is like the two sides of a coin. Shinran, in the Chapter on Practice, interprets the six-

character Name as Amida's directing merit of Other-Power (他力回向 *tariki ekō*). In the *Songō shinzō meimon* he explains it as the working of the Name directed from Amida Buddha toward sentient beings. In the *Letters*, Rennyo accepts both of Shinran's interpretations.

Rennyo interprets "taking refuge" (*kimyō*) as practitioners' *shinjin* from the perspective of sentient beings following the *Songō shinzō meimon*. In the Chapter on Shinjin, Shinran interprets "taking refuge" as "the command of the Primal Vow calling to and summoning us." Shinran also provides two additional notes to his interpretation of the character "ki" (帰) of "kimyō" (taking refuge 帰命), saying that *ki* means "entrusting on" (ヨリタノム *yoritanomu*) and "relying on" (ヨリカカル *yorikakaru*). Shinran explains that the meaning of "namu," or "taking refuge," is Buddhas' command. In the *Songō shinzō meimon*, the *shinjin* of the sentient beings who accept the Buddhas' command is explained from the perspective of the sentient beings, that they respond "to the command and follow the call of the two honored ones, Śākyamuni and Amida."<sup>13</sup>

Rennyo's understanding of "taking refuge" is based on Shinran's above interpretation. For example, in the *Letter* (4–14), Rennyo writes, "'To take refuge' expresses the entrusting mind of sentient beings who rely on Amida Buddha to save them, bringing them to buddhahood in the after-life."<sup>14</sup> In this passage, Rennyo demonstrates his interpretation of "taking refuge" from the perspective of sentient beings, which is practitioners' *shinjin* entrusting Amida's salvation.

In the *Songō shinzō meimon*, Shinran uses an expression that practitioners are to "follow the call" (召しにかなふ *meshi ni kanau*) and interprets "taking refuge" as practitioners' faithful entrusting (信順 *shinjun*) in the command of Śākyamuni and Amida. Rennyo, however, applies a different expression, "relying on Amida Buddha to save them" (たすけたまへとたのむ *tasuke tamae to tanomu*), to explain the meaning of "taking refuge." Here, we see the uniqueness of Rennyo's expression of settled mind (安心 *anjin*) which is developed out of Shinran's interpretation.

As for Shinran's interpretation of "aspiration for birth and directing merit" and "Amida-butsu is the practice," in the Chapter on Practice, he writes that "aspiration for birth and directing merit" is "the mind of the Tathāgata who, having already established the Vow, gives sentient beings the practice necessary for their birth" which is Amida's mind of great compassion to direct merit to sentient beings (大悲回向心 *daihi ekō shin*), or Amida's Vow mind of directing merit to sentient beings (能回向の願心 *nō ekō no ganshin*). "Amida-butsu is the practice," is defined as the "selected Primal Vow" (選択本願 *senjaku hongan*) which is the practice of those who receive Amida's directing of virtue (所回向の行 *shoekō no gyō*).<sup>15</sup>

In the *Larger Sūtra*, Amida Buddha has established Vows and directs to sentient beings the right practice for birth in the Pure Land and the

attainment of buddhahood through his mind of great compassion. Therefore Shinran understands that “Amida-butsu is the practice” means the virtue of the practice directed to practitioners which is none other than the Name (*myōgō*) praised in the Seventeenth Vow.

Based on Shinran’s understanding, Rennyo interprets both “aspiration for birth and directing merit” and “Amida-butsu is the practice” as the working of the Dharma of Amida Buddha. In the *Letters* (4–8), we find his major move.

Shan-tao explained long ago in his commentary: “‘Namu’ means ‘to take refuge.’ It also signifies aspiring to be born and directing virtue. ‘Amida-butsu’ is the practice.” When sentient beings take refuge in Amida—“namu,”—Amida Buddha, fully knowing those sentient beings, bestows on them the virtue of a myriad good deeds and practices, countless as the grains of sand in the river Ganges. This is what is meant by “Amida-butsu is the practice.”<sup>16</sup>

Here, Rennyo identifies Shan-tao’s words, “aspiration for birth and directing merit,” with “Amida-butsu is the practice” from the perspective of the working of Other-Power, or the perspective of the Dharma of Amida. This is considered to be Rennyo’s unique doctrinal elaboration developed on the basis of Shinran’s understanding of the Name discussed in the Chapter on Practice of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

Why does Rennyo interpret the Name by identifying “aspiration for birth and directing merit” with “Amida-butsu is the practice”? According to Shinran’s interpretation, “aspiration for birth and directing merit” is Amida’s directing of his mind of great compassion, and “Amida-butsu is the practice” means the virtuous cause for sentient beings’ birth in the Pure Land (往生の因徳 *ōjō no intoku*), or the practice for the birth, which is the practice directed from Amida Buddha. Therefore, the relationship is the directing (toward sentient beings) and the directed (from Amida Buddha). Amida’s mind of directing to sentient beings (as “aspiration for birth and directing merit”) and the practice directed from Amida (as “Amida-butsu is the practice”) are one and inseparable (不離一体 *furi ittai*). They are accomplished inseparably within the Dharma of Amida’s Name. Where the working of the great compassion of Amida directing merit to sentient beings exists, there is the fulfillment of Amida’s great practice containing the unsurpassable merit for sentient beings’ birth in the Pure Land. And where the practice as “Amida-butsu is the practice” directed from Amida becomes accomplished, there is the fulfillment of Amida’s great compassion as his mind of “aspiration for birth and directing merit” for sentient beings. Amida’s mind of directing virtue and the practice he directs to sentient beings are, therefore, one and inseparable. They are none other than the manifestation of the compassionate working of Amida Buddha to



emancipate sentient beings. Therefore, Rennyo identifies Amida's "aspiration for birth and directing merit" with the meaning of the phrase "Amida-butsu is the practice."

Rennyo's understanding is clearly reiterated in his *Letters* (3–6):

[When we] entrust ourselves to Amida Tathāgata with the single practice and single-mindedness, awakening the one thought-moment of taking refuge in which we realize that he saves us, [Amida] graciously sends forth his all-pervading light and receives us. This is precisely what is meant by the four characters "a-mi-da-butsu" and, also, by "aspiring to be born and directing virtue."<sup>17</sup>

Rennyo developed a unique interpretation of the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioners and Amida Buddha (*kihōmon*), based on Shinran's interpretation of the six-character Name in the *Songō shinzō meimon* and the Chapter on Practice. For Shinran that "namu," or "taking refuge" (南無・歸命 *namu kimyō*) is practitioners' *shinjin* and "aspiration for birth and directing merit," and "Amida-butsu is the practice" is Amida Buddha's Dharma emancipating sentient beings. Rennyo understands that the *shinjin* of sentient beings (*ki*) and the salvific working of the Buddha (*hō*) are both accomplished in the Dharma of Amida's Name which is expressed as the oneness of practitioner and Dharma of Amida Buddha (*ki hō ittai*). This is the essence of Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name from the perspective of the relationship between practitioners and Amida Buddha.

## VIII.

The last remaining issue regarding Rennyo's interpretation of the Name is his adaptation of the concept of the oneness of practitioner and Dharma of Amida Buddha (*kihō ittai*). As mentioned in the previous section, Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioners and Amida Buddha (*kihō mon*) does not appear in any of Shinran's writings and is considered to be a doctrinal formulation unique to Rennyo. As has already been pointed out by various scholars, the term *kihō ittai* was coined by the Pure Land scholars in the lineage of the Seizan school of the Jōdoshū. The source for Rennyo's usage of the term can be traced to the *Anjin ketsujō shō*, a text thought to be composed within the lineage of the Seizan school.

The concept of *kihō ittai* is the central issue of the *Anjin ketsujō shō*. In this text, the concept of *kihō ittai* is addressed from two aspects. One is *kihō ittai* as Amida Buddha's accomplishment of the essence of Dharma (法体成就 *hottai jōju*), and the other is sentient beings' receiv-



ing of the accomplished Dharma (機相領受 *kişō ryōju*). As for the former aspect, the text explains,

Amida Buddha has already arranged the birth of beings there by wholly fulfilling, in our place, the vow or aspiration and the practice [that are essential in the Buddhist path]. When, for every sentient being throughout the cosmos, the awakening of aspiration and performance of practice were thoroughly realized and birth in the Pure Land thereby accomplished, Amida attained the perfect enlightenment embodied in Namu-amida-butsu as the oneness of practitioner and Dharma [*kihō ittai*]. The birth of foolish beings, then, is inseparable from the Buddha's realization of perfect enlightenment. When the birth of all sentient beings throughout the cosmos was consummated, the Buddha attained enlightenment; thus, the Buddha's realization of enlightenment and the fulfillment of our birth in the Pure Land were simultaneous.<sup>18</sup>

The concept of *kihō ittai* discussed in the *Anjin ketsujō shō* is, however, not the same as used by Rennyo in his *Letters*. In the *Anjin ketsujō shō*, *ki* (beings) refers to the mind of ordinary beings (凡心 *bonshin*) and *hō* (Dharma) is the mind of Amida Buddha (仏心 *bussin*). The usage of *ki* (beings) in the *Anjin ketsujō shō*, for example, is represented by the phrase, "practitioners who slander the Dharma or lack the seed of Buddhahood, or practitioners of the period one hundred years after the extinction of the Dharma" (謗法闡提の機、法滅百歳の機 *hōbo sendai no ki, hōmetsu hyakusai no ki*);<sup>19</sup> and the passage, "For such practitioners as ourselves, who know only committing evil and who lack both the roots of good taught in the buddha-dharma and those valued in mundane life."<sup>20</sup> There are numerous usages of *ki* similar to these elsewhere in the *Anjin ketsujō shō*. The *Anjin ketsujō shō*'s understanding of *hō* (Dharma) is exemplified by this passage:

The Buddha-mind is great compassion. The Buddha-mind turning compassionate thoughts to us has pervaded and dyed us to the marrow of our bones. . . . There is nothing of the mind—including even the three poisons and blind passions—that is not thoroughly imbued by the Buddha's virtues. Practitioner and Dharma existing as one from the very beginning is expressed as "Namu-amida-butsu."<sup>21</sup>

According to these passages, "practitioners" (*ki*) refers to ordinary beings whose minds are defiled with the three poisons and blind passions, and Dharma (*hō*) is Amida Buddha. These passages illustrate the meaning of

*kihō ittai* in the *Anjin ketsujō shō* as the oneness of the Buddha's mind and the mind of ordinary beings.

In another passage, the *Anjin ketsujō shō* states, "The Buddha's virtues, from the beginning, have been fulfilled within the existence of sentient beings, in the oneness of practitioner and dharma."<sup>22</sup> Here, the concept of *kihō ittai* is discussed as the oneness of sentient beings and Amida Buddha (生仏一体 *shō-butsu ittai*).

The *Anjin ketsujō shō* understands that *kihō ittai* has already been accomplished in the essence of Dharma (法体成就 *hottai jōju*). According to the text, Amida Buddha has already fulfilled the aspiration (願 *gan*) and practice (行 *gyō*) for the sake of sentient beings ten *kalpa*-s ago and accomplished the true awakening (正覺 *shōgaku*) by staking his Buddhahood on the birth of all sentient beings.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the accomplishment of Amida Buddha's true awakening and the attainment of sentient beings' birth in the Pure Land are to be accomplished simultaneously. There is no birth of sentient beings without Amida Buddha's accomplishment of the true awakening. There is no true awakening of Amida Buddha without sentient beings' birth in the Pure Land. The birth of sentient beings (*ki*) and Amida Buddha's true awakening (*hō*), therefore, have already been accomplished together as one essence (一体 *ittai*). This relationship is called *kihō ittai* in the *Anjin ketsujō shō*. The oneness of the essence of sentient beings' birth and Amida's awakening as *kihō ittai*, which is the essence of the fruition of Amida's true awakening, is embodied in the Name of Amida Buddha, which is manifested as the Namu-Amidabutsu of *kihō ittai*. Hence, there is no birth of sentient beings without Amida Buddha's accomplishment of the true awakening, and there is no true awakening of Amida Buddha without sentient beings' birth in the Pure Land.

Then why are the minds of sentient beings still in the state of delusion? The *Anjin ketsujō shō* explains this problem as follows.

The *bhikṣu* Dharmākara, who vowed not to attain Buddhahood unless all sentient beings are born into his land, has already been Buddha for ten *kalpa*-s. [Nevertheless,] to this day we have been foolishly ignorant of the birth that has already been fulfilled on the part of Buddha (*buttai*) and have been aimlessly transmigrating [in *samsara*].<sup>24</sup>

Sentient beings' delusion depends on whether practitioners know or do not know of the simultaneous attainment of their birth and Amida's true awakening (往生正覺同時俱成 *ōjō shōgaku dōji kujō*) accomplished ten *kalpa*-s ago. Rennyo, however, never mentions this theory of the simultaneous attainment of sentient beings' birth in his writings, nor does he discuss the concept of *kihō ittai* as Amida Buddha himself or as Amida's true awakening itself.

The *Anjin ketsujō shō*'s theory of *kihō ittai* as sentient beings' receiving of the accomplished Dharma (*kisō ryōju*) appears in a discussion of a passage from the *Contemplation Sūtra* that says, "The Buddha-tathāgata [Amida] is the body of the Dharma-realm, entering the minds of all sentient beings." According to the *Anjin ketsujō shō*,

The virtues of the Buddha, who is the body of the Dharma-realm, fill our ignorant and inverted minds to their depth; again, therefore, practitioner and Dharma are one and are Namu-amida-butsu.<sup>25</sup>

The virtues of Amida Buddha's body and mind, which is the Buddha-body of the Dharma-realm, enter and fill the minds of ordinary beings so that the Tathāgata's virtues (*hō*) and the minds of ordinary beings (*ki*) become one. In the *Anjin ketsujō shō*, the concept of *kihō ittai* is discussed as the oneness of sentient beings and Amida Buddha (*shō-butsu ittai*). Rennyo, however, does not explain the concept of *kihō ittai* as the oneness of sentient beings and the Buddha. Instead he interprets the concept as the oneness of the Buddha's mind and sentient beings' minds (仏凡一体 *butsubon ittai*).

In the *Anjin ketsujō shō*, based on the understanding of the concept of *kihō ittai* from the perspective of sentient beings, the concept of *kihō ittai* is further explained as the oneness of the three modes of the working of Amida in the Pure Land and those of practitioners in this world (彼此三業 *hishi sangō*).

Further, Shan-tao explains concerning the contemplation of the true Buddha-body: "The three modes of activity of sentient beings of the *nembutsu* and the three modes of activity of Amida Tathāgata are mutually inseparable." The Buddha's perfect enlightenment consists of the birth of sentient beings, and the birth of sentient beings consists of the Buddha's perfect enlightenment; hence, the three modes of activity of sentient beings and those of Amida are wholly one.<sup>26</sup>

Amida Buddha has already fulfilled the aspiration and practice for sentient beings and he has already accomplished the true awakening. Hence, sentient beings' aspiration and practice are none other than those of Amida Buddha. For sentient beings, there is no other aspiration and practice than the fruition of Amida Buddha's true awakening. When sentient beings take refuge in Amida Buddha, the virtues of the three modes of activity of the Buddha's true awakening manifest themselves in sentient beings through their recitations, worshipping, and mindfulness of Amida Buddha. The three modes of activity of Amida Buddha in the Pure Land and that of

practitioners in this world become one (彼此三業機法一体 *hishi sangō kihō ittai*).

In the *Anjin ketsujō shō*, the author's understanding of the concept of *kihō ittai* is based on the theory of the oneness of sentient beings and Amida Buddha (生仏一体 *shōbutsu ittai*), whether it is discussed as Amida Buddha's accomplishment of the essence of Dharma (*hottai jōju*) or explained as the sentient beings' receiving of the accomplished Dharma (*kisō ryōju*). This understanding is in accordance with the line of thought developed within the Seizan school scholars.

How does Rennyo adopt and reinterpret this Seizan interpretation of the concept of *kihō ittai* in the *Anjin ketsujō shō*? In the *Letters*, Rennyo clearly rejects the idea that sentient beings' settlement of mind has already been accomplished ten *kalpa*-s ago (十劫安心 *jikkō anjin*). This idea was particularly emphasized by the practitioners of the Jishū (時宗). Rennyo does not discuss the simultaneous attainment of sentient beings' birth and Amida's true awakening (*ōjō shōgaku dōji kujō*) ten *kalpa*-s ago. Therefore, it is clear that he could not possibly agree with the *Anjin ketsujō shō*'s interpretation of *kihō ittai* as Amida Buddha's accomplishment of the essence of Dharma (*hottai jōju*).

Nor does Rennyo accept the idea that *kihō ittai* means the oneness of sentient beings and Amida Buddha (*shōbutsu ittai*). Rennyo's theory of the oneness of the mind of Amida Buddha and the mind of sentient beings (*butsubon ittai*) is rather discussed as a benefit of *shinjin* and a virtue of Amida's Dharma. Rennyo does not agree with the analysis of *kihō ittai* as sentient beings' receiving of the accomplished Dharma (*kisō ryōju*) as it is discussed in the *Anjin ketsujō shō*. Therefore, we could conclude that, although Rennyo borrows the term *kihō ittai* from the *Anjin ketsujō shō*, he transforms and recasts its meaning in his *Letters*.

The most significant characteristics of Rennyo's adaptation of the concept of *kihō ittai* from the *Anjin ketsujō shō* can be summarized in the following two points. First, he discusses the concept of *kihō ittai* to explain the meaning of the Name, or Namu-Amida-butsu. Second, he reinterprets the *Anjin ketsujō shō*'s concept of *kihō ittai* by applying Shinran's understanding of the directing of virtue of Other Power (*tariki ekō*).

Regarding the first point, in the *Letter* (3–7), Rennyo says,

Therefore, full realization of the significance of the six characters "na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu" is the substance of decisively settled faith. That is, the two characters "na-mu" indicate the receptive attitude of the sentient beings who entrust themselves to Amida Buddha. Next, the four characters "a-mi-da-butsu" signify the dharma through which Amida Tathāgata saves sentient beings. This is expressed as "the oneness in 'namu-amida-butsu' of the person [to be saved] and dharma [that saves]." <sup>27</sup>

“Na-mu” means sentient beings’ *shinjin* entrusting Amida Buddha. “A-mi-da-butsu” means the power of Amida Buddha who saves those who entrust him. Such beings and Dharma become one within the Name of Amida Buddha (Namu Amida-butsu). Therefore, all of the six characters of Amida’s Name are the *shinjin* of sentient beings (*ki*) and, at the same time, they are also Amida Buddha’s Dharma (*hō*). *Ki* and *hō* are, therefore, both accomplished by Amida Buddha’s working. Rennyo applies the words *ki* and *hō* to explain his understanding of the six-character Name. The *shinjin* of sentient beings (*ki*) and working of Amida Buddha (*hō*) who saves them are both accomplished in the Name as “Namu Amida-butsu” and directed toward sentient beings. When sentient beings come to realize this meaning of “Namu Amida-butsu” which is directed by Amida Buddha toward them, their *shinjin* becomes truly settled and their birth in the Pure Land becomes certain.

Regarding the second point, Rennyo’s understanding of the concept of *kihō ittai* as the working of the virtue of Amida’s Other Power (*tariki ekō*), Rennyo writes in the *Letters* (3–6),

When we reflect on Amida Tathāgata’s painstaking endeavors of five *kalpa*-s [of meditation] and innumerable, measureless *kalpa*-s [of practice], and when we think of the graciousness and wonder of his saving us so readily, it is hard to express our feelings. [Shinran] refers to this in a hymn:

The benevolence of “namu-amida-butsu,” [Amida’s]  
directing of virtue,  
is vast and inconceivable;  
as the benefit of his directing virtue for our  
going [to the Pure Land],  
we are led into his directing [virtue] for our  
return to this world.<sup>28</sup>

Amida Buddha’s directing virtues, in both its going forth and returning aspects (往還二回向 *ōgen ni ekō*), are together embodied in the Name, “Namu-Amidabutsu,” of *kihō ittai*, which is directed from the Buddha toward practitioners. The concept of *kihō ittai*, according to Rennyo, demonstrates that the Dharma of Amida’s Name, which is *kihō ittai*, makes us entrust Amida. At the same time, we are embraced by Amida who makes us go forth to the Pure Land and then return to this world.

Rennyo reiterates this point in the *Jōgai no gobunshō*.

Sentient beings who entrust themselves to Amida Buddha and the Dharma of Amida Buddha become one. That is the meaning of the oneness of practitioner and Dharma [of Amida Buddha]. The

oneness of practitioner and Dharma [of Amida Buddha] is Namu-Amida-butsu. Therefore, the directing of merit in going forth and returning is the mind entrusting this Namu-Amida-butsu.<sup>29</sup>

This *Letter* is a clear example of Rennyo's unique interpretation of the Name based on Shinran's teaching of the two aspects of the directing merit. The two aspects of directing of merit are accomplished in the teaching of the Name as *kihō ittai*. Amida Buddha makes practitioners go forth and return from the Pure Land through directing of his Name which is *kihō ittai*. By the working of the Name directed from Amida Buddha, sentient beings are made to attain *shinjin*, made to entrust (as *ki*), and to be saved (by *hō*). Here we see the accomplishment of the salvation by the Dharma of Amida's Name in *kihō ittai*.

## IX.

In the previous section, I examined Rennyo's adaptation of the concept of *kihō ittai* from the *Anjin ketsujō shō*. In this section, I will examine how Amida's Name as *kihō ittai* works in the actual context of the *shinjin* of *nembutsu* practitioners.

In the *Letters* (4–14), Rennyo explains the meaning of “namu” or “kimyō” (taking refuge) as follows.

First, the two characters “na-mu” mean “to take refuge.” “To take refuge” expresses the [entrusting] mind of sentient beings who rely on Amida Buddha to save them, [bringing them to buddhahood] in the afterlife.<sup>30</sup>

Rennyo understands that “taking refuge” is the entrusting mind of sentient beings who rely on Amida Buddha to save them and bring them to buddhahood in the afterlife. In the following passage of the same *Letter*, he interprets “aspiration for birth and directing virtue” as follows.

Then, “aspiring for birth and directing virtue” expresses the [Buddha's] mind that embraces and saves sentient beings who entrust themselves. This is the precise meaning of the four characters “a-mi-da-butsu.”<sup>31</sup>

Here, he understands that “aspiring for birth and directing virtue” is Amida Buddha's mind that embraces and saves sentient beings who entrust themselves. Then he identifies the phrase “aspiring for birth and directing virtue” with the four characters of “a-mi-da-butsu.” In these passages, Rennyo interprets “namu” as the *shinjin* of practitioners from the



perspective of sentient beings (*yakushō*). “Aspiration for birth and directing virtue” and “a-mi-da-butsu” are then interpreted from the perspective of Dharma of Amida Buddha (*yakubutsu*). He then concludes that the six-character Name is the accomplishment of Amida Buddha’s working.

Thus the two characters “na-mu” signify the sentient being, the person who relies on Amida. Further, the four characters “a-mi-da-butsu” express the dharma that saves sentient beings who entrust themselves. This, then, is precisely what we mean by “the oneness in ‘namu-amida-butsu’ of the person [to be saved] and dharma [that saves].”<sup>32</sup>

According to Rennyo, the practitioners’ *shinjin* expressed as “namu” or “kimyō” (taking refuge) of sentient beings entrusting their afterlife to Amida Buddha and the Dharma of “Amida-butsu” who saves sentient beings are accomplished together within the Name of Amida Buddha, or Namu Amida-butsu. The six-character Name of *kihō ittai*, therefore, expresses Amida Buddha’s power to make sentient beings entrust him to save them.

In the *Letters* (4–8), Rennyo says,

We must bear in mind, therefore, that “namu-amida-butsu” expresses the full realization of perfect enlightenment [that was accomplished] when Amida Buddha vowed long ago (when he was the monk Dharmākara) that unless sentient beings attained buddhahood, he too would not attain perfect enlightenment.<sup>33</sup>

The Dharma of Amida Buddha’s Name which is “Namu-Amida-butsu” in *kihō ittai* was completed by Amida Buddha who has already accomplished the true awakening through his aspiration and practice. All six characters of the Name, therefore, exist for the sake of sentient beings’ attainment of birth in the Pure Land and realization of buddhahood. The six-character Name as *kihō ittai* expresses Amida’s working to make sentient beings entrust him and to save them. From the standpoint of sentient beings, all six characters of the Name are *shinjin* entrusting Amida Buddha who saves them. From the standpoint of Amida Buddha, all six characters are the Dharma saving sentient beings who entrust him. The virtue of the true awakening of Amida Buddha has been completed as the Dharma of the Name. The Name is, therefore, the true cause of sentient beings’ birth in the Pure Land.

Rennyo’s interpretation from the standpoint of sentient beings, that the six-character Name is *shinjin* entrusting Amida Buddha who saves, is demonstrated in his *Letters* (4–11).



What is the meaning of “namu-amida-butsu”? And further, how are we to entrust ourselves to Amida and attain birth in the fulfilled land? What we must understand, first of all, is that we entrust ourselves to Amida by carefully discerning what the six characters “na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu” are all about. “Namu-amida-butsu” is essentially nothing other than the [entrusting] mind of us sentient beings who rely on Amida to save us, [bringing us to buddhahood] in the afterlife.<sup>34</sup>

His interpretation of the six-character Name from the standpoint of Amida Buddha as the Dharma of Amida Buddha saving sentient beings who entrust him is discussed by Rennyo in his *Letters* (3–4).

What, then, is the meaning of the six characters “na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu”? We must realize that when anyone relies steadfastly on Amida Tathāgata, the Buddha saves him, fully knowing that sentient being. This is what is expressed in the six characters “na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu.”<sup>35</sup>

In this *Letter*, Rennyo demonstrates his unique interpretation of the Name that sentient beings’ *shinjin* entrusting Amida Buddha and Amida Buddha’s power to save sentient beings, or his Dharma, are together accomplished in the Name as *kihō ittai*. Amida Buddha’s working which makes sentient beings entrust him (*ki*) and saves them (*hō*) is concretely revealed in the Name of *kihō ittai*.

