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Foreword

IMRE HAMAR

'*Buddhism in Practice*', held in September 2018, was the third symposium jointly organised by ELTE University (Budapest) and Ōtani University (Kyoto). The first ('*Faith in Buddhism*', held in Budapest in October 2013 with its proceedings published in 2016) and the second ('*The Buddha's Words and Their Interpretations*', held in Kyoto in May 2016 with its proceedings published in 2021) were successes in light of recent pressure on both the humanities and religious studies due to an increasing emphasis on research into the modern, digital world. Although there had been break from these kinds of scholarly meetings due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the upcoming, fourth symposium in Kyoto ('*Enlightenment, Wisdom, and Transformation in the World's Religious Traditions*', to be held in December 2023) shows that the humanities and the study of religions march on.

This volume presents papers that cover a vast range of topics and Buddhist cultures in Asia. First, we have a special introduction to the Nichiren sect and its teachings and guidelines for the clergy and lay followers by Kyōkō FUJII, former president of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies (Kokusai Bukkyōgaku Daigakuin Daigaku, Tokyo), who is also the head priest of a Nichiren temple in Tokyo (Kodenmachō Minobubetsuin) and therefore presents a unique insight into both scholarly and practiced (or lived) Buddhism in Japan. There are three contributions from ELTE University, encompassing the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese traditions of Buddhism. We read discussions about the question of why Buddhism was originally only for monks by Ferenc RUZSA; Huayan thought examined through the influence of the *Dasheng Qixin lun* treatise by Imre HAMAR; and the developments in esoteric Buddhist ritual practices in Heian-period Japan by Mónika KISS. The researchers of Ōtani University also address Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Buddhist thought and practice. Their papers, presented here, focus on such topics as Kumārajīva's and Fayun's argument for whether *arhats* can attain buddhahood by Robert F. RHODES; Vasubandhu's views of 'listening to the Buddha's words with reverence' in his *Vyākhyāyukti* by Makio UENO; Daochuo's insights on the 'path of easy practice' in his *Anleji* by Michael CONWAY; Shinran's emphasis on 'other

power faith' by Masafumi FUJIMOTO; and contemporary Shin Buddhist acts, missionary, and charitable activities referred to as 'benefiting others' by Yasushi KIGOSHI. The study of Chinese Pure Land thought is further strengthened by Jakub ZAMORSKI, researcher from the Jagellonian University of Poland, who examines modern Chinese Buddhism and the impact of Western thought on it in the Republican era.

Consequently, I think that this volume is an important contribution not just to the continuity of philological examinations of old Buddhist texts, written in Sanskrit, Classical Chinese, and Classical Japanese, but also to the inquiry into modern Buddhist thought and practice in Asia.

KYŌKŌ, FUJII

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The Meaning of the Practice of Chanting in Nichiren Buddhism

Introduction

Shōdai 唱題 signifies the chanting of the title of the Lotus Sūtra. It is widely practiced by those Buddhist communities that believe in the Lotus Sūtra. To be accurate, you chant ‘*Namu myōhō renge-kyō*’ 南無妙法蓮華經¹ which consists of ‘*Namu*’ 南無 (‘devotion’), and ‘*myōhō renge-kyō*’ 妙法蓮華經 (Lotus Sūtra). Newly arisen religions in Japan² that believe in the teaching of the Lotus Sūtra often insist that this *Shōdai* benefits their believers in their lives. Now, let us see what Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282) thought and said about it, along with how *Shōdai* is understood in the modern age. Therefore, in this paper I consider the following three issues.

1. What kind of significance did Nichiren mention about *Shōdai*?
2. What are the common understandings of it by the modern scholars of the Nichiren doctrine?
3. How do the current believers of the Nichiren sect think about *Shōdai*?

¹ Japanese pronunciation of 南無妙法蓮華經, which is the Chinese translation of the title of the Lotus Sūtra.

² There are two movements in which new religions have emerged in Japan. One occurred in the Kamakura period of the 13th century (*Kamakura shin bukkō* 鎌倉新仏教), and the other after the Second World War.

The Historical Background and Outline of Nichiren's Buddhism

Nichiren began his Buddhist studies at the Seichō-ji temple 清澄寺 in Chiba prefecture at the age of 12 and chose to enter priesthood at the age of 16. Dōzenbō 道善房 (mid-13th century) was his mentor. Afterward, Nichiren studied at several temples in the Kamakura area. Then he moved to the Enryakuji temple 延暦寺 to study the Tendai 天台 doctrine. He moved back to the Seichō-ji temple at the age of 32. In that year, he founded his original style of Buddhism, which was based on the Lotus Sūtra and 'Daimoku' which refers to the title of the sūtra 'Namu myōhō renga-kyō' (the terms from Chinese translation by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什).

He started to acrimoniously criticise other Buddhist sects, whereby he suffered persecutions. Below is an outline of Nichiren Buddhism.

The Outline of Nichiren Buddhism

Nichiren Buddhism is one of the 'Buddhism renovation movements'. It is also considered to be one of the Buddhism sects that arose during in the Kamakura era³(1192–1333).

1) Even though he studied the Tendai doctrine at the Enryakuji temple, where priests learn esoteric Buddhism and Jōdo 淨土 Buddhism along with the Lotus Sūtra, he deemed that the Lotus Sūtra is the one and only supreme Buddhist Sūtra, and thus, he formed his original new doctrine based on the Lotus Sūtra.

2) From 1257 to 1260, the Kanto region where he lived suffered from massive earthquakes, droughts, and floods. In addition to that, the Japanese political world was confused due to the conflict between the imperial court and the Kamakura shogunate 鎌倉幕府. From the Buddhist point of view, that time was considered to be in the middle of Mappō 末法, where the teaching of Buddha degenerates. Based on this viewpoint, Nichiren attributed all of the confused situations to a lack of the prevalence of the Lotus Sūtra in society. Therefore, Nichiren criticised existing common Buddhist sects, including the Nenbushu 念仏宗 and Zen 禪宗 sects. He went so far as to write *Risshō ankokuron* 立正安国論, which he submitted to the shogunate in order to make the Shikken 執權 regent at that time believe in the Lotus Sūtra in order to settle the situation.

³ During the Kamakura period, monks who studied Buddhism at Hiei Mountain independently set up sects. For example the Jōdo sect, Jōdo Shinshū, the Sōtō sect, the Rinzaï sect, and the Jishū sect were established.

3) He later criticised other sects, including the Risshū 律宗 and Shingon 真言宗 sects. His actions elicited antipathy among Nembutsu believers, and they sued Nichiren for the sin of vilification. The shogunate arrested him and several times sent him to islands. He also fell victim of torrential attacks by Nembutsu believers.

4) The more he suffered persecutions, the more solid his faith in the Lotus Sūtra became. This series of sufferings motivated him to believe in the Lotus Sūtra and Daimoku, which is the very essence of the Buddha's Dharma more profoundly.

The Significance of Upholding *Daimoku* and *Shōdai*

In this chapter, I would like to dig into Nichiren's understandings of the five-lettered-title of '*Namu myōhō renge-kyō*' 南無妙法蓮華經, which means 'devotion to the Lotus Sūtra'. According to the *Kanjin honzon-shō* 觀心本尊抄, which he wrote while he was isolated by the Kamakura shogunate on Sado 佐渡 island. Nichiren says as follows.

「積尊因行果德二法。妙法蓮華經五字具足。我等受持此五字自然讓与彼因果功德。」⁴

The gist of these passages is that Śākyamuni Buddha's merit of practicing the bodhisattva way leading to Buddhahood, as well as that of preaching and saving all living beings since His attainment of Buddhahood are altogether contained in the five words of *myō*, *hō*, *ren*, *ge*, and *kyō* (*Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Dharma*) and that consequently, when we uphold the five words, the merits which He accumulated before and after His attainment of Buddhahood are naturally transferred to us.⁵

These sentences highlight his thought that

– *Daimoku* is, for Nichiren, not just a title of the Lotus Sūtra but also an inclusive expression that contains all of the Buddha's merit, such as practice as a cause and enlightenment as a result and that.

– Those who uphold *Daimoku* are all provided with the Buddha's merit. Nichiren also says as follows.

「不識一念三千者。仏起大慈悲。五字内裏此珠。令懸末代幼稚類。」⁶

⁴ Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 1965: 711.

⁵ Translation from Hori – Tanabe 2002: 146.

⁶ Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 1965: 720.

For those who are incapable of understanding the truth of the ‘3,000 existences contained in one thought,’ Lord Śākyamuni Buddha, with His great compassion, wraps this jewel with the five characters of *myō*, *hō*, *ren*, *ge*, and *kyō* and hangs it around the neck of the ignorant in the Latter Age of Degeneration.⁷

Nichiren insisted that *Daimoku* of the Lotus Sūtra, which Śākyamuni Buddha provides us with the great compassion, enables the ignorant people who are not capable of understanding the very essence of the Lotus Sūtra, a notion called *ichinen sanzen* 一念三千 (‘3,000 existences contained in one thought’), to obtain Buddhahood.

Similar remarks are to be found in the *Hokke shosin jōbutsu-shō* 法華初心成仏鈔 written in 1277.

「されば三世の諸仏も妙法蓮華經の五字を以て仏に成給し也。三世の諸仏の出世の本懐、一切衆生皆成仏道の妙法と云は是也。是等の趣を能々心得て仏になる道には、我慢偏執の心なく南無妙法蓮華經と唱へ奉るべき者也。」⁸

Buddhas in the past, present, and future attained their Buddhahood thanks to the five letters of *myō*, *hō*, *ren*, *ge*, and *kyō*. The purpose of the advents of these Buddhas is to help all sentient beings attain Buddhahood which can only be achieved by the power of the Lotus Sūtra. Therefore, you should well understand this and keep chanting ‘*Namu myōhō renge kyō*’ without the sense of self-conceit or attachment.

When it comes to the aspect of actual practice, Nichiren placed *Shōdai* as a genuine practice. Nichiren wrote in *Jūhachi enmanshō* 十八円満鈔 in 1280 as follows:

「所詮入末法。天真独朗之法門無益也。助行可用也。正行唯南無妙法蓮華經也」⁹

In the *Mappo* era, where people’s abilities degenerated, lofty laws of truth do not work. These laws must be supplementary practices to the genuine practice which is ‘*Namu myōhō renge kyō*’.

This excerpt made it clear that *Daimoku* is the genuine practice that fits the present time *Mappō* 末法. This is also a criticism of the Jōdo sect, which places *Nembutsu* as the genuine practice. Nichiren clearly expressed what he thinks about *Daimoku* and what he deemed as the genuine practice.

⁷ Translation from Hori – Tanabe 2002: 164.

⁸ Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 1965: 1432.

⁹ Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 1965: 2143.

The Current Significance of *Shōdai*

For Priests of the Nichirenshū Sect

In the contemporary Nichiren sect, how is chanting practice located in doctrine and practice inside? Here is a list of points that address the question.

1) According to the doctrine of the current Nichiren sect, *Shōdai*, which is a practice whereby practitioners chant 'Namu myōhō rege kyō' is placed at the center of all the practices.

The *Shūgi taikō tokuhon* 宗義大綱読本, which is a commentary to the *Nichirenshū shūgi taikō* 日蓮宗宗義大綱, says that 'belief' 信 and 'practice' 行 are indivisible.¹⁰ In addition, it also notes that 'upholding the Daimoku' is the genuine practice, while it places 'Reading', 'Reciting', and 'Transcribing' as supplementary practices, 'Upholding the *Daimoku*' means to hold the *Daimoku* of 'Namu myōhō rege kyō' tightly in your mind so that it takes the form of *Shōdai* as an actual practice.¹¹

The *Shūgi taikō tokuhon* stipulates what you should actually do as a Nichiren sect practitioner to fulfill the 'upholding Daimoku' practice as follows.

「本門の本尊に向かって礼拝合掌し、本門の題目を至心に唱えていくことが「受持」することの意味であって、その場がそのまま本門の階段として開顕してくることになるというのである。」¹²

Pray and chant *Daimoku* sincerely to the fundamental object of worship and whereby the place of the practice transforms to a fundamental ordination platform.

As seen in the above sentences, the current Nichiren sect designates 'upholding *Daimoku*' as a genuine practice and its actual contents as *Shōdai*.

2) *Shōdai* is an outcome of one's 'upholding *Daimoku*' practice that was done bodily, vocally, and mentally. *Shūgi Taikō Tokuhon* also says:

「口に題目を唱える時は、必然的に意に本門の本尊を念じ、また唱題の姿はそのまま本門の戒壇を身に備え、法華経の行者として、仏と「同体」の果報・境界を得ることになるのである。」¹³

¹⁰ Nichirenshū Shūmuin Kyōmubu 1989: 112. 「信と行を別態とせず、あくまで信行一致の歸命であった。」

¹¹ Ibid. 122.

¹² Nichirenshū Shūmuin Kyōmubu 1989: 115.

¹³ Nichirenshū Shūmuin Kyōmubu 1989: 124–125.

When you chant *Daimoku*, you inevitably imagine the fundamental object of worship in your mind. And the posture of you chanting *Daimoku* embodies the fundamental ordination platform whereby you are able to attain the Buddhahood.

Thus, *Shōdai* is fundamentally equal to ‘upholding *Daimoku*’ and, as a result, it is ultimately equivalent to the three great esoteric rituals that help you directly to attain the Buddhahood.

3) *Shōdai* is used as one of the measures of meditation (深心行).

Zazen 坐禪 is the most common way to deepen meditation, but in the Nichiren sect, the following method is practiced. As the first step, a practitioner, by chanting ‘*Namu myōhō renge kyō*’, calms the mind and concentrates on the chanting itself, because it is difficult for him to completely banish idle thoughts. If he can concentrate their mind on one point, as the next step, he stops chanting and puts his hands on his knees, to form the cosmic mudrā, and further deepen meditation. This method of meditation is called *Jinshingyō* (深心行).

For Lay Followers

Then, what is the meaning of the chanting practice *Shōdai* for the lay followers of the Nichiren religious community? Several points are outlined below.

- 1) *Shōdai* is performed by lay followers for many purposes, such as,
 - to obtain benefits in their lives;¹⁴
 - to heal diseases;¹⁵
 - to be used as *dhāraṇī* to get out of difficult situations;
 - to pray for daily happiness and safety.

2) *Shōdai* is used at a memorial service for ancestor’s spirits.

When lay followers hold memorial services for spirits such as ancestors, in the memorial ceremony they pray for the souls of the deceased to enter Nirvāṇa by chanting the *Daimoku* ‘*Namu myō hō ren ge kyō*’. Accord-

¹⁴ Among the religions of Japan, except for certain cults, they are preaching the benefits of the world in general, and the believers are also asking for it. It can be said that this is the characteristic of Japanese religion.

¹⁵ Disease healing is a major factor with which most religions attract people. The original purpose of Buddhism is a complete mental liberation of a person, but it is one of the pragmatic objectives in real life.

ing to the doctrine of the Nichiren sect, one can transfer their merit of *Shōdai* to the dead souls.¹⁶

3) *Shōdai* is used as a deathbed ritual.

On their deathbed, one who is dying still has consciousness, and he/she is advised to chant *Daimoku* together with his/her family by the priest. If not, one's family will pray for his/her Nirvāṇa by chanting *Daimoku*. At a funeral ceremony, the bereaved of the dead also chant *Daimoku* for the dead with the priest.

Conclusion

From the description above, I may point out the following facts as a conclusion. First, *Daimoku* is, for Nichiren, not just a title of the Lotus Sūtra but also an inclusive expression that contains all the Buddha's merit, such as the practice as a cause and the enlightenment as a result.

Secondly, anyone who upholds the *Daimoku* is naturally rewarded with the merit.

Thirdly, Nichiren insisted that the *Daimoku* of the Lotus Sūtra, which Śākyamuni Buddha provides us with great compassion, enables the attainment of Buddhahood of the ignorant people who are not capable of understanding the very essence of the Lotus Sūtra, which is the notion called *ichinen sanzen*.

Fourthly, Nichiren placed *Daimoku* and *Shōdai* as genuine practices.

Fifthly, contemporary scholars of Nichiren doctrine have further developed Nichiren's understandings. They consider that *Shōdai* is fundamentally equal to 'upholding *Daimoku*' and, as a result, it is ultimately equivalent to the three great esoteric rituals, which help you to attain the Buddhahood directly.

Sixthly, *Shōdai* is used as one of the measures of meditation.

Seventhly, *Shōdai* is performed by lay followers to obtain the benefits in their lives.

Eighthly, *Shōdai* is used at memorial service to pray for ancestors.

Lastly, *Shōdai* is used as a deathbed ritual to send off the dying.

¹⁶ Nichirenshū Shūmuin Kyōmubu 1989: 141–142.

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MICHAEL CONWAY

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Practice and Other Power in Daochuo's Pure Land Buddhism

Abstract

Daochuo 道綽 (562–645) is revered as a patriarch of both the Pure Land and the True Pure Land schools of Buddhism in Japan. In his *Anleji* 安樂集 he makes a variety of arguments about the necessity and importance of relying on the 'path of easy practice' whereby one aspires to enlightenment through birth in the Amituo's Pure Land based on the working of the other power of Amituo's vows. Daochuo's prioritization of the Pure Land teachings is well known both inside and outside of Japan, but previous scholarship has focused particularly on Daochuo's arguments that the Pure Land teachings should be taken as the centerpiece of Buddhism due to the degenerate nature of the age and the inferior capacities of the people. Therefore, previous scholarship in both Japanese and English on Daochuo has primarily characterized him as offering an easy practice for incompetent people who were unlucky enough to have been born at a time far removed from Śākyamuni.

Through a careful analysis of passages in the second fascicle of the *Anleji*, in the first section of this paper I show that this understanding of Daochuo's view of the 'path of easy practice' fails to take into account the severity of his criticisms of the Buddhist practices that were preached in the Buddhist scriptures and prevalent at his time and therefore mischaracterizes the nature of his choice of Pure Land Buddhism as the most effective and excellent form of Buddhism and the only avenue for anyone at any time, regardless of their individual capacities or temporal relation to a Buddha, to genuinely fulfill the Mahayana ideal.

Although Daochuo took a very broadminded stance toward practice, holding that any practice undertaken with a desire to be born in the Pure Land would qualify the practitioner to receive the benefits of the other power of Amituo's vows, there are also several points in the *Anleji* where he singles out the practice of the *nianfo* 念佛, particularly vocal recitation of the *nianfo*, as the most appropriate and effective practice for people to engage in. In the second section of this paper, I introduce the passages where Daochuo encourages the practice of the *nianfo* and show that he prioritized it both because he held it was most appropriate for the sentient beings of the Latter Days of the Dharma and because it afforded practitioners with a variety of benefits that were not available to those who sought after birth in the Pure Land through other practices.

Keywords: Daochuo, Pure Land School, True Pure Land School, *Anleji*, Amituo, Amituo's vows, Amituo's Pure Land, other power, *nianfo*, Latter Days of the Dharma

Daochuo 道綽 (562–645), who is revered in Japan as an important patriarch of both the Pure Land and the True Pure Land Schools, is particularly famous for his attempt to situate Pure Land Buddhism—the teachings about the Buddha Amituo and the Pure Land that was created based on his vows as described in the *Wuliangshoujing* 無量壽經 (hereafter, *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*)—as the centerpiece of the Buddhist teachings. In his *Anleji* 安樂集 (Collection on [the Land of] Peace and Contentment), he makes a variety of arguments regarding the superiority of a path of Buddhist practice that seeks birth in that Pure Land as a primary goal over against the traditional path of Buddhist practices, such as the six *pāramitās*, which he refers to as the ‘path of sages’ (*shengdao* 聖道). Through these arguments, Daochuo is attempting to convince his audience primarily of the importance of aspiring for birth in Amituo’s Pure Land because of the power of that Buddha’s vows which make the goal of enlightenment much more immediately available than any other form of practice. He argues that practices undertaken with such a goal in mind benefit from the addition of the other power (*tali* 他力) of those vows, which makes them more effective, and thus more true, than any other Buddhist practice. Daochuo does not, however, directly prioritize any single practice the way that his successors Shandao 善導 (613–681) and Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212) would, although he does make three arguments regarding the centrality of the practice of calling the name of Amituo over other forms of practices aimed at birth in the Pure Land, which they in turn picked up upon and amplified in their discussion of the primacy and superiority of verbal recitation of that name over any other form of Buddhist practice.

In this chapter, after showing how Daochuo prioritizes ‘Pure Land practices’ (practices aimed at birth in Amituo’s Pure Land) over other, more traditional forms of Buddhist practice, I will consider how he attempts to carve out a special place for calling the name amongst the various Pure Land practices that he encourages.

The Paths of Difficult and Easy Practice

Daochuo’s primary aim in writing the *Anleji* was to argue that the Pure Land teachings should be seen as the central message that Śākyamuni intended to preach and thereby encourage a broad range of Buddhist practitioners to follow those teachings. In the course of that argument, Daochuo distinguishes between the traditional Buddhist practices set forth in most Mahayana sutras and those practices undertaken with the aim of attaining birth in Amituo’s Pure Land. Following on Tanluan 曇鸞 (476–542?) and the *Shizhupiposhalun* 十住毘婆沙論 (Treatise Expansively Interpreting the Ten Stages) attributed to Nāgārjuna, Dao-

chuo characterizes the former as 'the path of difficult practice' (*nanxingdao* 難行道) and the latter as 'the path of easy practice' (*yixingdao* 易行道). Daochuo strongly encourages his readers to abandon the path of difficult practice—which he also refers to as the 'path of sages'—in favor of the path of easy practice, because those who engage in that practice also receive the benefit of the power and maintenance of Amituo's vows which ensure that they achieve Buddhahood quickly and efficiently.

Although most previous studies on Daochuo in English have pointed out his reference to the latter days of the Dharma (*mofa* 末法) as the primary reason he proposes for adopting the Pure Land teachings and engaging in the path of easy practice,¹ a careful reading of the *Anleji* reveals that Daochuo was in fact stringently critical of the traditional Buddhist practices, going so far as to say that the six *pāramitās* and other practices said to be part of the traditional bodhisattva path lead only to 'false results' and are difficult, not because of the limitations of the current time period, but because they encourage practitioners to go against the very nature of the world and the human beings in it. In this section, after first introducing Daochuo's delineation of these easy and difficult paths, I will show that the primary reason that he encourages taking up the path of easy practice is the working of Amituo's vows that accrue to those who chose it which allows them to quickly attain Buddhahood and not the fact that the Dharma has degenerated to the point where the difficult path has become impossible. That is, I will show that Daochuo did not call people to choose the path of easy practice because they were so unlucky as to have been born as incompetent people in an unfortunate time period, but because the path of difficult practice is, by its very nature, fundamentally flawed. We will see that Daochuo actually held that the path of difficult practice is impossible regardless of the time period and that he encourages people to immediately abandon it because it only makes false promises of Buddhahood.

The most immediate scriptural basis for Daochuo's presentation of the two paths of practice is the 'chapter on easy practice'² in Nāgārjuna's *Shizhupiposhalun* and Tanluan's interpretation³ of that chapter presented at the beginning of his *Jingtulunzhu* 淨土論註 (Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land). In the

¹ The central organizing theme of David Chappell's dissertation, 'Tao-ch'o (562–645): A Pioneer of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism' (Yale University, 1976), is Daochuo's use of the teachings of the latter Dharma. Works such as Kenneth Tanaka's *Pure Land Buddhism: Historical Development and Contemporary Manifestation* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2004) also present the latter days of the Dharma as the primary feature of Daochuo's presentation of Pure Land Buddhism.

² *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書 (hereafter, SSZ) 1:253–265; *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (hereafter, T) T 26.1521: 40c28.

³ SSZ 1:279; T 40.1819: 826a28–b11.

Shizhupiposhalun, Nāgārjuna says that the program of bodhisattva practices laid out in the presentation of the ten stages of practice set forth in the *Huayan* 華嚴 *Sutra* is ‘more difficult than picking up the trichiliocosm,’⁴ and asks if there is not a faster, easier path to Buddhahood.⁵ After admonishing his readers that such a question is not appropriate for true bodhisattvas, he responds saying that calling the names of the Buddhas in the ten directions is a quick and easy way to attain the stage of nonretrogression (a state where one is assured of ultimately reaching the goal of Buddhahood). He lists a variety of Buddhas whose names allow those who call them to enter into the stage of nonretrogression and then specifically references the eighteenth and eleventh vows of Amituo—which promise that those who think of Amituo will be born in the Pure Land and that those who are born there will join the company of the rightly settled, or those assured of ultimately attaining Buddhahood—and goes on to praise the virtues of Amituo at length.⁶ Thus, although Nāgārjuna treats Amituo as one among many Buddhas whose name can lead to nonretrogression, he clearly features Amituo as one important element of the path of easy practice that he sets forth.

Tanluan, at the beginning of his *Jingtulunzhu*, refers to this chapter in the *Shizhupiposhalun*, but he does not mention the Buddhas of the ten directions at all and entirely omits Nāgārjuna’s admonition that says that seeking after the easy path is something not befitting to the true spirit of a bodhisattva that only the ‘timid, weak, lowly, and degenerate’⁷ do. Through this selective presentation at the start of a work devoted to a consideration of Amituo and his Pure Land, Tanluan not only highlights the role of that Buddha in the attainment of nonretrogression, he also accords this easy path a far higher status than Nāgārjuna did. Tanluan closes this introductory section of this work saying, ‘this *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* [i.e., Vasubandhu’s treatise that he is commenting upon] is the consummation of the excellent vehicle [i.e., the Mahayana],’⁸ intimating that the path of easy practice laid out in Vasubandhu’s treatise is the consummation of Mahayana Buddhism and not simply an expedient path for those incapable of engaging in the practices of the traditional bodhisattva path. In this way, Tanluan’s interpretation of Nāgārjuna’s presentation of these two paths significantly alters their meaning. Not only does Tanluan take the path of easy practice as the proper way to consummate the bodhisattva ideal, in the *Jingtulunzhu* the path of easy practice is redefined to mean specifically aspiring

⁴ SSZ 1:254; T 26.1521: 41a27–28.

⁵ SSZ 1:253; T 26.1521: 41a13–14.

⁶ SSZ 1:259–261; T 26.1521: 43a10–c18.

⁷ SSZ 1:254; T 26.1521: 41b1.

⁸ T 40.1819: 826b11; SSZ 1:279. The manuscript that serves as the base text in SSZ has a different character, but most other manuscripts agree that the term translated here as ‘excellent vehicle’ is *shangyan* 上衍, *yan* being a transliteration of *yāna* in Mahayana.

for birth in Amituo's Pure Land and entering into the state of nonretrogression through the working of his vows. Tanluan defines the path of easy practice saying, 'one simply, though the causes and conditions of entrusting oneself to the Buddha, aspires to be born in the Pure Land; riding on the power of the Buddha's vows, one then attains birth in that pure land; maintained by the power of the Buddha, one immediately enters into the company of those rightly settled in the Mahayana.'⁹ The path of easy practice defined here by Tanluan clearly refers to the path of aspiring for birth in the Pure Land of Amituo and reaching there—and ultimately Buddhahood—through the power of his vows.

Daochuo quotes this introductory portion of the *Jingtulunzhu* at the beginning of the first section of the third chapter of the *Anleji*.¹⁰ This third chapter is where he makes the famous argument regarding the priority of the Pure Land path in the latter days of the Dharma that is quoted by Hōnen in the first chapter of his *Senjaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集.¹¹ Daochuo quotes Tanluan's passage to lay the foundation for the distinction that he makes there regarding the 'path of sages' and 'birth in the Pure Land' as two methods for attaining Buddhahood preached in the Buddhist scriptures. Rather than attributing the passage to its author, however, Daochuo quotes the passage as though it was a statement by Nāgārjuna himself. This portion of the *Anleji* reads:

Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva states, 'In seeking the *avinivartanīya*, there are two types of paths. The first is the path of difficult practice. The second is the path of easy practice. To describe the path of difficult practice, I would say that in a world of the five defilements and a time without a Buddha, seeking the *avinivartanīya* is difficult. In this difficulty, there are many facets, [but] in briefly describing, there are five. First, the apparent good of the heterodox paths upsets the Dharma of bodhisattvas. Second, *śrāvakas* only benefit themselves and obstruct great compassion. Third, people who do not reflect upon their own evil destroy the excellent virtues of others. Fourth, the so-called upside-down good results of the actions of human and heavenly beings ruin people's pure practices. Fifth, there is only self power, and there is no maintenance by other power. Everything that one sees are these sorts of things. For example, it is like traveling by foot over land, which is trying. Therefore, it is called the path of difficult practice. To describe the path of easy practice, I would say that through the causes and conditions of entrusting to the Buddha, when one aspires to be born in the Pure Land, gives rise to the mind [that seeks enlightenment], establishes virtues, and cultivates various practices, because of the power of the Buddha's vow, one then is born.

⁹ SSZ 1:279; T 40.1819: 826b7–9.

¹⁰ SSZ 1:405–406; T 47.1958: 12b13–25.

¹¹ SSZ 1:929–930; T 83.2608: 1b7–26. The passage in the *Anleji* is at SSZ 1:410; T 47.1958: 13c2–22.

Through the maintaining power of the Buddha, one then enters into the company of the rightly settled of the Mahayana. The company of the rightly settled is the *avinivartanīya*, the stage of non-retrogression. For example, it is like traveling on water routes by boat, that is, because it is enjoyable, it is called the path of easy practice.¹²

Excluding some cosmetic changes to the expressions and the underlined portion, on the whole, Daochuo's quotation is quite true to Tanluan's original. Tanluan provides five reasons for the difficulty of the path of difficult practice, but for our purposes, it is the fifth—the lack of support from other power—that is most important. For Daochuo, the primary distinguishing factor between the path of difficult practice and the path of easy practice is the presence or absence of this support from Amituo's vows. Practices undertaken with a desire to be born in the Pure Land all qualify for this support and thus fall under the rubric of the path of easy practice, whereas any practice undertaken with a different intention—say the liberation of sentient beings or the attainment of Buddhahood in this world—ends up being a part of the path of difficult practice. We will see several examples of Daochuo's broadly inclusive stance toward practice in the following, but here it is important to note that it follows on Tanluan's position and differs considerably from that of Daochuo's successors such as Shandao and Hōnen.

This inclusive stance is particularly apparent in the major change that Daochuo did make to Tanluan's original (the underlined portion in the quotation above). Daochuo has considerably revised Tanluan's definition of the path of easy practice. While Tanluan only refers to aspiring to be born in the Pure Land through the causes and conditions of entrusting oneself to the Buddha, Daochuo adds the statement that one 'gives rise to the mind [that seeks enlightenment], establishes virtues, and cultivates various practices.'¹³ Through this addition, Daochuo signals that a wide variety of practices are included in the path of easy practice. Further, by going on to say, 'because of the power of the Buddha's vow, one then is born' he is emphasizing that it is not the content of the practice that is the deciding factor leading to birth in the Pure Land, but the working of the Buddha's vows. This revision that Daochuo makes to Tanluan's definition of

¹² SSZ 1:405–6; T 40.1819: 826b7–9.

¹³ The phrasing of this passage, which echoes the nineteenth vow of Amituo in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, led Shin exegetes in the Edo period to argue that Daochuo's soteriology did not make a clear distinction between the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth vows, in the way that Shinran did. A full discussion of the merits of that argument falls outside the scope of this chapter, but suffice it to say that it seems unfair to project categories created by Shinran onto a thinker who predates him by almost six hundred years. See, for instance, *Anrakushū kōgi* 安樂集講義 (Kyoto: Gohōkan, 1912) by Kōgatsu-in Jinrei 香月院深励 (1749–1817), 4:30r–31r.

the path of easy practice not only points out the decisive role of the vows as the agent of birth in the Pure Land, it also emphasizes the importance of aspiring for birth in the Pure Land whatever practice one might happen to engage in. Daochuo's phrasing seems to be intentionally vague. By only speaking of 'cultivating various practices' and 'establishing virtues,' he leaves open the possibility of engaging in a broad range of practices, holding that what is more important than the specific content of any given practice is the aspiration on the part of the practitioner which qualifies them to receive the other power of Amituo's vows.

After quoting from the *Jingtulunzhu*, Daochuo further highlights the importance of the other power of Amituo's vows in a question and answer. There, he states:

Question: There is only one *bodhi*, so there should also not be two ways to cultivate its cause. What is the reason that being here and cultivating the cause to move toward the result of Buddhahood is called difficult practice, while just being born in the Pure Land and expecting to attain great *bodhi* is called the path of easy practice? Answer: The various Mahayana sutras delineate that all practices have self power, self maintenance, other power, and other maintenance. [...] Therefore, the *Larger Sutra* states, 'The heavenly and human beings of the ten directions who wish to be born in my country all take the karmic power of the great vows of Amituo Tathāgata to be the excelling condition. There is none who does not. If this is not so, the forty-eight vows have been made in vain.' I say to those subsequent ones who study, there is already the other power upon which one can mount. You must not rely solely on your own abilities and meaninglessly stay in the burning house [of transmigration].¹⁴

In the question, Daochuo asks why it is that there can be two separate paths to Buddhahood—an easy one and a difficult one—when in fact the enlightenment attained must be the same. In answering, he refers to the 'other power and other maintenance' that is bestowed on the practitioner through the working of the forty-eight vows of Amituo, saying that it is this power that is the distinguishing factor between the two paths. In the closing lines of this section, he then encourages his readers to access that power and not rely solely on their own self power, cautioning them that such a choice will simply lead to the continuation of transmigration.

The distinction that Daochuo makes in section 1 of chapter 3 is extrapolated upon in section 3 of that same chapter, where Daochuo speaks of the 'path of sages' and 'birth in the Pure Land'—which he characterizes as 'two excellent methods for doing away with birth and death'¹⁵—and argues that birth in the

¹⁴ SSZ 1:406; T 47.1958: 12b25–c11.

¹⁵ SSZ 1:410; T 47.1958: 13c5.

Pure Land is the only appropriate path to Buddhahood in the latter days of the Dharma, saying ‘The present time is the latter Dharma and is in fact a world of the five defilements. There is only the gate of the Pure Land which is a path that can be entered and completed.’¹⁶ Since Hōnen quotes this passage at the beginning of his *magnum opus*, Japanese Pure Land Buddhists have generally taken it to be the clearest expression of Daochuo’s understanding of the reason for choosing the gate of the Pure Land and aspiring for birth in the Pure Land rather than engaging in the cultivation of the path of difficult practice. That is to say, much Japanese scholarship on Daochuo has presented him as arguing that the primary reason one should abandon the path of difficult practice and take up that of easy practice is that the current age is one where the Dharma has degenerated to the extent that the path of difficult practice is no longer possible.¹⁷ That stance has also been reflected in the English language scholarship on Daochuo, as well. Although Daochuo does indeed make that argument in section 3 of chapter 3 of the *Anleji*, in the second fascicle of that work, he also makes two other, more stringent criticisms of the path of difficult practice which indicate that his motivations for encouraging the Pure Land path had less to do with the degeneration of the Dharma after the passing of Śākyamuni and far more to do with problems inherent within the path of difficult practice itself—problems that are far more fundamental than just the issue of the time period.

In the second fascicle of the *Anleji*, Daochuo repeatedly returns to the theme of the two paths of practice—one undertaken to attain Buddhahood in this defiled world, and one that aims to attain Buddhahood in Amituo’s Pure Land with the assistance of his vow power. In most of these instances, Daochuo takes the same broad inclusivist stance toward the type of practice that we saw in section 1 of chapter 3, above, arguing that what is more important than the content of the practice is the aspiration behind it. Practices aimed at birth in the Pure Land are classified as part of the path of easy practice and said to be more excellent and effective than practices aimed at attainment of enlightenment in this world because these former ‘easy practices’ benefit from the addition of the other power and maintenance from Amituo’s vows.

In section 2 of chapter 5 of the *Anleji*, for instance, Daochuo contrasts meditative contemplation focused on this defiled land and the same sort of meditative

¹⁶ SSZ 1:410; T 47.1958: 13c10–11.

¹⁷ *Dōshaku kyōgaku no kenkyū* 道緯教学の研究 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1959), the seminal post-war study of Daochuo by Yamamoto Bukkotsu 山本仏骨, presents his thought this way, as does the volume on Tanluan and Daochuo in Kōdansha’s series, *Jōdo bukkyō no shisō* 浄土仏教の思想 (vol. 4; 1995). Although two works are the most representative large-scale introductions to Daochuo’s thought in contemporary Japanese, there are also countless other, shorter works, such as commentaries on the seven Shin patriarchs that also characterize his contribution to the development of Pure Land thought in this way.

practice focused on the Pure Land. In that section, he argues that not only is it more difficult to achieve the states of meditative calm that would allow one entry into the higher heavens of the realm of form and non-form in this world than to complete the meditative practices contemplating the features of the Pure Land, because the former, difficult practices only lead to rebirth in those heavenly realms—from which one will eventually necessarily regress—meditative practices focused on the Pure Land lead to far more excellent results, far more quickly. He states: ‘If one wishes to turn westward and engage in practice, the phenomenal object [of concentration] is luminescent and pure and it is easy to achieve contemplative concentration. Karmic results of the transgressions of many *kalpas* are removed, one is eternally settled [in the state of nonretrogression], and one quickly progresses, ultimately reaching the cool purity [of nirvana].’¹⁸ In the closing portion of this section, Daochuo writes:

In discussing the cultivation of meditative concentration at the level of cause, [meditation focused on] this world and on that one are generally equivalent. However, that realm is one of nonretrogression and includes maintenance by other power. Therefore I say it is excellent. In this place, although one also endeavors to cultivate meditative concentration, one only has one's own individual cause and lacks the support of other power. When the [good] karma [from meditative practice] is exhausted, one cannot avoid retrogressing, so I hold that [meditative practice] here is not equivalent.¹⁹

Here, Daochuo holds that even if the practice is essentially the same in terms of content—in this case, the same sort of meditative concentration is cultivated—the presence or lack of other power leading to nonretrogression is the decisive factor distinguishing between the two types of practice. The same sort of meditative practice can belong to either the path of difficult practice or to the path of easy practice. For Daochuo what makes that practice easy or difficult has nothing to do with the nature of actions the individual practitioner performs—in both cases, the practitioner is focusing their mind. It is the working of other power that makes meditation focused on the Pure Land lead to greater and more immediate results: one ‘quickly progresses’ to nirvana thanks to that other power. In that sense, Daochuo not only holds that the path of easy practice is easier from the perspective of the individual practitioner, he also says that it is better (or more ‘excellent’ to use his language) because of the benefits bestowed upon the practitioner through the working of other power. In that sense, from Daochuo's perspective the path of easy practice is the most efficient way to Buddhahood: One can make far greater progress along the path to nirvana with much less

¹⁸ SSZ 1:424; T 47.1958: 1b10–12.

¹⁹ SSZ 1:424; T 47.1958: 17b14–17.

investment at the level of individual practice. While traditional Buddhist meditative practices only promise entry into the heavens of form and non-form, Pure Land meditative practices give one entry into the state of nonretrogression and ultimate Buddhahood, a far higher and more certain goal on the Buddhist path. To use a colloquial phrase, from Daochuo's perspective, one gets far more bang for one's meditative buck, provided that meditation is aimed toward Amituo's Pure Land.

This stance of Daochuo's is not limited simply to meditative practice. In other parts of the second fascicle of the *Anleji*, Daochuo speaks broadly of 'Pure Land practices' and contrasts them with the traditional Buddhist practices encouraged in the Mahayana sutras and treatises. These easy, Pure Land practices benefit from the other power of Amituo's vows, while the difficult, traditional practices do not. Here I would like to take particular note of the contents of two parts of the *Anleji*—section 1 of chapter 5 and section 2 of chapter 7—where Daochuo not only displays an inclusive attitude toward the type of practices that are included in the path of easy practice, but also severely criticizes the traditional practices in the path of difficult practice (practices that were broadly held to be essential elements of the Mahayana Buddhist path to Buddhahood). These strict criticisms have not been noted in much previous scholarship on Daochuo, which has led to an overemphasis on his references to the latter Dharma in his arguments for adoption of the Pure Land path. It seems to me that this overemphasis has distorted the picture of his Pure Land Buddhism significantly, causing it to be presented as an inferior teaching for inferior beings in an inferior time period. As we saw above, however, unlike Nāgārjuna, Daochuo clearly viewed this Pure Land path of easy practice as an excellent one. The arguments that we will consider in the following show even more clearly that he chose this Pure Land path not because it was a last resort in an extremely unfortunate situation, but because it offered the clearest, most immediate path to the ultimate goal of Mahayana Buddhism. Further, we will see that he held that the path of difficult practice does not actually even lead to that goal.

In the first section of chapter 5 of the *Anleji*, Daochuo focuses specifically on the issue of the speed with which one is able to achieve Buddhahood in the two paths of practice. He forcefully argues that the path of easy practice is superior to the difficult one because it allows one to enter into the stage of nonretrogression in the span of just one lifetime, rather than the many *kalpas* that are said to be necessary to reach that stage based on traditional practices in the Buddhist scriptures. This argument appears to be a stringent denial of the efficacy of the path of difficult practice, so I would like to quote it at length and consider it in detail here. The first portion of this section can be divided into three parts: In the first, based on the *Pusa yingluo benye jing* 菩薩瓔珞本業經,

Daochuo describes the path of difficult practice as requiring ten thousand *kalpas* of consistent, strenuous practice before one can attain the certainty of nonretrogression. In the second, he criticizes that path as inappropriate for unaccomplished people because of the difficulty of attaining that assurance and strongly encourages people to instead aspire for birth in the Pure Land. In the third part, he further refers to the *Abhidharmakośa* as supporting evidence regarding the enormous amount of time required to reach the stage of nonretrogression and reiterates his exhortation to aspire for birth in the Pure Land because it will lead to the quick attainment of Buddhahood. Let us look at the first two of these parts in turn. (For considerations of space, I will have to omit a discussion of the third part.) Daochuo starts this section saying:

To clarify the speed [of the path of practice]: Among all sentient beings there simply are none who do not dislike suffering, seek contentment, fear bondage, and seek liberation. All who desire to quickly realize unsurpassed enlightenment must necessarily first give rise to the mind that seeks enlightenment and take it as primary. Yet, it is difficult to know and difficult to give rise to this mind. Even if one were able to give rise to it, then based on the sutras, ultimately, they will have to cultivate ten types of practices—so called entrusting, endeavor, concentration, precepts, meditation, wisdom, renunciation, protection of the Dharma, establishing vows, and merit transference—as they move on toward enlightenment. In this way, they must continue from body to body in their practice without interruption over the course of ten thousand *kalpas* and then for the first time will they achieve the stage of nonretrogression.²⁰

Daochuo begins by noting that all sentient beings are naturally inclined to disdain suffering and seek after liberation. In spite of that natural inclination toward the Buddhist path, however, he says that not only is it extremely difficult to authentically begin walking that path by giving rise to a proper aspiration toward enlightenment, even those who are able to do so are told in the scriptures that they must engage in ten strenuous practices over an unthinkable long period of time ('ten thousand *kalpas*') before they can have any certainty that they will reach their goal. The sutra that preaches about these practices leading to nonretrogression is the *Pusa yingluo benye jing*, which was held to be important in East Asian Buddhism as a comprehensive description of the fifty-two stages in the bodhisattva path.²¹ That sutra lays out the ten practices that Daochuo

²⁰ SSZ 1:421; T 47.1958: 16b22–29.

²¹ The Tiantai 天台 patriarch Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597) notes that the names and significance of the fifty-two stages presented in this sutra are particularly well presented in the *Fahuaxuanyi* 法華玄義 (T 33.1716: 731c24) and since then they have served as a standard representation of the bodhisattva path in East Asia, referred to by most of the subsequent commentators on it.

refers to here as necessary for those ordinary beings in the first ten stages (the ten faiths).²² The sutra says that only those ordinary beings who can continually encounter good teachers and Buddhas over the course of many, many *kalpas* and maintain these practices will be able to eventually reach the stage of nonretrogression, which it situates at the seventeenth of the fifty-two stages.²³ Although the sutra does not specifically state that it requires ten thousand *kalpas* to reach this stage the way that Daochuo does, it does refer at length to the dangers facing those who have not yet reached this stage and says that only those who have maintained the above ten practices, as well as the six *pāramitās*, over the course of several *kalpas* in order to progress to the sixteenth stage and there encounter a good teacher will be able to reach the stage of assurance of continued progress on the path to Buddhahood.²⁴

From Daochuo's perspective, this path of difficult practice should be abandoned in favor of the easy one, because Amituo's vows promise to welcome all who practice with a desire to be born in the Pure Land into that land at the end of their life in this world²⁵ and assure that all who are born in the Pure Land will dwell in a state of nonretrogression. He makes that argument in the following way:

The foolish, ordinary human beings of the current age are presently called 'those whose thought of faith is as light as a feather,' they are also said to be 'provisionally named,' and further referred to as the group of the unsettled and unaccomplished ordinary beings. They have not yet left the burning house [of the world of transmigration]. How can we know this? Based on the *Pusa yingluo jing* 菩薩瓔珞經, where it delineates the stages of practice of entry into enlightenment, it says, 'Because of its very nature (*faer* 法爾), this is called the path of difficult practice.' Further, one cannot count the number of bodies one takes on in birth and death in even the span of one *kalpa*, let alone the burning suffering one would meaninglessly experience over the course of ten thousand *kalpas*. If one can clearly believe the Buddhist sutras and aspire for birth in the Pure Land, then in accord with the length of their lives, in just one lifetime, they can reach [the Pure Land] and attain nonretrogression, such that one attains the same virtues as one does through those ten thousand *kalpas* of practice. All Buddhists and others, why do you not weigh this [difference], abandon the difficult, and seek the easy?²⁶

²² The two lists vary slightly, but the ten practices appear in both the first and second fascicles of the *Pusa yingluo benye jing*: T 24.1485: 1011c4–6 and T 24.1485: 1017a12–15.

²³ See T 24.1485: 1011b10.

²⁴ T 24.1485: 1014b27–c13.

²⁵ SSZ 1:9–10; T 12.0360: 268a26–b5.

²⁶ SSZ 1:421; T 47.1958: 6b29–c7.

Daochuo first confirms that he and his contemporaries are all novices on the bodhisattva path—ordinary beings who have not progressed beyond the first ten stages laid out in the *Pusa yingluo benye jing*. That is to say, he is stressing to his audience that they all are subject to the uncertainty of ‘backsliding at times and progressing at others’²⁷ that that sutra says all ordinary beings in these early stages face. Although Daochuo does reference ‘the current age,’ we should note that this status on the bodhisattva path has little to do with the problem posed by the absence of a Buddha in the latter days of the Dharma. Because the *Pusa yingluo benye jing* states clearly that only those who have ‘practiced the practices of the ten stages of faith and believed in the three treasures for one or two *kalpas* before Buddhas as many as the sands of one or two or three Ganges Rivers’²⁸ can possibly overcome the problem of intermittent regression and progress, the problem here for Daochuo is not with the time period, but with the fact that he and his contemporaries have simply not made sufficient progress on this long path to Buddhahood to become accomplished bodhisattvas. Based on the path of difficult practice, these ‘unsettled’ and ‘unaccomplished’ ordinary beings will have to be subject to at least ten thousand *kalpas* of transmigration, without slipping up on the path at all, before they will reach the same state of nonretrogression that Amituo promises to those who take the path of easy practice for just one lifetime. In section 3 of chapter 3 of the *Anleji*, Daochuo quotes a variety of sutras to show that one is reborn innumerable times even in the course of one *kalpa*, saying that ‘The bones of one’s bodies that pile up in one *kalpa* are [as tall] as Mount Vipula’²⁹ and ‘[The amount] of mother’s milk that one drinks within one *kalpa* is greater than the water of the four great oceans.’³⁰ In the quotation above, he refers back to that imagery, vividly evoking the ‘burning suffering’ that awaits those who wish to follow the difficult path.

Those who walk that path are not necessarily assured that the suffering will be limited to just ten thousand *kalpas*. Only those who are lucky enough to continuously engage in the practices outlined above and encounter good teachers will be able to reach the stage of nonretrogression in that time. Those who are not will end up regressing, setting the clock back and making their arduous journey even longer. Both the *Pusa yingluo benye jing*³¹ and the *Anleji*³² refer

²⁷ T 24.1485: 1014b27.

²⁸ T 24.1485: 1017a24–25.

²⁹ SSZ 1:408; T 47.1958: 13a23–24. Based on the passage in the *Nirvana Sutra* at T 12.0374: 496b15–16 and T 12.0375: 739c28–29.

³⁰ SSZ 1:408; T 47.1958: 13a22–23. Based on the passage in the *Nirvana Sutra* at T 12.0374: 496b16–17 and T 12.0375: 739c29.

³¹ T 24.1485: 1014c10.

³² SSZ 1:436; T 47.1958: 21a7.

to the story of Śāriputra's retrogression, which I would like to introduce here because it will give us an idea of just how impossible the task of maintaining consistent devotion to these traditional practices stipulated by the sutras over the time. The story appears in the *Dazhidulun* 大智度論.³³ It relays that having engaged in bodhisattva practices for a full sixty *kalpas*, Śāriputra was attempting to perfect the practice of giving when he encountered a beggar who asked for his eye. Although Śāriputra once attempted to dissuade him, the beggar insisted on receiving his eye, saying, 'If you are really going to practice giving, then give me your eye,'³⁴ so Śāriputra complied with the request. Having received the eye, however, the beggar smelled it, made a face at the foul smell, spat, threw Śāriputra's eyeball on the ground, and stomped on it. Śāriputra felt discouraged at how difficult it would be to genuinely save people like the beggar and thought, 'It is impossible to save people like this. It would be better for me simply to take care of myself and quickly attain liberation.'³⁵ This selfish thought disqualified Śāriputra as a bodhisattva, sending him back into a Hinayana form of practice, thus ruining the sixty *kalpas* of progress that he had made. This simple thought in disappointment was enough to set Śāriputra back sixty *kalpas*, so from Daochuo's perspective, the demands of treading the path of difficult practice as laid out in the *Pusa yingluo benye jing* are virtually impossible to meet.

There are two expressions in the above quotation from section 1, chapter 5 of the *Anleji* that seem to indicate this impossibility and that I believe can be taken as Daochuo's strict criticism of this path of difficult practice. First, he attributes the statement, 'Because of its very nature (*faer* 法爾), this is called the path of difficult practice' to the *Pusa yingluo benye jing*. This phrase 'very nature' has both the sense of the nature of the path and the sense of 'the way things are,' or 'the way that the world works.' Daochuo's choice of this term—which does not appear at all in the *Pusa yingluo benye jing*—to characterize the path of difficult practice clearly indicates that the path is not difficult because Śākyamuni passed away some fifteen hundred years ago, but because of the nature of the path itself. That is to say, this expression shows that the problem lies not with the time period, but with the path of difficult practice itself. When we understand the term with the second, broader meaning, this passage can be read to say that 'because of the very make up of the world, this is a difficult path.' That is, the difficulty of the path lies not with contingent factors like when or where one is practicing it, but with how the world itself works, so that path is in fact difficult at all times and in all situations—regardless of whether Śākyamuni is alive or has already passed away in the far distant past. Therefore, this phrase

³³ T 25.1522: 145a18–29.

³⁴ T 25.1522: 145a22–23.

³⁵ T 25.1522: 145a27–28.

can be read as a stringent criticism of the path of difficult practice as essentially impossible based on 'its very nature' and the nature of the world and human beings within it. This impossibility—which attempts to surmount the nature of the world and human beings (Who would not be discouraged after having their eyeball stomped upon?)—is the reason that Daochuo also says in the above passage that attempting to progress on the path of difficult practice will lead to 'meaningless' repetition of birth and death in the burning house of transmigration. Daochuo's characterization of the suffering that one would endure while attempting to make enough progress on the path of difficult practice to attain nonretrogression as 'meaningless' is the second profoundly critical statement in the passage above. Since Amituo's vows promise nonretrogression after just one lifetime to those who choose the path of easy practice and aspire for birth in the Pure Land, of course, choosing to transmigrate any more than that is ultimately a choice of avoidable and therefore meaningless suffering that will not necessarily lead to Buddhahood.

Daochuo takes this critical stance toward the path of difficult practice one step further in section 2 of chapter 7 of the *Anleji*, where he argues that the results one gains from the path of difficult practice are in fact 'false' because they do not lead to the goal of Buddhahood, but only to continued transmigration. In this section, as well, Daochuo makes reference to the immense amount of time required to be assured of not retrogressing on the traditional bodhisattva path and says that because that path of difficult practice lacks the promise of nonretrogression, it is actually a false path. Daochuo writes:

In the second section, to clarify that in the two paths of practice [those focused] here and [those focused on] the Pure Land, there is a difference in the weight of the virtues expended and a difference in the truth and falsehood of the recompense gained: For those who wish to give rise to the *bodhi* mind and take refuge in the West, if they simply use the reverences, contemplation, meditation, etc., that they perform in just a little bit of time, in accord with the length of their lives, when they come to their ends, the dias of light greets them and they quickly reach that land, attaining the stage of nonretrogression. Therefore, in the *Larger Sutra*, it states, 'If the human and heavenly beings of the ten directions who come to be born in my land all do not ultimately reach complete extinction and retrogress, then I will not obtain perfect enlightenment.' In this world, over the course of much time, one must completely practice giving, precepts, endurance, effort, meditation, and wisdom for over ten thousand *kalpas* while one still is not freed from this burning house. One goes against nature and falls back on the path, so it is said that one expends extremely heavy virtues and the recompense that one attains is false. The *Larger Sutra* states, 'Those who are born in my country all abruptly cut off the five evil ways of existence.' [...] If one is able

to be born in Amituo's pure country, then the five paths of this *sahā* world are abandoned suddenly, all at once. [...] If one can make one's intention clear, turn one's desires toward the West, whether exhausting one's lifetime, or even down to just ten thought moments, then all go, none are not born. Once reaching that country, one enters the group of the rightly settled and attains virtues equal to the practice of the path for ten thousand *kalpas* in this world.³⁶

Here again, Daochuo contrasts the two paths of practice, but his criticism of the path of difficult practice is even more stringent than before. We can see that he maintains his inclusive attitude about the content of practice here, saying, 'they simply use the reverences, contemplation, meditation, etc.' to refer broadly to the Pure Land practices in the path of easy practice. Quoting Amituo's eleventh vow, Daochuo argues that those who engage in those practices in this life will be assured of entering a state of nonretrogression upon reaching the Pure Land, making these practices an extremely efficient way to reach the goal of Buddhahood. As he says in the concluding sentences, whether one spends the rest of one's life engaging in these practices, or simply does the *nenbutsu* for ten thought moments, those who engage in these Pure Land practices are assured of attaining Buddhahood after having been born in the Pure Land. That is what he means when he says that the 'virtues expended' on the part of the practitioner are light, in contrast to the 'extremely heavy virtues' expended by those who attempt to walk the path of difficult practice. In that sense, Daochuo is simply reiterating his arguments about the path of easy practice that we have seen already.

In contrast, his criticism of the path of difficult practice is far more direct and severe than the ones we have seen up to this point. Daochuo refers specifically to the six *pāramitās*—which are held to be the central practices of Mahayana Buddhism in virtually all Mahayana scriptures—and says that the results one obtains from practicing them are 'false' or 'deception' (*wei* 偽).³⁷ He is saying that because those scriptures present the six *pāramitās* as a path to Buddhahood—a path out of transmigration—while also preaching that one cannot actually attain any assurance of really reaching that result unless one maintains those practices for an unthinkable long period of time, the six *pāramitās* do not lead to the results that they have promised. One only gets continued transmigration in this 'burning house' from the six *pāramitās*, not Buddhahood, so Daochuo says that the 'recompense' one receives from those practices is 'false.' The radical nature of this assertion cannot be understated. Daochuo is calling the system of practice preached in all of Mahayana Buddhism 'lies.' This stance clearly

³⁶ SSZ 1:429; T 47.1958: 18c18–19a8.

³⁷ T 47.1958: 18c25.

has nothing to do with the fact that Śākyamuni passed away one thousand five hundred years ago. These practices would have led to the same false results when he was alive as they will today or at any other time. This bold rejection of the efficacy of traditional Buddhist practice was clearly radical by the standards of the Buddhist community of his day.³⁸ When we remember that Hōnen and Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262) were subject to exile in Kamakura Japan for encouraging people to abandon traditional Buddhist practices in favor of the *nenbutsu*, Daochuo's statement that the 'recompense one attains' from the six *pāramitās* 'is false' should strike us as jaw-droppingly audacious. Here, Daochuo is definitely not encouraging people to take up the Pure Land path because they are inferior beings in an unfortunate time. Instead, he is calling into question the efficacy of the whole of the Mahayana Buddhist path and the validity of the traditional notions of practice held by virtually all of his contemporaries. His position is that those notions are mistaken and that the only Buddhist path that truly leads to the promise of Buddhahood is the Pure Land one. Because of the other power of Amituo's vows, those who choose this path of easy practice quickly and easily attain the results promised by Buddhism: enlightenment and freedom from transmigration.

The phrase that I have translated above as 'one goes against nature' (*diandao* 顛倒) provides a clue about the nature of the problem that Daochuo perceived in the traditional notions of practice in Buddhism. The term literally means 'upside-down' or 'backwards.' Tanluan uses it at the beginning of the *Jingtulunzhu* when he describes five difficulties involved in the path of difficult practice, saying 'Fourth, upside-down good results can ruin pure practices.' In Daochuo's quotation of this passage in the *Anleji* that I introduced at the outset of this section, he adds a few words so that it reads, 'the so-called upside-down good results of the actions of human and heavenly beings ruin people's pure practices.'³⁹ These 'upside-down good results' refer to the positive results sought for and gained when unenlightened beings engage in Buddhist practice.

³⁸ See, for instance, the commentary on the *Guanwuliangshoujing* 觀無量壽經 by Daochuo's contemporary Huiyuan 慧遠 (523–592), a patriarch of the Dilun 地論 school, where he applies the categories related to the bodhisattva path presented in the *Shidijinglun* 十地經論 to the nine grades of birth described at the end of that sutra (T 37.1749: 182a12–c22). In this discussion, Huiyuan is clearly positing the stages on the bodhisattva path as a system of practice that all those who intend to attain Buddhahood must engage in step by step. Jizang 吉藏 (549–623), another contemporary of Daochuo's who was influential in the Sanlun 三論 school, also presents the bodhisattva path as one that practitioners naturally must follow to attain Buddhahood (see, for instance, his *Fahuaxuanlun* 法華玄論 [T 34.1720: 420c27–421b4]). Also, Zhiyi makes a detailed introduction to the different scriptural presentations of the stages on the bodhisattva path in his *Fahuaxuanyi* 法華玄義 (T 33.1716: 731c1–732b13) which also indicates that he viewed them as stages that all practitioners had to pass through on the way to Buddhahood.

³⁹ SSZ 1:406; T 47.1958: 12b18–19.

Deluded beings' engaging in practices aimed at specific results can lead to a variety of unwholesome, delusory states—attachment to the results, arrogance and self-congratulation at having attained them, etc. Therefore, Tanluan calls these good results 'upside-down' and says that they 'ruin pure practices' in that they move one away from the Buddhist goals of being freed from attachment, arrogance, and expectations. Tanluan also uses the term when he distinguishes between true virtues and untrue virtues, writing: 'There are two types of virtues. The first arises from a defiled mind and does not accord with Dharma nature. The so-called myriad goods of ordinary beings and heavenly and human beings, the resultant recompense of heavenly and human beings, be they cause or effect, are all upside-down, they are all false. Therefore, they are referred to as untrue virtues.'⁴⁰ Since the language in this passage is echoed in Daochuo's quotation from the beginning of the *Jingtulunzhu*, it is likely that he had this passage in mind when he revised Tanluan's original. When ordinary beings—those who have not made progress on the bodhisattva path to the extent that they have had an insight into the truth of Buddhism that allows them to accord with Dharma nature—engage in practice, they necessarily attain these 'upside-down' and 'false' results and therefore are incapable of making genuine progress on that path. In that sense, the Mahayana sutras that encourage practitioners to engage in practice over the course of thousands of *kalpas* are making an impossible order, because the deluded people who engage in that practice 'do not accord with Dharma nature' and only attain 'upside down' results that move them away from Buddhahood and not toward it.