Rennyo interprets “namu” or “taking refuge” (*kimyō*) as the mind of sentient beings who rely on Amida Buddha to save them, bringing them to buddhahood in the afterlife. According to the understanding of the Chinzei lineage of the Jōdo school, “namu” or “taking refuge” (*kimyō*) is interpreted as sentient beings’ mind requesting Amida to save them (度我救我 *doga kyūga*). Here it is noteworthy that Rennyo understands it as *shinjin* directed by the Other Power. In the *Letters* (4–6), Rennyo explains that,

“[N]amu” means “to take refuge.” We must know that, for ordinary beings like ourselves who lack good and do evil, “taking refuge” expresses the [entrusting] mind that relies on Amida Buddha. This entrusting mind is none other than the mind of Amida Buddha, who receives sentient beings into his great light of eighty-four thousand rays and grants to sentient beings the two aspects of the Buddha’s directing of virtue, outgoing [from birth-and-death] and returning [into birth-and-death].<sup>36</sup>

Rennyo interprets “namu” or “taking refuge” as the entrusting mind that relies on Amida Buddha. Then he explains that the mind of entrusting is the

mind of Amida Buddha who receives sentient beings into his great light and grants sentient beings Amida Buddha's directing of virtue, outgoing from birth-and-death and returning into birth-and-death. The mind of Amida Buddha (*hō*) who grants sentient beings the two aspects of the Buddha's directing of virtue is at the same time the figure of Amida Buddha's mind of directing merit to them, with the great compassion as the *shinjin* of sentient beings (*ki*) that is "the entrusting mind of sentient beings who rely on Amida Buddha to save them, bringing them to buddhahood in the afterlife."<sup>37</sup> Therefore, sentient beings' *shinjin* entrusting Amida Buddha has already been accomplished within the Name of Namu-Amida-butsu. Rennyo explains this in the *Letters* (4–6) cited above as "Thus faith has no other meaning than this. Everything is encompassed within 'namu-amida-butsu.'"<sup>38</sup>

The mind of Amida Buddha directing to sentient beings his merits of going forth and returning is, in other words, his mind of aspiration and directing merit, or the Dharma of "Amida Buddha is the practice," reaching the practitioners' mind as *shinjin* which manifests in sentient beings as their entrusting of Amida Buddha who saves them and brings them to buddhahood in the afterlife. Rennyo interprets the six-character Name as *kihō ittai* from the standpoint of directing merit of Other Power which is the working of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow to make sentient beings entrust him to save them.

## X.

In this essay, I have examined Rennyo's theory of the Name particularly focusing on its relationship to Shinran's thought. The key point of Shinran's understanding of the Name as the great practice (名号大行 *myōgō daigyō*) is that he developed his interpretation from the perspective of the directing merit of Other Power based on Amida's Seventeenth Vow. In the Chapter on Practice of the *Kyōgyoshinshō*, he interprets it from the perspective of the directing merit of Other Power (*tariki ekō*). And in the *Songō shinzō meimon*, by directly referring to Shan-tao, he interprets it as the working of the Name on sentient beings by the directing merit of Other Power from the perspective of sentient beings (*yakushō*). Based on Shinran's interpretation of the six-character Name in the Chapter on Practice and the *Songō shinzō meimon*, as well as the passages of Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name, Rennyo interprets the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioners and the Dharma (*kihō mon*).

Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name is based on passages concerning the fulfillment of the Primal Vow. He interprets "namu" and "taking refuge" (*kimyō*) as sentient beings' *shinjin*, and "aspiration and directing merit" and "Amida-butsu is the practice" as the Dharma of

Amida Buddha. The *shinjin* of sentient beings and Amida's Dharma are accomplished together in the complete Name in the oneness of practitioner and Dharma of Amida Buddha (*kihō ittai*).

Rennyo adopts the term *kihō ittai* from the *Anjin ketsujō shō*. The concept of *kihō ittai* in the *Anjin ketsujō shō* is, however, discussed as the oneness of sentient beings and Amida Buddha (*shōbutsu ittai*). Rennyo transformed and recast the meaning of *kihō ittai* by introducing Shinran's concept of the directing merit of Other Power (*tariki ekō*). In his *Letters*, Rennyo demonstrates the nature of Amida's Name as the power of the Primal Vow which makes sentient beings entrust Amida who saves them. According to Rennyo, this is the context of *shinjin* in the phrase "hearing the Name, realize even one thought-moment of *shinjin* and joy" (聞其名号 信心歡喜 *mongo myōgō shinjin kangi*) found in the passage of the fulfillment of the Primal Vow. The most important characteristic of Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name is in his explanation of Amida's Name, or Namu Amida-butsu, as the concrete content of *shinjin*.

Translated by Eisho Nasu

## NOTES

1. Translator's note: This is the second part of the translation of "Rennyō Shōnin no myōgō ron: Shinran Shōnin to Rennyō Shōnin," first published in *Rennyō Shōnin kenkyū: Kyōgi hen 2*, edited by Jōdo Shinshū Kyōgaku Kenkyūsho (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998), pp. 191–218, by Dr. Fugen Kōju (Prof. Emeritus, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan). The first part of this translation was published in the *Pacific World*, Third Series 3 (2001): pp. 71–93. Translations of quoted passages have been taken, wherever possible, from available English translations in the *Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter *CWS*) (Kyōto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), and in Minor Lee Rogers and Ann T. Rogers, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991). All other quoted passages have been translated into English by the translator. The original Japanese for each quoted passage can be found in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereafter *SSZ*) (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), as indicated in the notes. Minor editorial changes and revisions have been made in the text and notes according to the journal's editorial guidelines and conventions of academic publication in English. The translator also wishes to thank Lisa Grumbach for editorial assistance.
2. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 205; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 461.
3. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 238 (modified); *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 497.
4. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 203; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 459.
5. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 252; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 510.
6. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 245; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 502.
7. *CWS*, p. 38; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 22.
8. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 233; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 490.
9. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 233; *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 490–491.
10. See "Rennyō's Theory on Amida Buddha's Name and Its Relationship to Shinran's Thought, Part 1," *Pacific World*, Third Series 3 (2001): pp. 72–75.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 75–79 and 85–89.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–85.
13. *CWS*, pp. 504–505; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 567.
14. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 238; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 497.
15. *CWS*, p. 38; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 22.
16. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 233; *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 490–491.

17. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 203; *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 459.
18. Dennis Hirota, "'On Attaining the Settled Mind': A Translation of *Anjin ketsujō shō*," in *Rennyo Shōnin kenkyū: Kyōgi hen 2*, pp. 23–24; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 615.
19. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," p. 26; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 617.
20. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," p. 29; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 619.
21. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," p. 40 (modified); *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 628.
22. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," p. 47; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 634.
23. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," p. 38; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 627.
24. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," p. 24; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 616.
25. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," p. 32; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 622.
26. Hirota, "On Attaining the Settled Mind," pp. 35–36; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 625.
27. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 205; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 461.
28. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo SZ*, vol. 3, p. 625 and pp. 203–204; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 460.
29. *SSZ*, vol. 5, p. 415.
30. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 238; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 497.
31. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 238; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 497.
32. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, pp. 238–239; *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 497–498.
33. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 233; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 491.
34. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 235; *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 493–494.
35. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 200; *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 455–456.
36. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 228; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 484.
37. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 238; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 497.
38. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 228; *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 484.



# An Examination of the Historical Development of the Concept of Two Aspects of Deep Belief, Part 2<sup>1</sup>

Ryōshō Yata

Ryukoku University, Kyoto

## V. BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE TWO ASPECTS OF DEEP BELIEF

### 1. Its Connection to Other Commentaries on the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*

We have seen above that the interpretation of deep mind as two aspects of deep belief was based on the original perspective of Shan-tao (613–681 CE). However, were there other essential factors that might have led to this development in Shan-tao's thought? In this section I will examine the doctrinal background to the formation of this concept by focusing on three points: first, its connection to other commentaries on the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* written during Shan-tao's time; second, its connection to the doctrines of other Pure Land Buddhist thinkers; and third, its connection to the theory and practice of repentance.

First of all, I could like to consider the way in which Shan-tao's perspective regarding the three minds expounded in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* might have been influenced by other commentaries on the sutra during his time. Pure Land literature tells us that a number of prominent Chinese scholars had addressed the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* prior to Shan-tao, including T'an-luan (476–542), Hui-yüan of the Ching-ying temple (523–592), Chih-i (538–597), Ling-yü (518–605), Chi-Tsang (549–623), Tao-ch'ö (562–645), Fa-chao (567–645), Chia-ts'ai (?–648), and Hui-ching (578–?).<sup>2</sup> Although they may have offered commentaries on the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, some of those commentaries were certainly apocryphal (as in the case of Chih-i)<sup>3</sup> and some are no longer extant. The only extant works that treat the three minds of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* are those of Hui-yüan and Chia-ts'ai.

In his text *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching i-shu* (*Commentary on the Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*), Hui-yüan posits



that there are three types of path to birth in the Buddha's land: birth through the practice of contemplation, birth through the performance of acts, and birth through mental cultivation. In regard to the third path he explains,

The third cause is rebirth by the cultivation of the mind (*hsiu-hsin*); there are three kinds of mind as the following passages explain. The first is the sincere mind (*ch'eng-hsin*); "sincere" means "real." Because one initiates practice without false [reasons] and seeks to depart [this world] with the real mind, it is called the "sincere mind." The second is the deep mind (*shen-hsin*); one longs for and is extremely anxious and desirous to be reborn in that country. The third is the mind that aspires for rebirth by transferring merit (*hui-hsiang fa-yüan chih hsin*). To seek without any particular expectation is explained as "aspiration" (*yüan*), while to seek in presumption of a favorable [result] is explained as "transference" (*hui-hsiang*).<sup>4</sup>

For Hui-yüan, sincere mind meant that one initiates practice without any false purposes and seeks birth with a real mind. Deep mind meant that one longs for and is extremely anxious and desirous to be reborn in that land. Later in the text he states,

The "deep mind" means an "extremely earnest mind." To perform practice in extreme earnestness is called the "deep mind." To seek to leave [for the Pure Land] in extreme earnestness is also called the "deep mind."<sup>5</sup>

Deep mind is the mind in which one earnestly aspires to reach the Pure Land and there realize birth. The content of the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit is that one seeks without any particular expectation, and yet also seeks in presumption of a favorable result.

Hence, it might be said that for Hui-yüan the three minds indicated that one should constantly and exclusively aspire for birth with a true and real mind, pursuing birth through the transference of the merit of one's roots of good. Hui-yüan considered the sincere mind to be the true mind that is without falsity. This perspective was akin to Shan-tao's view that sincere mind constitutes one's true and real mind. It might even be said that their basic approaches to the three minds as a whole were quite similar.<sup>6</sup> Hui-yüan's interpretation of the three minds, however, showed no signs of the structure of the two aspects of deep belief. In other words, although the basic purport of the three minds in Shan-tao's thought might have been hinted at by Hui-yüan,<sup>7</sup> the latter's perspective did not separate deep mind into the aspects of deep belief

as to beings and deep belief as to Dharmic truth. We can conclude that no such idea was transmitted by Hui-yüan to Shan-tao.

Chia-ts'ai's work, *Ching-t'u lun* (*Treatise on the Pure Land*), is not actually a commentary on the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. However, it discusses various questions pertaining to the Pure Land throughout its nine fascicles. The three minds of the sutra are touched upon in the section of Fascicle Two on determining persons who will attain birth. Here he addresses the nine grades of birth, which are expounded in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*.

Sentient beings in the highest rank of the highest grade of birth give rise to three kinds of mind and thereupon attain birth. These three minds are: sincere mind, deep mind, and the mind of aspiration for birth by transferring merit. These three minds correspond to the three minds present at the beginning of the ten stages of understanding, as determined in the *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith*. As the *Awakening of Faith* states, fulfilling faith and raising the [bodhi] mind take place in the last of the ten stages of faith. Upon giving rise to these three kinds of mind, one enters the ten stages of understanding for the first time. The first of the three minds [of the *Awakening of Faith*] is the true mind. One thinks correctly on the dharma of suchness; hence, it corresponds to sincere mind in the *Contemplation Sūtra*. Sincere mind and true mind possess the same meaning; only the names are different. As explicated in the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa*, there are also three minds related to the first of the two practices of the Pure Land practice hall. This is identical to the *Contemplation Sūtra*. All of these sutras and commentaries simply reveal that one must without fail give rise to these three minds at the outset of all the myriad practices. You should truly know that these three minds constitute the starting point of all practices. Because they constitute the starting point of all practices, [it means that] one is likely to attain birth in that land, awaken to the non-origination of all existences, and be able to attain the eighth *bhūmi*.

The second mind is deep mind. The *Contemplation Sūtra* also calls it deep mind. The third mind is the mind of great compassion. The *Contemplation Sūtra* refers to this as the mind of aspiration for birth by transferring merit. Were it not for great compassion, one would be unable to aspire for birth by transferring merit. Here again the meanings [of these two minds] are identical; their names alone differ. The three minds of the *Awakening of Faith* take place in the last of the ten stages of faith. This you should truly know. The teaching of the *Contemplation Sūtra* regarding persons of the

highest rank of the highest grade of birth reveals that they exist at the beginning of the ten stages of understanding.<sup>8</sup>

Chia-ts'ai states that the three minds of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* (sincere mind, deep mind, and mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit) correspond to the three minds elucidated in the *Ta-ch'eng-ch'i-hsin-lun* (*Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*), which are true mind, deep mind, and the mind of great compassion. He also treats them as identical to the three minds expounded in the chapters on the Buddha-land and bodhisattvas of the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa* (*Vimalakīrti Sūtra*), which are true mind, deep mind, and bodhisattva mind.<sup>9</sup> However, he does not provide any concrete explanation of deep mind. What I would like to make a note of here is simply that Chia-ts'ai argues that one should give rise to the three minds expounded in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* (including deep mind) at the outset of performing all practices to attain birth in the Pure Land.

Above we have examined how the various masters prior to Shan-tao understood the three minds expounded in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. While it appears that only Hui-yüan might have provided any sort of influence on Shan-tao's perspective on the three minds, and especially in regard to deep mind, his influence pertained only to the basic purport of the three minds. It is impossible to see how he might have influenced the formation of the structure of the two aspects of deep belief.

## 2. Its Connection to the Doctrines of Other Pure Land Buddhist Thinkers

An examination of the connection between the concept the two aspects of deep belief and the doctrines of Pure Land thinkers prior to Shan-tao reveals that it likely originated in fundamental teachings regarding the truth as the nature of beings, as elucidated in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* and those regarding the real nature of Dharmic truth, as revealed in *Wu-liang shou ching* (*Sūtra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*). Such ideas were gradually developed by Pure Land Buddhist thinkers such as Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, T'an-luan, and Tao-ch'ō. These fundamental Pure Land teachings were in turn transmitted eventually to Shan-tao, who brought even clearer expression to them.<sup>10</sup> One might be able to agree with the claim that the notion of the two aspects of deep belief developed, in a broad sense, from the fundamental essence of the Pure Land teachings. Yet, it is clear that those teachings did not provide a backdrop out of which Shan-tao would have directly formulated the separation of *shinjin* into the aspects of beings and Dharma. What, then, might the concrete and essential elements of its formation have been? I would now like to take up that question.

Scholars have long considered that T'an-luan's idea of the "two forms of not-knowing and three facets of non-corresponding *shinjin*" represented the background to the formation of the idea of the two aspects of deep belief.<sup>11</sup> In his commentary, T'an-luan discusses the following phrase from Vasubandhu's *Ching-t'u-lun* (*Treatise on the Pure Land*).

One says the Name of the Tathāgata in accord with the Tathāgata's light, which is the embodiment of wisdom, and with the significance of the Name, wishing to be in correspondence with it by practicing in accord with reality.<sup>12</sup>

He states that, even though sentient beings say the Name, it is often the case that their ignorance continues to exist and their aspirations are not fulfilled. That is because they do not practice in accord with reality and are not in correspondence with the significance of the Name. The reason for that is offered in his interpretation of the "two forms of not-knowing and three facets of non-corresponding *shinjin*."

Why is your practice not in accord with reality and not in correspondence with the significance of the Name? Because you do not know that the Tathāgata is the body of true reality and, further, the body for the sake of beings.

Further, there are three aspects of noncorrespondence. In the first, *shinjin* is not genuine, for at times it appears to exist and at other times not to exist. In the second, *shinjin* is not single, for it lacks decisiveness. In the third, *shinjin* is not enduring, for it is disrupted by other thoughts. These three act reciprocally among themselves and mutually give rise to each other. Because *shinjin* is not genuine, it lacks decisiveness. Because it lacks decisiveness, mindfulness is not enduring. Further, because mindfulness is not enduring, one does not realize *shinjin* that is decisive. Because one does not realize *shinjin* that is decisive, the mind is not genuine. The opposite, positive side of this is termed *to be in correspondence [with the significance of the Name] by practicing in accord with reality*.<sup>13</sup>

Mochizuki Shinkō believes that T'an-luan's idea of the three facets of corresponding and non-corresponding *shinjin* provided a hint to the formation of the notion of two aspects of deep belief.

According to the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa*, the significance of deep mind is that it possesses the virtues of all good deeds. In spite of that, however, it appears that [Shan-tao] interpreted it as deep belief based on a hint from T'an-luan's explanation of the two

forms of not-knowing and three facets of non-corresponding belief. In each of the passages pertaining to belief as to the nature of beings and Dharma, [Shan-tao] writes that one “deeply and decidedly believes.” “Decidedly” is identical with “decisiveness” in T’an-luan’s three facets of belief. “Deeply believe” corresponds with “genuineness” of belief. Further, he states that no person who aspires to be born should be lacking in the three facets of corresponding belief.<sup>14</sup>

Certainly, there are expressions in T’an-luan’s commentary that appear to have some connection to Shan-tao’s interpretation of deep mind. We might even accept that they offered hints to Shan-tao. However, it is difficult to affirm that T’an-luan’s doctrine provided the background out of which there developed a description of *shinjin* that separated it into the aspects regarding beings and Dharmic-truth.

Shigaraki Takamaro, in contrast, focuses his attention upon the passage regarding the two forms of not-knowing.

T’an-luan’s passage regarding the two forms of not-knowing is cited verbatim by Tao-ch’o in the first fascicle of his *An-lê-chi* (*Passages on the Land of Happiness*). Shan-tao certainly comprehended *shin* as “true knowing.” His explanation of it in terms of two aspects of deep and true knowing—as to beings and as to Dharma—was based on, and guided by, the notion of two forms of not-knowing in the Pure Land teachings of T’an-luan and Tao-ch’o. I would venture to say that his idea of deep knowing as to the nature of beings was derived from the aspect of knowing that Amida Buddha is the body of great compassion, for the sake of beings. The notion of deep knowing as to Dharmic truth was a development of the aspect of knowing that Amida Buddha is the body of true reality.<sup>15</sup>

For Shigaraki, the two aspects of deep belief (as to the nature of beings and Dharmic-truth) could be explained as a development of the aspects of knowing that Amida Buddha is the body for the sake of beings and the body of true reality respectively. The likely reason is that when one accepts in *shinjin* that Amida Buddha is the body for the sake of beings, one knows that the existence of the body for the sake of beings is essential. Hence, he asserts that T’an-luan’s idea of the two forms of not-knowing form the actual background for the formation of the concept of the two aspects of deep belief. However, as I mentioned earlier, Shan-tao’s idea of the two aspects of deep belief was constructed on the basis of non-meditative practice, in which one seeks to abandon evil and perform good. Hence, even if we were able to accept that T’an-luan’s two forms of not-knowing

constituted a backdrop that indirectly formed the idea of the two aspects of deep belief, we are unable to say that it constituted a direct cause.

### 3. Its Connection to Repentance

I believe that a more direct influence on the formation of the two aspects of deep belief came from the theory and practice of repentance (Ch. *ch'an-hui*; Jpn. *sange*). Elsewhere I had written that both repentance and the practice leading to birth, which is related to the two aspects of deep belief, held very similar positions in Shan-tao's thought.<sup>16</sup> Since then, a variety of theories have been brought to light, including a theory that the two aspects of deep belief were formed on the basis of repentance,<sup>17</sup> and a theory that repentance represented a concrete method for the realization of deep mind.<sup>18</sup> Here, I would now like to examine the relationship between repentance and the two aspects of deep belief, based on those studies.

The basic meaning of repentance is that one divulges and confesses to others the karmic sins that one has committed, and seeks to extinguish the karmic evil produced by one's transgressions. One thereupon becomes purified. At the same time, one undertakes not to commit such offenses again.<sup>19</sup> From about the fifth century CE a large number of repentance scriptures were translated in China. This led to its wide acceptance among the masses and its extensive practice during the Sui and T'ang periods. The most common trend was for repentance to be performed in combination with the practice of praising and reciting the Buddha's Name.<sup>20</sup> Repentance had earlier received doctrinal acceptance in such Pure Land texts as the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* and in T'an-luan's *Ts'an-o-mi-to-fo-chieh* (*Hymns to Amida Buddha*). But, clearly it gained full-scale acceptance in China from the Sui to the early T'ang periods.<sup>21</sup>

It was during that time that Shan-tao presented repentance as a practice for birth in the Pure Land in his five writings—*Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* (*Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra*), *Fa-shih-tsan* (*Hymns of the Nembutsu Liturgy*), *Kuan-nien fa-men* (*Methods of Contemplation on Amida Buddha*), *Wang-shen li-tsan* (*Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land*), and *Pan-chou-tsan* (*Hymns [on the Samādhi] of All Buddhas' Presence*). Of them, his text *Wang-shen li-tsan* offers a particularly detailed explanation of repentance practice. There, he explains that there are three kinds of repentance practice: principal, short, and extensive. He also states that repentance can be separated into three grades—high, middle, and low—depending on the relative strength or weakness of one's repentance. Shan-tao's principal, short, and extensive forms of repentance are as follows.

## Principal Repentance

Sincere repentance:

I take refuge in and repent before Buddhas of the ten quarters;  
May all the roots of my karmic evil be destroyed.

I will transfer to others the good which I have cultivated since  
long ago

So that it may become the cause of birth in the Land of Peace  
and Bliss for them and for myself.

I always wish that at the time of death, everyone will see  
All the wonderful objects and manifestations.

I wish to see Amida, the Lord of Great Compassion,  
Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and Honored Ones of  
the ten quarters.

I pray and wish that their divine light embraces me and  
they extend their hands toward me;

May I ride the Buddha's Primal Vow and be born in his land.

After having thus repented, transferred my merits and made an  
aspiration, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.<sup>22</sup>

## Brief Repentance

Sincere repentance:

Ever since my existence came to be in the beginningless past,  
I have continuously done ten evil acts to other beings;

To my parents I have neglected duties and I have abused the  
Three Treasures;

I have committed the five gravest offenses and other evil acts.

As the results of various karmic evils like those,

Delusory thoughts and perverse views have arisen and  
produced bondages,

Which will cause me to suffer immeasurable pain of  
birth-and-death.

I bow to the Buddha in worship and repent. I beseech you to  
remove those evils.

Having thus repented, I sincerely take refuge in Amida Buddha.

Sincere request:

The Buddhas, the peerless Honored Ones of Great Compassion,  
Constantly illumine the three worlds with the Wisdom of  
Voidness.

Blind and ignorant, sentient beings are unaware of this,



Sinking eternally in the great ocean of birth-and-death.  
In order to free sentient beings from various sufferings,  
I beseech the Buddhas to turn the Wheel of Dharma always.

Having made this request, I sincerely take refuge in Amida Buddha.

Sincere rejoicing:

Jealousy, haughtiness, and indolence which I have had for  
many *kalpa*-s arise from stupidity;  
With the fire of anger and malevolence I have always  
Burnt the good roots of wisdom and compassion.  
As I contemplate today, I have realized this for the first time;  
Then I have awakened the mind of making great efforts and  
rejoicing (in others' good acts).

After having thus rejoiced, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with  
sincerity of heart.

Sincere merit-transference:

Wandering about in the three worlds,  
I have been conceived in the womb-jail through blind love;  
Having been born, I am destined to old age and death.  
Thus I have been sinking in the ocean of suffering.  
Now I perform these meritorious acts;  
I turn their merit over to the Land of Peace and Bliss to attain  
birth there.

After having thus transferred the merit, I take refuge in Amida  
Buddha with sincerity of heart.

Sincere vow:

I wish to abandon the body enclosed in the womb  
And attain birth in the Land of Peace and Bliss,  
Where I will quickly behold Amida Buddha's  
Body of boundless merits and virtues  
And see many Tathāgatas  
And holy sages as well.  
Having acquired the six supernatural powers,  
I will continue to save suffering sentient beings  
Until all their worlds throughout the universe are exhausted.  
Such will be my vow.

After having thus made a vow, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with  
sincerity of heart.<sup>23</sup>

## Extensive Repentance

Reverently I announce: May all the Buddhas in the ten quarters, the twelve-divisioned scriptures, all the great bodhisattvas, all the holy sages, all the eight groups of demi-gods, including devas and dragons, sentient beings in the entire universe, and the audience in the present assembly become my witnesses. I, *so and so*, confess my offenses and repent them. From the beginningless past up to now, I have killed or destroyed all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings in the entire universe whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have stolen property and belongings of all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. . . . [The text then states, in the same manner, that I have committed other offenses—having lascivious thoughts, deceiving with lies, ridiculing with insincere words, calumniating, abusing, and rebuking with harsh words, causing enmity and mutual destruction with calumnious words, breaking the precepts and inciting others to break them and rejoicing at seeing them do so—offenses whose numbers are beyond calculation.]

Such transgressions are innumerable, just as the great earth extending in the ten directions is boundless and the number of dust-particles is incalculable. Just as the open space is limitless, my offenses are equally limitless. . . . [The text goes on to state, in the same manner, that just as the means of salvation, the Dharma-nature, the Dharma-realm, sentient beings, the Three Treasures, and precepts provided are limitless, my offenses are without limit.]

Any one of the sages, from bodhisattvas down to *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s, cannot know the extent of my offenses. Only the Buddha knows it.

Now, before the Three Treasures and sentient beings of the entire universe, I confess and repent my offenses, without hiding them. I pray that all the members of the Three Treasures throughout the ten quarters and sentient beings of the entire universe recognize my repentance and wish that I will be purified of the offenses. From today on, together with sentient beings, I wish to abandon wrong views and take right ones, awaken the Bodhi mind, see each other with a compassionate heart, look at each other with the eye of the Buddha, become a companion of Bodhi, become a true teacher of the Way, attain birth in Amida Buddha's land

together, discontinue committing those offenses forever and never commit them again.

Having thus repented, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.<sup>24</sup>

Principal repentance provided a simplified rendition of brief repentance by omitting the aspects of request and rejoicing, and including the remaining aspects of repentance, merit transference, and vow. Brief repentance was also referred to as the “five seas.” It represented a common model for repentance taught by the masters of the Path of Sages during Shan-tao’s time. In particular, it emulated the model found in Chih-i’s *Fa-hua-san-mei ch’an-i* and *Mo-ho-chih-kuan*.<sup>25</sup> Scriptural bases for the formation of extensive repentance included the *Ta-fang-têng-t’o-lo-ni-ching* (Jpn. *Daihōdō darani-kyō*) and the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā-śāstra* (*Commentary on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages*). In this form of repentance one does so extensively—before all of the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings of the universe—confessing all of one’s karmic offenses, including not only those committed in the present, but also all of the innumerable transgressions that one has committed since the beginningless past. Extensive repentance made possible an even broader reflection on one’s entire past and repentance for one’s existence, continuously committing of innumerable and unlimited karmic offenses. Shan-tao’s words, “Whenever you commit faults, repent immediately”<sup>26</sup> would seem to imply simply that the frequency of one’s repentance ought to correspond to the number of offenses that one commits. However, as we have seen above, Shan-tao’s descriptions of repentance practice took on fixed forms. What this means is that repentance, as explicated by Shan-tao, did not focus on every single offense. Rather, it tended to be concerned with the nature of human existence itself, in which one commits evil offenses without end.

Shan-tao also explains that repentance can also be separated into three grades—high, middle, and low—depending on the (relative) strength or weakness of one’s repentance. In the section preceding his explication of extensive repentance, he states,

There are three grades of repentance: high, middle, and low. The high grade of repentance is to shed blood from the hair pores of one’s body and also shed blood from one’s eyes. The middle grade of repentance is to shed hot sweat from the hair pores of one’s whole body and also shed blood from one’s eyes. The low grade of repentance is to feel feverish all over the body and also shed tears from one’s eyes.<sup>27</sup>

It is believed that this notion of the three grades of repentance was Shan-tao's creation.<sup>28</sup> Because they are all very demanding and are not easily accomplished by ordinary beings, Shan-tao states,

These three grades of repentance are different from each other, but they can all be carried out by those who have long cultivated the roots of good in the stage leading to emancipation.<sup>29</sup>

That is to say, they could be accomplished only by those who have amassed roots of good in the stage leading to emancipation, or, that is, those who have achieved the ten stages of steadfastness, practice, and merit transference. Yet, he then goes on to state,

Those who do not repent in the proper way should know this. Even though one is unable to shed tears and blood, one will get the same result as described above if one thoroughly attains the True Faith.<sup>30</sup>

Shan-tao explains that, even if one is not able to carry out the three grades of repentance, the thoroughgoing attainment of faith (literally, true mind) bears the identical significance. Thus, in Shan-tao's perspective on repentance the real issue was not one of the method, form, or degree of performance. Rather, it was ultimately a question of whether one thoroughly realizes the true mind or not. In other words, what was of utmost importance was that one carries it out with a sincere mind and sincere intentions.

In Shan-tao's thought, then, what was the meaning of repentance, as a practice leading to birth in the Pure Land? As we have already shown, the notions of principal, short, and extensive repentance, as well as the high, middle, and low grades of repentance are explicated in his text, *Wang-shen li-tsan*. He also offers his purpose for writing the text in its preface,

My sole wish is, first, to encourage people to be mindful of the Buddha continuously in order to facilitate their attainment of birth and, second, to benefit the ages of the distant future by enlightening those who have not yet heard the Dharma.<sup>31</sup>

For Shan-tao, the role of repentance was to facilitate the practice leading to birth in the Pure Land, from the side. This idea is presented in more concrete form in another text, *Kuan-nien fa-men*, which states,

If the sick person cannot talk, let the nursing man ask him various questions, saying, "What realm did you see?" If he tells of the visions of his karmic evils, let the man on the bedside recite the

Name and himself repent in order to help the sick man repent; thereby, you can definitely purge him of the karmic evils.<sup>32</sup>

From this we can understand that repentance served to facilitate the *nien-fo* (Jpn. *nembutsu*), which is the practice leading to birth, and extinguish karmic evils. Shan-tao further states in the *Pan-chou-tsan*,

You should solely practice *nien-fo*, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down,  
And use all means to direct the [merit generated by it], in combination with all good acts.  
If you constantly repent, in each and every thought-moment, In the final moments of life you will ascend the diamond platform.<sup>33</sup>

Here, he explains that the practice of the *nien-fo* and other good acts are performed at the same time as and in combination with repentance. He states the same thing in this passage,

Even though there might be benefit received by initiating and directing [the merit of] all good acts, it does not compare with the act of solely uttering the Name of Amida. You should always repent each and every time you say the Name.<sup>34</sup>

For Shan-tao, one should engage in repentance at the same time that one performs the continuous recitation of the Name. This meant, as we have seen previously in the sections on the principal, brief, and extensive repentance, that repentance is always performed in combination with other actions. In the past, scholars pointed out that repentance was explicated by Shan-tao in order that one might fulfill the practices of worship during the six periods of the day (in the *Wang-shen li-tsan*), visualization and contemplation of the Buddha (in the *Kuan-nien fa-men*), and meditative practices (in the Chapter on Meditative Practice in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu*).<sup>35</sup> This notion of combining repentance with other practices matched the general trend in Shan-tao's time, which was to practice repentance in combination with the utterance and recitation of the Buddha's Name.

Again, Shan-tao accepted that, as a practice performed in order to attain birth in the Pure Land, repentance ought to be combined with *nien-fo* practice in particular, so that it might facilitate that practice. Just what, however, is the content of such assistance and what concrete role might repentance play? Repentance means that one confesses one's own karmic sins and seeks to extinguish that karmic evil, thereby purifying oneself so that one will never commit such offenses again. In the *Kuan-nien fa-men*

Shan-tao draws upon the notion of repentance as explicated in the *Sūtra of the Ocean-like Samādhi of Contemplation of the Buddha* and the *Great Collection Sūtra*. He then states,

I have quoted this sutra as the evidence. It shows a method of repentance with sincerity of heart.<sup>36</sup>

In other words, he explains that repentance practice is a method to bring about the fulfillment of one's sincere mind. He states that repentance is also to be practiced in combination with contemplation on the Buddha.

You should confess and repent them to the multitude of revered monks. In accordance with the Buddha's instruction, you should throw your bodies on the ground before the assembly of the followers of the Buddha-Dharma, as if a high mountain crumbles, and repent before the Buddha. When you have repented, your spiritual eye will be opened. Then you will see the Buddha's body and attain great joy.<sup>37</sup>

As we have seen earlier, sincere mind is the true and real mind, which is not mixed with falsity or untruth. In such a true and real mind, one's karmic evil is extinguished, all obstacles to visualizing the Buddha are removed, and the practice of contemplating the Buddha is fulfilled.

I have quoted this passage as further evidence. Since the King had sincerity of heart, his hindrances were removed at each recitation. Knowing that the King's karmic transgressions had been destroyed, the Buddha manifested himself in response to the King's desire. This one should know.<sup>38</sup>

This is a discussion of the combination of contemplation and repentance. Certainly, the situation would be identical with other practices. In other words, one could say that, for Shan-tao, repentance represented a state in which there are no hindrances to the fulfillment of practices leading to birth in the Pure Land, since it enables one to give rise to a true and real mind.

Originally, the idea of extinguishing karmic evil was taken up in the context of practices leading to birth, which were represented by the *nien-fo*. For instance, the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* it states,

Those who practice this contemplation will not encounter any misfortune, but will be freed from karmic hindrances and rid of the evil karma which they have committed during innumerable *kalpa*-s of *saṃsāra*.<sup>39</sup>

If good men or women simply hear the Name of this Buddha or the names of those two bodhisattvas, the evil karma which they have committed during innumerable *kalpa*-s of samsara will be extinguished.<sup>40</sup>

Because he calls the Buddha's Name, with each repetition, the evil karma which he has committed during eighty *koṭi*-s of *kalpa*-s of samsara is extinguished.<sup>41</sup>

The point of commonality in all these practices is the principle of extinguishing karmic evil through repentance, which, when performed in combination with them, reinforces and facilitates the practices so that they might lead to birth in the Pure Land without hindrance. For Shan-tao, the condition precedent for the actualization of that combination is the performance of non-meditative practices, which are practiced by beings in nine grades of birth. His assertion that "'non-meditative' refers to abandoning evil and performing good"<sup>42</sup> was not intended to mean that one simply ought to practice the roots of good, without seeking to abandon evil. Shan-tao elucidated the three minds and the two aspects of deep belief in the context of the basic structure of "abandoning evil and performing good." Thus, I believe that repentance, as put to use within Shan-tao's Pure Land practices, constituted a direct and essential condition for the formation of the concept of the two aspects of deep belief.

However, we must then ask: If repentance influenced the development of the two aspects of deep belief in this way, why is there no explication of repentance in the *San-shan-i* (Chapter on Non-Meditative Practice) of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu*, in which Shan-tao sets forth the two aspects of deep belief? His Chapter on Meditative Practice includes a discussion of repentance. Yet, in the section on non-meditative practice, it appears that repentance is not brought up. Why would that be? Tsuboi Shun'ei discusses this matter in the following way,

When discussing the aspiration for birth in the Pure Land through the practice of saying the Name, Shan-tao expounds theories that saying the Name extinguishes karmic evil and that saying the Name constitutes repentance. He does not explicate the repentance ritual. . . . The person who performs the practice of severe repentance and self-reproach, as expounded in the *Wang-shen li-tsan*, is one who has cultivated the roots of good in the stage leading to emancipation, that is, one who has achieved the ten stages of steadfastness, practice, and merit transference. Ordinary beings of the nine grades of birth that transmigrate through the three worlds of samsara are completely unable to accomplish the severe practice of repentance as expounded in the *Wang-shen li-*



*tsan*. Hence, Shan-tao expounds theories that extinguishing karmic evil through saying the Name and that saying the Name constitutes repentance.<sup>43</sup>

According to this, repentance is not taught in the *San-shan-i* because that chapter was intended to teach ordinary beings in the nine grades of birth—beings of inferior capacities who are unable to carry out the practice of repentance. Indeed, principal, short, and extensive repentance, as well as the three grades of repentance, would be difficult to accomplish for ordinary beings of inferior capacities. However, as we discussed earlier, even if it might prove very difficult for them to accomplish repentance, Shan-tao asserts, if they thoroughly realize the true mind it would become possible. That is, he does not say that repentance would be completely impossible for ordinary beings to carry out. He simply states that it would be undoubtedly difficult for ordinary beings to accomplish it. For that reason saying the Name is explicated as the practice that corresponds to the capacities of ordinary beings. Thus, it could be Shan-tao did not teach of repentance in this chapter because he perceived the limitations of that practice.

This might also be inferred from the fact that Shan-tao purposely declined to place the statement, “‘non-meditative’ refers to abandoning evil and performing good” in the chapter devoted to non-meditative practice. In addition, he declined to do so even though he considered the combination of repentance (extinguishing karmic evil) and the practice (of non-meditative good) to be effective in leading the practitioner to birth, as we have seen above. Shan-tao’s refusal to admit in the *San-shan-i* that non-meditative practice refers to “abandoning evil and performing good” was precisely because that concept came about through the direct influence of repentance. Having perceived the limitations inherent in repentance, he found himself unable to advocate it in the *San-shan-i*. Hence, in order to urge beings to engage in non-meditative practice that would involve the same activity of “abandoning evil and performing good” as repentance (without resorting to the practice of repentance), I believe that he had no choice but to elucidate the two aspects of deep belief.

The limitations inherent in the practice of repentance results from the fact that it was not established within the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. The *San-shan-i* describes saying the Name as the practice that accords with the capacities of inferior ordinary beings in the nine grades of birth. In Shan-tao’s discussion of deep mind in the *San-shan-i* he mentions “establishing trust in relation to practice.” There he elucidates the five right practices, and states that, among them, saying the Name is the “act of true settlement.” This is based in the fact that “it is in accord with the Buddha’s Vow.”<sup>44</sup> That is, the practice of saying the Name is substantiated by Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow. These words, “because it is in accord with the Buddha’s Vow” would later bring Hōnen to indicate his reverence for

Shan-tao with the words, "I rely on Shan-tao alone as my sole master." We could say that, for Shan-tao, taking refuge and being in accord with the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha was a matter of utmost importance. In contrast, the practice of repentance was not established within the Primal Vow. Here, we might infer, lies the reason that Shan-tao, who was influenced by the idea and who himself performed the practice of repentance, did not mention repentance in the *San-Shan-i*.<sup>45</sup>

Above we have examined repentance as the doctrinal background out of which the concept of the two aspects of deep belief was formed. During Shan-tao's time repentance was performed in combination with a diverse number of practices. Shan-tao implemented this common trend without change in his basic form of the practices leading to birth. However, in the *San-shan-i* he declined to make abandoning evil and performing good the basic practice for birth. Instead, he floated the idea that saying the Name, which is in accord with the Buddha's Vow, is the practice that corresponds to the capacities of ordinary beings. By taking the position that saying the Name is the "act of true settlement" because it is established in the Primal Vow, Shan-tao had to admit that repentance is not a practice within the Primal Vow. Hence, it became impossible for him to advocate repentance practice in the *San-shan-i*. One could conclude therefore that the concept of the two aspects of deep belief was presented as a substitute for repentance, which continues to perform the same function as repentance.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Above, we have examined the formation and background of the establishment the concept of the two aspects of deep belief from the standpoint of the historical development of that doctrine. The two aspects of deep belief, as experienced and realized by Shinran, reveal in a straightforward way the unique doctrinal features of Shinran's thought. It is also a teaching that represents the most concrete manifestation of the fundamental spirit of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The first person to discuss *shinjin* by separating it into the two aspects regarding beings and Dharma was Shan-tao. It was addressed in two of his texts: the *San-shan-i* chapter of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* and the *Wang-shen li-tsan*. Yet, in those texts he simply mentioned the two aspects of belief, and did not at all touch upon either their function or the relationship between the two aspects. For that reason there have arisen many views, which seek to interpret the two aspects of deep *shinjin* by adhering strictly to sectarian perspectives based in Shinran's understanding or by omitting the perspective of its historical doctrinal development. Were one simply to follow such established scholastic theories, one could find contradictions in Shan-tao's interpretations of the three minds—sincere

mind, deep mind, and mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit—that frame the two aspects of deep belief.

When we examine the two aspects of deep belief, as revealed by Shan-tao, we find that it does not comprehend the notion that “a single [*shinjin*] possesses two aspects.” That represents Shinran’s understanding. Instead, we discover that the structure of Shan-tao’s thought was based in the standpoint of non-meditative practice, which he had expressed as “abandon evil and perform good.” One who has deep belief as to the nature of beings would never again commit the karmic offenses that one had committed in the past. Next, because of one’s deep belief as to the Dharma one’s good thoughts would continue and one’s birth in the Pure Land would be assured. When we understand deep mind—the two aspects of deep belief—in this way then any seeming contradictions between the three minds disappear.

In our investigation of the background that brought about the formation of Shan-tao’s idea of two aspects of deep belief, we looked at its connection to other commentaries on the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* and found that he did not apparently receive any direct influence from Hui-yüan. T’an-luan’s discussion of the “two forms of not-knowing and three facets of non-corresponding *shinjin*” hold some basic aspects in common with Shan-tao’s idea. However, those points are also common to all Pure Land Buddhist doctrine. They likely represented a doctrinal setting that indirectly influenced the formation of the idea of the two aspects of deep belief. However, it appears impossible to say that they were a direct cause of it.

It was repentance that provided a stronger influence on the formation of the notion of the two aspects of deep belief. Repentance was performed in combination with the utterance and recitation of the Buddha’s Name during Shan-tao’s time. He also accepted repentance as a practice that would extinguish karmic evil. Repentance and the extinction of karmic evil would bring about the arising of a true and real mind and the purification of one’s mind and body. Through the cultivation of these roots of good, one could expect to be born in the Pure Land. This represented the fundamental model for the practice leading to birth in the Pure Land in Shan-tao’s thought. However, when Shan-tao taught that, among all Pure Land practices, the act of saying the Name accords with the Primal Vow, he was addressing ordinary beings of the nine grades of birth with inferior capacities. Thus, he did not utilize the word “repentance” to explain this to them. In place of repentance he introduced the concept of the two aspects of deep belief as to beings and as to Dharmic truth.

The idea of the two aspects of deep belief, as elucidated by Shan-tao, was subsequently transmitted to Hōnen and Shinran, in whose thought it would come to be known as “the consummation of Mahāyāna Buddhism.”

## NOTES

1. This is the second part of an article that was originally published in Japanese as “Nishu jinshin no kyōrishiteki kōsatsu: seiritsu to sono haikai,” in *Shinshūgaku* 83 (1991): pp. 1–31. Part One of this translation was published in the *Pacific World*, Third Series, 3 (2001): pp. 157–176.
2. See Nogami Shunjō, *Chūgoku Jōdokyōshiron* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981), p. 196, et seq; also Kashiwabara Yūgi, *Kangyō gengibun kōyō* (Kyoto: Ango Jimusho, 1955), p. 7, et seq.
3. See Satō Tetsuei, “Tendai Kangyōsho no saiginmi,” *Shūgakuin ronshū* 23 (1976): pp. 31–70. It is believed that Chih-i’s *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* was written after Shan-tao’s commentary.
4. Hui-yūan, *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching i-shu* in *Taishō*, vol. 37, p. 183a–b; English translation by Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine: Ching-ying Hui-yūan’s Commentary on the Visualization Sūtra* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), p. 178.
5. *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching i-shu*, p. 184c; Tanaka, p. 187.
6. See Tsuboi Shun’ei, “Zendō kyōgaku ni okeru sanjinjaku no keisei: Toku ni nishujinshin no keisei ni kanshite,” in Bukkyō daigaku Zendō kyōgaku kenkyūkai, ed., *Zendō kyōgaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunka Shuppan, 1980), p. 124 et seq.
7. See Mizutani Kōshō, “Tō Zendō no shijōshin ni tsuite,” *Ōryōshigaku* 3 and 4 (1977): pp. 339–370. Mizutani points out that scriptures translated into Chinese prior to Shan-tao’s time rendered *shijō* or *shijōshin* (sincere mind) as *shinjitsushin* (true and real mind). From that perspective, it is probably not possible to say that Shan-tao’s interpretation of *shijōshin* was suggested by Hui-yūan’s view on the matter.
8. Chia-ts’ai, *Ching-t’u lun*, in *Taishō*, vol. 47, p. 87b.
9. See *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa* (*Vimalakīrti Sūtra*), Chapter on Buddha-land, in *Taishō*, vol. 14, p. 538b; Chapter on Bodhisattvas, in *Taishō*, vol. 14, p. 542.
10. See Ōhara Shōjitsu, *Zendō kyōgaku no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1974), p. 101 et seq.; also Fujiwara Ryōsetsu, *Ōjō Raisan gaisetsu* (Kyoto: Bunshōdō, 1962), p. 62, et seq.
11. See Mochizuki Shinkō, *Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1975), p. 194, et seq.; also Shigaraki Takamaro, *Jōdokyō ni okeru shin no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1975), p. 350, et seq.
12. T’an-luan, *Ching-t’u-wang-shen-lun-chu* (Jpn. *Ōjō ronchū; Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land*), *Taishō*, vol. 40, 826; *Shinshū*

*shōgyō zensho* (hereinafter *SSZ*), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Ōyagii Kōbundō, 1941), p. 314; cited in The Shin Buddhism Translation Series, *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereinafter *CWS*), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 82.

13. *Ching-t'u-wang-shen-lun-chu*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 314; cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, pp. 82–3.

14. Mochizuki Shinkō, *Chūgoku no Jōdo kyōrishi*, p. 194.

15. Takamaro Shigaraki, *Jōdokyō ni okeru Shin no Kenkyū*, pp. 350–1.

16. Yata Ryōshō, “Zendō Jōdokyō ni okeru zaiaku ni tsuite,” *Ryūkokū daigaku ronshū* 399 (1972): pp. 108–129; also Yata Ryōshō, “Chūgoku Jōdokyō ni okeru sange ni tsuite,” *Bukkyō bunka kenkyūsho kiyō* 13 (1974): pp. 1–15.

17. See Tsuboi Shu’ei, “Zendō kyōgaku ni okeru sanjinjaku no keisei.”

18. Fukuhara Ryūzen, “Zendō daishi no sange shisō,” *Jōdo shūgaku kenkyū* 12 (1980): pp. 45–70. There have been other discussions of the relationship between the two aspects of deep belief and repentance, including Kobayashi Shōei, “Zendō daishi no zaiakukan,” *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū* 29 (1984): pp. 55–68.

19. See Sawada Kenshō, “Bukkyō ni okeru sange no shujusō to Zendō daishi,” Tōdō Kyōshun, ed., in *Zendō daishi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1980), p. 23, et seq.; and Miyabayashi Shōgen, “Nembutsu to sange,” *Jōdo shūgaku kenkyū* 11, (1979): pp. 93–104.

20. Shioiri Ryōdō, “Chūgoku Bukkyō girei ni okeru sange no ukemi katei,” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 22 (1963): pp. 353–358.

21. See Yata Ryōshō, “Chūgoku Jōdokyō ni okeru sange ni tsuite.”

22. Shan-tao, *Wang-shen li-tsan* (Jpn. *Ōjō raisan*; Eng. *Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land*), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 656; English translation by Hisao Inagaki, *Liturgy for Birth (Ojoraisan), The Pure Land*, New Series, 17 (2000), pp. 137–138.

23 *Wang-shen li-tsan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 665–666; *Liturgy for Birth*, pp. 153–155.

24. *Wang-shen li-tsan* in *SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 680–682; *Liturgy for Birth*, pp. 185–187.

25. See Uesugi Bunshū, *Zendō daishi oyobi Ōjōraisan no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1931), p. 405, et seq.; also Mochizuki Shinkō, “Zendō daishi no chosho yori mitaru kyōkei,” Jōshūkai, ed., *Zendō daishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Jōshūkai, 1927), p. 139, et seq.

26. *Wang-shen li-tsan* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 650; *Liturgy for Birth*, p. 127.

27. *Wang-shen li-tsan* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 680; *Liturgy for Birth*, p. 184.

28. See Uesugi, *Zendō daishi oyobi Ōjōraisan no kenkyū*, p. 520, et seq.

29. *Wang-shen li-tsan* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 680; *Liturgy for Birth*, p. 184.

30. Wang-shen li-tsan in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 680; *Liturgy for Birth*, p. 184.
31. Wang-shen li-tsan in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 648; *Liturgy for Birth*, p. 123
32. Shan-tao, *Kuan-nien fa-men* (Jpn. *Kannen bōmon*, *Methods of Contemplation on Amida Buddha*), *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 625; English translation by Hisao Inagaki, "Shan-tao's Exposition of the Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha, Part 1," *Pacific World*, Third Series, 1 (1999): p. 86.
33. Shan-tao, *Pan-chou-tsan* (Jpn. *Hanju san*; *Hymns [on the Samādhi] of All Buddhas' Presence*) in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 694.
34. *Pan-chou-tsan* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 707.
35. Tsuboi Shun'ei, "Zendō daishi no sange to Hōnen shōnin: Shōmyō nembutsu to sange ni tsuite," in *Jōdo shūgaku kenkyū* 12 (1980): pp. 71–95.
36. Shan-tao, *Kuan-nien fa-men* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 646; Hisao Inagaki, "Shan-tao's Exposition of the Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha, Part 3," *Pacific World*, Third Series, 3 (2001): p. 285.
37. *Kuan-nien fa-men* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 644; *Pacific World*, Third Series, 3, p. 283.
38. *Kuan-nien fa-men* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 647; *Pacific World*, Third Series, 3, p. 286.
39. *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* (Jpn. *Kan muryōjukyō*; *Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*) in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 58; English translation by Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation from Chinese* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1994), p. 335.
40. *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 66; *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 350.
41. *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 65; *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 348.
42. Shan-tao, *Hsü-fên-i* (Chapter on the Introductory Portion of the Sutra) of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* (*Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra in Four Fascicles*) in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 443; cited in *CWS*, p. 214.
43. See Tsuboi, "Zendō daishi no sange to Hōnen shōnin."
44. *San-shan-i*, *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 537–8; cited in *CWS*, pp. 216–7.
45. I would like to discuss this issue at a later date.





# Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History

Chapter Five: The Early Pure Land Faith: Southern China, and  
Chapter Six: The Early Pure Land Faith: Northern China

**Shinkō Mochizuki**

Translated by  
Leo M. Pruden

Edited by  
Richard K. Payne  
Institute of Buddhist Studies

## CHAPTER V: THE EARLY PURE LAND FAITH SOUTHERN CHINA

### 1. Hui-Yuan's Disciples

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Hui-yuan established the *Pai-lien she* (the White Lotus Society) on Mt. Lu and, together with his followers, he cultivated the *nien-fo san-mei*, the meditation on the Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land. Due to his reputation for diligent religious practice, his fame spread throughout the country.

After the death of Hui-yuan, his disciple Tao-ping became the abbot of the Tung-lin Monastery (*Tung-ling ching-she*). Others of his disciples, such as T'an-heng and T'an-hsien, also remained on Mt. Lu, and there spread Hui-yuan's teachings, so it is not hard to imagine that Mt. Lu continued for a long time to be an important center of Pure Land activities.

At the same time, many of the monks and laity who had joined the White Lotus Association, among them many who were Hui-yuan's disciples, traveled to various parts of China, converting others to the Pure Land faith. Due to their activities, the Pure Land faith spread throughout all parts of China and soon embraced a large portion of the population. The monks T'an-shun, T'an-yü, and Seng-ch'ê initially remained on Mt. Lu after the death of Hui-yuan, but after a while they moved to Chiang-ling (present-day Chiang-ling *hsien*, Hupei), and there began to preach. The layman Tsung Ping is also reported to have constructed a lodging in the San-hu (Three Lakes) region of Chiang-ling and lived there in seclusion.

Subsequent to this, the monk T'an-chien also moved to the same region, and began to preach there.

According to the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, T'an-chien was a disciple of Hui-yuan's disciple, Tao-tsu; he was diligent in keeping all the rules of the *Vinaya*, and studied many of the scriptures. Subsequently, he went to Ch'ang-an where he studied with Kumārajīva, and then moved to Chiang-ling where he lived in the Hsin-ssu Monastery. Here he cultivated devotions to Amitābha, desiring to be reborn in the Pure Land. Based on these references then, we know that the Pure Land faith was at an early period spread throughout the Chiang-ling region of China.