It is based on this background in Tanluan's work that Daochuo boldly calls the six *pāramitās* 'false.' Those ordinary beings who engage in them with the expectation of making progress toward Buddhahood are actually only attaining these 'false,' 'upside-down good results' which end up ruining their pure practice. This difficulty is a far more serious problem that adheres to the path of difficult practice than the simple fact of the distance in time since Śākyamuni's passing—it is a problem that lies in the very structure of the notion of practice (the deluded thought that specific acts will lead to specific results). The Mahayana Buddhists who formulated the path of bodhisattva practice laid out in scriptures like the *Huayan Sutra* or the *Pusa yingluo benye jing* were clearly aware of the problem, since they all hold that bodhisattvas of high attainment have overcome such specific expectations, using terms such as *wugongyong* 無功用⁴¹ to describe that state. Both Tanluan and Daochuo take the stance that the only way to overcome this difficulty was to rely on the other power of Amituo's vows. Although encountering a Buddha and benefiting from their guidance is

⁴⁰ SSZ 1:284; T 40.1819: 827c17–20.

⁴¹ See, for instance, T 10.0279: 196c22–23; T 24.1485: 1015b9–12.

held to be critical for resolving this problem inherent within practice, we can see that Daochuo is certainly not framing the problem nor proposing a solution to it primarily in reference to the latter days of the Dharma. Instead the problem lies with the nature of practice itself and the deluded people who work within the paradigm of 'If I do this good act, I will get this good result.' From the perspective of Tanluan and Daochuo, that paradigm itself is an 'upside-down' and 'false' one that leads one away from—not toward—enlightenment.

In this section, we have seen that Daochuo posited the path of easy practice as the only genuine path to Buddhahood, very much going against the grain of his contemporaries in that he concludes that the traditional modes of practice are fundamentally flawed. Not only do they not lead quickly to the state of non-retrogression, they also do not actually lead the people who practice them to the intended results. Daochuo sets the path of easy practice alongside this difficult, false path as the only true alternative that genuinely fulfills the promise of Buddhism to lead people to enlightenment. This way of looking at Daochuo's stance presents it very differently from the way it has been described in the past. This more stringent, nuanced criticism is clearly present in the *Anleji*, so it seems it is necessary to consider it to paint a more accurate picture of Daochuo's prioritization of Pure Land Buddhism within the myriad teachings of Śākyamuni.

We also saw that Daochuo did not make any specific statements delimiting the type of practices that belonged to the path of easy practice. For him, it was the aspiration for birth in the Pure Land that was the decisive factor in making that determination, because that aspiration is what qualified practitioners to receive the benefits of Amituo's vow power. That stance is apparent in all the portions of the *Anleji* that I introduced in this section and is echoed elsewhere in the work, as well.⁴² While showing this very inclusive attitude throughout the *Anleji*, there are three instances where Daochuo does indicate that the *nianfo* 念佛, or chanting the name of Amituo, is the most appropriate and effective practice. Because this position strongly influenced Daochuo's successors, such as Shandao and Hōnen, in the next section, I will introduce them.

⁴² For instance, at the end of the opening portion of section 1, chapter 5 ('The merit of all one's practices has been transferred to bring about birth there. If one is simply exclusively straightforward, then when one's life ends, one will necessarily be born. When one attains birth in that country, then ultimately one reaches the cool purity [of nirvana].'), SSZ 1:421–22, T 47.1958: 16c13–15; in a quote from the *Shifangsuivyuanwangshengjing* 十方隨願往生經 in section 2, chapter 2 ('If one can rely on the aspiration, and cultivate practices, there is none who does not attain benefits.') SSZ 1:397, T 47.1958: 9c21–22; the list of eight practices for birth from the *Hailongwangjing* 海龍王經 quoted in chapter 4, section 2, SSZ 1:417; T 47.1958: 15b23–c1; and the list of ten practices for birth from the *Shiwangshengjing* 十往生經 in chapter 12, SSZ 1:438–439, T 47.1958: 21b15–c4.

Daochuo's Three Arguments to Prioritize Calling of the Name

As we saw in the previous section, at the pivotal points in Daochuo's discussion of the paths of difficult and easy practice, he does not specify any particular practice as particularly belonging to the path of easy practice, but instead posits a broad category of practices, from meditative to devotional ones, as 'Pure Land practices.' This inclusivity regarding a variety of practices has led later Shin Buddhist exegetes to criticize his thought as immature or underdeveloped, because it contrasts sharply especially with Hōnen's stance in the *Senjakushū* and also Shinran's detailed distinctions regarding the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth vows of Amituo Buddha. In spite of this broadly inclusive stance, there are three points within the *Anleji* where Daochuo clearly argues that the *nianfo*, and particularly vocal recitation of the name of Amituo, is the best practice for people to engage in. Shandao picks up on these arguments and further develops them in his works, which in turn had a strong influence on Hōnen's proposing exclusive practice of the *nianfo* because it is the practice stipulated in Amituo's eighteenth vow. Let us consider those three arguments in the order that they appear in the *Anleji*.

Daochuo makes his first argument about the appropriateness of vocal recitation of Amituo's name in section 1 of chapter 1. There, he argues that the *nianfo* as the calling of the name is the proper practice for people of his age to engage in. In this section, Daochuo explicitly states that the *nianfo* should be prioritized because the current age is one far removed from Śākyamuni's time and influence. Having stated that the topic under consideration in this section is to describe the reasons that the *Guanwuliangshoujing* 觀無量壽經 (hereafter, *Contemplation Sutra*) was preached, Daochuo begins the discussion with the declaration, 'If a teaching is aligned with the time period and the object of liberation, it is easy to practice and easy to realize. If the object of liberation, the teaching and the time period are turned against each other, it is difficult to practice and difficult to enter.'⁴³ Here, Daochuo is signaling his intention to discuss the merits of a teaching based on the nature of the time period. He goes on to quote a passage from the *Zhengfanianjing* 正法念經 which emphasizes the importance of considering the time period in order to be effective in the employment of expedient means.⁴⁴ He follows that with a passage from what he calls the *Dajiyuezangjing* 大集月藏經 which states that the practices which people can engage in will degenerate over time after Śākyamuni passes away in the course of five-hundred-year stages.⁴⁵ In the first five hundred year period,

⁴³ SSZ 1:378; T 47.1958: 4a27–28.

⁴⁴ SSZ 1:378; T 47.1958: 4a28–b3.

⁴⁵ SSZ 1:376; T 47.1958: 4b3–8.

people will be capable of practicing and attaining wisdom, while in the next they will lose that ability and only be able to practice meditative concentration. After those five hundred years have passed—that is, from the time one thousand years after the passing of the Buddha—people will only be able to engage in the practices of chanting and listening to the teachings in the sutras. In the fourth five hundred year period, even that becomes impossible and people will only be able to construct temples and *stūpas*, perform meritorious deeds, and recognize and admit sins. By the fifth five hundred year period—now two thousand years from Śākyamuni's passing—Buddhists will come to engage in dissentious argumentation and only 'the slightest good Dharma'⁴⁶ will remain. Through this quotation, Daochuo is showing that as time passes from Śākyamuni's entry into complete nirvana, the Buddhist teachings will slowly lose their influence and effectiveness, such that eventually people will no longer be able to engage in practices that will lead to enlightenment. Next, Daochuo quotes another text—without providing a clear attribution—which describes how Buddhas liberate sentient beings through four different methods: (1) dispensing the Dharma through preaching, (2) serving as objects of contemplation, (3) through the use of supernatural abilities, (4) through their names.⁴⁷

These three quotations are presented as the evidence for the following conclusion:

Considering the sentient beings of the present time period, it is [now] the fourth five-hundred-year period since the Buddha has left this world. Truly, [they] are this: those who recognize and admit their sins, perform meritorious deeds, and should chant the name of the Buddha. If one calls the name of Amituo Buddha for one thought-moment, then the sins of eight billion *kalpas* of birth and death are completely removed. One thought-moment is already this way. How much more so [the one who] constantly practices thinking on the Buddha. [He] is the person who continuously recognizes and admits his sins. Further, if the passing of the Sage is near [in time], then the former, the practice of meditation and the cultivation of transcendental wisdom, is the proper study and the latter is secondary. If the passing of the Sage is already far [in the past], then the latter, the calling of the name is proper, and the former is secondary.⁴⁸

Based on the passage from the *Dajiyuezangjing*, Daochuo holds that since it is the fourth of the five five-hundred-year periods since the passing of Śākyamuni, sentient beings should engage in the practices of 'admitting their sins, performing meritorious deeds, and should chant the name of the Buddha.' Although

⁴⁶ SSZ 1:378; T 47.1958: 4b8.

⁴⁷ SSZ 1:378; T 47.1958: 4b8–16.

⁴⁸ SSZ 1:378–379; T 47.1958: 4b16–22.

neither the original text nor Daochuo's quotation of it make specific reference to chanting the name of the Buddha, in this conclusion, Daochuo adds that phrase, likely in light of the third quotation, as well as the content of the *Contemplation Sutra*, which encourages chanting the name and is also the subject of discussion here (the reference to the chanting of the name as eliminating the sins of eighty *kalpas* is a clear reference to that sutra⁴⁹). Daochuo clearly states that chanting the name of Amituo is the appropriate practice because the current age is distant in time from the Buddha. In earlier times, meditative practice would have been the correct practice to engage in, but given the limitations of the time period and the lack of a teacher who can guide one in those practices, Daochuo says that the proper practice to engage in is the chanting of the name.

This first prioritization of the chanting of the name of Amituo over against other types of Buddhist practices is made based on the criteria of the amount of time that has passed since Śākyamuni entered complete nirvana. In other words, in this section, Daochuo is arguing that people should recite the *nianfo* because so much time has passed between them and the Buddha's time that it is no longer possible to engage in other practices. This stance is quite different from—and far more conciliatory than—the one that we saw above in section 1 of chapter 7. It is likely that Daochuo chose to take this more readily understandable and acceptable position at the start of the text (and leave his radical declaration far closer to the end) in order to have his work appeal to a broad audience of Buddhist practitioners. At the time, there were many criticisms of Pure Land Buddhism as inauthentic and of verbal recitation of the name of the Buddha as ineffectual,⁵⁰ so it is likely that Daochuo appealed to the doctrine of the decline of the Dharma, which had considerable currency among his contemporaries,⁵¹ in order to make his radical message more palatable to them. That is to say, this discussion about the degeneration of the Buddhist teachings is not the central message of the *Anleji*, but instead an expedient Daochuo employed to draw in a broad range of Buddhist practitioners who did indeed believe that the six *pāramitās*—especially meditation—were the authentic, proper practices for Buddhists to engage in. The doctrine of the latter days of the Dharma, which had plenty of scriptural precedents that Daochuo could cite, provided a common

⁴⁹ See SSZ 1:65; T 12.0366: 346a19–20.

⁵⁰ Daochuo takes up nine of these criticism in section 2 of chapter 2 of the *Anleji*. SSZ 1:391–399; T 47.1958: 8a22–10b11. The *Xugaosengzhuan* 續高僧傳 by Daochuo's contemporary Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) also relays several incidents where Daochuo was criticized by other monks for his Pure Land devotion. See T 50.2060: 641b27–c11 and T 50.2060: 583b28–c5.

⁵¹ See Takao Giken 高雄義堅, 'Mappō shisō to shoke no taido' 末法思想と諸家の態度, part 1, in *Shina bukkyō shigaku* 支那仏教史学, vol. 1, no. 1, 1–20 (1937) for an introduction to how the doctrine of the latter Dharma was understood by major Buddhist thinkers in the Sui and early Tang dynasties.

ground that Daochuo could conveniently employ to draw Buddhists skeptical of the message of the path of easy practice into the Pure Land fold. That does not mean, however, that it was the salient feature of his Pure Land thought.

Daochuo next prioritizes chanting of the name of Amituo as the most appropriate practice in section 3 of chapter 3, where he imbeds a reference regarding vocal recitation into a creative quotation of Amituo's eighteenth vow. This interpretation of the content of the eighteenth vow as calling the practitioner to chant the Buddha's name is perhaps Daochuo's most influential contribution to the development of Pure Land Buddhism in East Asia, because it served as the basis for both Shandao's and Hōnen's arguments regarding the exclusive practice of chanting Amituo's name rather than engaging in any other Buddhist practices. The eighteenth vow as it appears in the *Sutra on Immeasurable Life* reads as follows:

If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings of the ten directions extend their minds, hopefully entrust, and wish to be born in my land up to ten thought moments, and are not born there, I will not obtain perfect enlightenment.⁵²

Here, Dharmākara Bodhisattva, Amituo in his causal phase before becoming a Buddha, promises he will insure that all sentient beings who fulfill the simple condition of having faith and wishing to be born in his Pure Land up to ten times will definitely be born there. The original text does not make any reference to vocal recitation of Amituo's name, but instead just speaks of 'ten thought-moments.' Daochuo's quotation of this vow in section 3 of chapter 3 reads:

The *Larger Sutra* states, 'If there are sentient beings, even those who created evil for their entire lives, who when they come upon the end of their lives, continue for ten thought moments calling my name, if they are not born, I will not obtain perfect enlightenment.'⁵³

Daochuo has considerably revised the original in this creative quotation. For our purposes here, the phrase 'calling my name' is what is most important. Daochuo has interpreted the eighteenth vow to mean all those, however evil they may be, who call Amituo's name for ten thought moments will necessarily be born in the Pure Land. The text of the *Sutra on Immeasurable Life* does not explicitly state that the 'ten thought moments' mean vocal recitation, but Daochuo's quotation very clearly does.

The idea that Amituo himself chose calling the name as the most appropriate practice for sentient beings is the basis for the arguments that Shandao and Hōnen make encouraging people to specifically practice chanting Amituo's

⁵² SSZ 1:9, T 12.0360: 268a26–27.

⁵³ SSZ 1:410, T 47.1958: 13c11–13.

name as opposed to any other practices. Shandao makes several interpretive quotations of the eighteenth vow that all follow closely on Daochuo's.⁵⁴ Shandao also writes, 'Single-mindedly, exclusively considering Amituo's name when walking, standing, sitting, and lying down—regardless of the length of time—thought after thought, without abandoning it: This is what is referred to as the rightly settled act, because it accords with that Buddha's vow.'⁵⁵ Here he argues that chanting the name is the rightly settled act because it is the act that Dharmākara set forth as the condition for birth in the Pure Land. Hōnen was moved by this passage of Shandao's to devote himself exclusively to the practice of chanting the name of Amituo. In the second chapter of the *Senjakushū*, Hōnen poses the question as to why Shandao specifically takes chanting the name as the 'rightly settled act' and responds by saying, 'Vocal recitation of the *nenbutsu* is the practice [stipulated] in that Buddha's original vow. Therefore, those who practice it will, based on that Buddha's vow, necessarily attain birth in the Pure Land.'⁵⁶ Needless to say, without Daochuo's creative rereading of the eighteenth vow—where he clearly states that the practice Dharmākara called for in the eighteenth vow was vocal recitation—these interpretations by Shandao and Hōnen would not be possible. Therefore, we can say that it is this second prioritization where Daochuo says that the *nianfo* is the appropriate practice because it was chosen by Amituo himself is the most historically significant of the three.

The third prioritization comes in the fourth part of section 2 of chapter 4. There Daochuo calls the *nianfo* 'the essential path' and argues that, although all who turn over the merits of their myriad practices toward birth in the Pure Land will unfailingly be born there, certain benefits adhere to those who practice the *nianfo* that are not enjoyed by people who aim for birth in the Pure Land through other practices. He writes:

Fourth, relying on the *Contemplation Sutra* and other various scriptures, based on the myriad practices performed, if one just turns one's aspiration [to the Pure Land], then all are unfailingly born. However, the single practice of the *nianfo* 念仏 is taken to be the essential path. Why? In investigating the various scriptures, it is clear that there are two benefits, initial and final. If one wishes to give rise to good and perform practices, then [the *nianfo*] entirely encompasses the various *pāramitās*. If one wishes to destroy evil and cause misfortune to cease, then [the

⁵⁴ See Michael Conway マイケル・コンウェイ, 'Zendō kyōgaku no gensen to shite no Anrakushū: Honganron to gyōgōron o chūshin ni' 善導教学の源泉としての『安楽集』: 本願論と行業論を中心に, *Shinran kyōgaku* 親鸞教学 vol. 97, 68–71 (2011), for a discussion of these passages.

⁵⁵ SSZ 1:538, T 34.1753: 272b6–8.

⁵⁶ SSZ 1:935–936, T 83.2608: 3a29–b1.

nianfo] comprehensively cures the myriad obstructions. Therefore, below in the sutra, it states, 'The sentient beings of the *nianfo* are taken up, never to be abandoned. When their life runs out, they necessarily will be born.' This is referred to as the initial benefit. About the final benefit, based on the *Guanyin shouji jing* 觀音授記經, it states, 'Amituo Buddha will remain in the world for a long time, immeasurably many *kalpas*, yet he also has complete extinction. When he enters into *parinirvana*, only Avalokitēśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta will be present and maintain the Land of Peace and Bliss, guiding those in the ten directions. The length of that Buddha's complete extinction will be the same as the amount of time he spent in the world. In this way, the sentient beings of that world will not see the Buddha at all. Only those who are born by exclusively thinking solely of Amituo Buddha will constantly see Amituo in the present, not having become extinct.' This is the benefit of the final time. The other practices that one performs, all lead to birth if one transfers the merit for that purpose, but there is a difference between those who see the complete extinction of the World-honored One, and those who do not. I encourage later generations to consider this carefully, so that they will be able to attain the far-off benefit.⁵⁷

Here, Daochuo says that although all who wish to be born in the Pure Land and devote their practices to that purpose will be born there, there are two major benefits that practitioners of the *nianfo* receive which those people who do other practices do not. Before describing those two benefits, he also notes that in terms of practice, the *nianfo* is particularly effective, in that it 'encompasses the various *pāramitās*' and 'comprehensively cures the myriad obstructions.' He says that because of this effectiveness, the *Contemplation Sutra* speaks of sentient beings who do the *nianfo* as necessarily receiving the benefit of being grasped by the light of Amituo and never abandoned. Daochuo calls this the initial benefit that only those who do the *nianfo* receive. He then makes reference to the *Guanyin shouji jing* which describes how in the distant future Avalokitēśvara will take the place of Amituo as the Buddha in the Pure Land Amituo created.⁵⁸ Daochuo creatively quotes from that sutra to make it a text that proves that only those who do the *nianfo* will be assured of seeing Amituo forever.⁵⁹ Those who are born in the Pure Land through other practices will ultimately have to part with Amituo and continue their practice in the Pure Land

⁵⁷ SSZ 1:415–416, T 47.1958: 15a6–19.

⁵⁸ The sutra appears at T 12.0371: 353b5–357c17. The portion that Daochuo is referring to appears at T 12.0371: 357a5–10.

⁵⁹ Although the original states that 'bodhisattvas who have attained the *nianfo samādhi* will receive the benefit of always seeing the Buddha' (T 12.0371: 357a10.), Daochuo rephrases that statement in his quotation based on the language in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (T 12.0360: 272b17, 272b26–27, 272c6).

under the direction of Avalokitēśvara. In this way, Daochuo argues that there are two important benefits that are available only to those who do the *nianfo* and therefore he encourages his readers to particularly engage in that practice as ‘the essential path.’

In Lieu of a Conclusion

Through the course of this chapter, we have seen that Daochuo took a broad, inclusive stance toward the content of the practice in the path of easy practice that he encouraged his readers to take. He also argued for the importance of the *nianfo* as an essential path that is appropriate for a variety of reasons: (1) because it accords with the needs of the time period, (2) because it was chosen by Amituo himself as the practice for sentient beings to perform, and (3) because it affords its practitioners more benefits than other practices aimed at birth in the Pure Land.

This inclusive stance likely stems from two sources. First, Daochuo’s understanding of the decisive role played by other power in effecting the liberation of sentient beings led him to not lay much weight on the issue of individual practitioners’ activities. More important than the content of the practice for him was the intention behind it. If the practice is engaged in with the hopes of attaining birth in Amituo’s Pure Land, that is sufficient to qualify the practitioner to receive the benefits of the working of Amituo’s vows, so Daochuo probably felt no strong need to make strict declarations about exclusively chanting the name of Amituo the way his successors did.

From section 2 of this chapter, however, we can clearly see that Daochuo did hold the *nianfo* to be ‘the essential path,’ so we have to look for a second source that kept him from making that argument consistently throughout the *Anleji*. It seems that one major reason that Daochuo chose to take such a broad, inclusive stance toward the type of practice was in order to avoid alienating his audience. At the time that Daochuo was writing, Pure Land Buddhism was certainly an object of interest for a large number of lay and monastic Buddhists, but it was not accorded the sort of central position that Daochuo held it should be afforded. There was not only a great deal of criticism of Pure Land Buddhism as not authentically Buddhist, there were many influential people who treated the *nianfo* as little more than an expedient practice for inferior practitioners. With that sort of an audience, Daochuo had to first convince them that Pure Land Buddhism was indeed worthy of attention. If he were to present only the sort of radical stance we saw in section 1 above, or make a bold argument about exclusive practice of the *nianfo*, it is likely that he would not have been taken

seriously by the clerics he was attempting to win over to the Pure Land path. It seems that these sorts of concerns led him to make reference to the doctrine of the latter days of the Dharma as well as downplay the essential role of the *nianfo* in Pure Land soteriology.

Before closing, however, it seems important to revisit Daochuo's assertions about how the results one obtains from the six *pāramitās* are 'false' and 'upside down' and ask what significance that holds for our understanding of Buddhist practice and what the Pure Land meant to him. It is truly quite jarring to be told that the six *pāramitās* are 'false' and that any practice that a foolish ordinary being engages in is necessarily 'upside-down' and does not lead to—but instead away from—Buddhahood. It challenges the validity of our very concept of practice. Daochuo and Tanluan took this stance and based on it, discouraged engaging in self power practice, instead calling people to rely on the other power of Amituo's vows. It will require further research to be able to prove this fully, but it seems that the flaw that Daochuo and Tanluan perceived in practice as conceived by the unenlightened being—the flaw that makes the path of difficult practice impossible—was actually broadly recognized by Mahayana thinkers in India and China.⁶⁰ Tanluan and Daochuo's choice to attempt to resolve that flaw with reference to Amituo and his Pure Land is surely unique, but it seems that a great many Buddhist thinkers wrestled with the problem that they were attempting to address. When we consider Buddhist practice simply as actions that people perform in hopes of attaining Buddhahood, we run the risk of obscuring the issues that our objects of study were attempting to address. It seems, therefore, that an important question that needs to be addressed going forward is how exactly did Mahayana Buddhists understand the systems of practice laid out with such a vast time scale in scriptures like the *Huayan Sutra* and the *Pusa yingluo benye jing*.

A second, and perhaps more pressing, question has also become apparent over the course of these considerations. This study has focused on what practices Daochuo held would qualify one for birth in the Pure Land, but the fact is that for Daochuo, birth in the Pure Land is a multivalent concept, so although we have seen that Daochuo held a wide variety of practices would indeed lead to birth in the Pure Land, it is highly likely that he saw that 'birth' to be an expedient one. In section 8 of chapter 1 of the *Anleji*, Daochuo writes as follows:

Question: You have already said that the pure country of Amituo takes in [people both] high and low; that all equally go [there to be born] without questioning

⁶⁰ For instance, both Tanluan (T 40.1819: 840b27–29) and the *Pusa yingluo benye jing* (T 24.1485: 1016a12) refer to the stages in the path of bodhisattva practice set forth in scriptures like the *Huayan Sutra* as 'a path of transformed response' (*yinghuadao* 応化道), indicating that it is an expedient that does not necessarily express ultimate truth, or the true path to Buddhahood.

whether they are ordinary human beings or sages. I still do not know if one gains birth only through practicing no-set-form or, on the other hand, if the [relying on] set form of the ordinary human being is also able to be born. Answer: The ordinary person, whose wisdom is shallow and often seeks relying on set form definitely attains birth in the Pure Land. However, because the strength of good with set form is weak, [they] are only born in a land with form and see a transformed recompense Buddha.⁶¹

All the various practices that we have discussed above, since they are practiced by the ‘unaccomplished ordinary beings’ who have not made progress along the bodhisattva path are ultimately what Daochuo here calls ‘good with set form’—that is, good that takes a specific form and is thus said to not accord with the ultimate, formless, Buddhist truth. Thus, from his perspective, they do not qualify one for a true birth in the true Pure Land, only an expedient birth in an expedient land ‘with form,’ where one only encounters a ‘transformed recompense Buddha.’ In light of this passage, I have to say that although in the above I have been able to make a presentation of the superficial aspects of Daochuo’s understanding of the role of practice in the Pure Land path, this presentation really only deals with the expedient level of birth in the Pure Land. That is to say, I have not actually managed to address the way in which what Daochuo held to be true birth in the Pure Land actually resolves the flaw in practice and allows ordinary beings to fulfill the Mahayana ideal without arduous progress along the fifty-two stages of the bodhisattva path.

In that sense, this chapter has led to more questions than answers, but I am out of space, so I will have to address those questions at another opportunity.

⁶¹ SSZ 1:386, T 47.1958: 6c1–5.

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Abbreviations

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Shinran's 'Practice'. The Shin Buddhist Turn in the Buddhist Understanding of Practice

Abstract

In Buddhism, the fundamental question regarding practice is what practice will allow one to overcome the suffering of *samsara*. Shinran offered a unique answer to that question based on the transformation of his understanding of Buddhism brought about through his encounter with Hōnen, a Buddhist thinker who advocated exclusively practicing the recitation of the *nenbutsu*. This paper aims to clarify the significance and originality of Shinran's grasp of what that practice is through a careful reading of his works.

Shinran holds that his encounter with Hōnen's teaching led him to shift from the self-power practices of the Path of Sages to the Other Power of the Pure Land tradition. After describing the traditional view of practice laid out in the Path of Sages, which aims to attain enlightenment through severing one's mental afflictions and developing wisdom through meditative concentration, I discuss Hōnen's understanding of the *nenbutsu* as an Other Power practice selected in Amida's original vow. From Hōnen's perspective, people are incapable bringing about the sort of transformation that was sought after through those traditional, self-power practices such as keeping precepts and engaging in mediation. Rather than engaging in such an impossible endeavor, Hōnen advocated reliance on the compassionate action of Amida's original vow, which promised to bring all who relied on it to ultimate enlightenment.

Then I discuss how Shinran developed Hōnen's ideas to shift the significance of practice to one entirely based on Other Power faith. Shinran does not focus on the act of vocal recitation of the *nenbutsu*, but instead emphasizes the importance of the experience of hearing the significance of the name of Amida as explained by awakened predecessors and the arising of faith toward that message. From Shinran's perspective, the name of Amida represents the virtues of true suchness that have already been fully realized entirely independent of the actions or intentions of the individual practitioner. For Shinran, recognizing and accepting the virtues that are shown to exist through the Amida's name is the key to being liberated from *samsara* and is possible in an instant of insight that is available to anyone regardless of their abilities or actions.

Through these considerations, this paper shows how Shinran's emphasis of Other Power faith is an essential element of his clarification of the True Pure Land Buddhism as the consummation of Mahayana Buddhism.

Keywords: Shinran, Hōnen, *nenbutsu*, self power, Path of Sages, Other Power, Pure Land tradition, faith, vocal recitation of the *nenbutsu*, True Pure Land Buddhism

Introduction

In Buddhism's long history, 'practice' (*gyō* 行) has been discussed in a variety of ways. At the root of these discussions is the question of what practice will allow one to transcend the suffering of birth and death.

This chapter focuses on the understanding of practice found in the thought of Shinran, who lived in medieval Japan and had a large influence on Japanese Buddhism by clarifying and systematizing the true essence of the Pure Land teachings as Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗, or Shin Buddhism. A decisive event in Shinran's life was when he turned from the teachings of the self-power Path of the Sages (*jiriki shōdō mon* 自力聖道門) to Other Power Pure Land teachings (*tariki jōdo mon* 他力浄土門). This opened for him a way of living that 'discard[s] sundry practices and [takes] refuge in the Original Vow [*hongan* 本願].'¹ This was a decisive turn away from the understanding of practice upon which the former kind of Buddhism was premised. Shinran made clear the meaning of Buddhist practice based on the power of the Original Vow, that is, 'Other Power.'

Drawing from his twenty years of religious training and study, Shinran declared that practice based on self-power cannot be true practice. I will therefore first describe Shinran's perspective on the understanding of practice that had been seen as self-evident before him. Then, I will examine the views of Shinran's teacher Hōnen, which led Shinran to see calling the name of Amida Buddha (*shōmyō nenbutsu* 称名念仏) as true practice. Then, based on the above, I will make clear the nature of Shinran's own understanding of practice.

Shinran's Perspective on Practice

A Buddhist seeks to discover how they themselves can leave behind birth and death, and, if they can discover such a path, to understand concretely its nature. Therefore, when pursuing the Buddhist way, one is confronted with the unavoidable question of how to understand oneself, as well as how to understand the problems of humanity that become apparent through this seeking. Shinran understood himself as a 'foolish being' (*bonbu* 凡夫). He would repeatedly say this.

Foolish beings: none other than ourselves [...]

¹ *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 290. Slightly modified.

Foolish beings: as expressed in the parable of the two rivers of water and fire, we are full of ignorance and blind passion. Our desires are countless, and anger, wrath, jealousy, and envy are overwhelming, arising without pause; to the very last moment of life they do not cease, or disappear, or exhaust themselves.²

Foolish beings are those who until the moment of death live with continually arising, never perishing ignorance and blind passions (or mental afflictions). Shinran's above words show that he held that losing sight of this truth is to deceive and misperceive oneself. This is Shinran's perspective regarding himself as well as humans in general.

When discussing Shinran's view of humans, we should also mention the thirteenth section of the *Tannishō* 歎異抄:

If the karmic cause so prompts us, we will commit any kind of act.³

Shinran states that a human can commit any kind of act due to the deeds of themselves and many others, the results of these deeds, and various environments and conditions. In the background to this statement is Shinran's experience of having been exiled as a criminal. These words are also deeply related to his way of life: he walked alongside those at the lowest levels of society who, stepped on and kicked as if they were stones, were forced to live lives in which people took no interest. Shinran saw them as brethren: 'we, who are like stones and tiles and pebbles.'⁴

Based on the above, we could say that Shinran saw 'humans' as beings living with two decisive limitations. First, they are unable to cut off blind passions, and, second, they are tossed around and bound by the results of their actions as well as the various environments and conditions they find themselves in. In his Buddhist search, Shinran exhaustively sought a Buddhist path that would bring such beings beyond suffering and confusion.