The city of Ch'eng-tu (the present-day city of Ch'eng-tu, Szechwan) was the location where Hui-yuan's younger brother, the monk Hui-chih, preached. According to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, Hui-chih was a constant devotee of the Pure Land faith. He left his brother's company in 399, and traveled west to the land of Shu (Szechwan). Here he lived in the Lung-yuan Monastery, and widely propagated the Buddhadharma. Many clerics and laity became his disciples, two early disciples being the monks Hui-yen and Seng-kung. Hui-chih died at the age of seventy-five in 412, and it is recorded that his chief disciples were the monks Tao-kung and T'an-lan.

The monk Tao-wang, one of the disciples of Hui-yuan, also taught in Szechwan. According to the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, and the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, Tao-wang became a disciple of Hui-yuan at an early age. He is described as having been widely versed in both the scriptures and the *Vinaya*, but specialized in the study of the *Nieh-p'an ching* (the Mahāyāna *Parinirvāna Sūtra*), and for several decades confined his diet to uncooked, vegetarian foods. Later in his life he moved to Ch'eng-tu, where he lived and taught in the Chih-yüan Monastery ("the Jetavana Monastery"), dying in the year 465. It is reported that, sometime during the Later Ch'i Dynasty (479–502), the monk Fa-lin also moved to Szechwan and there cultivated Pure Land devotions.

The city of Chien-k'ang (present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu), the capital city of southern China at this time, was also the scene for the preaching of the Pure Land faith by Hui-yuan's disciples. Hui-yuan's disciple, the monk Tao-yen, and two lay members of the White Lotus Association, Chou Hsü-chih and Lei Tz'u-tung, moved to Chien-k'ang after the death of Hui-yuan. According to the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Tao-yen was a native of Ch'ao-na, in An-ting (present-day Ping-kuo hsien, Kansu). He moved to Mt. Lu and there became a student of Hui-yuan, later moving to Ch'ang-an where he studied with Kumārajīva. Sometime during the Yuan-chia period (424–453), he was living in the T'an-hsi ssu Monastery, in the city of Hsiang-yang (the present-day city of Hsiang-yang, Hupei). In the early years of the Hsiao chien period (454–456), he received an Imperial Order to become the abbot

of the Chung-hsing ssu Monastery, in the capital city of Chien-k'ang. It was evidently here that he died in the early years of the Ch'in-shih period (466–471) at the age of sixty-eight.

The city of Yang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu) was the site of Buddhahadra and Fa-yün's new translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*) in the year 421, and it was to this city that Hui-yuan's disciple Fa-chuang moved. According to the twelfth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Fa-chuang was a native of Huai-nan (present-day Shou *hsien*, Anhwei) who, at the age of nine, left the householder's life and became a disciple of Hui-yuan. Later in life he moved to north-central China (the Kuan-chung region) and studied with Seng-ying, a disciple of Kumārajīva. In the early years of the Yuan-chia period (424–453), he moved to Yang-tu and there lived in the Tao-ch'ang ssu Monastery. It was here that he recited the *Nieh-p'an ching*, the *Fa-hua ching* (the *Lotus Sūtra*), and the *Wei-mo ching* (the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*), dying here in the early years of the Ta-ming period (457–464) at the age of seventy-five.

There also appears to have been considerable missionary activity in the Chekiang region. According to the fifth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, Hui-min, who at an early age had become a monk and lived on Mt. Lu, moved to the Chia-hsiang ssu Monastery in Shan-yin (present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang) in the early years of the Yi-hsi period (405–418). He later contracted a serious illness, and his thoughts turned to the Pure Land. He fervently prayed to Kuan-yin (the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara), and it is reported that, at the moment of his death, he was rewarded by the appearance of auspicious signs.

Hui-yuan's disciple, the monk Tao-ching, left Mt. Lu and took up his residence on Mt. Jo-hsien (located in Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), where he preached the Buddhadharma. The monk T'an-i moved to Mt. Ch'in-wang (located in present-day Hang-chou, Chekiang), where he constructed a monastery (which has been mentioned above in Chapter III. 3 [*Pacific World*, Third Series, 3 (2001)], p. 259). It is also reported that the monk Tao-tsu moved to the state of Wu (present-day Wu *hsien*, Kiangsu) after the death of Hui-yuan.

According to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Tao-tsu first left the householder's life under the master Chih Fa-chi; later, with his companions, the monks Seng-ch'ien and Tao-liu, he moved to Mt. Lu and there received the full number of precepts. These three monks were favorites of Hui-yuan, but the monks Seng-ch'ien and Tao-liu both died at the early age of twenty-seven. Tao-tsu continued the literary work begun by his friend Tao-liu, and so put into final form a scriptural catalogue entitled the *Chu-ching mu-lu*. Tao-tsu later returned to the T'ai ssu Monastery in the state of Wu, dying there at the age of seventy-one in 419. According to the seventh volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, the catalogue

compiled by Tao-tsu was in four Chinese volumes. The first volume, a scriptural catalogue of those works translated during the Wei Dynasty, was entitled the *Wei-shih lu-mu*. The second volume, recording those scriptures that appeared during the Wu Dynasty, was entitled the *Wu-shih lu-mu*. The third volume, recording those scriptures that appeared during the Chin Dynasty, was entitled the *Chin-shih tsa-lu*. And the fourth volume, recording those works that appeared "west of the river," was entitled the *Ho-hsi lu-mu*. It was reported that this four-volume catalogue enjoyed a wide circulation at this time.

Indications have been preserved for us pointing to considerable Pure Land activity at this time among monks and laymen who were not disciples of Hui-yuan. According to the biography of the monk Seng-ch'uan, preserved in the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* and in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, he was a native of Hai-yang (located in present-day Hsing-ch'eng hsien, Feng-t'ien, in Manchuria), in the western part of the region of the Liao. He early began his studies in the regions of the states of Yen and Ch'i, and a while later moved to Mt. Hu-ch'iu (present-day Wu hsien, Kiangsu), where he constructed a golden image. Subsequently, he moved to Yü-hang (present-day Ch'ien-t'ang, Chekiang), taking up residence in the Fang-hsien ssu Monastery. He is reported to have constantly desired rebirth in Sukhāvati, and to have copied out by hand several thousand copies of the *O-mi-t'o ching*.

According to the biography of T'an-hung, preserved in the twelfth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, this monk was a native of Huang-lung (perhaps the present-day Chi-lin area of Manchuria). He devoted himself to a study of various *Vinaya* works and, in the Yung-ch'ü period (420-422), traveled to the city of Fan-yü in the far south of China (in present-day Kuang-tung province). In his later years, he moved to the region of Chiao-chih (in the present-day Tongking region of Annam), taking up residence in the Hsien-shan ssu Monastery. Here he recited the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, desiring rebirth in Sukhāvati. One day in 455, he gathered together a pile of firewood and immolated himself, being perhaps the first person to commit "religious suicide" in the history of the Pure Land faith (see below, Chapter XV). T'an-hung was also perhaps the first propagator of the Pure Land faith in the area of Chiao-chih. Sometime later, there was received from the land of Champa (south of Tongking) a stone image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, Amitāyus, which may be in some way related to the early Pure Land preaching of T'an-hung.

The eleventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as well as the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, mentions the monk Hui-t'ung (var. Chih-t'ung), who lived in the T'ai-hou ssu Monastery in Ch'ang-an, learning the practice of meditation from the master Hui-chao. He was always devoted to the Pure Land faith, and it is recorded that at his death he saw the light of the Buddha.

In volume seven of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, in the biography of the monk T'an-chien, it is reported that there were many others who, through their desire to be reborn in the Pure Land, experienced auspicious signs at the time of their deaths. Such events are recorded for Tao-hai (of Chiang-ling), Hui-k'an (of Pei-chou), Hui-kung (of Tung-chou), T'an-hung (of Huai-nan; present-day Shou *hsien*, Anhwei), Tao-kuang (of Tung-yuan shan), and Tao-kuang (of Hung-nung; present-day Ling-pao *hsien*, Honan). In addition to these names, the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao* also records that the monks Fa-i, Seng-hung, and Seng-ch'ang saw auspicious signs at their deaths. And the fifteenth volume of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, quoting the *Ming-hsiang chi*, records that in the Liu-Sung Dynasty, the *upāsaka* Ko Chi-chih, the *bhikṣunī* Hui-mu, and the laymen Wei Shih-tzu and Ho T'an-yuan desired rebirth in the Pure Land, and were rewarded at their deaths by the appearance of auspicious signs.

## 2. The Pure Land Faith in the Ch'i and Liang Dynasties

There also appeared to be a considerable number of persons during the Ch'i (479–502) and the Liang (502–557) Dynasties who sought rebirth in the Pure Land. It was during this period that lectures on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* came to be especially popular, and the Pure Land teachings gradually came to be more and more studied. In perusing the various biographies of monks of this period, we find that in these dynasties a number of monks are recorded to have desired rebirth in the Pure Land: the monks Hui-chin, Seng-hsing, Ch'ao-pien, Fa-ming, Fa-ling, Seng-jou, Fa-tu, and Pao-liang.

According to the twelfth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Hui-chin was a native of Wu-hsing (present-day Wu-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), who lived in the Kao-tso ssu Monastery in the capital city of Chien-k'ang. He would always lecture on the text of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and caused over one hundred copies of this scripture to be made, transferring the merit from this pious deed to the attainment of his desire to be reborn in the Pure Land. He died at the age of eighty-four in 485.

According to his biography in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, the monk Seng-hsing was a native of Shan-yin (located in present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), and was the disciple of the master Hui-chi. He later moved to the Ch'eng-shan ssu Monastery in Yü *hsien* (present-day Yü-ch'eng *hsien*, Honan), where he preached the Buddhadharma. He always visualized (*nien*) the Western Pure Land, and longed for rebirth there, dying at the age of fifty-eight in 493.

The biography of Ch'ao-pien is found in the twelfth volume of the *Liang-sao-seng ch'uan*, and in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*. Here it is recorded that he lived in the Ting-lin shang ssu Monastery (the Upper

Ting-lin Monastery) in the city of Chien-k'ang, where he was earnest in his worship of the *Lotus Sūtra* and of the Buddha Amitābha. The monk Fa-ming lived in the Ling-chi ssu Monastery, where he always recited the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Wu-liang-shou ching*.

According to the eleventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Fa-lin lived in the P'ei ssu Monastery in Shu chün (present-day Ch'eng-tu *hsien*, Szechwan), where he was renowned for his adherence to the *Vinaya* rules. He subsequently accompanied the monk Seng-yin to the province of Shensi, returning eventually to the Ling-chien ssu Monastery in Shu (Szechwan). He was always concerned with the Pure Land faith, and recited both the *Wu-liang shou ching* and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. He died at an unknown age in 495.

According to the eighth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Seng-jou was a native of Tan-yang (present-day Tan-yang *chen*, Ch'ang-t'u *hsien*, Anhwei). He early became proficient in the scriptures and began lecturing on them, subsequently moving to Shan-yin where he studied with the master Hui-chi. He then moved to the Ting-lin shang ssu Monastery (see above) in Chien-k'ang. Here his fame reached the attention of the emperor, and he was richly rewarded for his scholastic abilities by the Emperors Wen-hui and Wen-hsüan, gaining great fame during his lifetime. He constantly vowed to be reborn in Sukhāvātī and, at every sunset, he would stand in a formal position, facing west with his palms together in reverence. He died at the age of sixty-three in 494.

The monk Fa-tu was also a native of Huang-lung. Early in his life, he traveled to the north for study and, towards the latter years of the Liu-Sung Dynasty, he moved to the city of Chien-k'ang and took up residence in the Chi-hsia ssu Monastery on Mt. She (located in present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu). He was held in esteem by the Emperor Wen-hsüan, and always desired to be reborn in the Pure Land, often lecturing on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. He died at the age of sixty-three in 500.

The monastery in which Fa-tu lived, the Chi-hsia ssu, was founded sometime during the T'ai-shih period (465–471) of the Liu-Sung Dynasty. It seems that a retired scholar from Chi-chou by the name of Ming Seng-shao moved to Mt. She and there built himself a rude hut. Subsequently the monk Fa-tu, who was "a companion in the Way" of Ming Seng-shao, also moved to Mt. She, and there, in a small mountain temple, he began to lecture on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. Once, during the night, Ming Seng-shao saw a bright light coming from this temple. Moved by this miracle he converted his hut into a Buddhist monastery in 489. After his death, his son Ming Chung-chang constructed a more permanent dwelling against the face of a cliff at the western base of the mountain. Here, together with the monk Fa-tu, he carved a seated image of the Buddha Amitābha, over thirty feet in height, with a backdrop forty feet high, and seated figures of two bodhisattvas, over thirty feet in height. Chung-chang and the monk Fa-tu



were aided in their construction work by the various emperors of this dynasty, the Emperors Wen-hui, Wen-hsien, Wen-hsüan, and Shih-an. The wife of the Liu-Sung Prime Minister, the Lady Tsui, and, later, the Ch'i Dynasty military governor of Yung-chou, one T'ien Hsiung, contributed money for the completion of this work. With their contributions, the workmen were able to carve onto the face of these massive rocks "hundreds of millions" of forms of the *nirmāṇakāya* Buddha, Śākyamuni. These figures were later decorated through gifts made by a Liang Dynasty king, King Ching-hui of Lin-ch'uan. (This information is based on a memorial inscription, the *She shan chi-hsia ssu p'ei-ming*, which was composed by the Ch'en Dynasty official, Chiang Tsung-chih, and preserved in volume four of the *Chin-ling fan-she chih* [A Monograph of the Buddhist Monasteries in the Chin-lin area]). These carvings became famous, and were known as the She-shan Ch'ien-Fo yen, "The Grotto of the One Thousand Buddhas on Mt. She." However, another account differs considerably in its account of the origins of these carved images. This is the one preserved in a memorial inscription erected in honor of one Lord Ming-cheng, a stele written in the hand of the T'ang Dynasty Emperor Kao-tsung and erected within the precincts of the Chi-hsia ssu Monastery. This memorial inscription is also preserved in the fifty-ninth volume of the *Chin-shih ts'ui-pien*. This latter account records that the monk Fa-tu had over ten new carved images. It also records that in 516 (not in 511 as given above) the King of Lin-ch'uan had constructed one image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life (Amitāyus) which measured (from base to tip of halo) some fifty feet in height! It is not certain which of these accounts is the correct one.

According to the account preserved in the eighth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Pao-liang initially lived in the Chung-hsing ssu Monastery, in the city of Chien-k'ang. Later, he moved to the Ling-wei ssu Monastery, and here would often lecture on the *Nieh-p'an ching*, the *Sheng-man ching* (the *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra*), the *Wei-mo ching*, and the *Fa-hua ching*. In 509, upon an order from the Emperor Wu, he composed a seventy-one volume commentary on the *Nieh-p'an ching*, the *Nieh-p'an ching chi-chieh*, in which he gathered together all the theories propounded by the various masters who had previously commented upon this scripture. His biography also records that he lectured on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* close to ten times.

Based on these accounts, then, we can see that lectures on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* were gradually becoming more popular at that time in southern China, but it would seem, too, that there were no written works as yet composed by these lecturers.

The monk Fa-yün was a disciple of the master Pao-liang. He lived in the Kuang-che ssu Monastery in Chin-ling (one of the names of the city of Chin-k'ang). There he lectured often on the *Ch'eng-shih lun* (the *Tattva-siddhi*) and the *Fa-hua ching*. Together with the scholar-monks Seng-min and



Chih-tsang, Fa-yün was counted as one of the "Three Great Dharma Masters of the Liang Dynasty" (*Liang san ta-fa-shih*). It is not recorded that he sought rebirth in the Pure Land. However, in the fifth volume of his work on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Fa-hua ching i-chi*, in the section where he elucidates the fourth chapter, "On Faith and Understanding," the wealthy man in the scripture is likened to the Buddha Amitābha. Similarly, in the eighth volume of this same commentary, Fa-yün discusses the passage from the sixteenth chapter, "On Length of His Life," where the text says, "he manifests his own body, or the body of another." Fa-yün explains that "his own body" refers to the form of the Buddha Śākyamuni, while "the body of another" refers to the body of Amitābha. Based on these fragmentary passages, it would appear that Fa-yün held that the Buddha Amitābha (here identical to the Buddha Amitāyus) is the basic underlying form (*pen shen*) of the Buddha Śākyamuni, which, if true, is profoundly significant for later thought.

In his *Ching Kuan-yin ching shu*, Chih-i (founder of the T'ien-t'ai tradition) discusses the ideas of the Master An-lin of the Ch'i-an ssu Monastery, whom Chih-i considered to be one of the "Seven Masters of the North." According to Chih-i, An-lin held that Śākyamuni was the "response body, the trace body," whereas Amitābha was "the true body, the underlying body." "The response body" (*nirmāṇakāya*) was unable to conquer the effects of poison, but the "true body" (*dharmakāya* or *sambhogakāya*) was able to remove all types of poisons. This theory of An-lin is clearly the teaching that there are two aspects to the Buddha's manifestation, a basic ground whence the manifestation arises, and the manifestation, "the trace body" itself, and that these bodies were the Buddha Amitābha and Śākyamuni respectively. This theory was perhaps borrowed by An-lin from the teachings of the master Fa-yün. We know that in 509, a nineteen-foot high golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life was cast and enshrined in this same Kuang-che ssu Monastery. Based upon these accounts, then, we can see that this Kuang-che ssu was the primary center for the Pure Land faith in this region.

According to the fourth volume of the *Pi-ch'iu-ni ch'uan* (*Biographies of Nuns*), the nun Tao-kuei of the Ting shan ssu Monastery recited the *Sheng-man ching* and the *Wu-liang-shou ching* continually both day and night, dying at the age of eighty-five in 516.

According to the sixteenth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Tao-ch'in lived on Mt. Lu in the early years of the Liang Dynasty, constantly cultivating Pure Land devotions. One night in a dream he saw a ship about to set sail in the direction of the Buddha land of Amitābha. Although he asked to board the ship, he was not permitted to do so. This was because he did not recite the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and he had not paid for the construction of a bathhouse on the grounds of the monastery! From this time onward, we are told, Tao-ch'in recited the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and he was

eventually reborn into the Pure Land, his death being accompanied by auspicious signs.

The account of Tao-ch'in is preserved also in the *O-mi-t'o ching pu-ssu-i shen-li ch'uan* (*Accounts of the Miraculous Power of the O-mi-t'o ching*), and in a *Postface* (*hou chi*) to the *O-mi-t'o ching*, dated 728 (K'ai-yuan 16), which was discovered at Tun-huang. In these accounts, the monk in question is referred to simply as "the Meditation Master Ch'in" (Ch'in *ch'an-shih*), and his dream occurred sometime during the T'ien-chia period (560–565) of the Ch'en Dynasty. Ennin's catalogue of scriptures, the *Nittō-guhō mokuroku* (dated 838), lists among other works a one-volume *nien-fo san-mei chih kuei* (*Instruction in the Nien-fo Samādhi*), composed by the Sui Dynasty monk Hui-ch'in, of the I-ai ssu Monastery, on Mt. Lu. Now if this Hui-ch'in is the above-mentioned Meditation Master Ch'in, he could not have lived in the early years of the Liang Dynasty, but sometime during the years of the Ch'en Dynasty and the Sui Dynasty instead.

### 3. Early Images of Amitābha

From the end of the Chin Dynasty onwards, the construction of images of the Buddha Amitābha continued apace with the gradual growth of the Pure Land faith. Most of the images in north China were carved out of rock, while those in the south were metal.

According to an account given in the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as well as in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, the monk Seng-hung lived in the Wa-kuan ssu Monastery, in the city of Chien-k'ang (present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu). At this time, at the end of the Chin Dynasty, the prohibition on the use of copper was very strictly enforced, but notwithstanding, Seng-hung solicited donations from believers and was able to have cast a sixteen foot-high image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. He was arrested and thrown into prison for this deed, but he began to recite the *Kuan-shih-yin ching* (the scripture of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*), while fervently worshiping an image of the Buddha. Suddenly, he perceived a miraculous vision, and was able to escape from the prison.

According to an account preserved in the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as well as in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, the monk Seng-liang lived in Chiang-ling. He wished to cast a sixteen-foot golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. However, since the copper necessary for the casting was insufficient in that region, he hired one hundred craftsmen and rented some ten large vessels, and sailed with the craftsmen to the border of Hsiang-chou (present-day Ch'ang-sha *hsien*, Hunan). He arrived at the shrine of Wu-tzu Hsü, located in Tung-hsi, "Copper Canyon." Here they mined some copper and cast the image. However, there was not enough copper for the casting of the halo surrounding the image,

so the Liu-Sung Emperor Wen constructed a gold-plated halo and presented it to the image. The finished image was enshrined in the P'eng-ch'eng ssu Monastery. Subsequently, during the T'ai-shih period (465–471), the image was moved to the Hsiang-kung ssu Monastery by the Emperor Ming.

There is preserved in the *Fa-yuan tsa-yuan yuan-shih chi mu-lu* (quoted in the twelfth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*) an account of the construction of a golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life that was sixteen feet tall by the monk Seng-liang. This account is entitled the *Ching-chou sha-men Shih Seng-liang tsao Wu-liang-shou chang-liu chin-hsiang chi*.

Volume two of the Liang Dynasty monk Pao-ch'ang's composition, the *Pi-ch'iu-ni ch'uan*, records that the nun Tao-ch'üung (of the Chien-fu ssu Monastery, Chin-ling) had constructed a golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life in 438.

The *Ming-seng ch'uan chao* records two additional instances. The Liu-Sung Dynasty monk Tao-ching, of the An-lo ssu Monastery (the Sukhāvati Monastery), had a five-foot gilded image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life cast. Also, the monk Hui-ching (of the Chih-yuan ssu Monastery, see above) constructed a sixteen foot-high image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life.

The twenty-eighth volume of the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* records that the Liu-Sung Dynasty nun Tao-yüan had constructed some seven large images, which she placed in various monasteries, and further records that she had a copper and gold alloy image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life cast.

The above-mentioned *Fa-yuan tsa-yuan yuan-shih chi mu-lu* also contains two further inscriptions. One is a record of the Liu-Sung Emperor Hsiao-wu constructing a golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life (the *Sung Hsiao-wu Huang-ti tsao Wu-liang shou shin-hsiang chi*). The other is an inscription on the cast metal image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life sent as tribute from the country of Champa (the *Lin-i kuo hsien Wu-liang-shou t'ou shih hsiang chi*).

The Japanese Buddhist scholar Seigai Ōmura, in his *Shina Bijutsu-shi: Chōsō-hen* (*History of Chinese Art: Sculpture*) records a slightly defaced stone inscription, dated 448, from a border region of China. The inscription reads: "For the benefit of my father and mother, as well as for my mate of the Hsiung clan, and our children, I have made the vow to be born in the land of the Buddha □-liang-shou□" (為父母并熊身兒子、起願□亮壽□国生[square boxes represent illegible or missing characters in the original]). The character *liang* 亮 is an error for *liang* 量, and so the image was clearly an image of the Buddha Amitābha. We can see from these above accounts that the construction of images of the Buddha Amitābha continued apace throughout the Liu-Sung Dynasty.

There are a considerable number of references to the construction of such images during the Ch'i and Liang Dynasties as well. The sixteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi* preserves for us an inscription on an

embroidered hanging of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, which was crafted by a certain Madame Ch'en in company with the *bhikṣuṇī* Pao-yuan of the Yueh-lin ssu Monastery, and dated 486. The thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* records that the monk Fa-yüeh of the Ch'eng-ch'ueh ssu Monastery in Chien-k'ang, together with the monk Chih-ching of the Pai-ma ssu Monastery, made a solicitation for donations in order to construct an eighteen foot-high image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. In the early years of the Liang Dynasty, they received imperial permission for the construction of this image, and in 909 work was begun on it within the Hsiao Chuang-yen ssu Monastery. The amount of copper available for the construction was insufficient, so additional copper was presented by the Imperial Court, and eventually a nineteen foot-high image of the Buddha was completed, which was enshrined in the Kuang-che ssu Monastery. The account concludes by saying that this image was the largest golden image existing anywhere east of the Kunlun Mountains (i.e., in all China!). The account of the casting of this image is given in the *Kuang-che ssu chang-chiu Wu-liang-shou chin-hsiang chi*, preserved in the *Fa-yuan tsa-yuan yuan-shih chi mu-lu* (which in turn is preserved in the twelfth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*).

The sixteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming-chi* contains an inscription to an image of the Buddha Amitābha, composed by the Liang Dynasty literati Shen Yueh.

The thirty-ninth volume of the *Nan-shih* (*Standard History of the Southern Dynasties*) preserves the inscription from a stele erected within the Chin-hsiang ssu Monastery (the Monastery of the Golden Image) in Yung-chou (the *Yung-chou Chin-hsiang ssu Wu-liang-shou Fo-hsiang p'ei*) composed by the Liang Dynasty layman Liu Ch'ien.

The ninetieth volume of the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, in the *Monograph on Spirits and Prodigies* (*Shen-i tien*), records an inscription to an image of the Buddha Amitābha composed by the Liang Dynasty Emperor Chien-wen.

In his *O-mi-t'o ching shu*, the Sung Dynasty scholar-monk Yuan-chao (see below Chapter XXVIII) records that the layman Ch'en Jen-leng raised a stele within the precincts of the Lung-hsing ssu Monastery, Hsiang-chou (present-day Hsiang-yang, Hupei), with the text of the *O-mi-t'o ching* on it. The text had some twenty-one additional characters in it: following the words "one-pointedness of mind, undisturbed," the text continued with the words: "exclusively hold to the Name . . . with many good roots and various meritorious and virtuous causes and conditions."

Yuan-chao himself had this inscription copied and carved on another stele, and erected it on the grounds of his own monastery, the Ch'ung-fu ssu Monastery in the Hsi-hu (the Western Lakes) region of Hang-chou, in present-day Chekiang province. Eventually, this latter inscription was again copied and brought to Japan, and raised on a stele presently in the precincts of the Shuzo-jinja, in the province of Echizen. This stele has been declared a National Treasure.

## CHAPTER VI: THE EARLY PURE LAND FAITH NORTHERN CHINA

### 1. The Northern Wei Dynasty

Under the influence of Hui-yuan of Mt. Lu, coupled with the translation by Pao-yün and Kālayaśas of Pure Land texts, the Pure Land faith spread to all parts of south China. In the north, however, there were no major spokesmen for the Pure Land teachings. Civil wars and insurrections continually ravaged the area, and in 446 the Northern Wei Emperor Wu began a systematic destruction of Buddhism. Texts were burned, and monasteries and *stūpa*-s were laid waste. Thus, for a while Buddhism was effectively destroyed in the regions under the effective control of the Northern Wei Dynasty.