By now, Shinran's perspective on practice is surely clear. He was concerned with how practice on the Buddhist path could be opened to those who have accepted the fact that they cannot run away from the reality of being a foolish person. This can be neither a practice that is predicated on elimination of blind passions as an absolute necessity, nor a practice that holds the adjustment of individual circumstances and experiences, or the development of individual abilities to be a necessary condition for liberation. An eye to the existential state of humans as foolish beings made him acutely question the nature of practice in Buddhism.

² *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 488.

³ *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 671.

⁴ *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 459.

While Shinran studied and trained for twenty years on Mt. Hiei, pursuing the Path of Sages that aims to cut off delusion and realize awakening, at the age of twenty-nine he left this behind and met his lifelong teacher Hōnen. He then put his trust in the Other Power Buddhist path that is based on the Original Vow of Amida Buddha. In his magnum opus *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, he declares that the *Larger Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* (*Bussetsu muryō jukyō* 仏説無量寿經) is the true teaching of Buddhism, and states the following.

To reveal the true teaching: It is the *Larger Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*. The central purport of this sutra is that Amida, by establishing the incomparable Vows, has opened wide the dharma-storehouse, and full of compassion for small, foolish beings, selects and bestows the treasure of virtues. [The sutra further reveals that] Śākyamuni appeared in this world and expounded the teachings of the way to enlightenment, seeking to save the multitudes of living beings by blessing them with this benefit that is true and real.

Here Shinran says that the object of the true teachings found in the *Larger Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* are ‘small, foolish beings’ (*bonshō* 凡小), or the ‘multitudes of living beings’ (*gunmō* 群萌). These words clearly express the nature of human beings that Shinran was concerned with and that we have described above. This clearly shows that for him encountering the ‘true teaching’ is to encounter the Buddhist path that is realized while living as a foolish being. Therefore, the various practices that had been seen before Shinran as a necessary part of the Path of the Sages completely lose their meaning for those who have realized that they are foolish beings. This is because, after facing the fact that they cannot cut off blind passions and are bound by their karma, to continue to hope for results on the Buddhist path via these practices is not only an attempt to explain away the existential state of humans, but also involves continuing to dream about an unrealizable Buddhahood.

Sentient beings, having long followed the Path of Sages—
The accommodated and temporary teachings that are provisional means—
Have been transmigrating in various forms of existence;

So, take refuge in the One Vehicle of the compassionate Vow.⁵

Here we can see Shinran’s perspective. It would lead him to both make thoroughly clear the meaning of a Buddhist practice completely different than the Path of the Sages and find it necessary to consider the meaning of the word ‘practice’ itself.

⁵ *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 344.

Shinran's Teacher Hōnen and His Understanding of Practice

For Shinran, making clear the meaning of practice on the Buddhist path was accompanied by a fundamental question: what is practice for foolish beings? A decisive event in his exploration of practice that would lead him to turn from the self-power teachings of the Path of the Sages to the Other Power teachings of the Pure Land was his encounter with the teaching of the sole practice of reciting the Buddha's name upon meeting his teacher Hōnen. Therefore, here I want to explore Hōnen's understanding of practice.

Hōnen established the Pure Land school by breaking away from the teachings of Path of the Sages that had been passed down in Japan until his time. These teachings held that by cutting off blind passions one could achieve the awakening of nirvana. Like Shinran, Hōnen sought a Buddhist path that he, himself, could pursue, but in the course of that seeking he realized not only that he was a confused 'foolish being' who engages in the ten unwholesome behaviors (*jūaku* 十惡) and is unable to cut off blind passions, but also that on the Path of the Sages there was no way he could leave behind birth and death because such a path is premised on the elimination of blind passions. After years of struggle, he encountered in the Pure Land teachings a path to Buddhahood on which he could stand.

Hōnen makes clear that practice on the Buddhist path for foolish beings is the *nenbutsu*, the 'practice chosen in the Original Vow.' Hōnen describes this practice as follows in the third chapter of his magnum opus, *Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集.

Amida Tathāgata, in the distant past when he was the Hōzō Bodhisattva, moved with impartial compassion and wishing to save all beings universally, did not choose in his Original Vow concerning rebirth the manifold practices, such as making images of the Buddha and building stupas. He chose the single practice of uttering the *nenbutsu* in that Original Vow.⁶

Hōnen explains that in order to include all sentient beings as the object of the Original Vow, Amida Tathāgata chose not the manifold good practices but solely the *nenbutsu*. Elsewhere Hōnen also states that the significance of the Original Vow lies in it equally bringing all sentient beings to rebirth in the Pure Land (*issai shujō byōdō ōjō* 一切衆生平等往生). He makes clear the reason that the Original Vow does away with the myriad practices and chooses the sole practice of the *nenbutsu* by going back to the Tathāgata's impartial compassion, in other words, his 'mind of the vow' (*ganshin* 願心) that tries to have all sentient beings

⁶ *Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 1997: 37. Slightly modified.

be equally reborn in the Pure Land. In the background of this discovery of the significance of the ‘mind of the Vow,’ lies Hōnen’s encounter with himself as a foolish, ordinary being as well as his encounter with the teaching of the Original Vow, in which such self-recognition is an essential element. These encounters served as the basis for Hōnen’s choice of the *nenbutsu* as practice. If this is left unclear and the relative difficulty and superiority of various practices are discussed, then one will be unable to escape from a hierarchical way of thinking that holds that the *nenbutsu* is an easy practice for those with inferior spiritual abilities who cannot carry out difficult practices. Furthermore, the meaning of Hōnen establishing the Pure Land school would be left incomplete. Hōnen is confirming that the *nenbutsu* is the practice for foolish beings to leave behind birth and death particularly in the context of correspondence between the teachings and the capacities of human being of his times. In other words, that choice arose in the context of his decisive realization regarding the human capacity for self-liberation and the Dharma of the Original Vow directed toward such human beings.

Hōnen’s elucidation of this *nenbutsu* served as the intellectual background for Shinran’s understanding of practice. Here we should take note of Hōnen’s investigation into the Original Vow that necessitated this understanding of practice, that is, of Amida’s Name (*myōgō* 名号). Hōnen states that in order to have all sentient beings equally be reborn in the Pure Land and transcend suffering and confusion, only the easy practice of the *nenbutsu* was chosen in the Original Vow. At the basis of this understanding of practice is Hōnen’s recognition of the actualization of the great compassion by which Amida Tathāgata equally saves all sentient beings. Shinran, while passing on his teacher’s thought, elucidated practice in the context of the Other Power path in an even more thorough fashion.

Shinran’s Understanding of Practice

Drawing from the thought of Hōnen, which made clear the significance of the *nenbutsu* as the Original Vow’s chosen practice, Shinran states the following regarding practice.

The great practice is to say the Name of the Tathāgata of unhindered light. This practice, embodying all good acts and possessing all roots of virtue, is perfect and most rapid in bringing them to fullness. It is the treasure ocean of virtues that is suchness or true reality. For this reason, it is called great practice.⁷

⁷ *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 13.

Shinran states that reciting the Name is a 'great practice' that is always already making the virtue of suchness complete. At the basis of his understanding is Hōzō Bodhisattva's seventeenth vow, which states that if the buddhas of the innumerable worlds do not praise and recite the Name of Amida Buddha, he will not become a buddha. In other words, buddhas that have perfected improving themselves and bringing benefit to others are the ones who truly understand the meaning of reciting the Name as a great practice and praise it. These buddhas are the ones who recite the name, not ordinary sentient beings. The responsibility of sentient beings is to *listen* to the meaning of the Name of Amida Buddha that is praised and recited by these buddhas. They do not themselves engage in the recitation of the Name as a good practice. Therefore, Shinran's understanding of practice clearly rejects the importance of 'good practices' that are part of the calculating acts of practitioners engaging in practice. This is clearly expressed in the *Tannishō* as well: 'The *nenbutsu*, for its practitioners, is not a practice or a good act.'⁸ This is a very important part of Shinran's understanding of practice.

If this is the case, what did Shinran see as the meaning of the *nenbutsu*? He states the following regarding *Namu Amida Butsu* 南無阿弥陀仏 (lit., 'I take refuge in Amida Buddha'):

[T]he word *Namu* means to take refuge (*kimyō*) [...] Thus, *kimyō* is the command of the Original Vow calling to and summoning us [...] *Aspiring for birth and directing virtue* indicates the mind of the Tathāgata who, having already established the Vow, gives sentient beings the practice necessary for their birth. *The practice* is the selected Original Vow.⁹

Here, Shinran is developing his original understanding of *Namu Amida Butsu*, the Tathāgata's Name. He holds that the Name is a command in which Amida Buddha's Original Vow summons sentient beings. In other words, Shinran interprets *Namu Amida Butsu* as—regardless of who is doing the reciting—the functioning of the Original Vow that is continually calling out to sentient beings living amidst birth and death. *Namu Amida Butsu* is thus the practice of the Original Vow that continually functions as a voice calling out to sentient beings, commanding them to 'take refuge (*namu*) in Amida Buddha('s Original Vow)'. It is for this reason that Shinran heard in the Name itself Amida Tathāgata's 'mind of the vow' that led him to give rise to his Original Vow, engage in practices, and redirect the merit of these practices to sentient beings.

We could refer to Shinran's understanding as the 'Shin Buddhist shift' in Buddhist practice.

⁸ *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 665. Slightly modified.

⁹ *The Collected Works of Shinran* 1997: 38. Slightly modified.

Thoroughly realizing that humans are none other than foolish beings, Shinran first inquired into the nature of the practice that must be elucidated in this context. With regard to this issue, Hōnen made clear that the *nenbutsu* is the practice chosen in the Original Vow, which states that all sentient beings will equally be reborn in the Pure Land. Hōnen showed that it was because of nothing other than the great compassionate Original Vow—which does not abandon anyone, regardless of the depth of their blind passions and transgressions—that the easy practice of the *nenbutsu* was chosen. Adopting this perspective and further deeply reflecting on the meaning of the *nenbutsu*, Shinran completely rejected the idea that it is a practice in which ordinary sentient beings *engage*. This was a fundamental turn away from the approach of the Path of the Sages: self power-based practices and seeking enlightenment through these practices. Shinran then made clear that the significance of the *nenbutsu* for sentient beings lies in the command of the Tathāgata’s compassionate Original Vow, which continually functions for people living in all karmic circumstances and regardless of the depth of their blind passions and transgressions. For this reason Shinran came to understand the task of sentient beings to be to listen to the Name of the Original Vow and attain the ‘mind of faith’ (*shinjin* 信心) that arises based on the mind of the vow of the Tathāgata. This understanding of practice as the practice of the Original Vow, or the calling of the the Original Vow shows that the deciding factor of the realization of the Path to Buddhahood through Other Power is the ‘mind of faith’, not human action. This Shin Buddhist turn in the understanding of practice is thus inseparable from his understanding of faith.

Conclusion

Let us summarize what I have argued in this paper. Shinran’s understanding of practice is distinguished by his thorough questioning of the kind of practice that is suited for foolish beings. This inquiry was based on his deep contemplation regarding the existential situation humans find themselves in as foolish beings. The ‘chosen *nenbutsu* of the Original Vow’ that Shinran was taught by his teacher Hōnen gave his inquiry a clear direction. Shinran, making even clearer the significance of this *nenbutsu*, then elucidated practice as follows:

- (1) The true practice of reciting the Name is always already making the virtue of suchness complete.
- (2) Buddhas, not ordinary sentient beings, are the ones engaging in the practice of reciting the Name.
- (3) The recitation of the Name is not a good deed or practice of practitioners.

- (4) The Name (*Namu Amida Butsu*) is not simply a name that refers to Amida Tathāgata but a command by which the Tathāgata's Original Vow beckons sentient beings.
- (5) It is the task of practitioners to listen to the Name recited by buddhas and realize true faith in the Name of the Original Vow.

In this way, Shinran clarified the meaning of practice in the Pure Land teachings and its position in Shin Buddhism (which he calls the 'consummation' of the Mahāyāna), thereby showing the significance of practice in a Buddhist path founded upon Other Power.

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The Huayan Understanding of One-mind and Buddhist Practice on the Basis of the Awakening of Faith

Abstract

The Huayan school of Chinese Buddhism inherited the legacy of the early transmission of Yogācāra teachings through the Dilun and Shelun schools, signifying a scholarly endeavour to synthesise the Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha teachings. In contrast to the Indian Yogācāra tradition, which was subsequently introduced to China by the renowned monk and traveller Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), these early schools emphasised a kind of actual or pure reality behind the phenomenal world and was not satisfied with the worldview that the world can be traced back to a tainted entity, the *ālayavijñāna*, the source of all phenomena. This distinctive Chinese viewpoint finds explicit expression in the apocryphal Chinese text the *Awakening of Faith Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng Qixin lun* 大乘起信論), which has become one of the most important philosophical treatises in the history of Chinese Buddhism. This text proposes the concept of one-mind, which has the *tathatā* aspect (*zhenru men* 真如門) and the *samsāra* aspect (*shengmie men* 生滅門). Huayan exegetes, who authored commentaries on the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, the scripture that they regarded as the most perfect teaching of the Buddha, were influenced by the *Awakening of Faith* and the early Chinese Yogācāra schools in their understanding of this scripture. In this article, we are going to introduce the teachings of *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* that were interpreted as not only the appearance of Yogācāra thought but also as an unequivocal articulation of the concept of one-mind as it was put forward in the *Awakening of Faith* by Huayan scholars. We will show how this concept was further elaborated in Huayan philosophy and practice.

Keywords: *Awakening of Faith Mahāyāna*, one-mind, Huayan, Zhiyan, Fazang, Chengguan.

The Huayan 華嚴 school of Chinese Buddhism inherited the early Chinese understanding of Yogācāra teachings reflected by the works of the Dilun 地論 and Shelun 攝論宗 schools.¹ These works influenced the way that the Huayan masters shaped their own distinct tenets, which are, as they claim, the perfect teaching.² The second patriarch of the school, Zhiyan 智儼 (602–668), who actually proposed several of the innovative teachings of the Huayan school, laying the ground for further elaborations of the following generations, started to write his main Huayan works as a response to the challenge of the new transmission of Yogācāra teachings by the traveller-monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), who was acknowledged as a great authority of Buddhist knowledge by the imperial court.³ Consequently, Zhiyan and the subsequent Huayan masters had to take great effort both intellectually and by finding powerful supporters in the court in order to protect the central concepts of the early transmission of Yogācāra, such as the universality of Buddhahood, or *tathatā*, as the final reality.

Indisputably, the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng Qixin lun* 大乘起信論, hereafter: *Awakening of Faith*), a short but very influential treatise not only in Huayan Buddhism but also in the East Asian Buddhist tradition, was at the core of the tradition that the Huayan masters attempted to uphold and served as a foundation upon which they built their own legacy.⁴ It is one of the Buddhist works to which they refer most often in their commentaries on the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, the scripture that the Huayan masters regarded as Buddha's most perfect teaching. The third patriarch, Fazang 法藏 (643–712), wrote a very substantial commentary on the *Awakening of Faith* that became one of the most authoritative commentaries on the treatise in the Buddhist tradition.⁵ Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839), the fourth patriarch, who composed the most voluminous commentaries (i.e., a Buddhist encyclopaedia that includes references

¹ For the early transmission of Yogācāra teachings in China through the Dilun and the Shelun schools, see Paul 1984, Keng 2009.

² The Huayan school regarded the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* as the Perfect Teaching, which was preached by Buddha directly after his enlightenment under the bodhi tree and is called the distinct teaching of the one vehicle. For the study of the content of the Perfect Teaching and its distinct character, see Gregory 1991: 154–172.

³ For the study of Zhiyan's life, works, his doctrinal innovations, and especially his reaction toward Xuanzang's teaching, the best treatment has been Gimello's unpublished doctoral dissertation. See Gimello 1976.

⁴ For a translation of this important treatise, see Hakeda 1967. For a translation with references to Chinese and Korean commentaries, see Girard 2004, Jorgensen 2019.

⁵ For a very comprehensive biography of Fazang emphasising his role as a religious leader who maintained close a relationship with the court, see Chen 2007. Fazang wrote two commentaries on the *Awakening of Faith*: 1. *Dasheng qixin lun yi ji* 大乘起信論義記, T 1846 and 2. *Dasheng qixin lun yi ji bieji* 大乘起信論義記別記, T 1847. For an English translation of the *Dasheng qixin lun yi ji*, see Vorenkamp 2004.

to more than 300 Buddhist works) on the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, did not write his own commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, but while explaining the text of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, he often refers to the *Awakening of Faith* and provides his own understanding of this treatise.⁶ His disciple, Zongmi 宗密 (780–841), who favoured the *Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment* (*Da fangguang Yuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyi jing* 大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經, T 842),⁷ did not write a commentary on the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*; however, he further elaborated Fazang's commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, and his doing so also played an important role in his understanding of the *Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment*.⁸

Given that the patriarchs of Huayan Buddhism lived in different political and religious environments, the agendas of their religious and social activities, and consequently their philosophical persuasions, differed. As we have seen, the challenge faced by the new Yogācāra school was formidable in Zhiyan's and Fazang's times, and this challenge prompted the two scholar-monks to prove, by all means, the priority of the old Yogācāra school, including the *Tathāgata-garbha* teachings over Xuanzang's school, which Fazang derogatively named the 'Faxiang' 法相 (i.e., 'the characteristics of the dharma') school. To show the superiority of the old school, in his system of five teachings, Fazang denoted the Faxiang school as the beginning of the Mahāyāna teachings and *Tathāgata-garbha* as the final level.⁹

By the time of Chengguan, the threat of the takeover of the Indian Yogācāra must have diminished; however, the Chan school gained wide currency in society and the Buddhist world. The Chan iconoclasm and its serious attack on traditional Buddhist doctrine and practice presented new challenges to scholar-monks such as Chengguan, who, although on the level of perfect teaching were able to acknowledge the perfect interfusion of all practices, firmly believed in the conventional Buddhist path to enlightenment and the necessity of Buddhist practice.¹⁰ To cope with the rise of the new school, Chengguan was no longer malignant toward the Faxiang school, even if it remained inferior in the five teachings. However, he often cited the seminal work of the Faxiang school, the *Demonstration of Consciousness Only* (*Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論, T 1585) and Kuiji's 窺基 (632–682) commentary on it, the *Cheng weishi lun shuji* 成唯

⁶ For Chengguan's biography, see Hamar 2002. For a translation of Chengguan's introduction to his commentary on the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* with his subcommentary, see Guo 2014.

⁷ The *Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment* is a Chinese apocryphal text probably written in the 8th century by one or more individuals associated with Chan and Huayan Buddhism. See Muller 1999: 3.

⁸ See Zhang 2017: 217–226.

⁹ For a thorough treatment of the Huayan system of the classification of teachings, see Liu 1981, Gregory 1991: 115–135.

¹⁰ See Hamar 2016.

識論述記 (T. 1830).¹¹ Chengguan's scholastic mind, to a certain extent, seems to have been charmed by the very sophisticated elaboration of mental activity and religious practice by the *Cheng weishi lun*, which excellently supplements the rather terse and profound statement of the *Awakening of Faith*. To balance the previous, biased views on the new school, Chengguan created two new categories for classifying teachings: the Dharma-characteristics principle (*faxiang zong* 法相宗) and the Dharma-nature principle (*faxing zong* 法性宗), the latter of which includes Madhyamaka teachings, not only *Tathāgatagarbha* teachings. Chengguan attempts to show two different kinds of philosophical views that are finally transcended by the perfect teaching, the Huayan doctrine.¹²

Next, I show, due to limited space, through two examples how the Huayan masters were influenced by the *Awakening of Faith* in their understanding and interpretation of the most perfect scripture of the Huayan school, the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, and how the *Awakening of Faith* influenced their views on Buddhist practice. One of the most famous teachings of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* is that 'the three realms are mind only.' This occurs in the following passage of the 60-fascicle version of the sūtra:

三界虛妄但是心作；十二緣分是皆依心。¹³

The three realms are illusion, created only by mind; the twelve chains of dependent arising rely on mind.

The same passage in the 80-fascicle version:

三界所有，唯是一心。如來於此分別演說，十二有支皆依一心，如是而立。¹⁴

All existent things in the three realms are only one-mind. Thus the *Tathāgata* explained that the twelve branches of existence are established relying on one-mind.

The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of this passage are very close to the Chinese renditions.¹⁵ This passage might shed some light on the process of *samsāra*, which functions without personal agent, and in a broader context, it might clarify that this process actually is an illusory result produced by our minds.¹⁶

¹¹ For the most recent translation of this seminal work, see Cook 1999.

¹² See Hamar 2007.

¹³ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T 09.0278: 558c10–11.

¹⁴ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T 10.0279: 194a14–15.

¹⁵ For a comparative study of the various versions of this passage, see Tamaki 1960.

¹⁶ See Schmithausen 2009: 142–143.

It is tempting to interpret this text as evidence for the presence of Yogācāra, or even the Absolute mind in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*; however, it is quite clear from the context that here the mind is deluded due to ignorance about the Absolute truth, and this ignorance leads to existence, death, and suffering, which are described by the 12 chains of dependent arising. As existence comes into being due to the craving mind, we can be certain that the one-mind mentioned in this passage is not the Absolute one-mind advocated by the famous Chinese apocryphal scripture, *The Awakening of Faith*.

The Dilun master Huiyuan 慧遠 (523–592) attributed a tainted quality to the mind, which gives rise to all objects in the phenomenal (*shixiang* 事相) world. This understanding is very close to the original meaning of the *sūtra*. However, when discussing dependent arising, he emphasises that the process involves actual and false aspects that depend on each other, and that it is exactly the coexistence of these two ways that makes the evolution of the process possible. Even if both actual and false aspects play a role in the process of the origination of the phenomenal world, based on how deep one penetrates the mind, one can find different levels of causes and conditions that set the process of origination in motion.

On the first level, the six kinds of consciousness are the causes and conditions for the phenomenal world to arise, which creates all karmic sufferings of *samsāra*. On the next level, if one investigates the principle (*li* 理) of this phenomenal world, which must mean the realisation of emptiness of all phenomena, one finds that only false conceptualisation (*wangxiang* 妄想) is behind the fabrication of the phenomenal world as cause and condition. In fact, all phenomena are just like dreams, as there are no phenomena outside the mind. On the third level, one is able to penetrate into the essence (*ti* 體) of the false conceptualisation, reaching its original nature (*benxing* 本性). It turns out that eventually all phenomena are originated by the actual consciousness (*zhenshi* 真識), which is called the actual (*zhenshi* 真實) cause and condition. Huiyuan argues that the one-mind, as defined by the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, is none other than the same actual mind (*zhenxin* 真心), the only existent entity. This actual mind is defined as the non-empty aspect of suchness and characterised by eternal, unchanging, pure dharmas by the *Awakening of Faith*.¹⁷

Zhiyan explains this passage in the context of the seminal Huayan doctrine the *dharma-dhātu* dependent arising (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起), which he says has many ways but in short can be divided into the following: defiled dependent arising from the perspective of ordinary beings and the pure dependent arising from the perspective of the enlightenment.¹⁸ In other words, the former explains

¹⁷ *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論, T 32.1666: 576b5–7.

¹⁸ T 35.1732: 62c25–63c3. Gimello 1976: 435–439.

how suffering evolves out of ignorance, while the latter shows how to reverse the process of the appearance of suffering by religious cultivation. On the one hand, this scheme preserves the meaning of the original teaching of *pratītya-samutpāda* formulated by Buddha and the passage of the sūtra concerned here. On the other hand, as we will see, it incorporates the teachings of Yogācāra and *Tathāgatagarbha*.

The defiled dependent arising is divided into two aspects: the dependent arising one-mind (*yuānqi yixin* 緣起一心) and the supporting one-mind (*yichi yixin* 依持一心). The dependent arising one-mind is described from three perspectives. First, Zhiyan emphasises that the root consciousness (*benshi* 本識), out of which the 12 links of dependent arising evolve, does not have the distinction of actuality and falsity. This root consciousness, named one-mind by the *Awakening of Faith*, comprises them as potentials before being activated; this consciousness that merges actuality and falsity is called *ālaya*, which enables the appearance of mutually dependent actuality and falsity (*zhenwang yuānqi* 真妄緣集). Having underlined the general statement about the integration of actuality and falsity, Zhiyan then introduces the process of dependent arising from two directions.

The second perspective is to follow that which is evolved while entailing the origin (*sheben congmo* 攝本從末), a process that creates the deluded mind. This direction is further defined as seed consciousness (*sarvabījakavijñāna*; *zhongzi shi* 種子識) and retributive consciousness (*vipāka-vijñāna*; *guobao shi* 果報識), and in turn is to be eliminated through corrective practices (*pratipakṣa-mārga*; *dui zhidao* 對治道). Furthermore, this is revealed by the circulation of the *dharma-kāya* in five destinies, called living beings, resulting in various forms of suffering.

The third perspective is to follow the origin while entailing that which is evolved (*shemo congben* 攝末從本). In contrast with the previous perspective, this involves the creation of 12 links by the actual mind (*zhenxin* 真心), just like how waves are created in water. To speak more broadly, five *skandhas*, 12 links of dependent arising, and ignorance are nothing but Buddha-nature, and this is the meaning of the sentence: ‘The three realms are illusion, created only by mind’.

The other aspect, the supporting one-mind, is the *ālaya* on which the first six and seventh consciousnesses rely in their formation, being the general cause (*tongyin* 通因). In comparison with the first aspect, which emphasises that during the dependent arising of one-mind, defilement and purity essentially cannot be differentiated. Rather, as we have seen, depending on the direction of our observing the process of coming into existence, we can make statements

in terms of falsity or actuality. Here, the support and that which is supported (*nengsuo* 能所) are clearly differentiated; their identity cannot be established.

The pure dependent arising, the Buddhist solution for eliminating suffering and realising enlightenment, is discussed from the perspective of whether it is originally possessed (*ben you* 本有) by the practitioner (as it is advocated by the *Tathāgatagarbha* or Buddha-nature doctrine) or reached by cultivation (*xiusheng* 修生), which should be the original Buddhist way (as it had been prescribed by the Buddha). In order to shed light on the mutual dependence and inseparability of these two aspects, Zhiyan adds two other aspects of enlightenment: ‘originally possessed and (due to that) reached by cultivation (*ben you xiusheng* 本有修生)’, and ‘reached by cultivation and (due to that) originally possessed (*xiusheng ben you* 修生本有)’.

First, given that the reality of dependent arising (*yuanqi benshi* 緣起本實) essentially cannot be described and that the *dharma-dhātu* appears as such without the movement of the three times (past, present, future), all living beings originally possess the great tree of awakening, and therefore they all realise enlightenment sooner or later.

Second, originally possessed and (due to that) reached by cultivation means that even if pure qualities originally do not have different natures, based on various conditions new good dharmas can be produced. True knowledge can be realised on the level of false dharmas, and that is the field of Samantabhadra’s religious practice. The essence of the innate nature is not differentiated, just like wisdom attained through cultivation. That is the reason that wisdom is in accordance with principle (*shunli* 順理) and not with conditions out of which it was generated. In conclusion, that which is reached by cultivation is identical to that which is originally possessed.

Third, reached by cultivation means that faith and other good roots previously do not appear, but after encountering the pure teachings, dependent on conditions, these good qualities are newly born.

Fourth, reached by cultivation and (due to that) originally possessed means that ordinary beings are deluded; therefore, the nature of *Tathāgatagarbha* is concealed in the defilements. As long as they are deluded, we cannot say that they are endowed with the nature of *Tathāgatagarbha*. Attaining the non-discriminating wisdom, the *dharma-kāya* appears in the defilements, showing its purity. Given that previously the *Tathāgatagarbha* was not efficient (*wu you li* 無有力), this dharma did not exist (*wufa* 無法), but after attaining wisdom, it revealed its function (*chengyong* 成用). As it did not originally exist, we cannot say that it was originally possessed. Rather, it was reached by cultivation and purification (*xiujing* 修淨).

Fazang, defining the meaning of dependent arising in his commentary on this passage, preserved the pure and defiled ways, but he added a third way that treats the previous two together (*ranjing heshuo* 染淨合說).¹⁹ Each of these three ways is divided into four aspects. Fazang considerably reorganised the scheme of defiled dependent arising that Zhiyan put forth by including into his four aspects the original two: the dependent arising one-mind (*yuanqi yixin* 緣起一心) and the supporting one-mind (*yichi yixin* 依持一心). However, the supporting one-mind was renamed as 'the support of the origin and that which is evolved' (*benmo yichi* 本末依持). In addition, he included following that which is evolved while entailing the origin (*sheben congmo* 攝本從末) and following the origin while entailing that which is evolved (*shemo congben* 攝末從本), which originally were the second and third aspects of the dependent arising mind, respectively. Fazang dropped the first aspect of the dependent arising mind, mutually dependent actuality and falsity (*zhenwang yuanqi* 真妄緣集), probably because he instead proposed the joint discussion of defilement and purity as a third way of dependent arising.

Fazang completely adopted the four aspects of pure dependent arising from Zhiyan: originally possessed (*ben you* 本有), originally possessed and (due to that) reached by cultivation (*ben you xiusheng* 本有修生), reached by cultivation (*xiusheng* 修生), and reached by cultivation and (due to that) originally possessed (*xiusheng ben you* 修生本有).

The four aspects of the joint discussion of defilement and purity are: revealing purity by turning over defilement (*fanran xianjing* 翻染現淨), responding to defilement by purity (*yijing yingran* 以淨應染), the coalescence of defilement by identifying with purity (*huiran jijing* 會染即淨), and the elimination of the defilement and annihilation of purity (*ranjin jingmin* 染盡淨泯). Here, I propose that we find a Sinitic or Huayan application of the Madhyamaka, *catuṣkoṭi*, or tetralemma, with the first representing purity, the second defilement, the third both purity and defilement, and the fourth neither purity nor defilement.

Fazang, who comments on both the original text of the sūtra and Vasubandhu's commentary, in turn divides his explanation of the passage into two parts. The sentence 'the three realms are illusion, created only by mind' clarifies the collective arising (*yuanqi* 集起) of all phenomena, while the sentence 'the twelve chains of dependent arising rely on mind' points out the support (*yichi* 依持) of this process. It is interesting to note that in explaining the collective arising, Fazang introduces a new scheme for Yogācāra teachings, the 10 levels of consciousness-only, which are discussed elsewhere.²⁰

¹⁹ *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T 35.1733: 344a29–b8.

²⁰ See Hamar 2012a.

Chengguan treats the Buddhist causal theory in a broader context compared to how Confucianist and Daoist teachings treat the creation of the outer world. He recapitulates Fazang's scheme of three aspects of dependent arising almost word by word.²¹ Moreover, he adopts the scheme of 10 levels of consciousness-only but makes considerable changes due to his own ambitions.

Zhiyan:

<i>dharmadhātu</i> dependent arising (<i>fajie yuanqi</i> 法界緣起)	
defiled dependent arising	pure dependent arising
1. the dependent arising one-mind (<i>yuanqi yixin</i> 緣起一心)	1. originally possessed (<i>ben you</i> 本有)
a. root consciousness (<i>benshi</i> 本識)	2. originally possessed and (due to that) reached by cultivation (<i>ben you xiusheng</i> 本有修生),
b. following that which is evolved while entailing the origin (<i>sheben congmo</i> 攝本從末)	3. reached by cultivation (<i>xiusheng</i> 修生)
c. following the origin while entailing that which is evolved (<i>shemo congben</i> 攝末從本)	4. reached by cultivation and (due to that) originally possessed (<i>xiusheng ben you</i> 修生本有)
2. supporting one-mind (<i>yichi yixin</i> 依持一心)	

²¹ T 36.1736: 513c15–25. The only difference is that in elaborating the pure dependent arising in the third and fourth permutations, Chengguan inserts the word 'identical' (*ji* 即): originally possessed is identical with that which is reached by cultivation (*ben you ji xiusheng* 本有即修生), and that which is reached by cultivation is identical with the originally possessed (*xiusheng ben you* 修生即本有).

Fazang:

<i>dharmā-dhātu</i> dependent arising (<i>fajie yuanqi</i> 法界緣起)		
defiled dependent arising	pure dependent arising	Defiled and pure jointly discussed (<i>ranjing heshuo</i> 染淨合說)
1. the dependent arising one-mind (<i>yuanqi yixin</i> 緣起一心)	1. originally possessed (<i>ben you</i> 本有)	1. revealing purity by turning over defilement (<i>fanran xianjing</i> 翻染現淨)
2. the support of the origin and that which is evolved (<i>benmo yichi</i> 本末依持)	2. originally possessed and (due to that) reached by cultivation (<i>ben you xiusheng</i> 本有修生)	2. responding to defilement by purity (<i>yijing yingran</i> 以淨應染)
3. following that which is evolved while entailing the origin (<i>sheben congmo</i> 攝本從末)	3. reached by cultivation (<i>xiusheng</i> 修生)	3. coalescence of defilement by identifying with purity (<i>huiran jijing</i> 會染即淨)
4. following the origin while entailing that which is evolved (<i>shemo congben</i> 攝末從本)	4. reached by cultivation and (due to that) originally possessed (<i>xiusheng ben you</i> 修生本有)	4. elimination of defilement and annihilation of purity (<i>ranjin jingmin</i> 染盡淨泯)

As we have seen above, the Huayan masters in their interpretation of ‘three realms are mind-only’ were willing to neglect the original context of this passage of the sūtra, which clearly describes the mind as a source of illusions, and as such eventually is the main reason for living beings to be born in *samsāra*. This in turn leads to all kinds of suffering. The Huayan masters preferred to understand one-mind (*yixin* 一心) as the one-mind described by the *Awakening of Faith*, which described one-mind as having the *tathatā* aspect (*zhenru men* 真如門) and the *samsāra* aspect (*shengmie men* 生滅門).

Another famous part of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* that is often traditionally believed by East Asian scholar monks and modern Japanese scholars, whose understanding heavily relies on the traditional exegetical works, to be influ-

enced by Yogācāra philosophy is the so-called *Mind-only Poem* (*Weixin jie* 唯心偈) that appears in the chapter titled ‘Hymns recited in the palace of Yama’.²² By this poem, the bodhisattva called Forest of Awakening, like other bodhisattvas in this chapter, praises Buddha’s merits and capacities, and originally intends to emphasise Buddha’s unique and magnificent ability to resume various forms in the world suitable to the needs and capacities of living beings.²³ The bodhisattva claims that the mind creating the external world is just like a painter who applies various colours to make a picture on a canvas.

1.
譬如工畫師 分布諸彩色
虛妄取異相 大種無差別

Like when a painter
is spreading the paint:
the different forms are apprehended in a wrong way;
[in fact] the components are not distinct.

2.
大種中無色 色中無大種
亦不離大種 而有色可得

In the composing elements, there is no form.
In the form, there is no composing elements.
Outside the composing element
form cannot be apprehended.

3.
心中無彩畫 彩畫中無心
然不離於心 有彩畫可得

In the mind, there is no colourful painting.
In the colourful painting, there is no mind.
Outside the mind, therefore,
the colourful picture cannot be apprehended.

²² For Japanese commentaries on this poem, see Kamata 1989.

²³ For thorough studies of the possible original meaning of this poem and its interpretation in Huayan Buddhism, see Schmithausen 2009 and Hamar 2012b.

4.

彼心恒不住 無量難思議
示現一切色 各各不相知

Mind does not abide forever,
numberless and incomprehensible.
It manifests all forms
that do not know each other.

5.

譬如工畫師 不能知自心
而由心故畫 諸法性如是

Just as in the case of the painter
who does not know his own mind,
but the painting comes from his mind
– the nature of all dharmas is like this.

6.

心如工畫師 能畫諸世間
五蘊悉從生 無法而不造

Mind, just like the painter,
can paint the different worlds.
The five skandha are born from it;
there is nothing it does not create.

7.

如心佛亦爾 如佛眾生然
應知佛與心 體性皆無盡

The Buddha is also like mind,
and living beings are like the Buddha.
It must be known that the Buddha and mind
are, in their essential nature, inexhaustible.

8.

若人知心行 普造諸世間
是人則見佛 了佛真實性

If one understands that the activity of mind
creates the worlds everywhere,
he will see the Buddha,
and understand the real nature of the Buddha.

9.

心不住於身 身亦不住心
而能作佛事 自在未曾有

The mind does not dwell in the body,
and the body does not dwell in the mind.
However, it can still perform Buddha's deeds
freely and in an unequalled way.

10.

若人欲了知 三世一切佛
應觀法界性 一切唯心造

If somebody wants to know
all the buddhas of the three worlds,
he has to discern the nature of dharma-dhātu:
everything is created by the mind.

Fazang and Chengguan explain the meaning of the *Mind-only poem* in terms of the doctrines of the *Awakening of Faith*, which overshadows the original intention of the sūtra by interpreting mind as one-mind, the creator of the phenomenal world. Fazang structures the text saying that ‘the first six stanzas tell us how mind creates the world of phenomena (*zuofan* 作凡); the next four stanzas explain how mind brings about the enlightenment (*qisheng* 起聖).’²⁴ In other words, the first part reveals the defiled dependent arising discussed above, which is none other than the origination of phenomenal world from one-mind as described in the *Awakening of Faith*, while the last four stanzas show how Buddhist practice can lead to the realisation of the actual aspect of mind. On the other hand, in this poem Chengguan underlines the unity of actuality and falsity (*zhenwang hecheng* 真妄合成), which is called the ‘complete consciousness-only’ (*jufen weishi* 具分唯識), because this poem reveals both the origination of defiled phenomenal world and the realisation of Buddha-mind.²⁵

Various colourful forms appear on the canvas, but in fact they consist of the same four elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Wind) and only due to illusion are perceived as different, just like, as Fazang argues, all the objects, eventually, are none other than the actual mind.²⁶ On the one hand, phenomena are different from actual mind, given that they are empty, while actual mind is real; on the other hand, phenomena and actual mind cannot be separated, as actuality can

²⁴ See *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T 35.1733: 215b5–6.

²⁵ See *Da fangguang fo huayan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, T35, no. 1735, p. 658, a8; *Da fangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T 36.1736: 321c9–10.

²⁶ See *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T 33.1733: 215b22–23.

appear only if the real nature of phenomena (i.e., their emptiness) is perceived. The phenomena, as Chengguan underlines, do not possess a distinct essence (*wu bieti* 無別體); therefore, applying the classical Huayan expression, nature and phenomena mutually pervade (*xingxiang jiaoche* 性相交徹).

後偈上半明真妄不即。上句明能造非所造喻。攝妄之真不即妄，以性真故。下句明所造非能造喻。依真之妄不即真，以性虛故。下半明妄不離真。謂以虛徹真，虛盡真現故，云不離。是故不離、不異、不即。思之！²⁷

The first half of the [second] stanza clarifies that the actual and false are not identical. The first sentence shows that in the metaphor the creator is not that which is created. The actual that includes the false is not identical with the false, because its nature is real. The next sentence illustrates that the created is not the creator. The false that relies on the real is not identical with the actual, because its nature is empty. The second half elucidates that the false is not apart from the actual. It means that emptiness penetrates the actual, because the actual is manifested if emptiness is eliminated. Thus, we say they are not separated. They are neither separated, nor different, nor identical. Think about it!

The non-constant mind (*xin bu heng zhu* 心恒不住), mentioned in the fourth stanza, is interpreted by Chinese exegetes as the *ālayavijñāna* of the *Awakening of Faith*, which is described as ‘the non-born and non-ceasing is connected to the born and the ceasing (*bu sheng bu mie yu shengmie hehe* 不生不滅與生滅和合)’.²⁸

The seventh stanza undoubtedly raises new questions by introducing the concept of Buddha, which, as the Chinese scholars interpret, involves soteriological issues into the discussion of the nature and origin of phenomena. The stanza seems to suggest the identity of Buddha, mind, and living beings, underlying the inexhaustible nature of Buddha and mind. Fazang, retaining the context of the *Awakening of Faith*, regards the root and branches as the principle of actuality—which is represented by the Buddha endowed with pure nature and enlightenment, the goal of Buddhist practice—and living beings evolved from mind, respectively. Mind includes both root and branches, as on the one hand it relies on actuality; on the other hand, it is able to evolve to bring about phenomena. Consequently, mind, Buddha, and living beings are integrated and unobstructed parts of the process of dependent arising (*yuanqi rongtong wuai* 緣起融通無礙).²⁹

²⁷ *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T 33.1733: 3215b23–28.

²⁸ T 32.1666: 576b8–9.

²⁹ *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T 35.1733: 215c18–23.

In terms of Buddhist practice, as Chengguan states, a practitioner should understand that mind is the source of all phenomena to proceed in the line of pure dependent arising (*jing yuanqi* 淨緣起), which eventually leads to enlightenment. Conversely, ignorance about this truth causes rebirth in one of the realms of living beings, which is defined as defiled dependent arising (*ran yuanqi* 染緣起). In order to prove the identity of mind, Buddha, and living beings, Chengguan shows that each of them has tainted and pure aspects.

上三各有二義。總心二義者：一染、二淨。佛二義者：一應機隨染、二平等違染。眾生二者：一隨流背佛、二機熟感佛。各以初義，成順流無差；各以後義，為反流無差；則無差之言，含盡無盡。³⁰

The three above each have two aspects. These are two aspects of the comprehensive mind: first, being tainted and, second, being pure. These are the two aspects of a Buddha: first, in response to the faculty [of living beings] he follows the tainted, and second, in his equanimity he avoids the tainted. These are two aspects of living beings: first, they wander in *samsāra* turning away from Buddha, and second, the faculties of living beings ripen and generate belief in Buddha. In accordance with their first aspect, they do not differ in that they wander in the *samsāra*. In accordance with the second aspect, they do not differ in that they return from *samsāra*. Thus, if we say that they are not different, it includes both their limit and limitlessness.

The last stanza is explained as guidance for religious practice to realise Buddhahood, which enables the practitioner to see all the Buddhas of the three worlds. The only efficient method to reach this goal is to discern the real nature of the *dharmadhātu*, all phenomena, and to understand that everything originates from mind. One must, as Fazang admonishes, rely on principle in his discernment of all phenomena (*yi li guan* 依理觀), and can realize actuality or tathatā by coalescence with the mind (*hui xin ru shi* 會心入實).

Applying the paradigm of *Awakening of Faith*, Chengguan claims that the discernment of *dharmadhātu* is the actual aspect, while the realisation that everything is created by mind is the *samsāra* aspect. In addition, he formulates two Mahāyāna practices of discernment: discernment regarding the truth of actuality (*zhenru shi guan* 真如實觀) and discernment regarding the truth of mind-only (*weixin shi guan* 唯心實觀). One-mind not only includes all dharmas, as the *Awakening of Faith* says, but also these two kinds of discernment, or meditation practices, and these two discernment are interpenetrated, unobstructed, and one flavoured, which is the final Huayan vision of reality leading to the most marvellous (*miaoji* 妙極) insight realised by Buddha under the bodhi tree.

³⁰ *Da fangguang fo huyan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, T 35.1735: 658c14–19.

As we have seen above, the two famous citations of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* that are traditionally, and sometimes even by modern scholars, related to the Yogācāra philosophy, in fact originally were not embedded in the context of the consciousness-only philosophy. However, Huayan exegetes undoubtedly believed that they express the same idea, namely the one-mind as tathatā found in the *Awakening of Faith*. However, they interpreted one-mind in the framework of the most important Huayan concept, the *dharma-dhātu* dependent arising (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起), revealing that these two aspects eventually form one final reality, and that they are an integrated, unseparated part of it. The Huayan term ‘the defiled dependent arising’, which shows the origination of the phenomenal world, is in accord with the *Awakening of Faith* saying that on the basis of *tathāgatagarbha* (*rulai zang* 如來藏) ‘the non-born and non-ceasing is connected to the born and the ceasing (*bu sheng bu mie yu shengmie hehe* 不生不滅與生滅和合)’, and this process is designated as the *ālayavijñāna* (*aliyeshi* 阿梨耶識) by the *Awakening of Faith*.³¹

Immediately after introducing the two aspects of the one mind, the *Awakening of Faith* defines original enlightenment (*benjue* 本覺; the natural state of mind without disturbance caused by thinking that in turn can be traced back to ignorance) and the acquired enlightenment (*shijue* 始覺; which is identical to original enlightenment, given that the four characteristics [*si xiang* 四相] of the mind, that is origin, abiding, change, and decay [*sheng zhu yi mie* 生住異滅], are simultaneous). In contrast, the pure dependent arising of the Huayan calls original enlightenment and acquired enlightenment originally possessed and reached by cultivation, respectively. To show the identity of these two kinds of enlightenment, Huayan exegetes introduced the categories ‘originally possessed and (due to that) reached by cultivation’ and ‘reached by cultivation and (due to that) originally possessed’, which shed light on the fact that no matter which kind of enlightenment is the starting point, it will eventually lead to the other one. In other words, the identity of the initial enlightenment and the acquired enlightenment is revealed through the Huayan understanding of the dependent arising, which includes mind, Buddha, and living beings integratively and unobstructedly. This can lead to the correct discernment of the *dharma-dhātu*.

³¹ See CBETA T32, no. 1666, p. 576b8–9.

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Abbreviation

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Recent Trends Concerning the Issue of ‘Buddhism and Practice’ in Contemporary Japan

Abstract

When discussing Buddhism in practice, we should first note that the word *practice* has a multilayered meaning in Buddhism. For the purposes of this paper, I would like to simplify things considerably, and divide those multiple meanings into two groups. The first involves the training of one’s mind and body. By engaging in such training, the practitioner is said to draw closer to Buddhist enlightenment. This practice takes various forms depending on the time and place, such as observing the precepts or engaging in meditation, and is referred to as ‘benefiting the self’ (*jiri* 自利). Second, there is the practice that consists of Buddhists’ activities vis-à-vis society. Even Buddhists, whose fundamental orientation is towards leaving the secular world (*shusseken* 出世間), have engaged in activities in society that have taken a variety of forms. There are records of Śākyamuni having given various pieces of advice to rulers during ancient times. We also find many records of later Buddhists engaging in missionary and charitable activities. This is referred to as ‘benefiting others’ (*rita* 利他). In particular, Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes the inseparability of ‘benefiting the self’ and ‘benefiting others.’

Although Buddhist practice is traditionally divided into two categories: self-interest and altruism, it would not be true to say, in fact, that ‘benefiting others’ has always been as much of a primary concern as ‘benefiting the self.’ Rather, it can be said that concern for others has always been a weakness of Buddhism, overshadowed by concerns with ‘benefiting the self.’ Thus, Mahayana Buddhism’s emphasis on the importance of benefiting others, on the contrary, could be said to imply that this was a weakness of the Buddhism at the time of the Mahayana arose.

My paper focuses on recent developments surrounding Buddhism and its practice in contemporary Japan, particularly the element of ‘benefiting others.’ The question of how Buddhists should contribute to society has continually and repeatedly appeared from the origins of Mahayana Buddhism to the present. Against this backdrop, an event occurred in Japan in recent years that marked a major turning point in the issue of Buddhist contributions to society. That event is the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. In this paper, I consider the issue of ‘benefiting others’ in Buddhism in light of the effects of the tragic earthquake disaster.

Keywords: practice, benefiting the self, benefiting others, Mahayana Buddhism, contemporary Japan, Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

About Buddhist Practice

When discussing *Buddhism in practice*, we should first note that the word *practice* has a multilayered meaning in Buddhism. So that our discussions at this symposium can proceed smoothly, I would like to simplify things considerably, and divide their meaning into two senses. The first involves the training of one's mind and body. By engaging in such training, the practitioner is said to draw closer to Buddhist enlightenment. This practice takes various forms depending on the time and place, such as observing the precepts or engaging in meditation, and is referred to as 'benefiting the self' (*jiri* 自利). Second, there is the practice that consists of Buddhists' activities vis-à-vis society. This is referred to as 'benefiting others' (*rita* 利他). Even Buddhists, whose fundamental orientation is towards leaving the secular world (*shusseken* 出世間), have engaged in activities in society that have taken a variety of forms. There are records of Śākyamuni having given various pieces of advice to rulers during ancient times. We also find many records of later Buddhists engaging in missionary and charitable activities, a practice that continues up through the present.

This volume consists of various papers, and we should take note of the sense in which each author is using the term 'practice.' Some will probably emphasize practice that involves the training of the self, while others might discuss issues relating to the salvation of others. Particularly in Mahayana Buddhism, one finds an emphasis on the inseparability of benefiting the self and benefiting others. Self-benefit is seen as a necessary condition for benefiting others, and vice versa. Therefore, we also must keep in mind that one cannot simply discuss these two kinds of practice as separate entities. My paper will focus on recent trends surrounding Buddhism and practice in contemporary Japan and consider practice in society in relation to these concepts of 'benefiting the self' and 'benefiting others.'

Two Issues in Buddhist Societal Practice

There is no exhausting the discussion surrounding societal practice in Buddhism. These discussions focus on two issues: the content of such practice, and its meaning.

The former is concerned with the kind of societal demands to which 'Buddhist practice' should respond, as well as the ways in which this should be done. Ever since Siddhartha Gautama left home, Buddhism has placed a certain distance between itself and the secular or mundane world. This is symbolized by

the following exchange between Gautama, when he was going to engage in religious training, and Bimbisara.

(Bimbisara) 'I shall give you objects of enjoyment; enjoy them. But tell me your birth, when asked.'

(Gautama) 'They are Adicca by clan, Sakiya by birth. From the family, I went forth, King, not desiring sensuous pleasures. Having seen the peril in sensual pleasures, having seen going-forth as safety, I shall go in order to strive.'¹

King Bimbisara was trying to bring Gautama into the world of secular power by giving him 'objects of enjoyment.' However, holding that doing away with rather than fulfilling mundane desires is true peace, Gautama rejected this and asserted that he would seek a path that transcends the mundane world. This would mean that Buddhist societal practice does not respond to society's demands in a straightforward fashion. Rather, Buddhism presents outcomes that are the polar opposite of these demands as what is truly beneficial. To laypeople seeking salvation, Śākyamuni preached not wealth but its renunciation,² and not life but the acceptance of death.³ There is a need to carefully discuss the kind of role such a supra-mundane view of salvation can play in society. (This becomes an issue of the place and time in which Buddhist practice tries to be involved in society. I will touch upon this again at the end of my paper.)

The meaning of Buddhist societal practice is another theme that receives frequent attention, with discussions focusing on the necessity of engaging in practice that benefits others. Buddhism is a religion that began with Siddhartha Gautama's unease regarding old age, illness, and death, and seeks to establish psycho-spiritual subjects that can overcome these. After becoming enlightened, Śākyamuni preached the Four Noble Truths in his first sermon, explaining that one should 'extinguish, discard, and leave behind' attachment to the self in order to do away with the suffering of old age, illness, and death. He also presented the Noble Eightfold Path, consisting of Right View, Right Thought, and so on. Such practice largely involves the training of the self and does not directly give rise to the social concern of saving others. As a result, an issue in practice seeking Buddhist enlightenment is that it is predominantly oriented towards benefiting the self rather than benefiting others.

¹ Norman 2001: 421-424.

² Horner 2015: 21. 'The son of great merchant called Yasa' (Yasa leaving home).

³ Watson Burlingame 2018: 258. Kisa Gotami seeks a mustard seed to cure her dead child.

However, it is not the case that Śākyamuni took absolutely no interest in benefiting others. When recommending to his disciples that they engage in itinerant practice, he said the following:

(Buddha) ‘Walk, monks, on tour for the blessing of the manyfolk, for the happiness of the manyfolk out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of *devas* and men. Let not two (of you) go by one (way). Monks, teach *Dhamma* which is lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely at the ending. Explain with the spirit and the letter the Brahma-faring completely fulfilled, wholly pure.’⁴

Despite the existence of such teachings, prominent Buddhists were entirely focused on the training of the self and would eventually confront the problem of the closed-off nature of the sangha. There are many Buddhists who attempted to confront this problem, and their interest can be seen as proof that they were trying to follow Śākyamuni’s recommendation to benefit others. Through my paper we will see that these issues found in Buddhist societal practice have continued to exist up through the present.

Societal Practice as a Reaction to Insularity

The emphasis on societal practice in reaction to the closed-off nature of the self and sangha was very apparent when Mahayana Buddhism was growing out of what would later, and inappropriately, come to be called ‘Hinayana Buddhism.’ Various understandings have been offered, and still are being proposed, regarding the background to the appearance of Mahayana Buddhism. First the theory was proposed that Buddhist religious institutions broke into two groups and that one of them, the Mahāsāṃghika, developed into Mahayana Buddhism. One also finds the claim that Mahayana Buddhism emerged separately from the renunciate leaders of early Buddhism, out of laypeople centered around Buddhist stupas that enshrined the bones of Śākyamuni. Other scholars have claimed that Mahayana Buddhism has its origins in elements that were dispersed throughout early Buddhist renunciate groups. Some now even claim an approach that tries to find a clear historical origin for the emergence of Mahayana Buddhism is mistaken.⁵ While it is now difficult to definitively establish the time of the emergence of Mahayana Buddhism and the group(s) out of which it appeared, it is certain that doubts regarding the teachings that have been passed down as

⁴ Horner 2015: 28.

⁵ See Shimoda 2011.

those of Śākyamuni contributed to a great shift in the subsequent direction of Buddhist institutions. Shimoda Masahiro holds that these doubts took the form of the 'conscious question' of 'what are the true teachings of the Buddha?'⁶ This 'conscious question' would in the end be expressed by the word 'Mahayana' (in contradistinction to 'Hinayana'), and Mahayana Buddhism would subsequently grow in India and China in the form of religious institutions. An important element in all of this was the issue of the closed-off nature of the Buddhist organization. Here we can find a driving force that apparently led Buddhist practice to grow to encompass others, rather than the self alone.

Sasaki Shizuka, who has written many articles regarding the origins of Mahayana Buddhism, states the following:

Buddhism from the time of Śākyamuni had tried to run away from the suffering of existence by remodeling the self in renunciate religious practice. It then turned into Mahayana Buddhism, which attempts to achieve Buddhahood through salvific activities in society based on the bodhisattva practice of benefiting others. This turning point was undoubtedly a confrontation with the question of how Buddhists should and can contribute to society.⁷

As I mentioned above, Śākyamuni taught his disciples to engage in activities 'for the blessing of the manyfolk, for the happiness of the manyfolk.' However, these early period Buddhists, seeking to establish religious belief, entirely focused on reconstructing the self, and were unable to adequately fulfill their promise to benefit others as Śākyamuni taught. According to Sasaki, contributing to society emerged as a major interest of these Buddhist renunciates, and a new Buddhism developed that had a strong inclination towards benefiting others.

In Mahayana Buddhism, Buddhist practitioners were called 'bodhisattvas.' The word was first used in tales of Śākyamuni's past lives (Jātaka tales) to refer to him. This bodhisattva is depicted as a practitioner who repeatedly abandoned his own life to save others. This was a new image of Śākyamuni that emerged against the background of a strong interest in how Buddhists should contribute to society. In response to the conscious question of the nature of the true teachings of the Buddha, Buddhism would develop into a religion that was actively involved in the salvation of others based on compassion.

While Mahayana Buddhism started in this way, the question of how Buddhists should contribute to society has, surprisingly, constantly and repeatedly appeared up through the present. Next, to think about this problem, I will turn to developments in contemporary Japanese Buddhism.

⁶ See Shimoda 2011.

⁷ See Sasaki 2014.

Developments in Japanese Buddhism Related to ‘Buddhism and Practice’

Although I say, ‘turn to developments in contemporary Japanese Buddhism,’ it is difficult to point to one specific thing that represents ‘contemporary Japanese Buddhism.’ Such is the nature of contemporary Buddhism that one is unable to overcome the limits of diversification and single out one specific person or group that preserves the Buddhist tradition in an orthodox way. Thus, here I would like to provisionally take as representative the societies that attempt to clarify the nature of the Buddhist tradition through academic methods. In Japan at present, there are two large academic societies. The first is the Nippon Buddhist Research Association, which began in 1928, and the second is the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, which was founded in 1951. Members of the former include multiple Buddhist universities and national universities, such as the University of Tokyo, and the latter is made up of individuals that research Buddhism and Indian philosophy.

Because the former, the Nippon Buddhist Research Association, is made up of multiple organizations, a common theme is set for the annual conference, and the different representatives share their findings. Themes related to things such as faith, awakening, and history are common, but in 1969 the 39th conference was held under the theme ‘The Various Issues for Buddhism and Society.’ The conference records explain its motives as follows:

Buddhism was originally concerned with the issue of individuals’ faith, practice, and realization. However, despite this, while continuing to criticize society for its secularity, Buddhism also hopes to enter into the secular world and realize its ideals while standing in a supra-mundane position.⁸

Here it is posited that Buddhism was ‘originally’ an issue of faith, practice, and realization for the individual. However, ‘despite this,’ it is not completely removed from society, and ‘hopes to enter into the secular world and realize its ideals while standing in a supra-mundane position.’ Because Buddhism shifts from ‘originally’ being an issue for the individual to become something that ‘enters into the secular world . . . while standing in a supra-mundane position,’ one can see that a divide was already assumed to exist between the individual and the secular world. The issue of the insularity that Buddhism has embraced since its earliest stage also surely stems from this divide. Hirakawa Akira, who presented what were at the time revolutionary findings concerning the origins of Mahayana Buddhism, spoke as follows on the theme of ‘The Buddhist Organization’s Involvement in Society’:

⁸ See the Introduction in *Nihon Bukkyō Gakkai* 1970.

Even if the central interest of Buddhism is the liberation of the individual, human beings are social creatures by necessity, so as long as a human is alive he or she cannot ignore his or her social side and live solely through his or her individual side [...]. However, traditionally, Buddhists have not sufficiently reflected on their social lives. Thus, the 'human' side is overlooked, and there has been a tendency to understand human beings entirely from the individual side. Thus, Buddhism must proceed to deal with this issue in the future.⁹

Now I want to focus on the other society, the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies. Because this group is made up of individual members its discussions do not take the form of shared themes. However, on the issue of Buddhism and societal practice, the following noteworthy proposal was made at the board of directors meeting of the 1965 conference.

Some members have suggested that, for the further development of the association, perhaps we should create a section for so-called 'Applied Buddhist Studies,' encompassing fields such as Buddhist sociology, arts, and welfare work. And, along with placing an increased focus on the importance of basic research, it is desirable that Buddhist studies are advanced in both of these areas.¹⁰

This proposal was put forward by the then chairperson of the association, Miyamoto Shōson of University of Tokyo. There was, then, at the conference the next year in 1966, a section for applied studies that was separate from the general research section. At this conference, Nishi Yoshio, who was a professor at Toyo University at that time, proposed the following definition for the new field of Buddhist studies that had been given the name 'Applied Buddhist Studies':

Buddhism has its own unique form of scholarship and a research methodology for realizing that scholarship. Through this, we can establish foundational studies that thoroughly investigate the Mahayana teachings on ultimate truths, such as those on Buddhism's fundamental wisdom and its conception of the Buddha, Nirvana, and the Middle Way. From that standpoint, let us review the various modes of life in the secular world, and call this reconstruction of the teachings of conventional truths 'Applied Buddhist Studies.'¹¹

What Nishi refers to here as 'foundational studies' means something different from the scholastic stance on Buddhist research at the time (and perhaps also now), where the greatest emphasis is placed on areas such as literature and his-

⁹ See Hirakawa 1970.

¹⁰ See 'Dai jūrokkai gakujutsu taikai kiji' 第十六回学術大会記事 (1965).

¹¹ See Nishi 1966.

tory studies. Nishi contrasts this stance on foundational studies with what he calls ‘education on the living Buddha.’ ‘Education on the living Buddha,’ seeks to treat Buddhist wisdom, on ideas such as *śūnyatā* (空; emptiness) and *anātman* (無我; no-self), not as ‘thought’ (i.e., records), but rather as ‘self-realization’ (i.e., experience). Thus, it is from this position that ‘applied Buddhist studies’ is taken to mean ‘the reviewing of the various modes of life in the secular world and the reconstruction of the teachings.’ On applied Buddhist studies, Nishi concludes by saying he is confident that, ‘it will bring about the removal of all hindrances to awakening, and involvement in social welfare planning, and ultimately contribute to worldwide happiness and peace.’