When the Emperor Wen-ch'eng took the throne, Buddhism underwent a revival. In 454, the monk T'an-yüeh was given an Imperial Command to construct five shrines out of caves and grottos carved into the north face of the mountains facing the Sai-shan ku Valley, in Wu-chou, to the northwest of the Wei capital, Heng-an (present-day Ta-t'ung, Shansi). Later, T'an-yüeh constructed over ten stone chapels and temples in the vicinity of these caves, and images of the Buddhas were enshrined in all of them. This was the beginning of the famous Ta-t'ung Caves.

In 494, the Emperor Hsiao-wen moved the capital of the Wei Dynasty to the city of Loyang, and soon thereafter work was begun on the Lung-men caves (located in present-day Lo-yang *hsien*, Honan). Over the years, a large number of both caves and temples came to be constructed in this area, and images of the Buddhas were enshrined in them. The largest number of images were those of the Buddha Maitreya, followed in number by images of Śākyamuni and Avalokiteśvara. There were comparatively few images of the Buddha Amitābha, and those that exist are of a somewhat later date.

According to Seigai Ōmura's *Shina Bitjutsu-shi: Chōsō-hen*, the first image of the Buddha Amitābha to be constructed at Lung-men was one raised by a pious laywoman, one Madame Chiang, in the year 518. This image was followed at Lung-men by images raised in 519, 522, 523, 526, 527, 533, and 545.

Nevertheless, at this early date, concepts of the Pure Land were still in the elementary stage, and in most cases the faith in the Pure Land of Amitābha was identified or confused with a faith in the appearance of the future Buddha Maitreya and his Pure Land, Tuṣita. This is shown with great clarity by one inscription, dated 499, preserved in the Ku-yang Cave in Lung-men. This inscription was composed by the *bhikṣu*



Seng-hsin on a stone image of the Buddha Maitreya constructed by him. The inscription says:

I have raised this one stone image of Maitreya for the benefit of the rebirth of my father and mother, and for all of the masters and members of the *Saṅgha* related to me. I desire that they all be born in the Western Land of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, that they may hear the Three Teachings of the Dharma under the Nāga Flower Tree. May they all be reborn in their human state as the sons and grandsons of lords and kings, and may they be born together with the Great Bodhisattvas in the dwelling of Tuṣita Heaven.

An inscription on an image of Maitreya raised by the *bhikṣuṇī* Fa-ching in 501 states that she desired to be born in the Western Land of Sublime Bliss (Sukhāvatī), and that she be born as a duke, a king, or a millionaire. We find a similar sentiment in an inscription on an image of the Buddha Śakyamuni raised in this same year by the *bhikṣuṇī* Hui-chih. She also desires to be born in this same Western Land of Sublime Bliss as a duke, a king, or a millionaire, and she desires to hear the Three Teachings of Maitreya given under the Nāga Flower Tree.

These inscriptions show that the belief in a future Pure Land involved both belief in the future appearance of Maitreya, and belief in the Pure Land of Amitābha, Sukhāvatī. These devotees wished to be reborn in Sukhāvatī by virtue of the merits accruing from the construction of an image of Maitreya. Then, when the Buddha Maitreya appears in the world, they wish to be born as human beings, the sons of feudal lords or kings, and to hear the Three Teachings given by the Buddha Maitreya under the Nāga Flower Tree.

Many devotees desired to be born in Heaven, among the *deva*-s, through the merits acquired by raising an image of the Buddha Amitābha. In one inscription, dated 526, on an image of the Buddha Amitābha raised by the *upāsikā* (laywoman) Huang Fa-seng, she desires that her deceased relatives be born in Heaven, where "they will cast off suffering, and obtain pleasure." In an inscription on an image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, raised in 545 by (the monk?) Hui-chien, the donor says: "For the benefit of my deceased father and mother, I have constructed an image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life [here: Wu-shou Fo], desiring that they may be born in the Heavenly Land." Another inscription dated 549 on a stone image says that the donor has constructed four Buddha and four Bodhisattva images, by the merits of which the deceased may ascend to Heaven, and there be born in the Western Land of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. An inscription on a stone image of Amitābha carved in 597 records that the donor desires to cast off his present defiled form, and meet Maitreya face to face, and that he may be born in the Western Land (of Amitābha).

What specifically do these donors mean by Heaven, *t'ien*? We can, of course, regard this Heaven in the Confucian sense of the word. However, these are not Confucian inscriptions, but inscriptions at the base of Buddha images, so the Heaven referred to must be one of the Pure Lands of Buddhism. From this very early period, however, the belief in the Pure Land of Maitreya, Tuṣita Heaven, was bound up with the belief in the Pure Land of Amitābha, Sukhāvati. So these inscriptions doubtlessly refer to the one Pure Land which is commonly called a "heaven" (*t'ien*), in Buddhist writings, the Tuṣita Heaven of Maitreya. If this is the case, these inscriptions must be read and understood as evidence of this confusion of beliefs, on the one hand a belief in "birth in Tuṣita" (*tou-shuai shang-sheng*), and on the other, "rebirth in the West" (*hsi-fang wang-sheng*). The later result of this confusion of beliefs led to Sukhāvati coming to be called the *t'ien-shou kuo*, the "Heavenly Land of Long Life."

In a *Postface* (*hou-chi*) to the forty-sixth volume of a copy of the *Hua-yen ching*, found in Tun-huang and dated 583, we find what is perhaps the first occurrence of the phrase *t'ien-shou kuo*. This is in the phrase: "I desire that my deceased father and mother are born in the Western Heavenly Land of Long Life." Also, an inscription on an image of Amitābha in the Mo-ai Cliffs in the Ling-yen ssu Monastery, located in the Ch'ien-fo Mountains of present-day Li-shan *hsien*, Shantung province, and dated sometime in the Sui Dynasty, states: "I have respectfully constructed this one image of the Buddha Amitābha, with the desire that I, together with all sentient beings, may ascend to □□□□□, there to maintain our heavenly long lives" (敬造阿彌陀佛像一軀、願供一切衆生同登岐□□□□□保天壽).

In Japan, in 622, the Empress Suiko had constructed an embroidered hanging, entitled the "Tenjūkoku Embroidered Hanging," as an offering upon the death of Prince Shōtoku. Such a hanging clearly reflected the north Chinese belief of the two previous centuries. Prince Shōtoku was, it was thought, reborn in Amitābha's Pure Land, and this embroidered hanging is thought to represent this Pure Land, Sukhāvati.

In any case we can see that, although confused with Tuṣita Heaven in the minds of some monks, nuns, and laity, belief in the Pure Land of Amitābha came to be more and more widespread in north China.

## 2. Bodhiruci and the "Six Great Worthies of the Pure Land Teachings."

The monk Bodhiruci was a native of north India who came to China, arriving at the capital city of Loyang in 508, during the reign of the Emperor Hsuan-wu of the Northern Wei Dynasty. Bodhiruci was the famous translator of such important texts as the *Shih-ti ching lun* (the *Daśa-bhūmi vyākhyāna*) and the *Ju-Leng-chia ching* (the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*). Impor-



tant for the Pure Land teachings, however, was his translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching Yü-p'o-ti-she Yuan-sheng chieh* (An Upadeśa [Instruction] on the Amitāyus Sūtra: A Gāthā on Desiring Rebirth), traditionally ascribed to Vasubandhu. This work is also known by a variety of shorter titles, either the *Wu-liang shou ching lun* (A Commentary on the Amitāyus Sūtra), the *Wang-sheng lun* (A Commentary on Rebirth), or simply the *Ching-t'u lun* (A Commentary on the Pure Land). It was an important work to later Pure Land thinkers for its teaching of attaining rebirth by the five-fold practice of the *nien-fo* (*wu nien-fo wang-sheng*).

According to the ninth volume of the *Li-tai San-pao chi*, this work was translated in 530 during the Northern Wei Dynasty; the sixth volume of the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu* gives the date of this translation as 529. However, there is nothing in the biography of Bodhiruci (preserved in the first volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*) that would attribute a belief in the Pure Land to him. Rather, the first reference to him in a Pure Land context is a master-disciple lineage recorded in the second volume of the *An-lo chi* (A Collection of Works on Sukhāvati), composed in the T'ang Dynasty by the monk Tao-ch'ō (see below, Chapter XII). In this work, Tao-ch'ō gives a lineage of six masters who, in their profound investigations of the Mahāyāna, came to believe that the most essential teachings of the Mahāyāna were the Pure Land teachings. These six masters are Bodhiruci, Hui-ch'ung, Tao-ch'ang, T'an-luan, Ta-hai, and Fa-shang. Thus, according to Tao-ch'ō, Bodhiruci is the first Patriarchal Master of the Pure Land teachings in China.

In the biography of T'an-luan, preserved in the sixth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, the story is told that when T'an-luan was traveling in south China, he passed through Loyang and there met the master Bodhiruci. T'an-luan asked Bodhiruci whether there was in the Buddhadharma any art or technique that equaled the Taoist techniques for attaining perpetual life. Bodhiruci responded to this by spitting on the ground and berating him. Handing T'an-luan a copy of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, Bodhiruci said that this was the technique of the Great Sage, Śākyamuni, and that if he were to cultivate its teachings, he would obtain liberation from the round of birth and death, and hence attain the deathless state.

If this account is true, then Bodhiruci must be regarded as a believer in the Pure Land teachings. However, it is not recorded in either the *An-lo chi*, nor in Chia-ts'ai's *Ching-t'u lun*. Perhaps this account is no more than a pious legend appended to account for Bodhiruci's translation of a major Pure Land text, the *Wu-liang-shou ching lun*. In any case, it is hard to credit this account with any basis in historical fact.

The name Hui-ch'ung 慧龍 is perhaps a misprint for the name Tao-ch'ung 道龍. According to the seventh volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, the master Tao-ch'ung studied the *Shih-ti ching lun* with Bodhiruci. In his day he was as famous a master as his contemporary, Hui-kuang (see

below), for Tao-ch'ung came to be counted as one of the patriarchal masters of the northern Ti-lun tradition. The northern Ti-lun tradition was a major academic tradition in Chinese Buddhism which centered on the study of Bodhiruci's translation of the *Daśa-bhūmi-vyākhyāna*. The study of this text prepared the way for the eventual development of the Hua-yen tradition of Buddhism. In any case, there is no evidence in the biography of the master Tao-ch'ung that he was especially interested in the Pure Land faith.

According to the twenty-fourth volume of the *Ta-chih-tu lun shu* (composed by the Northern Chou Dynasty scholar-monk Hui-ying), the master Tao-ch'ang 道場 (also written Tao-chang 道長) was a disciple of Hui-kuang. Subsequently he attended Bodhiruci's lectures, but became the object of the jealousy of Bodhiruci's other students, and moved to Ch'ung-kao shan (located in present-day Teng-feng *hsien*, Honan), where he lived for ten years, studying the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. He eventually left the mountain and returned to the city, where he began to lecture on this work, and the subsequent popularity of the *Ta-chih tu lun* is said to be based on Tao-ch'ang's lectures on the text.

In the biography of one Chih-nien, preserved in the eleventh volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, there is mention of the Dharma Master Tao-ch'ang 道場 (道長) who lived in Yeh-tu (located in present-day Lin-chang *hsien*, Honan). He was well-versed in the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, and was a major scholar of this tradition. In the biography of the monk Ming-chan, in the twenty-fourth volume of this same *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, mention is also made of the Dharma Master Tao-ch'ang, who lived in the Ta-chi ssu Monastery, in Yeh. It states that his exclusive topic of study was the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. Thus, we can see from these accounts that he lived in the Ta-chi ssu Monastery in the capital city of Yeh, and that his lectures on the *Ta-chih-tu lun* were popular and well-attended.

According to accounts preserved in the second volume of Tao-hsüan's *Chi Shen-chou San-pao kan-t'ung lu*, and in the fifteenth volume of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, sometime during the reign of the Sui Dynasty Emperor Wen, the *śramaṇa* Ming-hsien visited the monastery of the master Tao-ch'ang. While there he saw a picture of the Buddha Amitābha surrounded by some fifty attendant bodhisattvas. This picture was supposedly based on an Indian model preserved in the Kukkuṭārāma Vihāra in Magadha, showing the Five Bodhisattvas of Supernormal Powers (*rddhi*). Tao-ch'ang copied this picture and caused it to be circulated. Since this Tao-ch'ang is, without doubt, the same Tao-ch'ang mentioned above, and if this account is historically true, then he was a believer in the Buddha Amitābha, and the work that he obtained was the so-called "*Maṇḍala* of the Five Supernormal Powers."

According to the third volume of Fa-lin's *Pien-ch'eng lun*, the Northern Wei Emperor Hsiao-wen constructed the An-yang ssu Monastery (the

Sukhāvati Monastery) in the capital city of Yeh in memory of his deceased mother. It is clear then, that the Pure Land faith enjoyed a great prosperity in the capital city of Yeh.

The fifth of the "Six Pure Land Worthies" listed by Tao-ch'ō is the monk Ta-hai, which is perhaps a variant name for the monk Hui-hai. According to the twelfth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Hui-hai first studied with the Dharma Master Chiung who lived in the Kuang-kuo ssu Monastery, in the capital city of Yeh, and here studied the *Nieh-p'an ching* and the *Leng-chia ching*. Later Hui-hai constructed the An-lo ssu Monastery (the Sukhāvati Monastery) in Chiang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu), and lived there until his death at the age of sixty-eight in 609. Throughout his life he desired rebirth in the Pure Land. On one occasion he received from the monk Seng-ch'üan (of Ch'i-chou, located in present-day Li-ch'eng *hsien*, Shantung) an image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life copied from the above-mentioned picture of the Bodhisattvas of the Five Supernormal Powers. He in turn caused this picture to be copied, recording on it that viewing it only deepened his desire for rebirth in the Pure Land. From this account, it is clear that the master Hui-hai was also a believer and a worshiper of the "*Maṇḍala of the Five Supernormal Powers*."

The reputed history of this maṇḍala is given in the second volume of Tao-hsüan's *Chi Shen-chou San-pao kan-t'ung lu*. In the Kukkuṭārāma Monastery, in Magadha, there were five Bodhisattvas who possessed supernormal powers (*rddhi*). They went to Sukhāvati heaven and there they met Amitābha, requesting him to descend to this *sahā* world in order to benefit the living beings here. At that time, the Buddha was seated with fifty of his attendant bodhisattvas, each one on his lotus throne. The Buddha then appeared in this world, together with these fifty attendant bodhisattvas, and they manifested themselves on the top of a tree. The five bodhisattvas took the leaves of this tree and drew pictures of this scene on them, and distributed these leaves far and wide.

During the reign of the Han Emperor Ming, a *śramaṇa*, the nephew of Kāśyapa-mātāṅga, brought a copy of this *maṇḍala* to China. Tao-hsüan continues that time of the Wei and Chin Dynasties is distant from the time of the Buddha, and the world has entered into the period of the Extinction of the Dharma. For these reasons both scriptures and religious pictures are on the verge of extinction, and this *maṇḍala* too was almost lost.

During the reign of the Sui Emperor Wen, there was a *śramaṇa* by the name of Ming-hsien. He obtained a copy of this *maṇḍala* from the Dharma Master Tao-ch'ang, and Tao-ch'ang in turn told him the circumstances of its composition in India, and of its transmission to China. From the time of Tao-ch'ang onward, copies of this picture spread widely throughout China. The Northern Ch'i Dynasty painter, Ts'ao Chung-ta, was especially good at mixing colors, and he drew facsimilies of this *maṇḍala* on the walls of monasteries all over the country.

As we have seen from the above, this *maṇḍala* is reputed to trace its origins to the Later Han Dynasty, but this tale is obviously not based on historical fact. Previously we have referred to the second volume of the *Wang-sheng ch'uan*, which was composed by one Chieh-chu, and is now preserved in the library of the Shimpukuji Monastery, Tokyo. This text records that the Indian monk Jinadharmā was a firm believer in the Pure Land teachings, and that in India he drew a picture of Amitābha surrounded by twenty-five attendant bodhisattvas. He brought this picture with him to China, and composed a *gāthā* expressing his devotion to the *maṇḍala*. The *gāthā* says, "If you desire the Pure Land, you should make images and pictures. At the moment of your death, they will appear before you, and shall point out the Path to you . . . ."

These twenty-five attendant bodhisattvas perhaps have some relationship with the twenty-five bodhisattvas mentioned in the *Shih wang-sheng O-mi-t'o Fo-kuo ching*, and since this *maṇḍala* is a picture of Amitābha and his attendants, the figure twenty-five is perhaps also a scribal error for the figure fifty-two. If this is the case, then perhaps it was the Indian master Jinadharmā who first brought this *maṇḍala* to China, sometime during the Northern Ch'i Dynasty (479–502).

According to volume X:4 of the *Yuishiki-ron Dōgaku-shō*, the master Chih-chou of P'u-yang (present-day P'u-yang *hsien*, Hopei), constructed images of Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and the fifty-two bodhisattvas within the Hsi-fang Ching-t'u yuan (the Western Pure Land Chapel). His mind was solely concerned with the Pure Land, and suddenly some miraculous signs appeared to him. According to this account, the representation of these fifty-two bodhisattvas continued to be produced well into the T'ang Dynasty.

The representation of Amitābha and his fifty-two attendant bodhisattvas was introduced into Japan as well. The volume *Amida* of the *Kakuzen-shō* (*Kakuzen-shō: Amida-no-kan*) gives pictures of these bodhisattvas.

### 3. Hui-kuang

The scholar-monk Hui-kuang was as famous in his day as was the monk Tao-ch'ung, the disciple of Bodhiruci. He was counted as the founder of the southern branch of the Ti-lun tradition that centered on the study of the *Daśa-bhūmi* scripture. According to the twenty-first volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, Hui-kuang was initially the Monastic Supervisor (*kuo-seng-t'u*) in the capital city of Loyang. Later he was sent by Imperial Order to Yeh, where he became the Monastic Supervisor for the whole kingdom (*kuo-t'ung*). During his whole life, he desired rebirth in the Pure Land. However, it is not certain which

Pure Land it was that he was so devoted to (the Sukhāvati of Amitābha, or the Tuṣita of Maitreya). His biography does state that when he was about to die, he desired to be reborn in Sukhāvati.

Fa-shang, the last of the Tao-ch'ō's "Six Pure Land Worthies," was a disciple of Hui-kuang. According to the eighth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, he was as famous in his day as Tao-ch'ang. Throughout his life he worshiped Maitreya, and thus desired to be reborn in Tuṣita Heaven, dying at the age of eighty-five in 580. According to this, he was not a devotee of the Sukhāvati Pure Land faith. The reason Tao-ch'ō included him among the "Six Pure Land [here: Sukhāvati] Worthies" was perhaps that the meaning of the term "Pure Land" as employed by Tao-ch'ō was the broad meaning of this term. In this usage it would have also included the idea of Tuṣita Heaven as a Pure Land, on an equal footing with Sukhāvati.

Furthermore, Hui-kuang's disciple, the monk Tao-p'ing, was noted for being a devotee of Sukhāvati and, according to the eighth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, at the time of his death saw the light of the Buddha. According to the ninth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, Tao-p'ing's disciple was the monk Ling-yü, who composed three commentaries. One was on the *O-mi-t'ō ching* (the *O-mi-t'ō ching shu*), one on the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching* (the *Kuan Wu-Liang-shou ching shu*), and one on the *Upadeśa* of Vasubandhu (the *Wang-sheng lun shu*) in which he elucidated and clarified the Pure Land teachings. Based on this, then, we can clearly see that Pure Land faith and devotion was highly regarded in both the Northern and the Southern branches of the Ti-lun tradition.

It was approximately at this period, too, that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* (*The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*) first came to be noticed in Chinese Buddhist circles. It was traditionally taught that this work was composed in India by Aśvaghoṣa, and was translated into Chinese by the monk Paramārtha. This work teaches origination from out of the Tathāgata-garbha, and that the absolute (*tathatā, chen-ju*) constitutes the basis and the support of all the dharmas, a position which tallied with the contemporary teachings of the Southern branch of the Ti-lun tradition.

In volume five of the *Chung-ching mu-lu* (compiled in the Sui Dynasty by the monk Fa-ching), the *Ta-ch'eng ch'ih-sin lun* is listed within the section "Doubtful Works" (*I-huo lu*). The notation indicates that the work does not appear in any list of Paramārtha's translations, and so the compiler relegated it to the "doubtful" category. Volume ten of the *Ssu-lun hsüan-i* by the T'ang Dynasty monk Hui-chun is preserved in the second volume of Chinkai's *Sanron-gensho Mongiyō*. Here it states that the masters of the Northern branch of the Ti-lun tradition held that this work was not composed by Aśvaghoṣa, but that it was forged (i.e., written in China and ascribed to an Indian master) by some master of the Ti-lun tradition.



The *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* itself says in one passage at the end of the section "Cultivation and Faith":

If one desires to cultivate stilling and insight (*śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*), and to search out correct faith, because one lives in this *Sahā* world, it is not possible to ever personally encounter the Buddhas, and to make *pūja* offerings to them. It is very difficult to generate faith. So, if someone fears regressing, he should with one-pointedness of mind concentrate on the Buddha of the West, Amitābha, and be reborn in his Pure Land, and abide in the number of those truly assured.

This passage borrows heavily from the teaching of the two paths, the difficult and the easy path, attributed to Nāgārjuna. Furthermore, it is also closely related to T'an-luan's teachings that divide these paths into two: the difficult path is the path of practice in this world, whereas the easy path is the path of rebirth. We can see, then, that many of the masters of the Ti-lun tradition were believers in the Pure Land faith, and, as Hui-chün points out, this work was probably composed by a master of the Southern branch of this Ti-lun tradition.

Another work whose first appearance dates from this period is the two-volume *Chan-ts'a shan-o Yeh-pao ching*. The text itself, which is included in the present-day canon of Buddhist scriptures, bears the name of the Indian *Tripiṭaka* Master Bodhidīpa as its translator. Bodhidīpa, however, is totally unknown. According to the twelfth volume of the *Li-tai San-pao chi*, the scholar-monk Fa-ching (the compiler of the *Chung-ching mu-lu*) was asked to examine this work in 593 in order to determine its authenticity. Fa-ching declared that it was a forgery, and as a result, it was officially prohibited from circulating. Fa-ching, in both the second volume of his *Chung-ching mu-lu* and the fourth volume of Yen-tsung's *Chung-ching mu-lu*, relegates this scripture to the section "Doubtful Works," so we can confidently say that this work is not the translation of an Indian original.

The last volume of the *Yeh-pao ching* states that it teaches the "true significance" of the Mahāyāna but, in fact, its teaching in this section is almost identical to the teachings of the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*. Furthermore, the *Yeh-pao ching* praises the Pure Land teachings in terms that are very close to those used in the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*. The *Yeh-pao ching* says, towards the end of its last volume, that even if one were to practice *adhimokṣa* (one's resolutions, lit: one's faith and understanding), because his roots of good are still shallow, he will be unable to progress in his spiritual cultivations. However, anyone who fears regressing should meditate on the name of the Buddha and visualize the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha. Should he thus cultivate the practice of faith, he will be born, in

accordance with his vows, in that Pure Land which is even now in that other direction. There his good roots will grow and increase, and he will be able to speedily attain the state of non-regression.

The monk Jin'go of Silla wrote the *Tamhyŏn-gi Jesam-sagi* (*Private Notes on the Third Volume of the T'an-hsüan chi*), which is in turn quoted in the eighth volume of Kembō's *Hōsatsu-shō*. There, Jin'go states that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* was composed based on another forged text, the *Chien-ch'a ching*. Thus, it would naturally follow that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* would be a forgery. The words *chien-ch'a* 漸刹 appear to be a transliteration of the words *chan-ts'a* 占察, so it would appear that Jin'go is saying that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* was written based on the *Chan-ts'a shan-o Pao-yeh ching*.

Whatever the case may be, it is clear that from the very earliest days, both the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* and the *Pao-yeh ching* were regarded as similar texts. Now, if we were to assume that the *Ta-cheng ch'i-hsin lun* was the composition of one of the masters in the Southern branch of the Ti-lun tradition, then we would be obliged to acknowledge that the *Chan-ts'a shan-o pao-yeh ching* is from the hand of a master from this same school. These problems have already been discussed in detail in my work, the *Daijō-kishin-ron no kenkyū* (*A Study of the Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*). If this above conclusion is accepted, then it is clear that the Pure Land faith came to be viewed with increasing importance among the masters of the Ti-lun tradition.





## BOOK REVIEWS

***Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism.* By Judith Simmer-Brown. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2001. xxv, 404 pages. Hardcover, \$29.95; paperback (2002), \$18.95.**

**Susan M. Abbott**

Starr King School for the Ministry

In *Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism*, Judith Simmer-Brown explores many aspects of one of the more compelling, complex, and misunderstood figures of Tibetan Buddhism—that compassionate, fierce, powerful, and transforming group of female wisdom energy beings known as *ḍākinī*-s. Simmer-Brown takes her title from the fact that *dzogchen* is a “whispered tradition” with instruction transmitted via the breath in the whispering voice of the teacher. The *ḍākinī*'s warm breath implies a quality of intimacy, the closeness to be able to hear the whisper, to feel the warmth, and the essential juicy truth of the teaching. To understand the *ḍākinī* is to understand the deepest wisdom of the *dzogchen* tradition in this intimate way, for according to Simmer-Brown, the *ḍākinī* represents “the inner wisdom mind” of the tantric practitioner. In this tradition, “every word of Vajrayāna is the *ḍākinī*'s breath” (p. 290) and it is a gift of the tradition's innermost wisdom.

By introducing the student to the *dakini*, the guru is introducing his or her own realization and the treasury of the lineage's realization as no different from the student's (p. 96).

Simmer-Brown characterizes her methodology as “wildly messy,” taking her information from a wide variety of sources: oral teachings, personal practice, hagiographic literature, sutras, *tantras*, *sādhana*s, commentary, history, interviews, and conversations. She is also influenced by academic studies of gendered symbols in various religious traditions, which inform her understanding of patterns and meaning in *ḍākinī* lore. This eclectic approach combines to make *Dakini's Warm Breath* an interestingly readable and rich piece of scholarship. The *ḍākinī*-s that inspire her work personify:

... the spiritual process of surrendering expectation and concept, revealing limitless space and pristine awareness. While her feminine face drew me inward, what I have found is far beyond gender concerns. She is a powerful religious phenomenon, a fertile symbol of the heart of wisdom to be realized personally by every practitioner and to be respected and revered throughout the Tibetan tantric tradition. Her manifestations and meaning are profound, experiential, and hidden from rational strategy. Yet she appears everywhere in tantric literature and practice, mystifying and intriguing all tantric practitioners (pp. xv–xvi).