As seen above, academic societies that represent Japan, while basing themselves in reflections on passivity toward Buddhist societal practice, have also been making the assertion that there should be proactive discussions concerning societal practice. However, on ‘Buddhists’ mode of social life,’ contrary to the thoughts of people such as Hirakawa, who said that ‘Buddhism must proceed to deal with this issue in the future,’ and Nishi, who was confident that ‘it will bring about ... involvement in social welfare planning, and ultimately contribute to worldwide happiness and peace,’ things did not proceed in a clear way following that, and there has been a repetition of reflections on Buddhism’s passive approach to societal practice. After this, especially among Japanese Buddhist studies societies, academic conferences were held with themes such as ‘social ethics’ and ‘cohabitation’ but it could be said that these actually worked to deepen the divide between societal practice and individuals’ interest in Buddhism. Further, according to the records, the applied section of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies was absorbed into the general Buddhist studies section after just two years. One of the causes behind the de facto dissolution of the applied section may have been the fact that, in the same year as that proposal, researchers with a particular interest in welfare-based activities, separately founded the Japanese Association for Buddhist Social Welfare Studies. It appears that, due to the founding of this new academic society, the divide that existed between foundational Buddhist studies and applied Buddhist studies was unintentionally widened.

Buddhism and Societal Practice Today

Considering the above, it very much seems that societal practice in the context of Buddhism has been treated by Japanese Buddhists as ‘secondary.’ However, in recent years, discussions concerning Buddhist societal practice have been drawing unprecedented attention. In 2014 and 2015 the Nippon Buddhist

Research Association held consecutive conferences under the theme 'Questioning Societal Practice in Buddhism.' Discussions were held over those two years on the topics of 'Principles of Societal Practice' and 'The History of Societal Practice and Prospects for the Future.' There is a reason why Buddhist academic meetings were repeatedly held with these sorts of themes in recent years—and that is the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami that struck the northeast of the country.

On March 11, 2011, a great earthquake occurred centered off the coast of Miyagi prefecture in the Tōhoku region. The earthquake was the largest recorded in Japan, with a magnitude of 9.0 and a large hypocentral region spanning approximately 500 kilometers. This earthquake generated a tsunami that exceeded 40 meters in height depending on the location and brought devastating damage to the coastal area. The number of lives lost exceed 20,000, including those still missing.

Support came in from around the world for this disaster of a size rarely experienced in history, and in Japan, too, many people became involved in volunteer efforts, including many Buddhists. In the area of support activities during disasters, in contrast with the active involvement in social activities by Christians, Buddhists had frequently been an object of criticism due to their passivity. But, this time, many Buddhists who had been faced with the overwhelming scope of the damage also became seriously involved in disaster relief support activities.

Since the Edo period, Japanese Buddhists have been bound into inflexible relationships with individual temples and specifically affiliated people, giving them religious direction and performing funeral ceremonies (if one counts from the beginning of the *jidan* system, enacted in 1671, this arrangement has a history spanning almost three hundred and fifty years). However, during the disaster, temporary relationships that transcended affiliation and sect were formed between disaster victims and monks, and funeral ceremonies, etc., were conducted for those who lost their lives. Temple facilities were also opened to the public as evacuation centers, and Buddhists engaged in various support activities, even providing food and taking personal care of victims. The sects also gave organizational backup for these efforts and provided manpower, funds, and resources to the individuals and facilities working on the frontlines.

It was against this sort of backdrop that the conference was repeated under the theme of 'Questioning practice in Buddhism.' This was an experience in re-questioning the meaning and content of Buddhist societal practice for the Buddhists who had become aware of their insular stance concerning societal practice. The question that had been asked since ancient times, namely, 'how should Buddhist practitioners contribute to society?' was once again thrown onto the chopping board for discussion.

Why must Buddhists become aware of their own passivity concerning contributing to society and continually re-question its meaning and content? This issue originates from the main body of Buddhist thought itself and can be said to be the essence of Buddhism. When one understands that, from the perspective of a desire to transcend the secular world, one's views on salvation are deeply connected to the individual's inner self, and consequently practice in Buddhism does not naturally lead to a philanthropic attitude.

Buddhists always have their interest directed toward the issue of the liberation of the individual spirit from a supra-mundane position. That said, Buddhism has at times also repentantly opened its eyes to the closed-ness that comes from that interest and focused on others-benefiting activities. One must be careful to note, however, that this is not a demand that comes from within and it is essentially the result of being guided by outside demand. That is to say, this may in fact be an inherent factor in Buddhist societal practice. In devout Buddhist practice, there is no direct demand for benefitting others, and it is the overwhelming suffering of people that makes these insular Buddhists open their eyes to societal practice.

Looking back further, it might be said that this is a feature also seen in the old records of Śākyamuni. It is well known that when Śākyamuni achieved awakening, he hesitated over whether he should explain the *Dhamma* and share the content of his awakening with others. What convinced the hesitant Śākyamuni to share the *Dhamma* and contribute to society was, in fact, strong external demand.

(Buddha) 'This that through many toils. I've won — enough! Why should I make it known, by folk with lust and hate consumed? This *Dhamma* is not understood.'

(Brahma) 'Alas, the world is lost, alas, the world is destroyed, inasmuch as the mind of the Truth-finder, the perfected one, the fully awakened one, inclines to little effort and not to teaching *Dharma*...' 'Lord, let the Lord teach *Dhamma*, let the well-farer teach *Dhamma*.'¹²

In the case of Śākyamuni, too, the opening of the pathways to others-benefiting activities was a demand from the suffering secular world. Śākyamuni had no interest in explaining the *Dhamma*. What opened up that lack of interest was the sense of secular crisis in the words, 'Alas, the world is lost.' In accordance with the secular world's demand that 'the Lord teach *Dhamma*,' Śākyamuni established his first connection with society.

¹² Horner 2015: 7–8.

That kind of demand from the secular world appeared in extremely serious form in recent years with the 2011 Great Earthquake. The voice of a suffering society demanded Buddhists' others-benefitting practice, and through this arose the question of 'practice in Buddhism.'

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, I noted how there are two main issues in the discussions surrounding Buddhist societal practice. The first is the issue of 'content' and the second is that of 'meaning.' On the meaning of why practice is done, it appears from what we have seen above that one must conclude that it comes from societal demand rather than from inside Buddhism itself. Of course, one does see claims of orthodox meaning in societal practice deriving from within Buddhism, but these too can actually be seen as a reaction by earnest Buddhist practitioners to the issue of Buddhism's insularity.

Finally, I want to touch on the issue of 'content' in Buddhist societal practice; that is to say, if the demand comes from outside, what kind of response can really be called 'Buddhist'? Of the criticisms leveled at Buddhists engaged in various relief efforts at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, this was called into question. Was the provision of things such as food and shelter really something that was being done by Buddhists?

To skip to the conclusion, because even Buddhism, which positions itself outside of the secular world, responds with societal practice to demands from that world, it is not particularly strange if that practice temporarily takes on a secular face. It may be inevitable that Buddhist societal practice appears at first glance to start out of non-Buddhist activities. Śākyamuni, when healing King Ajātaśatru who was suffering from the sin of patricide, first healed the physical pain before applying Buddhism's original spiritual healing. In the *Nirvana Sutra*, it says, 'He radiates light, first healing the king's body, then proceeding to his heart.'¹³ This means first alleviating people's urgent sufferings and then moving on to Buddhism's original salvific activities.

The activities of the Buddhists at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake were a repeat of the general support activities, such as clearing away rubble, providing food, and securing housing. Simply lending an ear to those affected was likely another of those sorts of activities. In their practice, it is not possible to distinguish between 'general' and 'Buddhist'; and there is really no need

¹³ *Daihan nehankyō* 2008: 531.

to do so. Perhaps over time Buddhists will develop salvific activities that are characteristically Buddhist.

In that case, it may be that such is developed over time, but it may also be the case that activities are finished without the chance for any lasting distinction between that and general social philanthropy. The question of where practice becomes ‘Buddhist’ is a multifaceted issue, and the line shifts depending on the situation. Consequently, even if activities end before that chance arises, perhaps it is necessary to also view that as a societal practice by Buddhists.

Practice in Buddhism, in its self-benefitting aspect, and especially in its others-benefitting aspect, is a large issue that remains hanging over the world of contemporary Japanese Buddhism. Through this symposium, I hope we will see a deepening of understanding of practice in Buddhism, from traditional understandings through to the issues of contemporary society.

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Heian Period Developments in Japanese Esoteric Buddhist Practice: The Case of the Fugen Enmei Ritual and its Various *Honzons*

Abstract

The present paper addresses esoteric Buddhist rituals in Japan, with special focus on the changes that happened in its practice in the first couple of centuries after its initial arrival to the country. Although esotericism originated in India, it was the brief spotlight it gained in China during the Tang Dynasty (especially in the 8th century) that determined its transmission to Japan in the beginning of the 9th century, where it spread rapidly and reached a particular culmination within the same time period, i.e., the Heian Period (794 to 1185/1192). On the one hand, the Shingon school, established by the monk Kūkai (774-835), was essentially the first time the esoteric Buddhist teachings were systematised, and although the founder's person and teachings are still very much revered to this day, changes have begun right after his death in 835. On the other hand, the Tendai school, a rival for imperial recognition and support and also established (or rather introduced) in the beginning of the 9th century by the monk Saichō (767-822, a contemporary of Kūkai) included some esoteric teachings, and with the practices introduced by later Tendai monks, such as Ennin (794-864) or Enchin (814-891), this school cultivated esoteric practices that are still extant in Japan today.

Firstly, the meaning and usage of the *honzon* (an icon of a deity) in esoteric Buddhist rituals is clarified in the paper, while later the evolution of two specific icons that were used during the Fugen Enmei rituals of both the Shingon and Tendai schools is introduced, with explanations as to why there are two different types of iconographies extant for the same kind of ritual. The paper contributes to the study of those esoteric practices that were created and developed in a locally recognized Buddhist milieu that served specific purposes in Japan and are found in no other Buddhist cultures in Asia.

Keywords: Esotericism; Esoteric Buddhism; Japanese Buddhism; Fugen Bosatsu; Fugen Enmei; Samantabhadra; Honzon; Buddhist Ritual; Heian Period

The Fugen Enmei ritual (Fugen Enmei hō 普賢延命法)¹ is only preserved in Japan, and from the Japanese sources it can be assessed that it is a Japanese development in the changing era of the middle Heian period (mid 10th to mid 11th centuries), when the newly established power of the retired emperors (*insei* 院政) brought about several developments in the esoteric traditions as well. For example, through the *monzeki* 門跡 system of the cloistered prince-monks (*hosshinnō* 法親王), the imperial family became interwoven with the esoteric Buddhist traditions and temples. The Fugen Enmei ritual with Fugen Enmei Bodhisattva as its principal deity of worship,² emerged in such changing circumstances and became a major ritual for the imperial family and other powerful people, such as shoguns.

We cannot discuss this subject, however, without clarifying the primary concept by first asking: what is a *honzon* 本尊, and what does it mean in the esoteric Buddhist context? It is a frequently used word, yet scholars do not elaborate on its diverse meanings, especially in the light of how many denominations in Japan use various objects as *honzon*. This neglect was already pointed out by Robert Sharf.³ He and other scholars argue that the Buddhist icons that we

¹ There are different variations for longevity rituals with the name ‘*enmei*’ in the sources. Other than the Fugen Enmei ritual, there is also a ritual called the Enmei ritual (Enmei hō 延命法). Both the Enmei and Fugen Enmei rituals are performed for the prolongation of life. In this function, these two are regarded as one and the same by monks, scholars, and Buddhist dictionaries. Nonetheless, they are generally distinguished today by the number of ritual spheres (or altars) and assistant monks (*bansō* 伴僧), and also by their principal images. Therefore, the Enmei ritual is usually referred to as a common (*futsūhō* 普通法) or minor ritual (*shōhō* 小法), but the Fugen Enmei ritual is designated as one of the major rituals (*daihō* 大法).

In the Mochizuki dictionary of Buddhism, the two rituals are told apart as follows:

‘There is actually two kinds to this ritual: one is simply called Enmeihō, it is one of the six kinds of rituals (roku shu hō 六種法). It is performed as a common ritual, with Enmei deity, in other words, a two-armed Kongōsatta, as its honzon. The other one is called Fugen Enmeihō, and it is performed as a major ritual. In this case, the honzon is a twenty-armed Fugen Enmei deity, the altars of the Shitennō is set up separately, forty-nine lamp are lit, skeletal grass is used at the homa altar, and twenty assistant monks are necessary.’ (Mochizuki bukkyō daijiten vol. 1: 323)

Ueda Reijō sums up that the Enmei, the Fugen Enmei and the Jūmyō kyō rituals (壽命經法) are to pray for benefits and long life (*zōyaku* 增益 and *enmei* 延命/*enju* 延寿), and he distinguishes three lesser differences:

1. performing the Enmei hō does not include *sūtra*-reading, while performing the other two does;
2. the Fugen Enmei hō is a major ritual, while the other two are designated only as small scale ceremonies, and
3. the *honzon* of the Enmei hō is the two-armed Enmei bosatsu, but that of the Fugen Enmei hō is the 20-armed Fugen Enmei bosatsu, while the *honzon* of the Jūmyō kyō ritual can be a two- or a 20-armed Fugen Enmei bosatsu (Ueda 1989: 496–497).

² For more about this bodhisattva, its origins and iconography, see Kiss 2014, Kiss 2019, and Kiss 2021.

³ Sharf – Sharf 2001: 3.

encounter today as artworks were considered as living presences and were pervaded with significant ‘apotropaic and salvific power’.⁴ It seems, however, that not just Western but also Japanese scholars overlook the need to clarify the meaning of the *honzon* as well. In most cases, the term is used to refer to icons in a ritual context and is translated as ‘principal deity’ or ‘main object of veneration’.⁵ It is not so simple, however, to characterise the term. Goepper argues that *honzens* are the condensed and visible forms of various religious ideas.⁶ The *Mikkyō daijiten* 密教大辭典 (1969) lists three meanings:

1. a buddha or bodhisattva to whom the worshipper offers veneration, or for whom they perform the rituals;
2. the central figure (*chūzon* 中尊) of a configuration and
3. a main object of a temple or a hall, to whom that building is dedicated.⁷

The source for the concept or form of the *honzon* is a brief description in the Mahāvairocāna scripture (*Da piluzhe’na chenfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經, T19.848), translated by the Indian master Śubhākarasiṃha (637–735) and his Chinese disciple Yixing 一行 (683–727). It is further discussed in the first (and only) commentary on this scripture, the *Commentary on the Sūtra in which Mahāvairocāna Becomes a Buddha (Da Piluzhe’na chenfo jingshu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, T39.1796) by Yixing. In the explanation of Chapter 28 of Fascicle 6, *The Exposition of Deity Samādhi (Shuo benzun sanmeipi* 說本尊三昧品), it is stated that there are three categories of the deities’ bodies: syllable (*ji* 字, *akṣara*), seal (*in* 印, *mudrā*) and physical representation (*gyōzō* 形象, *rūpa*). Regarding the latter two, it is the impure body that has physical characteristics, such as the manifest body and colours.⁸

The Origins of the Fugen Enmei Ritual

According to the surviving lists of the 9th century Japanese monks who went to study in Tang China, the scripture called *Sūtra of the Most Excellent Adamantine Dhāraṇī of Samantabhadra of Long Life, Empowered by the Light of all the Tathāgatas, Preached by the Buddha (Bussetsu issai sho nyorai shin kōmyō kaji Samantabhadra enmei kongō saishō darani kyō* 佛說一切諸如來心光明加持普賢菩薩延命金剛最勝陀羅尼經 [abbreviated as the *Fugen Enmei*

⁴ Ibid. 8.

⁵ Goepper 1979: 245.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Mikkyō daijiten* vol. 5: 2068.

⁸ T 19.0848: 44a16–20. 「諸尊有三種身。所謂字印形像。彼字有二種。謂聲及菩提心。印有二種。所謂有形無形。本尊之身亦有二種。所謂清淨非清淨。彼證淨身離一切相。非淨有想之身。則有顯形衆色。」

sūtra]), was brought to Japan first by two Shingon monks: Eun 惠運 (798–869) in 847⁹ and then Shūei 宗叡 (809–884) in 865.¹⁰ An image of Fugen Enmei Bodhisattva arrived a couple of years earlier, as part of the imported treasures of the Tendai monk Ennin 円仁 (794–864).¹¹ These events are the indirect bases for the appearance of the Fugen Enmei ritual in Japan. From the ‘imports’ we could surmise a Chinese origin for the ritual. However, a ritual with this name is missing from all sources between the 9th and 11th centuries, which prevents us from making such a declaration. It was only from the end of the 11th century that the Fugen Enmei rituals began to be documented in Shingon and Tendai temple sources, such as records or liturgy anthologies.

Although there were mentions of an Enmei ritual in earlier centuries, we know very little of this ritual. The sources never mention anything about how it was performed or what kind of *honzon* was installed for the ceremony. This late entry on the Japanese esoteric Buddhist stage, the variations in the title of the prayer and the number of days of the rituals make the origins of this rite highly obscure. Uekawa Michio 上川通夫 epitomises three ways of how a ritual could have appeared in Japan: by means of import, by surfacing many years after the import and by Japanese production.¹² He mentions these in his study of the origins of the Nyohō sonshō hō 如法尊勝法, which is another ritual where coincidentally the Fugen Enmei image was used. He suspects that the ritual was produced in Japan. We find many corresponding facts when reading this case (such as the ones listed above), which also points to the third kind of appearance in the case of the Fugen Enmei ritual as well, which first appears in the sources in 1075. We can assess that the several accounts of an Enmei ritual without any kind of description may have differed from this one. This is due to two facts. Firstly, the monks used different names for the rituals, which clearly

⁹ *Eun zenshi shōrai kyōhō mokuroku* 惠運禪師将来教法目錄 (T 55.2168A: 1087c4–1089a16). 最勝延命經一卷 (1087c22). *Eun risshi sho mokuroku* 惠運律師書目錄 (T 55.2168B: 1089a19–1092a8). 佛說一切(諸)如來心光明加持普賢菩薩延命金剛最勝陀羅尼經一卷 大廣智不空譯 (1089a29–b01).

¹⁰ *Shin shosha shōrai hōmon tō mokuroku* 新書寫請來法門等目錄 (T 55.2174A: 1108a7–1111c6). 一切如來心光明加持普賢菩薩延命陀羅尼經一卷 不空三藏譯此同先請壽命(經)同本異譯也 四紙; 普賢菩薩延命金剛最勝陀羅尼經一卷 不空三藏譯 (異譯也) 四紙 (1108b06–09).

¹¹ It is intriguing that Ennin seems to never have been acquainted with the scripture of Fugen Enmei, only the image, for the text is not listed in any of his catalogues of imported Buddhist treasures. It can be, however, that he lost a supposed copy during the upheavals of the great anti-Buddhist persecution of 845, during which he was still in China. Another possible explanation can be that the text itself may not have been written when he was there in 840. However, I think the previous explanation might be more plausible than assuming that the text was written (down) sometime in the years between 840 and 847.

¹² Uekawa 2008: 76.

means that they were differentiated between. Secondly, only this newly held ritual was described at length and in detail, and also they emphasised the fact that it was performed for the first time.¹³ The complex ritualistic system of the Fugen Enmei hō (or as sometimes called in the Taimitsu tradition, the Nyohō Enmei hō 如法延命法), recorded in the *Kakuzenshō* 覺禪鈔 (Tōmitsu tradition) or *Asabashō* 阿娑縛抄 (Taimitsu tradition), seems to be a later development from around the same time that some other esoteric rites appeared in Japan.

The Enmei and Fugen Enmei rituals are discussed in some early Tendai commentaries, such as the *Shijū jōketsu* 四十帖決 of Chōen 長宴 (1016–1081),¹⁴ but mostly focus on the philosophical background of the bodhisattva and its scriptures. Later, after the Fugen Enmei ritual becomes one of the four major Tendai rituals and is performed often, we find numerous descriptions of rituals where the leading monk was that of a Tendai affiliation.

Various Functions of the Ritual

It is noticeable that the majority of the sources concerning Fugen Enmei are about the ritual. Apart from the many longer ritual journals (*nikki* 日記), we find a lot of shorter inscriptions, which give the date, time and place, and also the cause, the name or rank of the people benefitting from the prayer; sometimes the name of the performing *ācārya* (*ajari* 阿闍梨) or the number of assistant monks is described too. Looking at these aspects, we can assess the following points:

- 1) the date depends on the cause (whenever the prayer is needed);
- 2) the time varies and the length of the prayers also differ (one to 21 days);
- 3) the places are either one of the palaces or temples of the Heian capital (Kyoto);
- 4) all of the above rituals were performed when a high-ranking person was indisposed, sick or giving birth;
- 5) the leading monk is very high-ranking in the religious hierarchy and on many occasions is a head of a temple or a tradition (*zasu* 座主) and
- 6) the number of assistant monks also varies slightly (on most occasions there are 20).

¹³ This is recorded in the *Fugen Enmei hō nikki* 普賢延命法日記. The record says: 承保二年十月九日。法性寺座主(覺尋) 蒙二綸旨一。於二賀陽院內裏一。二十口伴僧一。被レ始二修普賢延命法一矣。‘On the 9th day of the 10th month in the 2nd year of Jōhō [1075], the chief abbot of the Hosshōji temple received a private message from the Emperor. At the Kayanoin palace, with twenty assistant monks, the Fugen Enmei ritual was performed for the first time’. In: *Asabashō*, 220th fascicles, TZ 9: 864a7–9.

¹⁴ T 75.2408: 825a2-960b25.

Various kinds of sources attest to these points: in addition to the comprehensive ritual journals, the liturgy compilations, the diaries of high-ranking officials (mostly of the Fujiwara- or Kujō-families) and the almanacs of monks or temples must be mentioned here.

The most common function of the ritual was to cure the ill. Many sources mention that when a member of a high-class family, or a shogun, became indisposed, which is usually expressed with the terms *gonō* 御悩, or *fuyo* 不豫, they turned to the Fugen Enmei ritual. On these occasions, there could be two kinds of activities: they either held a ritual or consecrated some Buddhist images. For example, in 1153, a hundred drawings of Enmei and a thousand fascicles of the *Jumyō kyō* were consecrated at the Toba palace, because the cloistered-retired Emperor Toba 鳥羽天皇 (1103–1156; r. 1107–1123) was suffering from ‘not eating’ (御悩不食).¹⁵ One of the most famous and thoroughly recorded rituals was performed when the first Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616), fell ill at the beginning of 1616.¹⁶

Since the function of the Enmei and Fugen Enmei rituals are the same, it is not wrong to think that the latter developed out of the former, with the assistance of the Japanese esoteric monks. As time passed, the range of the functions and application methods also widened.

Of the other functions, imperial pregnancies and childbirths must be mentioned. A series of esoteric rituals was performed in a short period of time for such occasions, which is another piece of evidence that shows not only how significant it was to preserve the imperial bloodline, but also how close the association was between the esoteric traditions and the imperial family. As official records, many *mokurokus* of the rituals during that time are preserved, especially in the monumental *Collection of Historical Documents* (*Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従), including the *List of Prayers for Delivery* (*Osan oinori mokurku* 御産御祈目録) and the *Assorted Accounts of Deliveries* (*Osan buruiki* 御産部類記). As Anna Andreeva points out in her recent study of Heian childbirth customs among the aristocrats, the room where the imperial consorts gave birth had to be ritually secured by all possible means, which meant that the high-ranking monks and cloistered prince-monks of imperially designated temples (*monzeki*)

¹⁵ *Tennō kōzoku jitsuroku*, vol. 39: 1110.

¹⁶ In the *Dai Nihon shiryō* there are seven separate sources cited related to this event, starting with a lengthy and detailed entry in Gien’s journal, the *Gien jugō nikki* 義演准后日記. Then it is also described in the *Sanbōin monjo* 三寶院文書, or the *Honkō kokushi nikki* 本光国史日記. Also, the *honzon* painting used for this ritual is in the Daigoji temple and has an inscription on the back. Although we do not know when the inscription was made, it records some circumstances of the ritual. It also states that the painting was an older one restored specifically for this ritual. In previous centuries, a new painting was made usually before the ritual, so the restoration may indicate the hastiness to perform the ritual.

were also invited into the household.¹⁷ Their role was naturally to pray for the safe delivery of the imperial consort and for the child to be a male heir.¹⁸ The Enmei and Fugen Enmei rituals were regularly carried out. The Enmei ritual is much more often listed than the other one, but both were usually led by the Tōmitsu (mostly Ninnaji) and Taimitsu (mainly Shōren'in) *monzeki* monks. As one example, in 1103 (Kōwa 5) there were two mentions of such rituals, on the 29th day of the 1st month, when in the Takamatsu shindono 高松寝殿 palace many Buddhist altars were built and images were consecrated for the newly born Prince Munehito 皇子宗仁親王, the future Emperor Toba.¹⁹

The First Rituals and The Tōmitsu – Taimitsu Context

The first ever recorded Fugen Enmei ritual is described in the 220th fascicle of the *Asabashō*, the monumental work of the Tendai monk Shōchō 承澄 (1205–1282), which is called the *Journal of the Fugen Enmei Ritual* (*Fugen Enmeihō nikki* 普賢延命法日記). The ritual was conducted by the Tendai *zasu* Kakujiin 覚尋 (1012–1081) in 1075 for Emperor Shirakawa 白河天皇 (1053–1129; r. 1073–1087):

承保二年十月九日。法性寺座主（覚尋）蒙二綸旨一。於二賀陽院內裏一。二十口伴僧一。被レ始二修普賢延命法一矣。²⁰

On the 9th day of the 10th month in the 2nd year of Jōhō [1075], the chief abbot of the Hosshōji temple received a private message from the emperor. At the Kayanoin palace,²¹ with 20 assistant monks, the Fugen Enmei ritual was performed for the first time.

¹⁷ Andreeva 2014: 363.

¹⁸ Matsumoto 2008: 85.

¹⁹ Two sources comment on the event: the journal of the statesman Fujiwara no Munetada 藤原宗忠 (1062–1141), the *Chūyūki* 中右記 (covering the events of the years between 1087 and 1138), and the *Gosan buruiki* 御産部類記 (*Assorted Accounts of Deliveries*). According to the former, the rituals continued to be performed for the new-born crown prince in the next month as well, and the prayers were for the retired emperor Shirakawa and the prince: 康和五年正月廿九日己酉、今日上皇皇子御祈、於高松寝殿被始修 [...] 白壇普賢延命。The latter records that they also started to make 11 buddhist images as well: 廿九日 [康和五年正月] 己酉、今日若宮御祈自院被行之、御佛十一軀被造始、於寝殿被始行五壇御修法 [...].

²⁰ *Asabashō*. TZ 9: 864a7–9.

²¹ The Kayanoin palace (賀陽院 or 高陽院), built by the powerful statesman Fujiwara no Yorimichi 藤原頼通 (992–1074), in the first half of the 11th century, was the location of many Fugen Enmei rituals.

This ritual was held for seven days, and the ending ceremony (*kechigan* 結願) was on the 15th day of the same month.²² We also get the layout of the altars of almost every ritual that is recorded in this volume of the *Asabashō*. We also gain crucial information about the process of the ritual, including the *honzon*s. It seems that it was common in the Taimitsu tradition that the image of Fugen Enmei Bodhisattva was hung (or placed) separately from those of the four Shitennō deities. All these images were consecrated (*kaigen kuyō* 開眼供養) during the opening ceremony (*kaibyaku* or *kaihaku*, *kaihyaku* 開白, or as sometimes also called *hyōbyaku* 表白).

The *Kakuzenshō* and the *Fugen Enmei mishuhōki* 普賢延命御修法記 of the Sanbōin 三宝院 hall of the Daigoji temple 醍醐寺 in Kyoto, both of the Tōmitsu tradition, list almost the same first couple of occasions, beginning with the first Taimitsu rituals and ending with some rituals with Shingon *ācāryas*. On the one hand, this shows that the Japanese beginnings were acknowledged by the monks of both esoteric traditions. Also, it becomes clear that those beginnings were initiated by the Taimitsu tradition. According to the *Shingon shū nenpyō* 真言宗年表, the earliest record of a Fugen Enmei hō is from 1099, and that first instance was conducted by Kakugyō 覺行 (1075–1105), the first monk to become cloistered-prince in the *insei* period.²³ A couple of years earlier, in 1087, there was mention of an Enmei hō, performed by a Shingon monk called Jōken 定賢 (?–?, active in the second half of the 11th century), so we see that the Shingon monks also acknowledged the difference between the two rituals.

Unfortunately, the Tōmitsu sources do not include the plans of the rituals, and the *honzon* descriptions are not common either. Of the few that are available, however, some clear patterns emerge. So now, let us see the patterns.

The Question of the *Honzon*

The ritual space of the Taimitsu Fugen Enmei hō seems consistent no matter where the ritual was performed, whether a palace or a temple hall. This ritual The four main altars, namely the main ritual sphere (*dai dan* 大壇), the fire rite (*homa*) ritual sphere (*goma dan* 護摩壇), the ritual sphere of the Twelve Deva Guardians (*Jūniten dan* 十二天壇) and the ritual sphere of Nandikeśvara (Shōten dan 聖天壇), are completed with the four smaller ritual spheres of the

²² TZ 9: 864b1–2.

²³ SSN 1973: 143. 「康和元年六月廿三日、覺行法親王、白河法皇の奉爲に普賢延命法を修す」 ‘On the 23rd day of the 6th month in 1099 (Kōwa 1), Kakugyō cloistered-prince performed the Fugen Enmei ritual for the cloistered-retired Emperor Shirakawa’. The citation is from the *Omuro sōshō ki* 御室相承記.

Four Heavenly Guardians in the four corners of the ritual space. Thus the Fugen Enmei hō is an eight-altar ritual, not a classic four-altar esoteric rite. The set-up of these altars can be found in many ritual manuals, such as the *Kakuzenshō*, the *Asabashō* and the *Mon'yōki* 門葉記 (Figures 1–2).

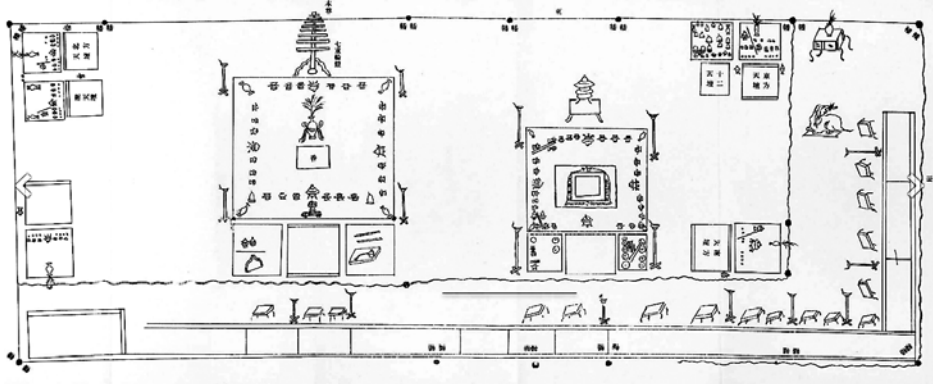


Figure 1. Ritual platform set-up for a Fugen Enmei hō.
(Source: *Asabashō*, TZ 9: 134/135.)

Kakuzen remarks that the Nyohō Enmei hō is performed only in the Taimitsu tradition, and a so-called Enmei mandala is used as *honzon* along with four Shitennō images. This corresponds to the many Taimitsu ritual descriptions: the *Asabashō* and the later *Mon'yōki* list mainly the same kind of images and only a couple of times vary (on some occasions it is called 'Fugen Enmei mandala'). Most accounts also mention that this mandala image is in the Zentōin 前唐院 style. The Zentōin functions as the repository of the treasures brought to Japan by Ennin, which means that the Fugen Enmei image of Ennin was the prototype for the Taimitsu Fugen Enmei ritual.

Almost all recorded accounts mention this type of image. However, there are some atypical *honrons* as well. In a ritual conducted by the 41st Tendai *zasu* Kensen 賢暹 in 1105 (Chōji 2), a painted image of a 20-armed bodhisattva sitting on four elephants was used, and there is no mention of the separate four Shitennō images.²⁴ However, then again, a two-armed bodhisattva statue is also mentioned, which means that on this occasion both types of the *honron* were present at the ritual space.²⁵ The solution to this riddle may be found in Kakuzen's remark that on this occasion there were actually two conducting monks: Kensen of the Sanmon 山門 branch of the Taimitsu and a monk called Chōkaku 長覚 from the Miidera temple 三井寺 (Onjōji temple 園城寺), which belongs to the

²⁴ *Asabashō*. TZ 9: 871b29–c9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Jimon 寺門 branch.²⁶ These traditions developed as different monks' teachings, namely that of Ennin (Sanmon) and Enchin 円珍 (814–891, Jimon). In other sources we find that one variation of the Fugen Enmei image was attributed to Enchin. However, it is not the 20-armed image, so even with the different traditions, the presence of this image is not clarified.

The Tōmitsu ritual had a different layout of altars, as can be seen in the drawing preserved in the Daigoji temple. Apart from the reversed order of the two major altars (the *dai dan* and the *goma dan*), one of the major changes is the missing Shitennō altars from the four corners, which makes this kind the usual four-altar esoteric rite. As I assess, this alteration is the result of using different *honrons*. The description of the ritual from 1133 in the *Kakuzenshō*, performed by the Shingon monk Genshin 儼信 (?–1157), lists a 20-armed *honron* that was made in the style of the Jōganji temple 貞觀寺 at Mt. Kōya.²⁷

The question of why there were no Shitennō altars with the images of each deity can be answered by the different *honron*. As the 20-armed bodhisattva sits on four great white elephants, the Four Heavenly Guardians are included in the principal image, each standing on one of the elephants' heads. Therefore, they do not need their own separate altars, like in the case of the two-armed mandala image, where the Shitennō are hardly ever depicted in one painting (the only exception is found in the Japanese collection of the Museum of Fine Art in Boston²⁸). The three paintings in the Daigoji temple seem to corroborate this idea. There are three paintings referred to as Fugen Enmei that were used as *honron* during the Fugen Enmei rituals, according to their inscriptions. One was made in the Kamakura period (1185/1192–1333/1336), it is designated as an important cultural property (*jūyō bunkazai* 重要文化財), and the other two are copies of this painting. All three have the 20-armed bodhisattva sitting on a lotus throne, supported by the four white elephants, and we see the four Shitennō deities on the elephants' heads.

The Ritual Today

The Fugen Enmei hō is still being performed by Tendai monks. Every four years between April 4th and 10th, there is such a ritual in the Konponchūdō 根本中堂 at the Enryakuji temple on Mt. Hiei.²⁹ The four-year interval is due to the fact that

²⁶ *Kakuzenshō*. TZ 5: 103a21–23.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 110a24–27.

²⁸ URL: <https://www.mfa.org/collections/object/fugen-enmei-the-bodhisattva-of-universal-virtue-who-prolongs-life-24538>.

²⁹ URL: <https://www.hieizan.or.jp/event/mishiho>.

there are four different kinds of major rituals (*dai hō*) that are performed one after another in successive years. The last Fugen Enmei ritual took place in 2021.³⁰

It seems that the Fugen Enmei ritual was preserved in practice in the Taimitsu tradition. However, it does not necessarily mean that the ritual was forgotten by the Shingon school. The commentaries of Ueda Shōhen 上田照遍 (1828–1907) prove that they were still passed down even in the 19th century. Shōhen, just like his master, Hōkan 宝肝 (d. u.), was a monk at the Enmeiji temple 延命寺 in Kawachi, Osaka. The collected work of his writings, the *Shōhen oshō zenshū* 照遍和尚全集, includes a *Secret Commentary on the Fugen Enmei ritual* (*Fugen Enmei hō hiki* 普賢延命法秘記).³¹ This brief description includes the usual aspects of the ritual, the mantra, the mudrā and the *bīja* of Fugen Enmei, and it also touches upon the problem of the names and versions of the longevity rituals, namely the Jumyō kyō hō, the Enmei hō and Fugen Enmei hō. Shōhen concludes that the first two have the same *honzon* (the two-armed Enmei bosatsu) and are what can be called ‘minor’ rituals. He again tells us that the scripture translated by Vajrabodhi is read during the Jumyō kyō and Fugen Enmei rituals. Although he does not mention the name of the scripture, we can surmise from the next commentary that he thinks of the *Issai kyō*, which he analyses as a text translated by Vajrabodhi during the reign of the Tang Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (685–762, r. 712–756). He does not write about actual performances of the ritual though.

Conclusion

It seems that the Fugen Enmei ritual, like some other esoteric rituals, was developed by the Japanese monks of the middle Heian period. The first couple of occasions were performed by Tendai monks, but before long, Shingon monks also developed their own ritual. The monks of the two esoteric traditions knew about each other’s rituals, and liturgy anthologies of late Heian and Kamakura periods, such as the *Kakuzenshō* or the *Asabashō*, point out the common themes and the modifications as well.

As for the *honzon*, an image called the (Fugen) Enmei mandala was used for the Taimitsu Fugen Enmei rituals from the very beginning, and apart from some exceptions, we suspect that the two-armed bodhisattva image remained the principal image from almost the very beginning. The earliest surviving painting of the Daigoji temple of the 20-armed bodhisattva type may indicate that it was the principal image of the deity during the Tōmitsu rituals from probably very early on as well.

³⁰ The ritual was held for seven days from 4 April 2021.

³¹ *Shōhen oshō zenshū* 照遍和尚全集 vol. 2.

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Can Arhats Attain Buddhahood? An Issue in the Interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*

Abstract

The *Lotus Sutra* is well known for its teaching of the One Vehicle. According to this teaching, although the Buddha preached that there are three paths to buddhahood (the paths of the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattva), there is in fact only one path of practice in Buddhism: the teaching of the bodhisattva leading to complete enlightenment. This implies that those who have attained the goal of arhatness through the practice of the śrāvaka path must ultimately convert to the bodhisattva path and continue their practices until they attain buddhahood. However, there is a problem since arhats are said to have destroyed all the defilements binding them to continued existence within the realms of transmigration, meaning that they must necessarily enter nirvāṇa at the end of their lives and are therefore prevented from continuing their practices to reach buddhahood. In this paper, I will introduce the theories employed by Kumārajīva and Fayun to explain this conundrum. Kumārajīva, a noted translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese, engaged in an exchange of letters with Huiyuan of Mt. Lu, one of the most respected Chinese Buddhist of his age. In one exchange, Kumārajīva specifically deals with the question of how arhats can attain buddhahood and argues that, although arhats believe they have eradicated all defilements, they have not actually done so. Taking his cue from the *Dazhidulum*, Kumārajīva argues they still possess what he terms “love towards nirvāṇa and the buddha dharma.” Hence, he concludes, arhats have not actually rid themselves of all defilements but must still remain within the cycle of transmigration undertaking bodhisattva practices until they extinguish these subtle forms of defilements and achieve buddhahood. Fayun, who lived approximately a century after Kumārajīva, was a noted scholar monk who wrote an influential commentary on the *Lotus Sutra*. In this commentary, Fayun also argues that arhats are capable of achieving buddhahood since they are still encumbered by defilements. However, in making his argument, Fayun relies on the theory of five levels of defilements taken from the *Śrīmālā-simhanāda Sūtra*. According to this theory, arhats have destroyed the latent defilements, the first four of the five levels of defilements described in the sūtra, but have yet to eradicate the defilements of fundamental ignorance, the final and most profound form of defilements. By availing himself to this theory, Fayun argues that arhats are indeed capable of attaining buddhahood since they still possess the defilements of fundamental ignorance which prevents them from entering extinction in nirvāṇa, allowing them to continue their practices as bodhisattvas until they achieve complete buddhahood.

Keywords: arhat, buddhahood, *Dasheng dayizhang*, defilement of fundamental ignorance, *Fahua yiji*, Fayun, Kumārajīva, *Lotus Sutra*, One Vehicle, *Śrīmālā-simhanāda Sūtra*

The *Lotus Sūtra* is one of the most influential texts in East Asian Buddhism. At eight rolls, it is a medium length sūtra but its impact on Chinese and Japanese Buddhism has been all out of proportion to its relatively short size. In this paper, I would like to discuss one issue in the interpretation of this sūtra: the question of how arhats, who by definition have eradicated all defilements (*kleśa*) binding them to continuous rebirths within the realm of transmigration, can refrain from entering nirvāṇa and continue to practice the Buddhist path until they attain complete buddhahood, as the *Lotus Sūtra* maintains. In considering this issue, I would like to focus on two Chinese Buddhist texts, the *Dasheng dayizhang* 大乘大義章, a collection of letters exchanged between Kumārajīva (344–413) and Huiyuan 慧遠 (344–416) of Mt. Lu 廬山, and the *Fahua yiji* 法華義記, a commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* by Fayun 法雲 (467–529) of the Liang Dynasty (502–557).

Before taking up these texts, it is first necessary to review the *Lotus Sūtra*'s doctrine of the One Vehicle as well as the teaching of the Three Vehicles presupposed by the One Vehicle.¹ Let us first consider the teaching of the Three Vehicles. This teaching holds that there are three different paths of spiritual cultivation in Buddhism: the paths of the śrāvaka vehicle, the pratyekabuddha vehicle, and the bodhisattva vehicle. Śrāvakas (literally „listeners”) are those who strive to attain nirvāṇa by listening to, and faithfully following, the teachings of the Buddha (which they have either heard directly from the Buddha or have received through tradition). Through their practices, śrāvaka seek to destroy the defilements binding them to the cycle of transmigration and attain arhathood. Since arhats have completely eliminated their defilements, they are said to be in their final reincarnations and will invariably enter nirvāṇa when their lives end. The nirvāṇa they enter is described as a state of total mental and physical extinction and is likened to the blowing out of a flame. This state is referred to as „turning the body to ashes and eliminating knowing” (*huishen miezhi* 灰身滅知; ‘knowing’ here refers to mental activities).

Next, pratyekabuddhas are said to attain enlightenment by themselves, without the benefit of listening to the Buddha’s teachings. When they reach their

¹ A succinct definition of the three vehicles is found in the ‘Introduction’ chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. ‘For the sake of those who sought to be voice hearers (*śrāvaka*), his preachings corresponded to the dharma of the four truths, with which to cross over birth, old age, sickness, and death into ultimate nirvāṇa. For the sake of those who sought to be *pratyekabuddhas*, [self-enlightened ones], his preachings corresponded to the dharma of the twelve causes and conditions. For the sake of the bodhisattvas, his preaching corresponded the six *pāramitās* [perfections], with which he caused them to gain *annuttara-samyak-sambodhi* and to perfect the knowledge of all modes.’ Hurvitz 2009: 13.

goal, that of pratyekabuddhahood, they too attain a state of total mental and physical extinction in nirvāṇa.

Finally, bodhisattvas are said to practice the six perfections in order to attain, both for oneself and others, supreme enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*) or the perfect wisdom of the buddhas. The six perfections (*pāramitās*) refer to the perfections of charity (*dāna*), keeping the precepts (*śīla*), forbearance (*kṣānti*), vigor (*vīrya*), meditation (*dhyāna*) and wisdom (*prajñā*). These practices are conducted on the basis of insight into emptiness and the non-substantiality of all dharmas. The enlightenment attained by the bodhisattvas is said to be far superior to those attained by arhats and pratyekabuddhas. This is because it indicates, not only the destruction of all defilements which keeps one tied to the cycle of rebirths (which is also attainable through the practices of the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddhas), but also the acquisition of all of the manifold virtues possessed by the buddhas.

However, the *Lotus Sūtra* proclaims that the division of the Buddhist path into those of the śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha and bodhisattva vehicles is nothing more than an expedient device (*upāya*) and that there is, in reality, only the One Vehicle leading to the attainment of buddhahood through the cultivation of bodhisattva-practices.² Despite the earlier claim that it is possible to attain nirvāṇa through the practices of the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha vehicles, the true nirvāṇa, the *Lotus Sūtra* maintains, is attained only by those who have reached buddhahood through the practice of the bodhisattva path. Indeed, in the ‘Parable of the Conjured City’ chapter, the *Lotus Sūtra* likens the nirvāṇa attained by arhats and pratyekabuddhas to a magically created city, devoid of ultimate reality.³ This means that, although arhats mistakenly believe they have completed their spiritual quest, they must still convert to the bodhisattva path and continue their practices until they attain complete buddhahood.

But here is a problem. If arhats (and pratyekabuddhas) have eliminated all defilements, this means that they no longer have anything binding them to the cycle of transmigration and must, by definition, enter nirvāṇa at the end of their lives. However, the *Lotus Sūtra* maintains that they must remain in the world to continue practicing as bodhisattvas until they attain complete buddhahood in the future. How can arhats, who are said to have destroyed all defilements binding them to future rebirths, refrain from entering nirvāṇa and continue their practices until they reach buddhahood? The *Lotus Sūtra* itself does not provide a clear answer and the question of how arhats can reach buddhahood became an issue that later Buddhists had to resolve.

² On the *Lotus Sūtra* and the One Vehicle doctrine, see Pye 1978: 18–83.

³ Hurvitz 2009: 136.

One early Chinese Buddhist text that provides an answer to this question was the *Dasheng dayizhang*.⁴ As noted above, this is a collection of letters exchanged by Kumārajīva and Huiyuan of Mt. Lu. Kumārajīva is one of the greatest translators of Buddhist texts into Chinese.⁵ He arrived in Chang-an in December of 401 and immediately embarked on his monumental translation project that was to last until his death in 409. During these years, he rendered into Chinese a number of important Mahāyāna sūtras and treaties, including the definitive translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Thanks to Kumārajīva's masterly translations, the understanding of Buddhist doctrines among Chinese monks was greatly deepened and ushered in a new era in the history of Chinese Buddhism.

Kumārajīva's correspondent, Huiyuan, was one of the most erudite and highly respected Chinese Buddhist monks of his age.⁶ After he obtained copies of Kumārajīva's newly translated texts, he studied them with care and sent a series of letters to Kumārajīva asking searching questions concerning doctrinal points he found difficult to understand in the new translations.

As noted previously, the question of how arhats can attain buddhahood is one of the issues taken up in the *Dasheng dayizhang*. In the second fascicle of this text, there is an exchange entitled 'Next, Question concerning Arhat's Reception of Prediction (of Buddhahood) and Attainment of Buddhahood, with Answer' dealing specifically with this question.⁷ Like the other exchanges in the *Dasheng dayizhang*, this exchange consists of Huiyuan's question, followed by Kumārajīva's reply. The gist of Huiyuan's query is as follows. According to the *Lotus Sūtra*, arhats receive predictions of future buddhahood from the Buddha and attain buddhahood. Furthermore, it is stated that when arhats are about to enter nirvāṇa, the Buddha appears before them to preach them the 'essential Dharma' and prevents them from entering nirvāṇa. However, arhats have destroyed all love (i.e., defilements) as well as the perfuming (*vāsanā*), or the residual force, of the defilements. It is a basic Buddhist tenet that once all defilements and their perfuming have been eradicated, one is liberated from the cycle of birth-and-death and enters nirvāṇa. How can arhats, who have destroyed all defilements and their perfuming, attain buddhahood in the future?

To this question, Kumārajīva replies that arhats have not, in fact, eradicated all defilements. He argues that, according to Mahāyāna Buddhist masters, there are two kinds of defilements: (1) the defilements of common beings and (2) the more subtle set of defilement possessed by advanced bodhisattvas who have

⁴ The *Dasheng dayizhang* is found in Kimura 1960, 3–57. For a study of this issue, see Hurvitz 1960.

⁵ On Kumārajīva, see Ōchō and Suwa 1982.

⁶ On Huiyuan, see Zurcher 1959 (vol. 1.): 204–239.

⁷ This exchange is found in Kimura 1960: 31–34.

gained insight into the true mark of dharmas (i.e., have gained insight into emptiness). The former set of defilements serve to keep sentient beings bound to the cycle of rebirths within the triple realms. Arhats are said to have destroyed this set of defilements.

However, there is a second, more subtle, set of defilements, which Kumārajīva calls ‘love towards nirvāṇa and the buddha dharma.’ Because arhats still possess this second set of defilements, they can refrain from entering nirvāṇa and remain in the world after converting to the bodhisattva path to continue their practices until they attain complete buddhahood.⁸ In another exchange in the *Dasheng dayizhang*, Kumārajīva argues that these defilements consist of the bodhisattva’s deeply rooted love, arrogance and ignorance towards the buddha dharma. First, love of the buddha dharma refers to their profound attachment to the buddha dharma, for which they would gladly give their lives. Second, ignorance refers to their inability to penetrate the dharma to its furthest depth. Finally, arrogance means that when bodhisattvas are not settled in the *samādhi* of the patience of the non-arising of dharmas, they can still have prideful thoughts that they have attained nirvāṇa unobtainable by ordinary people.⁹ Hence, because arhats still possess ‘love towards nirvāṇa and the buddha dharma’ (i.e., the second set of subtle defilements), they can remain in the world without entering nirvāṇa, convert to the bodhisattva path and continue their practices until they reach complete buddhahood.

It may be noted in passing that Kumārajīva derives his idea of the two kinds of defilements from the *Dazhidulun* 大智度論, the massive 100 fascicle commentary on the *Large Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* attributed to Nāgārjuna.¹⁰ However, there is one major difference between the theories propounded by Kumārajīva and the *Dazhidulun*. Whereas the former speaks of two kinds of defilements, the *Dazhidulun* speaks of defilements and their perfuming. In other words, the second set of subtle defilements spoken of by Kumārajīva is defined in the *Dazhidulun* as the perfuming of defilements, and not actually defilements themselves.

The second text to be considered is the *Fahua yiji*. This is an eight fascicle long commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* composed by Fayun, famous as one of the so-called ‘three great masters’ of the Liang period.¹¹ In his commentary, Fayun does not explicitly take up the question of how arhats can attain buddhahood. However, at the beginning of his commentary, he explains why the *Lotus Sūtra* is superior to other sūtras, and it is in this connection that he explains the mechanism whereby arhats can attain buddhahood. Huiyuan’s argument is that earlier

⁸ Kimura 1960: 32.

⁹ Kimura 1960: 10.

¹⁰ On the *Dazhidulun*’s theory of defilements and their perfuming, see Lamotte 1974.

¹¹ On Fayun, see Kanno 1996: 22–25.

sūtras only taught the way to destroy defilements that bind beings to the triple realms, while the *Lotus Sūtra* teaches the way to eradicate defilements both of the triple realms and those beyond the triple realms. Moreover, he argues that earlier sūtras only taught the way to eradicate the four static defilements, while the *Lotus Sūtra* teaches the way to eradicate both the four static defilements and the defilement of fundamental ignorance.¹²

Fayun's argument is based on the *Śrīmālā-simhanāda Sūtra* (hereafter *Śrīmālā Sūtra*) and its doctrines of the two kinds of birth and death and five levels of defilements.¹³ Both of these doctrines are introduced in the sūtra in order to explain its theory of the One Vehicle. Like the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Śrīmālā Sūtra* states that neither arhats nor pratyekabuddhas are completely liberated from the cycle of birth-and-death. According to the *Śrīmālā Sūtra*, only the tathāgatas have truly attained nirvāṇa. Although the Buddha taught that arhats and pratyekabuddhas have attained nirvāṇa, these words are merely expedient devices. In fact, they both still possess defilements which keep them tied to future rebirths.

However, it is not completely false to say that arhats and pratyekabuddhas have been liberated from birth-and-death. This is because there are two levels of birth-and-death: the discontinuous birth-and-death (*fenduan shengsi* 分段生死) and birth-and-death of inconceivable transformation (*busi yi bianyi shengsi* 不思議變易生死). The former refers to birth-and-death within the triple realms gained as a result of past karma. The latter refers to birth-and-death experienced by those who have been liberated from discontinuous birth-and-death but have yet to remain in the world to continue their practices until they reach final buddhahood. Beings that are still subject to the latter type of birth-and-death include arhats, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas of great power (i.e., advanced bodhisattvas). Although they are no longer born in gross corporeal bodies (because they have exhausted all defiled karma which results in their beings born anew in such bodies), they are born with 'mind-created bodies' (*manomaya-kāya*).

This theory of the two kinds of birth-and-death is closely related to the sūtra's innovative theory of defilements. According to the sūtra, defilements can be divided into two types: latent defilements (*zhudi fannaο* 住地煩惱) and defilement of fundamental ignorance (*wuming zhudi huo* 無明住地惑). Among them, the latent defilements are of four kinds: latent defilement based on a particular viewpoint, latent defilement based on attraction to desire, latent defilement based on attraction to form, and latent defilement based on attraction to

¹² T 33.1715: 573b–c.

¹³ The two kinds of birth and death and the five levels of defilements are discussed at T 12.0353: 219c–220a. For an English translation, see Paul and McRae 2004: 31–32.

mundane gestation. These four kinds of static defilements produce innumerable individual defilements, called active defilements' (*qi fannao* 起煩惱).

However, there is an even more basic defilement underlying the four latent defilements. This is the defilement of fundamental ignorance. This defilement is said to be far more deeply rooted than the static defilements and is, in fact, the root source of our deluded existence.

These two kinds of defilements—static defilements and defilement of fundamental ignorance—are, according to the *Śrīmālā Sūtra*, correlated to the two kinds of birth-and-death. Arhats, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas of great power have destroyed the former set of four static defilements (and, as a consequence, from all mobile defilements that arise from them). For this reason, they are said to be liberated from discontinuous birth-and-death. When arhats are said to have eliminated all defilements, what is really meant is that they have destroyed this, more superficial, type of defilements. However, they still retain the defilement of fundamental ignorance and are thus still bound to the birth-and-death of inconceivable transformation. Although the sūtra admits that they have attained 'partial nirvāṇa,' it is not the complete nirvāṇa. They are only said to be 'directed to the nirvāṇa realm.' Buddhahood and complete nirvāṇa are attained only when the defilement of fundamental ignorance is thoroughly eliminated. And since only the tathāgatas have eradicated this type of defilement, only they possess perfect nirvāṇa.

These ideas form the basis of the *Śrīmālā Sūtra's* understanding of the One Vehicle. According to the sūtra, the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha vehicles are, up to a certain point, valid ways of practice because they lead to the destruction of static defilements. However, they are not complete paths of practice, because they do not provide the means to destroy the most profound defilement, the defilement of fundamental ignorance. Thus these two vehicles are expedient devices, provisionally valid but devoid of ultimate efficacy. The final and supreme attainment, the attainment of buddhahood, can only be gained by eliminating the defilement of fundamental ignorance through the practice of the buddha vehicle. In the final analysis, all Buddhist practitioners—whether they have previously been śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas or bodhisattvas—must convert to the buddha vehicle to gain complete nirvāṇa. In this sense, the buddha vehicle is the One Vehicle, which both includes and transcends the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha vehicles.

As noted previously, Fayun does not specifically take up the question of how arhats can attain buddhahood in the *Fahua yiji*. However, judging from the fact that he uses the *Śrīmālā Sūtra's* theory of the two kinds of defilements and two kinds of birth-and-death in his exegesis, it is clear he understood that arhats have destroyed the static defilements and have been liberated from discontin-

uous birth-and-death but have yet to eradicate the defilement of fundamental ignorance and are not yet liberated from the birth-and-death of inconceivable transformation. Hence, like Kumārajīva, Fayun understood that arhats have not yet eliminated all their defilements and are consequently able to convert to the bodhisattva path and remain in the world to work for the benefit of sentient beings without entering nirvāṇa.

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Abbreviation

- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 85 vols. Eds. Takakusu, Junjirō 高楠順次郎 – Watanabe, Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1934.
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FERENC RUZSA

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Why Was Original Buddhism for Monks Only?¹

Abstract

Early Buddhism was a monastic religion: the Buddha's disciples were mendicant monks. However, there are many laypeople today who are practising Buddhists, meditating and following the eightfold Buddhist path towards *nirvāṇa*. This paper investigates how real this apparent inconsistency is. First, it is shown that the Buddha typically did not even speak about his own insights and doctrines to his lay followers; he only preached about general moral principles and gave wise advice, often with a noticeable conservative tinge. Since it is clear that Buddhism was not esoteric (i.e., it did not contain secrets revealed only to the initiated), this state of affairs can be explained only by supposing that the Buddha thought that true Buddhism was useful only for monks. It is never explicitly explained why it was so, but from several hints an answer may be tentatively reconstructed. Buddhist theory was only needed as a basis of Buddhist practice, and in the Buddha's age and environment, such practice was virtually impossible for laypersons living and toiling in a village, with a family, and taking care of children. One could not find the peace essential for meditation. Furthermore, such worldly life presupposes strong motivations and unavoidably generates desires, whereas Buddhist practice consists of the annihilation of precisely those desires.

Keywords: Buddhism, monks, laity, *upāsakas*, practice, inconsistency, incompatibility, meditation, desires

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Like most really great ideas, the Buddha's teaching is quite simple. Even including those elements that were not his inventions (e.g., the anthropology based on the five *skandhas*²) it could be completely described in ten pages. In contrast, Buddhist literature is immense. Even the most archaic collection of traditional texts (i.e., the Pali Canon) is vast, consisting of some fifty volumes. Yet it is not always easy to find in it straightforward answers to many fundamental questions related to the doctrine, and I believe that the title of this paper is one of those questions.

The question of why Buddhism was originally for monks only is more important in the modern world than it was ever before. There are many lay people today who are not necessarily religious in the traditional way (i.e., worshipping the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas), but rather they are practicing Buddhists. They follow the *ārya aṣṭāṅgika mārga* (the eightfold Buddhist path towards *nirvāṇa*), they meditate and they occasionally go on a retreat, yet they do not even plan ever to become monks. This may appear rather incongruent – do they accept the Buddha's wisdom or not? If not, why do they follow his path? If yes, how can they contradict his teaching at the very start, by practicing without first taking the monastic vows?

In fact, the statement implied in the question is far from self-evident, and its content has been underanalysed. It is common knowledge that early Buddhism was a monastic religion; the Buddha's disciples were *bhikṣus*, mendicant monks. The lay people we now would call Buddhists were only *upāsakas*, worshippers of the Buddha.³ From several early accounts it seems that they were only admirers of the Buddha and his teaching without accepting the essential tenets of Buddhism. They did not accept Buddhism, because they were not given the chance: *the Buddha generally did not tell lay people what his discoveries were.*

² Although this paper is based on the Pali sources, I use the Sanskrit terminology, for it is more familiar to many people. I tacitly change the terms (as also brahmana/brahman to brahmin) even in the translations quoted.

³ Starting with Schopen (1985), the monastic–lay contrast is now considered to have been less sharp than previously supposed. See e.g. Bluck (2002). Bodhi (2001) collected some material suggesting that a few exceptional laymen even practised meditation.

Teachings to Lay Persons

It is not the case that the Buddha did not teach lay people – he often did.⁴ However, what he told them had very little to do with Buddhism. Let us see a few well-known examples. The very first instruction the Buddha gave after his enlightenment is so described in the *Vinaya-piṭaka*:

Then one of the brahmin caste – of the cursing kind – went to the Blessed One [...] and said: ‘What is a brahmin, Master Gotama? And what are the things that make a brahmin?’

Knowing the meaning of this, the Blessed One then uttered this exclamation:

The brahmin who is rid of evil things,
Not cursing, undefiled and self-controlled,
Master of Vedas, having completed his studies,
Can rightly employ the word ‘brahman’,
If he is proud of nothing in the world.⁵

In spite of minor uncertainties of interpretation, it is clear that the Buddha urges the Vedic priest to continue his profession in a more elevated spirit. He makes no effort at converting the brahmin and does not even hint at his own teachings.

This remains the general attitude of the Buddha towards laypersons⁶ and their religion throughout his career, for we see it again at the very end of his life. In the village Pāṭali, he meets Sunīdha and Vassakāra, two high officials of the Magadhan court who are building the new capital, Pāṭaliputra, for the future empire. The Buddha’s advice to these brahmin ministers: worship local gods, for in exchange they will help you! *Do ut des*.

In the place where he builds his home, the one who is wise
Should make an offering to the gods who may be there:
When worshipped they worship him, when revered they revere him,
And so they show concern for him, as a mother for her own son,
And with the concern of the gods a man always sees good things.⁷

⁴ According to Kelly’s (2011: 40–45) very useful catalogue, 15 of the 32 suttas in the *Dīgha-Nikāya*, and 50 of the 152 suttas in the *Majjhima-Nikāya* are told to (or for) laypersons.

⁵ *Vinaya-piṭaka*, *Mahā-khandhaka*, 2. Ajaṇṇa-kathā, 4. The translation is based on Ñāṇamoli (2001: 33), with these variations: – *Humhūka* is here ‘cursing’ (‘haughty haw-haw-ing’ and ‘haughty’ in Ñāṇamoli, while Horner [2007: 3–4] has ‘uttering the sound *hum*’). – *Vedanta-gūvusita-brahmacariyo* is ‘Master of Vedas, having completed his studies’ (Ñāṇamoli: ‘Perfect in knowledge, and living the brahma-life’; Horner: ‘Master of Vedas, who lives the Brahma-faring’). Further, *Dhammena so brahma-vādaṃ vadeyya* (‘Can rightly employ the word “brahman”’) could rather be translated as ‘He may utter the sacred speech according to the Eternal Law’.