This study of *ḍākinī*-s in their myriad symbolic and human dimensions sheds much needed light on *ḍākinī* identity, power, and significance. Because *ḍākinī*-s are metamorphic, shape-shifting, mood-shifting, taboo-breaking beings, understanding them can help bring new perspectives to the study of gender and the role of psychosexual dynamics in spiritual development. *Ḍākinī*-s embody qualities that defy conventional stereotypes about the proper qualities and functions of women. *Ḍākinī*-s come in a variety of shapes and sizes: Prajñāpāramitā or Yum Chenmo, the Mother of All the Buddhas, along with being a text is also a deity, is a *ḍākinī*; Tārā in her twenty-one forms and her retinue, all *ḍākinī*-s; Ekadzati, the one-eyed, one-breasted protector of the *dzogchen* tradition is a *ḍākinī*; Vajrayoginī, the Queen of the *ḍākinī*-s, naked except for a few ornaments and surrounded by flames, is a *ḍākinī*. Animal-headed, human-bodied beings such as the cow-faced Vajravarahi and the lion-headed Simhamukha are *ḍākinī*-s. Historical women, realized practitioners such as Princess Maṇḍārāva, Yeshe Tsogyal, and Machig Labdron—*ḍākinī*-s all. *Ḍākinī*-s can still the mind in its everyday busyness for they can facilitate moving us beyond concepts in open awareness.

Simmer-Brown explains four levels in which *ḍākinī*-s exist: the secret *ḍākinī* which she calls “the great mother” *ḍākinī*; the inner *ḍākinī* or “visionary queen”; the outer *ḍākinī* as the “body of bliss”; and the outer-outer *ḍākinī*, that is, the human *ḍākinī*.

### The Secret *Ḍākinī*

In Vajrayana the Mother is said to be powerful because of her unique abilities to express the vast, awesome, limitless and (genderless) nature of emptiness. And the dakinis are transmitters of the radical realization of emptiness in all levels of manifestation (p. 115).

A reported conversation between Machik Labdron (the great saint, teacher, and founder of the Chod lineage) and Tārā illustrates the qualities

of the secret *ḍākinī* who is the primordial mother Prajñāpāramitā/Kuntuzangmo.

She is the ultimate nature of all phenomena, emptiness, the essence of reality [*dharmatā*] free from the two veils. She is the pure expanse of emptiness, the knowledge of the non-self, the matrix that gives birth to all the buddhas of the three times (p. 83).

While this principle is spoken of as feminine / mother / *yum* in the Tibetan tradition, Simmer-Brown points out that this principle is simultaneously gender-inclusive (both male and female) and beyond gender, so as to be in some ways intersexual and transgendered as well as asexual. *Ḍākinī*-s are also inter-species, in their combined animal and human forms. Simmer-Brown clarifies that this feminine principle is not to be confused with the mother goddess or the matriarchal traditions that prevail in other South Asian traditions, where a figure such as Kālī is associated with fecundity and materiality. The secret *ḍākinī*, primordial wisdom-mother in Tibetan Buddhism, is “associated with emptiness (*sunyata*) and the wisdom that sees the fundamental truth of how things really are” (p. 84). Milarepa says, “I’ve realized that just as mere knowledge of food doesn’t help a hungry man, it’s not enough to understand the goal of emptiness (intellectually); one must cultivate (its direct experience) repeatedly” (p. 89). *Ḍākinī*-s are most expedient allies in cultivating realization. In this way, the secret *ḍākinī* is the realized primordial wisdom-mind of the practitioner, whether that practitioner is male or female. In many ways the *ḍākinī* is the path, the goal, and the fruit simultaneously.

### The Inner *Ḍākinī*

Simmer-Brown describes the inner *ḍākinī* in the context of the *maṇḍala*: as beings who help practitioners overcome obstacles, and as protectors and presences in a world system where they play a very dynamic part. Simmer-Brown refers to the *maṇḍala* as the “complete environment of the universe as it is, physically, psychologically, and spiritually for the practitioner who has been introduced to wakefulness” (p. 117).

The inner *ḍākinī* is a visionary who rids us of mental fictions and facilitates spiritual transformation. Through meditation, dreams, and visions, the inner *ḍākinī* can open practitioners to the sacredness of all aspects of life. In classical art she is often naked except for a few ornaments. She wears a necklace of skulls, holds a skull cup brimming with blood in one hand, and a double-edged knife in the other. She appears with her right leg raised and appears to be dancing, ready to jump into action, crushing a corpse under her foot. Simmer-Brown explains her as the *ḍākinī* who:

... gazes into unfathomable space, and her body itself is luminous, empty of solidity. She embodies the teachings of emptiness in a uniquely Vajrayana way: she is the manifestation of coemergent wisdom, the all-inclusive wisdom generated in meditation. She captures the totality of the practitioner's mind, bringing both poles of attraction and revulsion directly to the path of realization. She cannot be conceptualized or categorized. She stops the mind (p. 132).

She is the *ḍākinī* of the charnel ground who, as a witness to death and decay, embodies the transformational truth of meditations on impermanence. Where much of our thinking around human behavior at such horrific sites tends to be of the "fight or flight" school, *ḍākinī*-s are of the "tend and befriend" school. According to tantric lore many *ḍākinī*-s were born in the charnel ground or reared there. Simmer-Brown tells the story of Kalasiddhi, a female infant who was left at the charnel ground with the mother who had died giving birth to her, as was the custom when women died in childbirth where the issue was a female child. The *yoginī* Maṇḍāravā, disguised as a tiger, found this child suckling at her dead mother's breast, and gave her to suckle her own tiger's breast milk. Feeding herself and the infant off of the dead mother's corpse, the child grew, became a weaver, was initiated into the *maṇḍala* of Vajrasattva, and became a *ḍākinī* herself.

Charnel grounds are seen as powerful places of Vajrayāna practice because the practitioner may use them to transform terror and fear of death into awakening. Simmer-Brown cites Padampa Sangye, Machik Labdron's mentor, as saying, "At first, to be fully convinced of impermanence makes you take up the dharma, in the middle, it whips up your diligence, and in the end it brings you to the radiant dharmakaya" (p. 124). In Vajrayāna practice, when the practitioner stays present and maintains discipline through fear and terror, releasing self-cherishing, it is then that Simmer-Brown says that the inner *ḍākinī* is at work providing nourishment and support. The inner *ḍākinī* is a symbol of transmuting pain and fear. Simmer-Brown points out that coemergent wisdom that arises out of the activity and experience of the inner *ḍākinī* is the great bliss of collapsed dichotomies. This wisdom is inner, inherent in each of us, the natural quality of nondual awareness.

### The Outer *Ḍākinī*

The outer *ḍākinī* manifests subtly, energetically in the physical bodies of real live, flesh and bones, men and women. Tibetan Buddhist views of the body and embodiment differ in significant ways from those currently circulating in biology, medicine, social science, theology, and feminist thought in the West. Simmer-Brown explains the view of the human body

as a *maṇḍala* of winds, channels, drops, and *cakras* of the subtle body that animate our grosser form. At each power point in the body, *ḍākinī*-s are at work. She says that “spiritual seeking fully engages bodily experience” (p. 162). The author discusses aspects of yoga and yogic practice where the *ḍākinī*-s manifest with an acknowledgment of the particularity of relationship of women to *ḍākinī*-s.

### The Outer-Outer *Ḍākinī*

In her discussion of the outer-outer *ḍākinī*-s, that is, human *ḍākinī*-s, Simmer-Brown shows the *ḍākinī* in ordinary lives and takes the opportunity to explore some of the more controversial and perplexing questions of human embodiment. How do we liberate desire and turn its intelligence and intensity toward awakening for ourselves and others? She cites the *Hevajratantra*, “that by which the world is bound, by that same its bonds are released” (p. 213). The *tantra* takes the Buddha’s realization of the truth of desire, aversion, and delusion as causes of our malaise and says that the key to liberation is contemplating, understanding, and working with these very factors, rather than running away from or banishing them. All is fodder for practice, including sexuality. *Ḍākinī*-s, on all levels, including the human, have the ability to accelerate the removal of obstacles through many methods including sexual yoga.

### Summary

Simmer-Brown tells the *ḍākinī* story partly through the lens of her own experience as a woman who has weathered gender inequities in academia and appreciates some of the opportunities that feminist activism and scholarship have opened up for women. She includes a critique of some psychological and gender-biased interpretations of *ḍākinī* lore that have perpetuated misunderstanding. For example, Jung’s theory of the contrasexual animus/ anima is often treated simplistically as a dichotomy of all gendered symbols, making any female representation symbolic of all qualities socially stereotyped as “feminine.” If one were to interpret the *ḍākinī* in terms of this dichotomy (as has been done for example by Herbert Guenther), such an interpretation would miss the complexity of the nondual principle which Simmer-Brown asserts is the core meaning of the *ḍākinī*.

Feminist critiques of *ḍākinī* lore point to the fact that what we know of *ḍākinī*-s is largely from the male point of view as the *ḍākinī*-s serve male deities and practitioners. The *yab-yum* (father-mother) iconography of sexual coupling found in Tibetan art, to the best of my knowledge, is exclusively heterosexual and in these sacred unions we never see the face of the female. Her back is always towards the viewer. This Tibetan Buddhist equivalent of the “missionary position” begs the question to the

contemporary observer—for a tradition that theoretically goes through and beyond the limitations of our gendered human bodies, that realizes that ultimately we are neither male or female, when it comes to enlightened energies, which both Prajñāpāramitā and Tārā symbolize, how is it that we never see sacred art expressing their union? Who has ever heard of the *sādhana* where practitioners are taught to visualize the “nectar” of their sacred union pouring over them? While Simmer-Brown does not really address or answer that question in her work, she indicates an important direction for further research and scholarship.

What remains to be done is a serious application of the tantric principles of heruka and wisdom dakini to homosexual identity and relationship, and to the study of embodiment (p. 289).

To that I would add the need for study as to the application of these principles for other expressions of sacred sexuality transgendered, intersexual, bisexual, and asexual identity and relationship as well. Little is known about who and how the *ḍākinī*-s are unto themselves, among other *ḍākinī*-s, and for female yoginis. Stories abound about the fabulous “*ḍākinī* feasts” where they gather amongst themselves in raucous and joyful revelry, indicating some kind of *ḍākinī* sisterhood. But these proceedings are shrouded in secrecy as *ḍākinī*-s are said to speak their own special language that the uninitiated are unable to fathom. For a philosophical and practical framework that sees our primordial ground of being as one of vast open space, one can imagine that there might be room for honoring the sacredness of myriad forms of sexual expression.

Simmer-Brown is sensitive to the fact that while Western scholars and practitioners have been intrigued, perhaps even titillated, by the *ḍākinī* phenomena, the holders of the Tibetan lineages have become very protective of the *ḍākinī*-s. These sky-going, space-traveling women are, in a way, the holy of holies of this tradition.

The dakini lore is one of the most revered and guarded of Tibetan esoteric symbolic teachings. Many diaspora Tibetan lamas have become concerned about interpretations they have encountered among Western observers, especially on topics as vulnerable to feminist scrutiny as the dakini and related understandings of sexuality. These lamas have seen their most sacred understandings interpreted through the lens of feminist critique in destructive ways that they feel denigrate the lama, the profound practices, and the effectiveness of teaching environments in the West (p. xviii).

That question persists of how we can respect a tradition, revere it even to the points of practice and realization, yet still keep our critical wits about



us to raise questions when we are disturbed by aspects of authority, hierarchy, and secrecy that have been problematic.

Given the powerful *ḍākinī* tradition that Simmer-Brown elucidates, how and why is it that we have or know so little about any lineages of female teachers? Women are recognized as having full spiritual potential in the Buddhist traditions, yet they have often been barred from leadership positions in institutional life. We are told “the dharma is neither male nor female,” and “there are no women in the Sukhāvātī heaven.” Buddhist tradition is rife with stories of women who are on the verge of enlightenment, who, if they practice seriously enough to come back in a male body, will achieve enlightenment in the next life. And, there is that privileging of scholars that Anne Klein speaks of in her experience that has given some Western women access to teachers and teaching that would rarely happen for women indigenous to the culture.

Until 1993, I had never met a female Tibetan teacher. All my Tibetan or other Asian teachers were male. My own position whether staying in a Tibetan monastery in India or engaging in discussions with monk-scholars in this country, was anomalous insofar as I had the kind of access to study, instruction, and personal interaction that only males would traditionally have in Tibetan culture. To be a scholar in a monastery is a male role, no matter what kind of body is involved (Anne C. Klein, *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1995], p. 19).

The religious and cultural cross-fertilization that has happened in the last fifty years when the lamas of the Tibetan diaspora have brought the *dzogchen* teachings to the West has been an enriching one indeed. We begin to know one another. *Dakini's Warm Breath* has earned the highest ranking among publications by Western women writers in the last decade, such as Anne Klein's *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen*, Tsultrim Allione's *Women of Wisdom*, Miranda Shaw's *Passionate Enlightenment*, and June Campbell's *Travelers in Space*, that have described and interpreted aspects of *ḍākinī* life and literature, and have explored the ramifications of this phenomena for that distinctively human project of spiritual development and identity.

***The Dzogchen Primer: Embracing the Spiritual Path According to the Great Perfection.* Compiled and edited by Marcia Binder Schmidt. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2002, xvii, 310 pages. Paperback: \$17.95.**

### **Randall Studstill**

San Jose State University

As the Western fascination with Tibetan Buddhism continues to grow, one Tibetan Buddhist movement seems to be attracting special attention: the "Great Perfection," or *dzogchen* (also transliterated as "rDzogs-chen" and "Dzokchen"). Many Tibetan Buddhist teachers (Nyingmapas in particular, but also the current Dalai Lama, a Gelugpa) consider *dzogchen* the ultimate, most advanced form of Buddhist practice. Though the tradition is complex, encompassing a variety of movements and trends, most of its forms tend to emphasize a few, basic themes. At the level of view, for example, *dzogchen* teachers often insist that one is primordially pure from the very beginning. At the level of path, they claim that the highest practice is "doing nothing" or "letting be."

Buddhism, in its more traditional forms, is a renouncer tradition, and like other renouncer traditions, practicing it involves a good deal of inconvenience; most forms of Buddhist practice are not comfortable (see Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's comments on p. 132). For Westerners interested in Tibetan Buddhism, the discomfort is compounded by the cultural foreignness of its symbols and rituals, the nondemocratic, non-egalitarian ideal of guru devotion, a pantheon of "deities" (some of which appear quite hideous), and a traditional cosmology replete with hell realms and hungry ghosts. Given these aspects of the tradition, a Western attraction to *dzogchen* is understandable. Without having to do anything (it appears) and without having to be involved with all those uncomfortable, somewhat embarrassing practices, rituals, and doctrines, one's self-image gets to glow in the satisfaction of being a practitioner of the "highest" form of Buddhism.

This approach to *dzogchen*, however, is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the tradition. *Dzogchen* is not practiced in a vacuum, but always engaged within the larger context of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. As practiced, *dzogchen* is never "just *dzogchen*." In a traditional setting, being introduced to *dzogchen* is the culmination of years of involvement with more conventional Buddhist views and practices. Neither is *dzogchen*, once introduced, intended to negate these traditional practices. Until Buddhahood, continued reflection on "the basics" (unsatisfactoriness, non-self, compassion, etc.) is almost always considered essential. To think otherwise is a form of self-delusion. As Tulku

Urgyen Rinpoche remarks, “One can fool oneself into believing one need only remain in simplicity. What this honestly means, though, is that such a person will have no spiritual progress” (p. 59).

This situation sets up ironic criteria for evaluating books about *dzogchen*. Presentations of *dzogchen* as a distinct tradition or movement may be valuable as scholarly projects and useful for the practitioner who already appreciates its history and traditional setting. But for a general, popular audience, or for those with limited background in the tradition, a book just about *dzogchen* can be highly misleading and promote the kind of misappropriation of the tradition described above. Depending on the audience, the best book about *dzogchen* is less about *dzogchen* than it is about the fundamentals of Buddhist views and practice considered by Tibetan Buddhists to be (1) the essential preliminary to *dzogchen* and (2) the ongoing context of *dzogchen* practice itself.

Based on these criteria, Marcia Binder Schmidt’s (ed.) *The Dzogchen Primer: Embracing the Spiritual Path According to the Great Perfection* is an important and welcome contribution to the popular literature about *dzogchen*. In spite of its title, the book has apparently little to do with *dzogchen*. And this is its strength. For all those who think *dzogchen* is hip and cool (and best of all, easy), *The Dzogchen Primer* is an invaluable dose of reality: a persistent and urgent reminder that until one has mastered the fundamentals of Buddhist views and practice, *dzogchen* can not be appreciated or practiced (see, for example, pp. 102, 104–5, 125–6, 175). If there is any one message of the book as a whole, it is this: *You must do (and keep doing) the preliminaries!*

The book is an anthology of Buddhist materials—the first volume of what will eventually be a three-volume series about *dzogchen* (presumably the next two volumes will focus more explicitly on *dzogchen*). Two types of materials make up the anthology: selections from classic Buddhist sources (Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, for example) and excerpts from books or lectures by modern Tibetan teachers (e.g., Chögyam Trungpa, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, and Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche). Most of the selections are well-chosen. The materials by modern Buddhist teachers convey Buddhist concepts in a comprehensible, informal, and often engaging style. At the same time, the reader is exposed to important primary sources, made more meaningful and accessible in relation to modern presentations. The selections are grouped by theme and arranged according to Tibetan Buddhist soteriological theory; doctrines and practices considered to be the foundation of the path are presented first, followed by progressively more advanced teachings. Schmidt’s organization specifically follows the approach of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, which is in turn based on the Tibetan classic, *The Light of Wisdom* (*Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo*, traditionally ascribed to Padmasambhava). The book’s organization is also

inspired by Gampopa's *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. (The editor presents the book as a "user-friendly" distillation of the teachings contained in both sources.) This traditional, hierarchical arrangement of teachings is not meant to imply the inferiority of the preliminaries compared to later, more advanced practices. As one develops spiritually, new teachings are incorporated into one's practice without abandoning the foundational views and practices, which are considered essential at every stage of the path.

The book begins with a preface by the editor and (in part 1) two introductions by modern Tibetan teachers that provide an overview of some of the topics addressed in the remaining chapters of the book. The authors stress that the purpose of Buddhism is transformation, which requires (among other things) having a solid intellectual grasp of the teachings and then putting the teachings into practice. As Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche suggests, Buddhism is not just an inventory of concepts, but a path to be lived (p. 10). Other themes touched upon in the introductions include: acknowledging the deludedness of ordinary consciousness; the importance of renunciation; the need for a teacher/guru, and the importance of faith in and devotion to the guru; the importance of compassion; and the "pure perception" of Vajrayāna. All of these points are presented as essential elements of the Buddhist/*dzogchen* path; to consider any of them "extrinsic" or "optional" negates the path's transformative potential.

These themes and others are then developed in parts 2 and 3 of the book, "Starting Point" (five chapters) and "Integration" (twenty-eight chapters), respectively. One of the primary topics of part 2 is buddha-nature: the idea that the true nature of the person is primordially pure, but is obscured by ordinary, dualistic consciousness. As the authors acknowledge, beginning with buddha-nature is unconventional (usually, it's suffering). The approach is defended based on the claim that understanding one's potential for buddhahood inspires confidence on the path and therefore functions as an important basis for all subsequent practices.

Having acquainted the reader with buddha-nature, the book builds on that foundation through discussions of a full range of beginning-to-advanced teachings on such topics as suffering and renunciation, taking refuge in the Three Jewels (as an act of faith, devotion, and existential commitment), the necessity of effort and diligence, *anātman*, the necessity of prostrations, *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, compassion and *bodhicitta*, etc. The selections on emptiness are helpful and include the classic presentation of the *Heart Sūtra* as well as modern explanations by Chögyam Trungpa and Thinley Norbu Rinpoche. Some of the discussion on emptiness may be challenging to the general reader, especially Thinley Norbu's outline of the different levels of Madhyamaka analysis (pp. 213–6). Occasionally the book touches upon more explicitly *dzogchen*-related themes, in particular, the esoteric/tantric presentations of taking refuge and

*bodhicitta*. Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche's stress on "non-distraction from mind essence" likewise expresses a *dzogchen* ideal, though he emphasizes at the same time cultivating devotion to the guru and faith in the Buddhist views (i.e., a firm conviction in the existence of buddha fields and hell realms, the law of karma, etc., pp. 178–80).

The overall quality of the entries is excellent, though I would dispute the editor's claim that the book as a whole is appropriate for beginners (p. xv). Most of the chapters are, but a few are little more than outlines of Buddhist paths/doctrines full of unexplained technical vocabulary and unlikely to be useful or comprehensible to anyone but an advanced student. Without a strong background in the tradition, a summation of the paths, *bhūmi*-s, and "factors of enlightenment" (p. 236ff) is useless. The glossary at the end of the book helps, but is incomplete. The book is also presented as a "practical guide" to Buddhist practice. While it certainly could be helpful in cultivating Buddhist attitudes, the specific practices described generally require the guidance and elaboration of a teacher. (See, for example, the "ceremony for taking the bodhicitta vow" on pp. 185–6. The visualization practice described on pp. 159–62 also requires a teacher or extensive familiarity with the tradition.) On the other hand, Schmidt hopes the book will be used in the context of a class or study-group led by a knowledgeable teacher (she includes "Facilitator Guidelines" at the end of book for just such a purpose). In that case, problems with the book's vocabulary and conceptual content could be addressed by the group's facilitator.

For a beginning practitioner, the most useful chapters are those by modern Tibetan lamas, discussing in a clear and sometimes moving style core Buddhist teachings on impermanence, suffering, death, karma, etc. Some of the best material in the book involves extended discussions of the four "mind changings," intended to promote a sense of spiritual urgency and establish an ethical foundation for the path: reflection on (1) the preciousness of a human birth, (2) impermanence and death, (3) the karmic law of cause and effect, and (4) the pervasiveness of suffering. Particularly powerful statements of the Buddhist views are Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's "Renunciation Mind" (pp. 102–7) and Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche's discussion of impermanence and renunciation (pp. 108–110).

As already indicated above, *The Dzogchen Primer* is not a book for scholars. There is no critical analysis of the tradition or attempt to historically contextualize any of the doctrines or practices. (Padmasambhava, for example, is presented as the author of a number of selections, without any indication that the texts are *terma* and what this means in a Tibetan context.) Schmidt, however, did not compile the book for scholars, but for practitioners. Her goal is to provide "a much-needed corrective to the many misconceptions and wrong views being promoted about *dzogchen* . . ." (p. ix). In this regard, the book is a success. The meaning of "simplicity" and

"effortlessness" is lost on the ordinary mind; on the other hand, these concepts gain the most profound significance for the mind trained in conventional Buddhist attitudes and practices. By guiding the reader in the cultivation of such attitudes, the book provides a strong foundation for an authentic understanding of *dzogchen*.

***Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School.* By James W. Heisig. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, xi, 380 pages. Hardcover: \$42; paperback: \$21.95.**

### **Peter Suares**

Graduate Theological Union

The aim of the Kyoto School has been to "introduce *Japanese* philosophy into world philosophy while at the same time using western philosophy for a second look at Japanese thought trapped in fascination with its own uniqueness" (p. 270). Heisig's stated goal is to introduce the thought of three principal philosophers of the School: Nishida's foundational ideas about nothingness, Tanabe's philosophy as their counterfoil, and the creative enlargements of Nishitani (p. 7).

Heisig's claim (p. ix) that his book is the first general overview of the Kyoto School and that there has yet been no study of it in the context of world philosophy (p. 279) is debatable—Heisig himself mentions a few precedents. But *Philosophers of Nothingness* may well be the most comprehensive presentation to date focused on the three main figures of the School. Heisig proposes to pursue two somewhat disparate goals: on the one hand, to let Nishida, Tanabe, and Nishitani speak with their own, Eastern and Buddhist, voices; on the other, to present them in a global intellectual context. By reaching these goals, Heisig promises to demonstrate the original contribution of the Kyoto School to world philosophy. He is well prepared to deliver on the promise. Intimate familiarity with both traditions allows him to recognize both the cultural uniqueness of the Kyoto School and the instances where he believes its three philosophers do not live up to their claim of creating world-class ideas. The book is well balanced, supplementing philosophical analysis with biographical and cultural background information from diaries, letters, and second-source commentaries, and offering critical evaluation of the reception of Kyoto-School ideas in Japan and abroad. The information is multi-faceted, impartial, well researched, and comprehensive.



Heisig's focus on three principal figures of the Kyoto School scales the topic down to manageable proportions. Absolute nothingness, the core concept shared by the three, provides a unifying thread. It is absolute nothingness, rather than a higher *being*, that functions as the ground for all things, "at once embracing and penetrating the inherent contradictions and relative nothingness at the limits of being" (p. 129). Heisig's attention to this foundational concept is particularly appreciated given the obscurities of thought and expression characteristic of his three subjects; it systematizes the book into a guide through what for many readers would otherwise remain a forbidding maze. Heisig offers a wealth of pointers to further sources of information on the Kyoto School, and steers the reader away from the poor Western translations. The material is organized around the logic of ideas. Heisig follows ideas "without paying too much attention to their dating or the development of their interlocking" (p. 49), and where helpful, "overlays earlier ideas with later ones" (p. 112). For Nishida and Tanabe, his strategy is to "avoid dividing their career into stages," and "instead to concentrate on recurrent themes" (p. 190). For Nishitani, it is to "focus on specific motifs. . . with a minimum attention to their dating or locating them in the development of his ideas" (p. 190). These disclaimers notwithstanding, Heisig does trace the rough lines of the evolution of thought in each of the three philosophers as well as the influences between them, and carefully distinguishes the particular contributions of each to the ideas they share; he also supplies basic chronologies.

The central segment of the book contains three sections, one on each of the thinkers. It is preceded by a single "Orientation," where Heisig describes the emergence of the Kyoto School in parallel with the development of Western philosophy in modern Japan. He describes the core assumptions of the School as inward-directedness (interest in the transformation of consciousness and preference for the direct experience unencumbered by critical logic or religious doctrine), the unity of awareness and reality, the latter taken "simply as it is," and an uncritical attitude toward Japan. A sketch of the history of the studies on the Kyoto School in the West is included.

The three sections forming the central part of the book are divided into chapters that are short (2–4 pages) and manageable, with the seamless transitions between them helping eliminate potential choppy. The last section is followed by "Notes," a seventy-page appendix serving as a commentary to the main text and a valuable resource of background data. It is to this section that Heisig relegates more detailed observations about the parallels between his three thinkers and Western philosophy. A disadvantage of this approach is the inconvenience of having to match multiple quotations dispersed throughout a particular chapter with their credits strung at the end of the corresponding section of "Notes." On the other hand, the reader may find it handy to have comments and notes in an



aggregate, rather than as footnotes disrupting the flow of the main text. A bibliography concentrates on the Western translations of primary sources and the Western secondary literature, but also includes a number of Japanese publications. Although not exhaustive, it is quite extensive and up-to-date, including some obscure but valuable items that an average reader would be otherwise unlikely to unearth.

The section on Nishida, like the two that follow it, opens with a good biographical introduction to its subject and an evaluation of his philosophical and literary style. At the outset, Heisig paints a picture of Nishida as something of a dilettante jumping from one idea to another, drawing his inspiration from quickly-read and half-understood Western texts; a man limited to a handful of ideas on which he rings the changes tirelessly throughout his life; and a hasty writer using an obscure style, who at times cannot understand his own texts when pressed for clarifications by the critics. Heisig sums up Nishida's first book, *An Inquiry into the Good*, as unfocused, awkward, and "wobbling," albeit with "daring and giant strides" (p. 40). All the flaws, Heisig assures us, are offset by Nishida's originality. The section tries to prove the point.

According to Nishida, individual consciousness can reflect on the absolute principle rationally, but at the same time, since it is itself a manifestation of that principle, it can also intuit it directly. This is not just speculation, but rather Nishida's philosophical reconstruction of the "pure experience" of Zen awakening. His central idea is that reality has a single principle: awareness. Originally a unity, awareness unfolds in time (p. 42), producing the seemingly disparate "I" and "world." That "I" is ordinary self-awareness, which is a secondary, undesirable formation that needs to be dismantled. With this accomplished, the objective world, the corollary opposite of "I," is also gone, leaving one to enjoy—within the now "true" self—reality in its pristine state, "simply as it is." In this condition, with both an identifiable knower and his/her object suppressed or transcended, the activity of knowing becomes identical to its content—"a seeing without the seer or the seen." Reality simply as it is represents the ultimately affirmative view of the world. Technically speaking, it emerges through a double negation, where the negation of the subject and the object is in turn negated. More precisely, the target of that second, absolute negation is the relativity of the first. The first negation does not completely efface the subject and the object, leaving behind their negative shadow, so to speak. It takes the second negation to eliminate this shadow and so to bridge the remaining gap to the absolute. The affirmation built upon this double negation is that of the absolute nothingness. Absolute nothingness is the source of reality, the ground of both the individual consciousness and the historical world. It replaces Nishida's first major philosophical idea, "pure experience," and its later incarnations as absolute will and (self-)awareness. Nishida, Heisig says, takes the idea of pure experience from William

James and then extends it into ontology, making it into the metaphysical principle based on the identification of reality with consciousness.

In Nishida's later philosophy, "absolute nothingness" itself recedes into the background while the thinker toys with new angles on his central insight, producing one ultimate principle after another: active intuition, body, self-identity of absolute contradictories, knowing by becoming, eternal now, and locus. Heisig demonstrates indirectly that virtually all Nishida's principles can be distilled to the unity of reality and consciousness, the unity made possible through the suppression of the subject and the ensuing disappearance of the object, which—as we saw earlier—results in the identity of the activity and the content of consciousness. Locus is actually not so much another version of this principle as the super-principle, the ultimate framework or ground for all the others. The self-identity of absolute contradictories (the logic of *soku*, or affirmation-in-negation), too, has a somewhat special status as a formal pattern at the base of Nishida's thought. The meaning of *soku* is close to "i.e.," "at the same time," or "and also" (p. 66). Heisig warns that "A *soku* not-A" should not be understood as "A is not-A" in a strict logical sense, for that would be "talking nonsense." Instead, it should be taken to mean "something like 'A-in-not-A is A'." We could perhaps also phrase it as "A is A in not being A." The intended meaning, Heisig says, is that a thing is truly itself only at a level beyond that of ordinary, dichotomizing perception, and that it maintains its identity not by virtue of its own substantiality, which would pit it squarely against the epistemological subject, but through relativity grounded in absolute nothingness.

To bring the elusive sense of Nishida's formula closer to the reader, Heisig attempts to elucidate it in the framework of Western logic. Are "A" and "not-A" (or, "A" and "A-in-not-A") contradictories, contraries, or correlatives—or do they simply coincide? Now, generally, the law of contradiction states that a thing cannot be A and not-A at the same time. Two propositions are defined as contrary when both can be false but not true. They are correlative if they are reciprocally related so that each implies the existence of the other. They coincide when they occupy the same place in space or time, or correspond or agree in nature, character, or function. Heisig initially suggests that "what Nishida calls 'contradictories' are often closer to what we might call 'contraries' or 'correlatives'" (ibid.). He does not specify the sense in which they may be regarded as contraries. But he does explain that the terms "A" and "not-A" can be thought of as identical in the sense of correlatives that, according to dialectical logic, "require one another and a common medium (or universal) to be understood" (ibid.). One correlative term entails the other, such as in the pairs self-other, life-death, and past-future. On the other hand, understood as the identity of strict contradictories, Nishida's formula would "offend the rules of logical discourse"—it would be nonsensical (ibid.).

And yet, Heisig reports that "surprisingly enough, [Nishida] seems to have been [intending his formula as a contradiction]." He believes that Nishida's purpose is, first, to refute "the subject-object dichotomy" and second, to "point to the basic contradiction between being and nothingness" (p. 67). As Heisig observes, Nishida fails in his first objective, the refutation, because the formula "*A soku not-A*," when interpreted as referring to subject and object, expresses but a simple identity in which one opposite is equated with the other. Rather than effectively refuting the difference, such an identity turns out to be "no better than, say, poetic or artistic expression in which things are allowed to run together." But, according to Heisig, Nishida succeeds in his second objective. If we understand the formula as a way of stating that each thing is a *coincidence* of the relative and the absolute, then the self-identity of the two terms that make up a thing expresses "the location of the relative world of being in an absolute of nothingness" (*ibid.*).

In summary: Although the two terms, *A* and not-*A*, are closer to being contraries or correlatives, Nishida insists on calling them contradictories; and his claim is legitimate insofar as one term coincides with the other, which is the case if one stands for the relativity of a thing, and the other for its absolute nihility. Now, if the reader finds that keeping up with the distinctions between contrariness, contradictoriness, correlativity, and coincidence has been no easy matter, our confusion may be compounded by finding that "we see contradictories and contraries coinciding in the world of being" (*ibid.*). Further, we will likely have trouble following the train of the argument *unless* we have grasped Nishida's understanding of the relationship between relativity and absolute nothingness. But in a circular way, the argument is unfolded *in order to* clarify that relationship. The definition of the relationship as collocation or "the location of the relative world of being in an absolute of nothingness" is helpful but vague. At the end, we seem to have little choice but resignedly to agree with Heisig's conclusion that Nishida's concept of self-identity of absolute contradictories reflects the difficulty consciousness and language have with capturing reality.

The next topic is art and morality, which Nishida considers to be two distinct self-expressions of the single absolute principle, the self-effacement of ego. Neither claims much of the philosopher's attention. The same is true for religion and God, and then again for the historical world, Nishida's theory of which Heisig assesses as one of the weakest points of his thought. Since the philosopher is interested mainly in history's place in the system of metaphysics, rather than in the analysis of historical processes as they unfold in time, he leaves a "gap . . . between the metaphysical ground of the historical world in absolute nothingness and the actual events that make up that world as we live in it" (p. 70). That gap is profound, extending from the question of history deep into the core of

Nishida's philosophy. For example, Nishida believes that things can be made to appear "just as they are" as soon as the operation of the ordinary self and its representation of the world as its object are suppressed. What gets eliminated in the process is the "I" as the "organizational, central 'point' in consciousness" that "grasps [the world] in perception and judgment" (p. 73). Taken as a recommendation to function in the world without organizing, perceiving, and judging, the idea is astonishing but consistent with Nishida's inattention to historical reality. But if the philosopher is trying to say that it is absolute consciousness that takes over the organizational activity, perception, and judgment of the individual—that the perceptual and other activities automatically restart on the absolute level—he leaves us in the dark as to the precise nature of this development. The doubt raised by this point is of a kind with the uneasy feeling one has about the tenability of Nishida's "pure experience." Again, on p. 76, Heisig describes Nishida's attempt to resolve the dualisms such as that between the individual and the universal or that between the historical and the absolute by structuring reality as a series of progressively more inclusive classes or universals, each embracing and determining its predecessor, with the ultimate universal, absolute nothingness, at the end. In effect, instead of the initial *two* worlds (historical and absolute), Nishida now offers us a *multi*-layered hierarchy. What Heisig does not mention is that this alleged solution only pushes the problem of dualism a step back. Structuring reality into multiple layers does not remedy the original dichotomy unless we assume that the degree of absoluteness increases stepwise from one universal to the next. But such an assumption would be equivalent to identifying universality with absoluteness, where a higher universal (or a larger class) is considered to be more absolute. Such identification seems to be unwarranted. Once we reject it, the idea of gradual absolutization becomes untenable. Instead, all the universals (classes) except absolute nothingness—which is the "universal of universals" or the "class of all classes"—must be seen as belonging wholly to the historical world. Absolute nothingness, on the other hand, remains absolute, an isolated, supra-historical entity in itself. The chasm between the two worlds, although camouflaged by the hierarchization of one of them, runs as deep and distinct as before; the mechanism through which the absolute determines the relative remains unexplained. Other examples of Nishida's indifference toward historical reality are his lack of interest in social questions, the dependence of his conception of culture on the metaphysics of nothingness (p. 87), and his unfortunate support of Japan's militaristic ideology during the war period. (Heisig's general observation here is that out of the three figures, only Tanabe's endorsement of Japan's war effort is formally built into the philosophy itself, while in case of Nishida and Nishitani, that endorsement represents little more than a "flirtation with Japanism" [p. 262]).

The next section of the book is devoted to Tanabe's "Gothic philosophical cathedral" (p. 112). Heisig organizes his discussion of Nishida's younger colleague around three points. The first is the dialectic of absolute mediation as applied to "Tanabe's crowning idea" (ibid.), the logic of the specific or species. The second consists in his political philosophy. The third is the philosophy of repentance and absolute critique of reason. Heisig's overall plan is "to show that [despite this diversity, Tanabe's] thought does present a total structure from beginning to end" (p. 112–113). The first few chapters trace the young Tanabe's interest in Kant, neo-Kantianism, scientific positivism, and phenomenology, and sketch his early ideas about natural sciences, morality, freedom, and teleology. Later, building upon the Hegelian model of reality, Tanabe develops a theory of absolute mediation, where "each thing and individual consciousness is at one and the same time its own self and an other to every other thing with which it interacts, and apart from this interaction nothing exists" (p. 117). Tanabe asserts that a thing is not simply itself but rather itself-*in*-other; that is, it represents affirmation-*in*-negation, for there is no pure affirmation or pure negation without its opposite (p. 118). According to Heisig, the crucial point in Tanabe's philosophy of mediation is not that "things are what they are because they are not other things, or that things are related to one another by not being one another," but rather that "these very relationships are always and ever mediated by other relationships. Nothing on its own relates to anything else directly, but always through the agency of other relationships" (p. 118). This not entirely lucid point becomes somewhat clearer in the subsequent discussion of the logic of the specific. Tanabe builds that logic upon the category of species, understood as a sociocultural substratum of a particular race, a mode of thought of an "ethnic society" that gives it its identity but also makes it a specific and, consequently, closed society. Only the category of the state, an absolute relativized through interaction with other states, can counteract the isolation of the species. In the period preceding the Second World War, Tanabe increasingly tailors his view of the role of the state to the taste of the national propaganda. Arguing that Tanabe's "political deviation resulted from a failure to examine his own premises and to heed his own warnings" (pp. 112–113), Heisig nevertheless tries to show the consistency of Tanabe's political thought within his philosophical corpus. One fourth of the section—a proportion similar to that in the section on Nishitani but larger than the one-sixth in the case of Nishida—is devoted to Tanabe's political involvement during the war. That includes a summary of several contemporary critiques leveled at Tanabe and a discussion of the moderate degree of the philosopher's ensuing "repentance."

After the war, Tanabe makes a constructive use of what bad conscience he has developed over his political behavior. The result is his *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. Negatively, the new thinking expressed in that book takes



Western philosophy systematically to task for its espousal of rationality. Having attempted to demonstrate the ultimate impotence of Western thought, Heisig continues, Tanabe proposes a positive alternative consisting in reason's submission to religion. Since one cannot expect reason to destroy itself, this must be accomplished through recourse to the Other-power. Embodied in Amida, the Other-power takes over from reason the burden of critiquing rationality. This point ties in with a subsequent chapter where Heisig expounds on the origins of Tanabe's divergence from Nishida and offers an interesting comparison between the two thinkers. The "true self" proposed by Tanabe, says Heisig (p. 171), is not Nishida's original state of awareness successfully undoing the damage wrought by discriminating consciousness, but rather one that, unable to escape its core delusions and finitude, rejects the self-power and gives itself over to the Other-power of Amida. Truth is attained at the point where the self realizes it can never attain it by itself. Regrettably, Heisig moves through this difficult but important point rather quickly, making do with a comment that although the awakening "does not dispose of the self's finiteness," yet "somehow" it reaffirms its existence (*ibid.*). Tanabe also differs from Nishida in their respective conceptions of pure experience. While the latter defines pure experience in predominantly subjective terms, Tanabe is unwilling to exclude from it the element of objective knowledge. This qualifies his philosophy as "objective idealism" in contrast to Nishida's "subjective" one (p. 113). Tanabe further criticizes Nishida for ignoring mediation as the dynamic basis of reality, and for slipping instead into contemplation of the "self-identity of absolute contradictories" which Tanabe sees as the static, Plotinian ONE in disguise (p. 315). Finally, there is a difference in the way the two thinkers approach absolute nothingness. While Nishida considers it—in the context of the true self—to be "seeing without the seer or seen," for Tanabe absolute nothingness expresses the non-substantial and non-mediated principle of mediation that constitutes the historical world, "almost a kind of *Élan vital*, a dynamic that keeps the dialectic of interrelatedness going" (pp. 121–122). Later in Tanabe's philosophy, absolute nothingness becomes "enriched by the idea of Other-power in Pure Land Buddhism" as discussed earlier. This transformation reflects the shift in Tanabe's philosophical interest between the earlier and later stages of his career. But if the Tanabe section abounds in such transformations and shifts, some at least can be accounted for simply by inconsistent or misleading terminology employed. One example is offered by the use of the term "culturism." On p. 123, Heisig defines Tanabe's understanding of it as worship and emulation of high culture from abroad. But two pages later, he speaks about "the closed mentality of contemporary [Taishō-era] Japan that showed up in its culturism." And on p. 194, we read that culturism is "the culture of autonomy" that characterizes the modern world, negatively infecting religious consciousness. Now, emulation of

foreign culture, closed mentality, and autonomy are at best unrelated, and at worst inconsistent, terms. Closed mentality can be associated with emulation of foreign culture and autonomy, respectively, only under the negative interpretation of emulation as concomitant with diffidence or obtuseness, and of autonomy as disregard for others. This interpretation seems to be substantiated on p. 147, where the specificity of the sociocultural substratum is said to "close the will to moral action in the name of ideals from outside" and oppose all mediation, and on p. 148, where the specific is nevertheless credited with offering a possibility of redemption from ignorance and "self-will" (which presumably are characteristics of culturism). We seem to advance a little in "Notes" on p. 316, where a distinction is made between the positive, metaphysical culturism and "the crude antipolitical and antisocial culturism that Tanabe saw as distinctive of Taishō thinkers." What seems to be relatively clear throughout these references is that "culturism" is related to specificity. But this does not help determine whether culturism is characterized by openness or closeness, for the terms "specific" and "species" are themselves multivalent and can carry either meaning. Heisig uses "specific" interchangeably with "a people," "society" or "ethnic society," "species" (e.g., p. 126), and "race." Confusingly, he keeps switching between the terms "nation" and "state"; on p. 320 we also read about "the specificity of society and nation." On p. 132, Heisig says that from Tanabe's very first essay on the logic of the specific, "it is clear that Tanabe saw nation as the necessary condition for salvation from the irrationality of the specific." But on p. 147, he observes that "Tanabe had never denied his initial position that the nation shares with the ethnic closed society that essential and permanent presence of *nonrationality* that is the mark of the specific," and he seems to use "nation" and "species" synonymously. For example, the context suggests that "nation" in the statement "nation loses the character of simple immediacy. . ." (p. 149, last line) is synonymous with "species." Yet, passages such as "nation as the salvation of the realm of the specific (a people)" (p. 147) show that the two are quite distinct. While it is possible that the variation in Heisig's usage of terms simply reflects the metamorphoses of Tanabe's thought, the book does not furnish sufficient evidence for such conclusion. The Tanabe section closes with a discussion of the philosopher's dialectic of death (the "death" of everyday self as a condition of awakening to true self) and a survey of his late publications on literature and aesthetics.

The following section of the book is devoted to Nishitani. Heisig credits this "first-rate philosophical mind" (p. 255) with bringing the Kyoto School to prominence, and applies to his output expressions such as "masterpiece," "splendid but demanding," and "a giant step in the advance of Japanese philosophy and religious thinking onto the stage of world intellectual history." Nishitani's thought can be reduced to a few basic ideas. As Heisig says, the Japanese thinker was not interested in



developing a philosophical system, but rather in finding a unifying standpoint vis-à-vis reality and then in deepening it so as to overcome obstacles to “seeing things as they are.” Nishitani’s motivation is overtly religious. His goal in seeing things as they are is to overcome nihilism born out of the upheavals of modernity. To achieve this, Nishitani believes, nonrational insight is required into the fact that reality extends below the subject-object dichotomy, to the level of bottomlessness that is common to both. That common bottomlessness or non-substantiality is the standpoint of absolute nothingness—neither objective fact nor subjective theory, but a level of awareness at which the two interpenetrate. Nothingness is a standpoint; although it makes a separate *self* (the subject) disappear, its concept is based on the model of *self*-awareness that serves as a paradigm of all reality. Nishitani labels this standpoint “true self” or “no-self.” In true self, we act out of our naturalness, and things are as they really are. Breaking through to deeper awareness opens a new dimension in reality, where things and problems obsolete themselves in their ordinairiness and open in their suchness. With this in mind, Nishitani talks about “overcoming nihilism by passing through it.” Nothingness is rediscovered in the world of being without destroying that world (p. 244), but instead deepening it; the salvific “other shore” is this very world (p. 195), and the process of spiritual ascent is achieved through descent into radical finitude (p. 219).

That Heisig makes these few pivotal ideas reappear in various guises throughout the Nishitani section is a faithful reflection of the actual spiral, recursive development of the philosopher’s thought. As Heisig rightly observes, “Nishitani was always looking for the same thing, and once he found it, he went out to look for it again.” The first name by which Nishitani called that thing was “elemental subjectivity.” An early synonym of absolute nothingness, “elemental subjectivity” is achieved in Zen meditation at the point when one lets “the bottom drop out” from under one’s ordinary consciousness based on the idea of a solid self. This is the leading idea of Nishitani’s mystically tinged first book, *A Philosophy of Elemental Subjectivity* (1940); it continues to occupy the philosopher’s attention, with variations of terminology, throughout his career. Proceeding to examine Nishitani’s ideological contributions during the war period, Heisig believes that the politically engaged thinker was—just like Nishida—out of his philosophical element (p. 262). Nishitani’s “abstract sermons,” as one critic put it, were out of touch with the concrete historical situation they were supposed to grasp, a situation symptomatic of Nishitani’s general difficulty in applying his theories to the problems of the actual world (p. 210). At the same time, Heisig cautions that “to dismiss Nishitani summarily for the statements made during the war, with no consideration of how he got through that position, is a far greater prejudice than Nishitani’s own prejudices had been” (pp. 213–214).

Next, Heisig examines Nishitani's idea of nihilism developed in the book *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*. The philosopher differentiates the European and Japanese nihilism, but blames both on the irreligious worldview fostered by the scientific progress. In Heisig's paraphrase of Nishitani, nihilism is overcome through recovering a will towards the future grounded in the past. This is to be achieved through plumbing one's spiritual depths, aided by the exploration of Buddhist nothingness and emptiness. Apart from this rather general recommendation, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism* does not present a working proposal for how to actually go about the task. Such proposal does not come until Nishitani's next major work, *Religion and Nothingness*, the discussion of which extends over three chapters in Heisig. Since "any genuinely philosophical problem needs to emerge from within oneself" (p. 217), *Religion and Nothingness* develops the problematic of nihilism in more pronouncedly psychological terms. According to Nishitani, the nihilistic process develops in stages. After realizing, in Great Doubt, the nihility of being, a nihilist on the way to enlightenment proceeds to nullify even that nihility, thereby arriving at absolute nothingness or emptiness. The double negation brings an affirmation of self and world. But now, seen in the perspective of absolute nothingness and true suchness, the former has been transformed into no-self and the latter, into things the way they really are.

Nishitani's approach is not without problems. As Heisig notes (p. 221), "that [Nishitani's final stage of no-self] is a higher and more real state is not self-evident from the start. By the same token, not every insight that Nishitani records along the way—including the reformulation of a great many western philosophical and theological ideas—is necessarily justified by his own passage, or even by the fact that it has a long tradition in the east standing behind it." Similarly difficult to justify is Nishitani's claim that from the standpoint of emptiness everything shows itself for what it is, but at the same unites itself with its opposite—fact with theory, the phenomenal with the noumenal, reality with mind. While Nishitani accounts for that unification on the ground that all oppositions are illusory, Heisig draws attention to the opacity of Nishitani's argument and its annoying circularity (pp. 223–224), which, as he notes, make this point one of the weakest in Nishitani's philosophy. Further, according to Nishitani, emptiness (associated with *samādhi*, a state of being mentally settled) allows one to act naturally, i.e., "in accord with the self-nature of oneself and all things. . . . This means that whatever is done in *samādhi* is done spontaneously, and not tailored to the form of one's personal wishes or even of one's ideals. . . . Behavior on this homeground of emptiness. . . is the spontaneous observance of a self no longer attached to itself so that it can 'realize' its surroundings" (p. 225). Although Heisig lets this passage go without a comment, we may disagree with the view implied here, that egolessness is our *natural* or spontaneous state.

Nishitani's essay published in 1962 under the title "Western Thought and Buddhism" may represent "Nishitani's way of thinking at its finest" as Heisig describes it, but it seems to bring little new to the idea of bottomlessness of absolute nothingness achieved in the state of non-self or true self. In the areas of ethics and history, again, Nishitani uses the same workhorse paradigm as a carrier of his solutions to concrete problems. Heisig is impatient with Nishitani's ethical remoteness (pp. 235, 236–237) and with his "ambiguity toward the ethical dimension of religion" (p. 238). Ethics is reduced to acting in accord with the self-awareness of non-ego (pp. 234–235). Reason, together with its application to concrete ethical problems such as social reform, is cast aside as an impediment to self-awareness (p. 237). In such view, "thou" or the "other" are reduced to a dimension of oneself ("no-self," in Nishitani's terminology); the I-Thou encounter is authentic only on the ground of nothingness (p. 234), and absolute enmity is absolute harmony. As Heisig is right to recognize, this borders on the nonsensical (p. 234). Similarly, "for many, if not most, of Nishitani's western readers, the chapters on time and history in *Religion and Nothingness* are the most dissatisfying because of their irrelevance to lived history" (p. 242). Nishitani believes that the problem of nihilism, embedded in the modern view of history, can only be overcome by a return to the origin of history itself, which is the "eternal now." There, "directly underfoot of the present," past and present are both transcended and made simultaneous—without destroying the temporal sequence just as it is. Nishitani blames nihilism equally on science, which he demonizes through oversimplification and clichés (p. 238). The solution Nishitani proposes is worn-out and disappointing: the scientific mode of thought is to be brought within the mind as a problem to be solved through an intrapsychic break to naturalness, which—as we have seen before—is the quality of something "as it is and of itself."

With advancing years, Nishitani is increasingly taken with Zen: "Zen examples fall into his texts fresh off the tree" (p. 249). But he tempers Zen's anti-rationalism by devising the concept of "imaging" through which the world appears in reason but without the substantiality of words and concepts and beyond the subject-object dichotomy. By creating an image of an object "on the field of emptiness," the subject senses the object in its immediacy; the image is both just an image and the object itself. Heisig makes it clear that "imaging" represents no revolutionary turn in Nishitani's thinking: "[T]he function of the image [was] never formally organized by Nishitani, nor did he go beyond these intimations to an interpretation of imagery that would have required some kind of symbolic theory. . . . One has to suppose that, as an old man who had found a position that basically sufficed for his inquiry into ultimate questions, he faced the twilight of his life with the almost ascetical refusal to distract himself in novelty" (p. 252). Here as throughout the book, Heisig's way of putting things is delightful.

Toward the end of the section, Heisig discusses Nishitani's views on organized religion and God. Nishitani's sees Western Christianity as intolerant, Japanese Christianity as not assimilated into the Japanese soil, and Buddhism as provincial, doctrinally and institutionally rigid, passive, and lacking a clear ethic (pp. 253–254). Nishitani believes that the Christian, personal God is an anthropomorphic projection of human attachment to self and being. It should be overcome by the true, impersonal God who embodies absolute nothingness and who opens in the enlightened awareness of no-self. Heisig is skeptical about "whether or not this method always works; one has the sense that the assumption of its applicability is more tacit than examined at times" (p. 245).

The pattern Heisig employs throughout the Nishitani section is to open a chapter with high praise for the philosopher and to close it with usually gentle but pointed criticism. In effect, Heisig presents the reader with a range of arguments as well as the opportunity to form a final opinion. Nevertheless, there are issues on which one may wish for a more decisive stand in the book. One such issue is Nishitani's psychologism, or turning of ontological problems into the material to be solved through a breakthrough to no-self. Heisig explains Nishitani's use of the Buddhist term *samādhi* as the common ground of mind and reality (p. 225) by the fact that "for Nishitani the structure of self-awareness is a paradigm of how all of reality is constructed," so "*samādhi* is not just a state of settled mind, . . . but the true form of all things as well" (p. 225). To justify this, Heisig suggests we accept Nishitani's invitation "to betake ourselves to the dimension where things become manifest in their suchness, to attune ourselves to the selfness of the pine tree and the selfness of the bamboo. . . ." (p. 226). One may or may not follow Heisig in finding this poetics "moving," but it is bound to be of little help as a key to the mechanics of Nishitani's idea of self-awareness serving as a bridge to the world of objects. And because such mechanics seems to be altogether missing, it is not easy to agree with Heisig that "the standpoint of emptiness entails an ontology and yet is not itself any philosophical position" (p. 226). On the contrary, it seems that Nishitani's standpoint is very much a position that does not add up to a coherent ontology. In fact, in his more critical moments Heisig recognizes this quite unequivocally. He characterizes Nishitani's effort "to delineate a conversion to the world in its 'true suchness,' a world that is neither subjective nor substantial but a 'middle way' that affirms itself in negating them both" as a *struggle* (p. 228). A few pages later, he also notes that "Nishitani's descriptions of the liberation of the self, or the encountering of true selfhood, are more mystical in tone than philosophical. . . . In this sense, Nishitani does not give philosophy an epistemology or ontology of the self so much as a permanent critique of all such ways of thinking" (p. 232). Heisig repeats this point later in relation to the Kyoto School as a whole. But

one regrets that these scattered observations do not evolve into a more systematic critique.

In the next section entitled "Prospectus," Heisig puts the central part of the book in perspective. We find here in a summary format much of the critical argumentation that was often only intimated before. The material is excellent, making one wish Heisig had used it earlier where he could have developed it in more detail. "Prospectus" opens with an outstanding review of the Kyoto School from several different angles. Heisig ranks the originality of the School fairly as below the greatest Western thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, James, and Heidegger. He also observes that compared with their contemporaries such as Whitehead, Wittgenstein, Foucault, Derrida, Habermas, and Gadamer, the Kyoto School "looks like something of an anachronism. What is more, a great many ideas in the philosophical tradition out of which Nishida, Tanabe, and Nishitani worked have been rejected" (p. 264; that last statement is tantalizing, for Heisig does not enlarge upon it anywhere in the book). Similarly, their contribution to the traditional Buddhist studies has been negligible. Their originality lies rather in "the appropriation of eastern ideas into western philosophy" (p. 260). Heisig notes that:

Nishida, Tanabe, and Nishitani do not really belong to the history of philosophy as we know it and under the assumptions that have dominated it up until now. Unless one is prepared to dismiss out of hand the idea of opening up western philosophy to the standpoint of world philosophy, there is literally no place to locate the Kyoto School properly. They have positioned themselves in a place as unfamiliar to the eastern mind as it is to the western. The question of locating them in effect questions the way we have located philosophies east and west. In this context, theirs is not a derivative contribution but something original and revolutionary (ibid.).

Heisig offers three good, although perhaps arbitrarily selected, suggestions for further research on the Kyoto School, by the same token pointing to the weaker spots of his own book: the relation between the three philosophers, the connection between them and the historical transformations of the day, and the central role of individual experience that the School holds up as the standard of truth and the foundation of philosophy. The last two points are particularly important since the disastrous engagement of the three thinkers in wartime events shows "the limits of a philosophy oriented to the contemplative" (p. 263). Heisig then singles out three topics as the suitable criteria for evaluating the place of the Kyoto School in the world philosophy (pp. 265–266). The first is their polyvalent notion of no-self, combining the soteriological, moral, and metaphysical



aspects, of which the moral one is distinctly underdeveloped. The second topic concerns the anthropocentric and subjectivist consequences of using the concept of self-awareness as a paradigm for the structure of reality, whereby the Kyoto School becomes the first culprit in what they criticize as the anthropocentrism of Western philosophy. The third topic has to do with the ambiguity of the notion "God," in which the School's critique of the Christian God intersects their own idea of God as a no-self approaching absolute nothingness.

In the course of the book, Heisig touches upon a few interesting, general questions. For example, to what extent should the Japanese philosophers be judged on their own terms rather than according to universal standards? In other words, is there an Oriental logic or only universal logic? Heisig endorses (pp. 36–37, 288) Nishida's view that there is "concrete" logic, or "a general sense of the principles of discourse" (meaning a Japanese logic), as separate from "methodological rules that distinguish a good argument from a bad one" (universal logic). Heisig never tries to prove the point directly. But indirectly he does a lot toward substantiating it, and his book is likely to convince the undecided readers that the "logic" of Zen and Pure Land mysticism does in fact constitute an alternative way to see the world.

Despite his emphasis on the idiosyncratic character of the Kyoto School philosophy, however, Heisig generally believes that its ideas are transferable across languages (p. 281). Perhaps this is why he discusses linguistic matters sparingly, to the certain disappointment of the readers interested in the Japanese equivalents of the key terms discussed. There is no substantial index of Japanese terms; only selected *kanji* appear, scattered across "Notes." For example, while explaining the meaning of the characters *kyō*, *gyō*, *shin*, and *shō* in Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* (p. 322), Heisig does not show the characters themselves. In the Nishida section, one looks in vain for the original Japanese for the English "self-awareness" and "active intuition." And commenting on Nishitani's play on the polyvalence of the Chinese character for *samādhi* (p. 224), Heisig simply, and rather unkindly, advises the reader to consult the glossary in the English translation of *Religion and Nothingness*. Another cause for mild irritation is Heisig's occasional use of German and Latin expressions without translation. For example, "a *gewordener Buddhist*" (p. 254; literally meaning "someone who became a Buddhist," but here used apparently in the sense of "a past Buddhist") is an English-German neologism, the meaning of which can with some effort be deduced from the context, but which would otherwise be difficult to trace by someone unfamiliar with German and the Kyoto School scholarship. However, the language of the book is one of its strong points. Heisig writes in a lively style that increases our enjoyment of reading without detracting from the incisiveness of the argument. The book is free from heavy and potentially misleading philosophical termi-

nology; Heisig uses terms such as existence, essence, phenomenal, noetic, etc., only when referring to Western philosophy or when reporting on a Kyoto School thinker as himself using the term. Nevertheless, *Philosophers of Nothingness* requires patient, close reading. Some passages are not clear, and the argument can get convoluted, becoming more understandable only from the perspective of a later discussion. This, I believe, is due mostly to the abstruseness of the *ideas* discussed. Heisig's *interpretations* are usually remarkably clear, and—as far as I can say—almost always justified and trustworthy, if occasionally tendentious.

Heisig writes authoritatively, despite being self-critical at times. Overt references to secondary literature are infrequent, except in “Notes.” He approaches his subjects with critical appreciation. He anticipates reader's objections, shows implications of the arguments he presents, and shores up the weaker points of the ideas under discussion by elucidating the unspoken or unconscious assumptions of their authors. Heisig defends the three philosophers when he fears their work may suffer from misunderstanding, for example, expressly refuting the reportedly common perception of Nishida's logic of absolute contradictoriness as “oriental mumbo-jumbo.” Another case in point is Heisig's sensitive analysis of the three thinkers' political involvement during the war era, which he considers from the standpoint of the integrity of their philosophical thought and without a trace of moralizing. He carefully reconstructs the interplay between various strains of their motivations, and does not justify or condemn their collaboration with the military regime; he simply tries to understand it. But when appropriate, he is mercilessly critical—of their “fair share of commonplace and ordinary ideas” (p. 261), convoluted style, unclear and inconsistent thinking, and superficial understanding of Western sources.

With respect to Western philosophy, Heisig's presentation is generally accurate and apposite. But occasionally, he stereotypes and oversimplifies. For example on pp. 66–67, while correctly drawing attention to Nishida's dependence on Hegel, Heisig reduces the latter's central notion of negation unfairly to the “idea that a negation clarifies the meaning of an affirmation” and concludes sweepingly that for Hegel “*all* [the emphasis is Heisig's] contradiction, whether in categories of thought or in social movement, is simply the manifestation of a deeper unity that gives them their reality.” On pp. 117–118, Heisig mentions “Nishida's concern that philosophical logic reach beyond grammatical form and rules of thinking to keep us in mind of the fact that there is, after all, an actual experiential world we are trying to explain, and that the mind that is trying to explain it is part of it.” This concern is occasioned by “Hegel's model” of reality as absolute relationality. By implication, this suggests that it is Hegel whose philosophical logic does not reach beyond grammatical form and rules of thinking into the actual experiential world. If this passage refers to the speculative rather than empirical nature of Hegel's thought, the opinion is



warranted. But it is a biased interpretation of Hegel to say that the philosopher gave no consideration to the experiential world in his philosophical logic. Heisig does not state this directly, and he does not report Nishida as doing so, either. But the misleading implication is strongly present. On p. 120, while discussing Tanabe's attitude towards Hegel and Marx, Heisig characterizes—presumably their—dialectic of history as “an ultimately meaningless hydraulics of energy flowing back and forth between self and other to give each its identity by negating the other.” The qualification “ultimately meaningless” in this caricature betrays a very curious understanding of the Hegelian or Marxist view of history. There are also ideas and passages (admittedly infrequent) that introduce new concepts without explaining them, and those that contain inconsistencies that appear to result from oversight. On pp. 44–45, Heisig suggests that at the time the 40-year-old Nishida published his first book, “[he] simply did not know Hegel that well. . . , and much of what he knew he got indirectly from the neo-Hegelian Thomas Green.” But on p. 313, he reports that “from early on, Nishida was. . . swept up in the imaginative power of the Hegelian system and its aftermath.” Of course, Nishida could have been swept by Hegel without knowing him that well, but I suspect this is not what was meant. On p. 108, Heisig says: “Tanabe made a clean break from what he saw as. . . the abstract dogmatism of German Idealism. Soon thereafter, in the course of two years of lectures on Fichte and Schelling his interest in Hegel was piqued.” Given the fact that Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, alongside Kant, are considered to be the chief representatives of German Idealism and are often characterized as abstract and dogmatic, it must be from them that Tanabe has made a clean break. So how could he have lectured on Fichte and Schelling afterwards? And even if we concede that one does not necessarily exclude the other, how are we to explain Tanabe's *positive* attitude toward Hegel after the break? Heisig's intention here is difficult to understand. The book also contains quite a few proofreading errors.

A more general problem—despite Heisig's objective and critical stance—lies in his reluctance to take his analysis of the Kyoto School philosophy beyond a rather general level. In all fairness, the book is called *Philosophers of Nothingness* rather than *Philosophies of Nothingness*. Besides, Heisig seems to be intent on making the text accessible to a broad range of readers. But the price to pay, as he himself modestly acknowledges, is that the general reader may find the book a tight fit, while a reader already familiar with the subject will find it too loose (p. x). The occasional casualness of Heisig's philosophical scrutiny is part of this “looseness” of the book. For example, when observing that Nishida inversed the “logic of self-consciousness that he met in western thought” (p. 52), Heisig does not specify which Western thought he means. In his discussion of Nishida's philosophy of the Absolute as pure awareness, Heisig does suggest that

Hegel's notion of "Absolute Mind" and William James' *Essays in Radical Empiricism* exerted an influence on the Japanese philosopher. But although Heisig offers a good summary of James in this context, he leaves us in the dark regarding Hegel and his idea of Absolute—an idea without an understanding of which we will not be able to put Nishida in the right perspective. That is, we learn about the Hegelian parentage of Nishida's thought, but we are not adequately informed about what Hegelianism means (and it can mean a very broad range of things), either for Nishida or for Heisig. In another instance, when discussing Nishida's idea of will in reality and consciousness, Heisig writes: "[Nishida says] that 'It is not so much that I give birth to my desires, but that the motivation of reality is me'; and later on: 'The will is a fundamental unifying activity of consciousness, . . . a power of the self.' In the years ahead he will take these ideas further to see will, in this broad sense of a fundamental life force, as an absolute principle more fundamental than consciousness, in fact almost a rethinking of the idea of pure experience" (p. 46). This point in the book would significantly benefit from a comparison with Schopenhauer, whether Nishida consciously drew on his ideas or not. Yet, Heisig's reference to Schopenhauer, while not entirely absent, is limited to a single paragraph in "Notes" (p. 292). Without an adequate comparative analysis, we will not be in a position to know what new ideas, if any, Nishida's theory of absolute will has to offer the post-Schopenhauerian audience. Similarly, Heisig's discussion of Nishida's and Tanabe's conception of identity through opposition (pp. 81, 103, 117)—the more pronounced the opposition, the stronger the identity—is incomplete without a reference to Spinoza's insight that every determination is a negation, an idea that has influenced generations of European philosophers including the German Idealists who exerted such an enormous influence on the Kyoto School. Heisig's procedure may satisfy readers well versed in Western philosophy, those who can fill in the gaps for themselves. Others may walk away from the book without having understood some of its crucial passages. In the end, the scarcity of adequate comparative analyses makes it difficult for Heisig to keep his promise of showing the place of the Kyoto School thought in the world philosophy. Incidentally, Heisig points to that promise as the reason for "eliminating nearly all excursions into Buddhist thought." (On the occasions where he does mention the Buddhist roots of the Kyoto School, he refers to them for the most part *en bloc* as "Zen, Pure Land, Keron, and Tendai Buddhist ideas" [pp. 25, 219, *et passim*], or "Eastern metaphysics" [p. 58].) Heisig justifies this "glaring omission," which indeed it is, by his wish to remain within the framework of traditional philosophy. But by committing it, he deprives us of a view on a major facet of his topic.

On the back cover of the book, Jan Van Bragt is quoted to say that Heisig's intellectual stature allows him to relive the ideas of the Kyoto School and place them in the wider history of philosophy. I fully agree with

the point about the intellectual stature. But, although I also acknowledge that Heisig has succeeded in placing the Kyoto School in the wider history of philosophy, I am not certain whether he did enough to make us understand *where* exactly that place falls. It is one thing to generate creative ideas, but quite another for those ideas to be world-class. Heisig shows the former to be true for Nishida, Tanabe, and Nishitani, but he does not conclusively prove the latter. For example (and I have already given analogous examples earlier), what new ideas does Tanabe's theory of absolute mediation add to the post-Hegelian world philosophy? What does his religious and ethical thought teach us beyond what we already know from Pure Land Buddhism and Kierkegaard? Heisig does not tell us, but, to his credit, he often graciously acknowledges the omissions when they occur. For example, Tanabe's *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Heisig says, is a "dense book that defies abbreviation." If what Tanabe proposes appears to be an ordinary Christian theology, it is only because Heisig's abbreviation of his ideas has "eliminated both the full range and rigor of Tanabe's argument" (p. 159). Similarly in the section on Nishitani, p. 216, when relating the philosopher's analysis of the differential resolution of nihilism in Europe and Japan—an analysis essentially correct but apparently not particularly profound—he exonerates Nishitani on the latter count on the grounds that the philosopher has arrived at his conclusions "by a process of argument far too intricate to reproduce here." And again on pp. 221–222, we read: "So much is sacrificed here in the telling, not only of the careful way Buddhist and western philosophical ideas are interwoven but also of the existential feel of Nishitani's prose, that I am tempted to run page after page of quotation from the book into the text at this point. But even that, I fear, would not breathe the soul into the bare bones of this summary that Nishitani has inspired." Heisig may be right in principle, but I feel he is also being excessively diffident. I take the liberty of understanding this passage to mean that he finds the nature of Nishitani's excellence or originality difficult to determine. Such capitulation is disappointing given Heisig's facility with language and his superb command of the subject. In any case, the question of originality is to a large extent a matter of opinion, and besides, perhaps not all the readers will share the degree of my concern about it. Whatever their final verdict on this point may be, most should agree that overall, *Philosophers of Nothingness* is an outstanding commentary on the Kyoto School and a remarkable achievement of philosophical criticism.

***Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism.* By Richard M. Jaffe. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. xxiii, 288 pages. Hardcover, \$42.50.**

### Kanjō Asuka

The Institute of Buddhist Studies

In 1872, the Meiji government promulgated an unprecedented law, the so-called *nikujiki saitai* (clerical marriage and eating meat) law, lifted the ban on clerical marriage, meat-eating, and the wearing of nonclerical garb by the Buddhist clergy. The law stated: "[F]rom now on Buddhist clerics shall be free to eat meat, marry, grow their hair, and so on. Furthermore, they are permitted to wear ordinary clothing when not engaged in religious activities" (p. 72). This law symbolized one aspect of Japan's attempts at modernization—the separation of religion from state, as influenced by the West. At the same time, this law actively contradicted renunciant, or "home-leaver" Buddhism (*shukke bukkyō*), because its doctrines made no allowance for clerical marriage and meat-eating.

This book focuses attention on an area which few scholars have researched. The author, Richard M. Jaffe, primarily describes how the issue of *nikujiki saitai* emerged and developed in a crucial period of Japan's history, from the early Meiji through the beginning of the Pacific War in the late 1930s, and what kinds of arguments evolved from the various viewpoints on the issue. This book is divided into ten chapters.

In the first chapter, Jaffe takes up the situation of clerical marriage in the Sōtō school of Zen Buddhism as an example of a Japanese Buddhist denomination, and compares this practice with that of other monks in the Buddhist world.

This comparison reveals Japanese Buddhism to be an anomaly in relation to the rest of the Buddhist world, and Jaffe attributes this to the *nikujiki saitai* law. He then goes on to summarize each chapter. In the second chapter, he describes the origin of the notion of *nikujiki saitai* in the premodern era. This origin is against the historical background of strict deportment by all the Buddhist denominations (except the Shin denomination which already engaged in clerical marriage) that was imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate in order to maintain order.

In the third chapter, Jaffe discusses how, in contrast to the other Buddhist schools which were under strict regimentation in the Edo period, the government allowed Shin ministers to marry, which drew strong criticism from other Buddhist institutions. In order to advocate the validity of their practice, Shin scholars published a number of apologetics.

Jaffe argues in the fourth chapter that transformation of the social status of the Buddhist clergy was accompanied by the abolition of the social ranking system in the Edo period. This developed from the emergence of a new concept of "religion" (*shūkyō*), which was based on the Western conception of religion. The policy that separated religion from state led to the reform of the social roles of Buddhist clergy. Furthermore, attacks from Neo-Confucianists, Shintoists, Nativists, as well as Christians, put pressure on Buddhists to modernize themselves.

The fifth chapter focuses on the activities of Buddhist clergy in accommodating to the Meiji government's efforts to modernize the state, in resisting the spread of Christianity, and attempting to revive their clerical status. This chapter describes how their work enormously contributed to the creation of new religious policies.

In the sixth chapter, Jaffe examines the confrontation between Buddhist denominational leaders who tried to resuscitate the strict precepts, and others—such as governmental leaders laity—who argued that religious matters should be an individual issue and should not be under state control.

The seventh chapter continues the discussion of the sectarian leaders' opposition to the dissemination of the *nikujiki saitai*. Jaffe also explores how those Buddhist clergy who affirmed the *nikujiki saitai* concept modernized Buddhism in accord with modern concepts such as science, individual rights, or nationalism.

The eighth chapter describes the attempt of Tanaka Chigaku, a Nichiren priest, to reconstruct Buddhism in the modern world through the formation of a lay Buddhist denomination. Tanaka produced new Buddhist rituals to fit with the new lifestyle of a conjugal family. Although in contrast to Tanaka's position most leaders disagreed with clerical marriage, they also actively reformed Buddhism in order to suit the new conceptions of the importance of the family.

In the ninth chapter, Jaffe examines how the new generation of Buddhist clergy came to favor the *nikujiki saitai* through biological and medical arguments. He also provides a statistical analysis of clergy who actually married, despite the contradiction between their practices and doctrine. This chapter also introduces the problems of temple succession, that is, who takes over the role of clergy, and the social status of the wives and children of clergy. These issues are still ambiguous even in the present day.

In the final chapter, Jaffe summarizes all the arguments above and points out that the issues concerning the *nikujiki saitai* have not yet been resolved, and underlie the foundation of modern Japanese Buddhism.

Although one of the most important purposes of this book is to explore the impact of the *nikujiki saitai* law in modern Japan (which has not previously been studied in depth), Jaffe makes all the arguments richer not

only due to his examination of the discussion among Buddhist denominations, but because he also pays great attention to the peripheral circumstances surrounding the law, doing so in a balanced manner. As the contents of this book proceed in historical sequence, despite the intricate interlacing of the numerous factors concerning the *nikujiki saitai* law, Jaffe describes them thoroughly, drawing upon source materials in a comprehensive way. Nevertheless, since this book focuses more on developing an overall grasp of the historical situation of Japanese Buddhism, it does not delineate the doctrinal arguments in detail. This may not satisfy readers who are interested in doctrinal inconsistency with the *nikujiki saitai* law.

For instance, although Jaffe compares the state of clerical life in the modern world with Shinran's concept of "neither monk nor layman," Shinran's proclamation of this notion is based on the historical fact that his priesthood was taken away as part of the suppression of the *nembutsu* teaching. A distinction needs to be made between the modern struggle over these issues on the part of clergy of other denominations, and Shin thought, for which this was not problematic. I think that Jaffe may have superimposed Shinran's situation onto Japanese Buddhism in the modern period, based on the superficial similarities of the two in relation to meat-eating and clerical marriage. While the intent of the work is an understanding of Japanese Buddhism in the modern world, the incautious reader might be led to misunderstand Shinran's views on these concepts.

But again, the magnificent research of this book is groundbreaking not only in the Western world, but also in the world of Japanese academic study of Buddhism. Jaffe succeeds in illuminating the fundamental problem that almost all denominations have turned away from since the time of the Pacific War. This issue deeply relates to their identities. This is the requisite book for us to rethink what Japanese Buddhism is in the contemporary world.





## **BKD ENGLISH TRIPITAKA SERIES: A Progress Report**

In 2002, preparations are well underway for three additional titles to be published as the Ninth Set of the BDK English Tripitaka Series, which will bring our total number of published works to fifty texts in twenty-eight volumes.

The following volumes have thus far been published.

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 Deploring 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)  
 A Comprehensive Commentary on the Heart Sutra [Taisho 1710] (2001)  
 Two Esoteric Sutras [Taisho 865 & 893] (2002)  
 Lives of Great Monks and Nuns [Taisho 2046, 2047, 2049, 1063 and 2085] (2002)  
 Interpretation of the Buddha Land [Taisho 1530] (2002)

The next three volumes scheduled for publication, comprising the Ninth Set, are:

***Kyogyoshinsho: On Teaching, Practice, Faith and Enlightenment*  
 [Taisho 2646]**

This work is the magnum opus of Shinran Shonin (1173–1262), the founder of the Jodo Shinshu school, and a disciple of Honen (1132–1212), who was instrumental in establishing Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. A core text of the Shin tradition, the *Kyogyoshinsho* represents the most comprehensive discourse on the essentials of Amida's salvific power, which is applicable to all human beings regardless of their moral qualities or spiritual capacity. Shinran systemized and explicated the teachings and practice of Pure Land Buddhism inherited from its origins in India and China, and further enhanced the Pure Land teachings by presenting the law of salvation through the "Other Power" of Amida Buddha as the ultimate teaching of the Mahayana. The *Kyogyoshinsho* is a collection of 376 quotations from sixty-two scriptures, discourses, and commentaries including non-Buddhist sources, with Shinran's notes and commentary serving as introductions to the quoted material and summation and further explication of its main points. The translator has provided paragraph divisions and subheadings to further aid the reader, and an extensive glossary of terms and concepts essential to Pure Land doctrine.

**Two Nichiren Texts**  
***Risshoankokuron and Kanjinhonzonsho***  
**[Taisho 2688 & 2692]**

This volume includes two texts by Nichiren (1222–1282), founder of the Nichiren sect of Japanese Buddhism. The *Risshoankokuron*, or "The Treatise on the Establishment of the Orthodox Teaching and the Peace of the Nation," was written in 1260 as an appeal to

the Kamakura government, extolling the practice of the *Lotus Sutra* as the means to restore and preserve the peace and security of Japan, then in a period of political and social turmoil and, Nichiren believed, under threat of imminent attack from the Mongol conquerors of China.

The *Kanjinhonzonsho* was written by Nichiren in 1273, in exile in Ichinosawa on Sado Island. In this work, Nichiren aims to reveal the presence of the Most Venerable One, the cosmic Buddha of the *Lotus Sutra*, as the object of devotion for the attainment of Buddhahood through recitation of the name of the *Lotus Sutra*, *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*.

### **Shingon Texts**

***On the Differences between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings; The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body; the Meaning of Sound, Sign, and Reality; The Meanings of the Word Hum; and The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* by Kukai**

[Taisho 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, and 2526]

***The Illuminating Secret Commentary on the Five Cakras and the Nine Syllables and The Mitsugonin Confession* by Kakuban**

[Taisho 2415 and 2527]

This volume includes five texts by Kukai (774–835), also known as Kobo Daishi, founder of the Japanese Shingon school of Esoteric Buddhism; and two texts by Kakuban (1095–1143), founder of the Shingi (“New Doctrine”)-Shingon school.

The Kukai texts are among those traditionally regarded as his six most important doctrinal and philosophical works. *On the Differences Between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings* is a religious manifesto of the Shingon school, proclaiming its superiority over all other forms of Buddhism prevalent in China and Japan at its time. *The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body*, *The Meanings of Sound, Sign and Reality*, and *The Meanings of the Word Hum* form a trilogy traditionally considered to explicate the “three mysteries” of the body, speech, and mind respectively. *The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, perhaps Kukai’s last major opus, presents a phenomenology of the religious mind.

Kakuban’s *Illuminating Secret Commentary on the Five Cakras and the Nine Syllables* assimilates the teachings of the Shingon and Pure Land schools from the standpoint of the Shingon teachings

established by Kukai, while *The Mitsugonin Confession* is a brief verse of text of confession and repentance of transgressions that is still recited daily in Shingi-Shingon services in Japan.

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.

The Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research as well as the Editorial 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 Reverend Dr. Yehan Numata to make the teaching of the Buddha available to the English-speaking world. *Gassho*,

**Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research**

2620 Warring Street, Berkeley, California 94704 USA

Tel: (510) 843-4128 Fax (510) 845-3409

Email: [Manager@numatacenter.com](mailto:Manager@numatacenter.com)

Website: [www.numatacenter.com](http://www.numatacenter.com)

This issue of *Pacific World:  
Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*  
is dedicated to the memory of

**The Venerable Kakue Miyaji**  
November 18, 1908 to January 4, 2002

As a holder of the highest scholastic rank (*Kangaku*) within the Hongwanji, he greatly contributed to its academic advancement. As a teacher and supporter of the Institute, he left an influence on our students and faculty that will long endure. May we continue to reach for the horizons that he perceived.

## **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