⁶ Of course a brahmin priest is a religious specialist; for our purposes, however, he is a layman as he lives in the world, in a family and in a home.

⁷ *Dīgha-Nikāya*, 16. Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta, 154. Tr. Gethin (2008: 50).

One may be tempted to explain away these cases as accidental, cursory, inconsequential meetings, although this would not be very convincing: there must be a reason for why these instructions are remembered and put into verse. In the following examples, however, it is clear that the teachings given were considered by all parties very important – only they were not about Buddhism at all.

Before dining with the two ministers, the previous day the Buddha gave a lengthy talk to the farmers of Pāṭali village. His topic was the effects of virtue (and of its opposite):

For someone who is virtuous there are these five benefits for following virtue. What five? When someone is virtuous and follows virtue he accumulates great wealth on account of his lack of negligence. This is the first benefit. Again, when someone is virtuous and follows virtue his good reputation spreads around. This is the second benefit. Again, when someone is virtuous and follows virtue, whenever he enters an assembly, whether of nobles, brahmins, householders, or ascetics, he does so with confidence and not nervously. This is the third benefit. Again, when someone is virtuous and follows virtue, he dies untroubled. This is the fourth benefit. Again, when someone is virtuous and follows virtue, at the breaking up of the body, after death, he is reborn in a happy destiny, a heavenly world. This is the fifth benefit. These are the five benefits for following virtue for someone who is virtuous.⁸

These householders were the lay followers (*upāsaka*) of the Buddha, yet he spoke about nothing specifically Buddhist. He encouraged them to follow virtue not because this was the first step on the long way to enlightenment, but simply because it leads to profit, good reputation, confidence, peace of mind, and in the end to heavenly reward.

Similar in tone, but rather more specific and detailed is the instruction given to the Vajjis, a confederation of tribes living on the northern bank of the Ganges, opposite the expanding state of Magadha.

‘Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis meet together frequently and regularly?’

‘I have heard this, sir.’

‘Ānanda, as long as the Vajjis continue to meet together frequently and regularly, then they can be expected to prosper, not to decline. [...]

[And similarly,] as long as the Vajjis

– continue to sit down together in concord, to get up together in concord, and to conduct their business in concord,

⁸ *Dīgha-Nikāya*, 16. Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta, 150. Tr. Gethin (2008: 48), slightly modified: *sīla-sampadāya*, *sīla-sampanna* is here ‘for following virtue’, ‘follows virtue’ (Gethin: ‘of his success in conduct’, ‘succeeds in his conduct’) and *khattiya* is ‘noble’ (Gethin: ‘ruler’).

- continue not to make pronouncements that have not been agreed, not to revoke pronouncements that have been agreed, but to proceed in accordance with the ancient laws of the Vajjis that are agreed pronouncements,
 - continue to respect, honour, revere, and worship those among them who are their elders, and to listen to what they say,
 - continue not to abduct and force women and girls of good family into sexual relations,
 - continue to respect, honour, revere, and worship their ancestral shrines, both those that are central and those that are outlying, and not to neglect the appropriate offerings that were given and made in the past,
 - continue to provide holy men with proper care, protection, and guard, such that those who have not come to their realm are encouraged to come, and those that have come live easily,
- then they can be expected to prosper, not to decline.’

Then the Blessed One spoke to the brahmin Vassakāra, the chief minister of Magadha: ‘Once, brahmin, when I was staying in Vesālī at the Shrine of Sāranadā, I taught the Vajjis these seven principles for avoiding decline, and as long as these seven principles remain established among the Vajjis, as long as they abide by them, then they can be expected to prosper, not to decline.’⁹

According to the Buddha’s advice, the strength and safe survival of the tribe depends on unity, legal and religious conservatism and respect for the elders, for their women and for holy men. Instead of telling the Vajjis to embrace Buddhism and follow its precepts, he told them to keep their old laws and customs and to continue their own religious tradition.

As far as I can see, there is nothing ‘suspicious’ about these texts. There is nothing in them that would suggest later tampering, and there is no particular interest of any group of Buddhists that could have led to forging such teachings. They might well be what they appear to be: memories of how the Blessed One addressed lay persons. However, they contain nothing that is peculiarly Buddhist – any wise, honest, well-respected person with some authority could speak similarly.

There is an obviously later standardised formula that recurs throughout the canon more than 50 times. We quote it from the story of Upāli, the wealthy Jain householder turning Buddhist:

Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upāli progressive instruction, that is, talk on giving, talk on virtue, talk on the heavens; he explained the danger, degradation, and defilement in sensual pleasures and the blessing of renunciation.¹⁰

⁹ *Dīgha-Nikāya*, 16. Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta, 134–135, condensed. Tr. Gethin (2008: 39–41).

¹⁰ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 56. Upāli-sutta, 69. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 485).

We may recognise here the later preoccupation of the Buddhist church with persuading the laity to support it: the foremost virtue is *dāna*, giving, very often clearly emphasising that the proper gift is given to monks or the *Samgha*, the Buddhist Order. Here again the reward is heavenly happiness. However, with the negative evaluation of sensual pleasures and the praise of renunciation, some Buddhistic motifs are at least vaguely discernible. The reason for this seems to be that this sentence is regularly followed by a proper conversion, this time with the central doctrine:

When he knew that the householder Upāli's mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated, and confident, he expounded to him the teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder Upāli sat there, the spotless immaculate vision of the Dharma arose in him: 'All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation'. Then the householder Upāli saw the Dharma, attained the Dharma, understood the Dharma, fathomed the Dharma; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation.¹¹

It appears that when the Buddha talked about the true Buddhist teaching to laypersons, it was normally with the intent of converting them into real Buddhists (i.e., monks), and he was usually successful. Upāli, however, remains a householder, although he considers himself something more than a simple worshipper (*upāsaka*): a *śrāvaka*, a disciple of the Buddha. However, in another story, Yasa's father, who is a rich merchant, becomes only an *upāsaka*.¹²

We may say that this much at least is true of the famous *upāya-kauśalya*, the 'skill in means'. This is a *Mahāyāna* device to explain the absence of their peculiar doctrines in the more orthodox *sūtras*. According to this, the Buddha was skilful enough to see that his first disciples were not brave or bright enough to receive the highest teaching, so he gave them *Hīnayāna* only. While this is clearly a late invention, we can see now that something very similar was in fact the Buddha's regular practice. He talked about the universality of suffering or about the nonexistence of a self mostly to his monks only, while to the laity he taught only some fairly general, benevolent moral rules.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Vinaya-piṭaka, *Mahā-khandhaka*, 7. Pabbajjā-kathā 26–28. Yasa was the first layperson to become a Buddhist monk. Samuels (1999: 233–234) quotes three further examples from the Nikāyas where the person receiving this teaching does not become a *bhikkhu*.

Worldly Life is Unsuitable for Peace of Mind

Since the Buddhist doctrine was not a secret, it was not an esoteric knowledge offered only to the elect few,¹³ the only conceivable explanation to this state of affairs is that the Buddha did think that true Buddhism was for monks only. Now I will try to suggest some answer to the original question: *why* was it for monks only?

There is precious little direct evidence concerning this question. In a frequently repeated formula, here quoted from the recurrent narrative of the future Buddha's way to enlightenment, there is an explicit hint at the answer. The Buddha tells the Jain Saccaka why he thought that he should leave home:

[...] before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisattva, I thought: 'Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, while living in a home, to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. [...]'¹⁴

As is typical of the Buddha, he is not categorical. He does not say that it is impossible, only that 'it is not easy' to lead the holy life at home. The reason for this is only suggested. It is not that Buddhist practice is necessarily a full-time job, but rather that it needs solitude and purity, while 'household life is crowded and dusty'.

From a Buddhist perspective, this characterisation should be understood as largely subjective. As the relevant cause of suffering is not external-objective, but rather the subject's own mental attitude (i.e., 'thirst', excessive desire), so here also the source of the impurity is mostly within our own minds. The defilements are perfectly natural; they arise unavoidably as we grow up. Here is the Buddha's attempt at developmental psychology: a new-born baby has only biological needs.

When he grows up and his faculties mature, the child plays at such games as toy ploughs, tipcat, somersaults, toy windmills, toy measures, toy cars, and a toy bow and arrow.

When he grows up and his faculties mature [still further], the youth enjoys himself provided and endowed with the five cords of sensual pleasure [...] that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of lust.

On seeing a form with the eye, he lusts after it if it is pleasing; he dislikes it if it is unpleasing. He abides with mindfulness of the body unestablished, with

¹³ In fact, when specifically asked about a point of his teaching, or challenged to a debate, the Buddha always spoke about the true Buddhist doctrine – also in front of laypersons.

¹⁴ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 36. Mahā-Saccaka-sutta, 371. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 335).

a limited mind, and he does not understand as it actually is the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder. Engaged as he is in favouring ... he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As he does so, delight arises in him. Now delight in feelings is clinging. [...] Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.¹⁵

Simply put, pleasant experiences lead to liking and then a wish to have them again (i.e., attachment). What is wrong with that? There is a famous, detailed and strongly worded account of all the troubles of the worldly life arising from clinging and desires in the Sutra on the Mass of Suffering.

And what, bhikṣus, is the danger in the case of sensual pleasures? Here, bhikṣus, on account of the craft by which a clansman makes a living – whether checking or accounting or calculating or farming or trading or husbandry or archery or the royal service, or whatever craft it may be – he has to face cold, he has to face heat, he is injured by contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and creeping things; he risks death by hunger and thirst.

Now this is a danger in the case of sensual pleasures, a mass of suffering visible here and now, having sensual pleasures as its cause, sensual pleasures as its source, sensual pleasures as its basis, the cause being simply sensual pleasures. (= refr.)

If no property comes to the clansman while he works and strives and makes an effort thus, he sorrows, grieves, and laments, he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught, crying: ‘My work is in vain, my effort is fruitless!’ *refr.*

If property comes to the clansman while he works and strives and makes an effort thus, he experiences pain and grief in protecting it: ‘How shall neither kings nor thieves make off with my property, nor fire burn it, nor water sweep it away, nor hateful heirs make off with it?’ And as he guards and protects his property, kings or thieves make off with it, or fire burns it, or water sweeps it away, or hateful heirs make off with it. And he sorrows, grieves, and laments, he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught, crying: ‘What I had I have no longer!’ *refr.*

Again, with sensual pleasures as the cause, sensual pleasures as the source, sensual pleasures as the basis, the cause being simply sensual pleasures, kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles, brahmins with brahmins, householders with householders; mother quarrels with son, son with mother, father with son, son with father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. And here in their quarrels, brawls, and disputes they attack each other with fists, clods, sticks, or knives, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. *refr.*

¹⁵ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 38. Mahā-taṇhā-saṅkhaya-sutta, 408–409. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 358–359).

Again, with sensual pleasures as the cause...men take swords and shields and buckle on bows and quivers, and they charge into battle massed in double array with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing; and there they are wounded by arrows and spears, and their heads are cut off by swords, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. *refi*:

Again, with sensual pleasures as the cause...men take swords and shields and buckle on bows and quivers, and they charge slippery bastions, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing; and there they are wounded by arrows and spears and splashed with boiling liquids and crushed under heavy weights, and their heads are cut off by swords, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. *refi*:

Again, with sensual pleasures as the cause...men break into houses, plunder wealth, commit burglary, ambush highways, seduce others' wives, and when they are caught, kings have many kinds of torture inflicted on them. The kings have them flogged with whips, beaten with canes, beaten with clubs; they have their hands cut off, their feet cut off, their hands and feet cut off; their ears cut off, their noses cut off, their ears and noses cut off; they have them subjected to the 'porridge pot,' to the 'polished-shell shave,' to the 'Rāhu's mouth,' to the 'fiery wreath,' to the 'flaming hand,' to the 'blades of grass,' to the 'bark dress,' to the 'antelope,' to the 'meat hooks,' to the 'coins,' to the 'lye pickling,' to the 'pivoting pin,' to the 'rolled-up palliasse'; and they have them splashed with boiling oil, and they have them thrown to be devoured by dogs, and they have them impaled alive on stakes, and they have their heads cut off with swords – whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. *refi*.¹⁶

In order to satisfy your desires you have to work, and that is unpleasant. Even if you can gain some wealth, possessions lead to new problems: different kinds of conflicts, often to sins and consequently punishment. I would suspect that this extremely negative characterisation of everyday life reflects the experiences of the times, the political instability connected to the growing of empires, the shocking loss of the previous autonomy of the tribes and the collapse of the old values.

However, the Buddha was very specific that even in the most favourable circumstances, even with due consideration for all the related issues, satisfying one's desires is an unsurmountable obstacle on the Path. One of his followers, Aritṭha, did not understand this. Here is a part of their conversation:

'As I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One, those things called obstructions by the Blessed One are not able to obstruct one who engages in them.'

¹⁶ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 13. Mahā-dukka-kkhandha-sutta, 167–169. Tr. Ñānamoli–Bodhi (2009: 180–182).

‘[...] have I not stated in many ways how obstructive things are obstructions, and how they are able to obstruct one who engages in them? I have stated that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more. With the simile of the skeleton...with the simile of the piece of meat...with the simile of the grass torch [...] with the simile of the pit of coals...with the simile of the dream...with the simile of the borrowed goods [...] with the simile of fruits on a tree [...] with the simile of the butcher’s knife and block [...] with the simile of the sword stake...with the simile of the snake’s head, I have stated that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more.’¹⁷

With another simile he pointed out that even the most arduous practice can bring no results if the practitioner still follows his desires and enjoys sensual pleasures.

‘Suppose there were a wet sappy piece of wood lying in water, and a man came with an upper fire-stick, thinking: “I shall light a fire, I shall produce heat”. What do you think, Aggivessana? Could the man light a fire and produce heat by taking the upper fire-stick and rubbing it against the wet sappy piece of wood lying in the water?’

‘No, Master Gotama. Why not? Because it is a wet sappy piece of wood, and it is lying in water. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment.’

‘So too, Aggivessana, as to those recluses and brahmins who still do not live bodily withdrawn from sensual pleasures, and whose sensual desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and fever for sensual pleasures has not been fully abandoned and suppressed internally, even if those good recluses and brahmins feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision and supreme enlightenment [...]’¹⁸

The impossibility of finding peace while still following worldly ways seems to stem from the way our minds work. While it is true that we act in accordance with what we think, it is equally true that we think in accordance with what we do: lustful practice fills the mind.

Bhikkhus, that one can engage in sensual pleasures without sensual desires, without perceptions of sensual desire, without thoughts of sensual desire – that is impossible.¹⁹

Unfortunately, it is not the case that only those worldly motives lead to suffering that are more generally considered as problematic (e.g., sexual lust or the desire for wealth and power). A central point in the Buddha’s insight is that even

¹⁷ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 22. Alagaddūpama-sutta, 14–16. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 225–226).

¹⁸ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 36 Mahā-Saccaka-sutta, 374. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 335–336).

¹⁹ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 22. Alagaddūpama-sutta, 19. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 227).

the most respected and pure attachments, such as parental love, unavoidably produce grief, because everything in the world is perishable and temporary. Anything dear to us can cause pain with its loss. In fact, *only* those things that we consider important can cause real suffering.

‘[...] my dear and beloved only son has died. Since he died I have no more desire to work or to eat. I keep going to the charnel ground and crying: “My only son, where are you? My only son, where are you?”’

‘So it is, householder, so it is! Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.’²⁰

The Monk’s Freedom and Superior Happiness

The only way to avoid the suffering caused by loss is not to be attached to anything or anybody. Everything and everybody in the world, all ‘bodies’ (*rūpa*: material form, visible appearance, beauty) should be regarded as ‘not mine’, since they are at most merely pleasant but essentially objective and neutral phenomena of the external world.

Bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple who has regard for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dharma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dharma, regards material form thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ He regards feeling (/perception /formations /what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought, mentally pondered) thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ [...]

Therefore, *bhikkhus*, any kind of material form (/etc.) whatever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all material form should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ [...] Seeing thus, *bhikkhus*, a well-taught noble disciple becomes disenchanted with material form (/etc.) [...] Being disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated.²¹

Obviously a person who does not consider anything as his own cannot be leading a worldly life. This attitude of complete detachment is far from automatic but at least possible in the case of a wandering monk, who has no family, no property, no caste, tribe or nation and no permanent residence. It is possible that there should be no one whom they love more than everybody else, no emotional

²⁰ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 87. Piya-jātika-sutta, 353. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 718).

²¹ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 22. Alagaddūpama-sutta, 29, 43–44. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 229, 139–140).

attachment to anybody, anything or any place. The promised reward is complete freedom and complete bliss:

Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so too the *bhikṣu* becomes content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes, he sets out taking only these with him. Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, he experiences within himself a bliss that is blameless.²²

Complete freedom does seem to follow from non-attachment; happiness, however, does not. Nevertheless, according to the Buddha, it does follow from the essential tool of re-building our mind-set (i.e., meditation). He said that the bliss and serenity experienced in the meditation technique he discovered surpasses anything a man in the world can even imagine.

‘Venerable sir, I have long understood the Dharma taught by the Blessed One thus: “Greed is an imperfection that defiles the mind, hate is an imperfection that defiles the mind, delusion is an imperfection that defiles the mind.” Yet while I understand the Dharma taught by the Blessed One thus, at times states of greed, hate, and delusion invade my mind and remain. I have wondered, venerable sir, what state is still unabandoned by me internally, owing to which at times these states of greed, hate, and delusion invade my mind and remain.’

‘Mahānāma... It is because that state is unabandoned by you internally that you are living the home life and enjoying sensual pleasures.

Even though a noble disciple has seen clearly as it actually is with proper wisdom that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more, as long as he still does not attain to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, he may still be attracted to sensual pleasures.’²³

The ‘rapture’ referred to is that which is experienced in the first *dhyāna*, meditative state, and after that, especially with the fourth *dhyāna* comes what is ‘more peaceful than that’.

Interestingly, this passage does not only suggest that merely understanding Buddhist theory is not enough (it is but the first step on the noble eightfold path) and meditative practice is essential. It also says that in the unlikely case that a layperson should find internal peace, they would unavoidably leave home and would become a homeless beggar. Although the reason for this is not explicitly stated, it is clear why it is so. You are not a prisoner or a slave; so you stay in

²² *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 38. Mahā-taṇhā-saṅkhaya-sutta, 411. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 274).

²³ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 14. Cūḷa-dukkha-kkhandha-sutta, 175–177. Tr. Ñāṇamoli–Bodhi (2009: 186).

your home with all of its troubles because you want to. However, once you gain complete unattachment, there is nothing that would keep you in the home, and of course you would choose freedom.

Conclusion

I think that now we have the complete picture. The Buddha's project was to find a way out of suffering. Since the root of suffering is desire, desires should be given up. However, it was practically impossible to live in the world the Buddha knew without desires, so one essential step on the way was to opt for the homeless life of the monk.

It seems quite logical why he did not preach real Buddhism to lay persons. Since he felt that they cannot follow the necessary practice, no decent goal could have been served by his telling householders, 'See how miserable your life is!' This would simply increase their suffering, and that was clearly contrary to the Buddha's fundamental aim. So he taught his central doctrine mostly to people who had already left home, and on rare occasions to those that were either on the brink of leaving it, or who were already so miserable that understanding the universality of suffering would help to allay their pain.²⁴

Whether the Buddha's understanding of the uselessness of Buddhist doctrine and the impossibility of meaningful Buddhist practice for those living in the world is still valid today (in a peaceful and secure country, with enjoyable jobs, contraceptives and numerous harmless enjoyments), it is not for a scholarly paper of this kind to consider.

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²⁴ As in the popular story of Kisā Gotamī grieving over the death of her son (*Khuddaka-Nikāya*, *Apadāna-pāḷi* 2, Therī-apadāna-pāḷi, 3. Kuṇḍala-Kesī-vagga, 2. Kisā-Gotamī-therī-apadāna 73–83). Or in teachings given to dying persons: to Dīghāvu by the Buddha (*Samyutta-Nikāya*, *Mahā-Vagga*, 11. Sotāpatti-saṃyutta, 1. Veḷudvāra-vagga, 3. Dīghāvu-upāsaka-sutta) and to Anāthapiṇḍika by Sāriputta (*Majjhima-Nikāya*, 143. Anāthapiṇḍikōvāda-sutta).

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On the Listening to Buddha's Words with Reverence: The Very First Step of Buddhist Practice in Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti**

Abstract

This paper focuses on the fifth chapter of the *Vyākhyāyukti* by Vasubandhu, a Buddhist thinker who was active in the fourth and fifth centuries in Northwestern India, and a commentary on that work, the *Vyākhyāyuktiṭīkā* by Guṇamati. In this chapter, Vasubandhu deals with the issue of how those who preach about the Buddha's words should teach about them and how those who listen to those teachings should study them. Vasubandhu explains that 'listening to the Buddha's words with reverence' is critical as the first step of Buddhist practice.

The source for this position of Vasubandhu's can be found in the *Arthavistara-dharmaparyāya* in the *Dīrghāgama* of the Sarvāstivāda. Vasubandhu argues that the first step of Buddhist practice is listening to the Buddha's words with reverence based on the third of sixteen methods for listening to the Buddha's words that are described in the fifth section of that scripture.

Why is reverence necessary when listening to the Buddha's words? Vasubandhu uses the famous metaphor of three kinds of vessels in answering this question. This metaphor respectively likens (1) a person who does not listen to the teachings, (2) a person who listens to the teachings but misunderstands them, and (3) a person who listens to the teachings but fails to remember them to (1) an upside-down vessel, (2) a dirty vessel, and (3) a vessel with a hole in it. That is to say, Vasubandhu is pointing to the fact that if a listener lacks respect for the preacher, they will (1) not try to listen carefully to the teachings, (2) misunderstand them, or (3) forget them.

Vasubandhu also uses this metaphor in his *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā*, which was written after the *Vyākhyāyukti*. This metaphor also appears frequently in Tibetan Buddhist literature in the works of figures such as Bu ston rin chen grub and Tsong kha pa. The position that Vasubandhu took regarding the importance of listening to the Buddha's words with reverence was extremely influential and came to be broadly held in the Buddhist traditions of both India and Tibet after the fifth century.

Keywords: Vasubandhu, *Vyākhyāyukti*, Guṇamati, *Vyākhyāyuktiṭīkā*, *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā*, *Arthavistara*, listening with reverence, metaphor of three kinds of vessels

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Introduction

Buddhist practice starts from listening to the Buddha's words; without listening, no one can start the Buddhist practice. However, the process of listening is always problematic, because one always listens in one's own way. In order to correct our misunderstanding, it is necessary to listen to many words of the Buddha (This is the reason why Indian Buddhists call an expert a *bahuśruta*, 'one who has heard many words'). Also, since people easily forget, it is necessary to listen repeatedly over and over and remember what they have listened to (Buddhist audiences are often referred to metaphorically as 'hollow vessels').

In his *Vyākhyāyukti* (hereafter VyY), Vasubandhu stated that the very first step of Buddhist practice is 'listening with reverence' (*gus par nyan pa*, **śuśrūṣā*), and it is a reverence for the Buddha himself and the Buddha's words that motivates us to listen the Buddhist dharma. 'Listening with reverence' is the subject of Chapter 5 of VyY. In this paper, I will consider 'listening with reverence' as the very first step of the buddhist practice. The VyY is a work of Vasubandhu's that is not found the original Sanskrit, and has not been translated into Chinese, but is preserved in Tibetan translation.

The *Arthavistara-dharmaparyāya*: The Source of Vasubandhu's Interpretation

When Vasubandhu emphasizes the importance of 'listening with reverence,' the source of the term is the *Arthavistara-dharmaparyāya* which Vasubandhu often quotes. This scripture is a prominent sutra that appears as the second sutra in a section of the *Dīrghāgama* of the Sarvāstivāda called *Ṣaṭsūtrakanipāta*. The Tibetan text and the reconstructed Sanskrit text based on the Central Asian manuscript fragments by Hartmann 1991, are shown below. The translation is based on the remaining part of the Sanskrit manuscript, using the Tibetan text to supplement the parts missing from the Sanskrit.

*tshe dang ldan pa dag chos nyan par 'dod pas rnam pa bcu drug gis mnyan par bya ste | 'di lta ste | (1) dus su chos mnyan par bya ba dang | (2) bkur sti bya ba dang | (3) gus par nyan pa dang | (4) ma rangs pa med pa dang | (5) bsgo ba bzhin nyan pa dang | (6) klan ka mi tshol ba dang | (7) chos la gus par bya ba dang | (8) chos smra ba'i gang zag la gus par bya ba dang | (9) chos la mi brnyas pa dang | (10) chos smra ba'i gang zag la mi brnyas pa dang | (11) bdag la mi brnyas pa dang | (12) rtse gcig pa'i sems dang | (13) kun shes par bya ba'i sems dang | (14) rna ba blags te mnyan pa dang | (15) sems bsdu pa dang | (16) sems thams cad kyis bsams te chos mnyan par bya'o || (AvDh(tib.) §5)
... śro(tavyaḥ katamaiḥ ṣoḍa)śabhiḥ (1) kālena dha(rmaḥ śrotav)ya(ḥ) (2) satkṛtya (3) śuśrūṣa(māṇena) (4) (anasūyatā) (5) (anuvīdhīyamānena) (6) (anupālam-*

bhāprekṣiṇā) (7) (*dharme gauravam upasthāpya*) (8) (*dharmakathi*)ke pudgale gaurav(am) upasthāpya (9) *dharmam aparibhavatā* (10) *dharmā(kathikaṃ pudgalam aparibhavatā*) (11) (*ātmānam apa*)ribhavatā (12) *ek(āgracittena)* (13) (*ājñācittena*) (14) (*avahitaśrotre*)ṇ(a) (15) *samāvarjitamānasena* (16) *sarvacetasā* (*samanvāhṛtya dharmāḥ śrotavyaḥ*) (AvDh §5, Hartmann1991: 320–321)¹

Venerable sirs, he who wishes to listen to the dharma should listen in sixteen ways. Namely, (1) he should listen to the dharma at an opportune time, (2) with respect, **(3) listen with reverence / wishing to listen**, (4) without complaining, (5) compliantly, (6) without looking for an argument, (7) establishing reverence for the dharma, (8) establishing reverence for the dharma-preacher, (9) without belittling the dharma, (10) without belittling the dharma-preacher, (11) without belittling himself, (12) with a mind that wishes to know fully, (13) with a singularly focused mind, (14) giving ear, (15) concentrating the mind, and (16) whole heartedly he should listen to the dharma, O venerable sirs. In these sixteen ways he should listen to the dharma.²

The above description is the sixteen kinds of ways or attitudes the listeners (*śrotrjāna*) should have, which is preached by Śāriputra at the direction of the Buddha. From the Tibetan translation and two kinds of Chinese translations of (3), we can see two aspects of the word *śuśrūṣamāṇena*: listening with reverence (attitude) and wanting to listen (motivation).³ In other words, ‘reverence’ included in this word does not mean simple respect. It includes a motivation and desire to listen to the Buddha’s words, and, in that sense, objects of reverence are the ‘Buddha’ and ‘Buddha’s words,’ as well as the ‘dharma-preachers’ and ‘dharma-preacher’s teachings.’

¹ Cf. *Puṣyāyī jing* 普法義經 (T 01.0098, Translation by 安世高 An Shigao). T 01.0098: 922c1–8. 舍利弗復謂比丘。欲聞法者、當有十六業。何等為十六。一當為有時可聞、二當為多聞、三當為向耳聽、四當為事、五當為莫平訶、六當為莫訶失、七當為莫求長短、八當為法恭敬、九當為說法者恭敬、十當為莫易法、十一亦莫易說法者、十二亦莫自易身、十三一向心、十四莫餘意、十五正持心、十六覺一切念、可聞法正。

Cf. *Guangyi famen jing* 廣義法門經 (T 01.0097, Translation by 眞諦 Paramārtha). T 01.0097: 919c15–22 長老。若人欲聽正法、具十六相、乃可聽受。何等十六。一隨時聽、二恭敬、三欲樂、四無執著、五如聞隨行、六不為破難、七於法起尊重心、八於說者起尊重心、九不輕撥正法、十不輕撥說者、十一不輕己身、十二一心不散、十三欲求解心、十四一心諦聽、十五依理正思、十六憶持前後、而聽正法。

² The English translation is based on the translation in Horiuchi 2013: 359. ‘The sixteen kinds of ways or attitudes of the listeners’ (AvDh §5) are cited in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, balagotrāpātala. Cf. BoBh 104.17–105.9.

³ The Sanskrit *śuśrūṣā* is a desiderative form of *śru*, so if we literally translate it, it will have the meaning of ‘wishing to listen,’ just as the Paramārtha’s Chinese translation 欲樂yù lè (wishing [to listen]) shows. It can be inferred that the nuance ‘reverence’ (*gus pa*) was put in based on the judgment of the Tibetan translator, but it can be said that it is a suitable translation consistent with the contents of Chapter 5 of VyY.

**‘Three Kinds of Vessels’ in the *Vyākhyāyukti*
and the *Pratītyasamupādayākhyā***

So, why do we need ‘reverence’ when listening to the Buddha’s words? The answer is not explicitly shown in the *Arthavistara*. On the other hand, a clue for thinking about that point lies in the famous ‘metaphor of three kinds of vessels’ in Chapter 5 of VyY and the *Pratītyasamupādayākhyā*. Vasubandhu’s VyY 5.2.1 says as follows:

*ci’i phyir gus par chos mnyan par bya zhe na | snod gsum dag tu ni lhas char
phab kyang chu’i bya ba mi byed de |*

(1) *kha gzhan du phyogs pa’am bcad pa gang du mi ‘bab pa nyid dang |*

(2) *mi gtsang ba gang du bab kyang skyon can du ‘gyur ba dang |*

(3) *bug dang bcas pa gang du mi gnas pa’o ||*

*de bzhin du skye bo nyan pa po’i yid kyi snod gsum dag tu chos smra bas chos
kyi char phab kyang | chos kyi chu’i bya ba mi byed de |*

(1) *rnam par g.yeng ba dang | rmugs pa dang | gnyid dag gis mi nyan pa’i phyir
| gang du mi ‘bab pa dang |*

(2) *tshul bzhin yid la mi byed pa’i phyir | gang du bab kyang skyon can du ‘gyur
ba dang |*

(3) *dran pa brjed ngas pa’i phyir | gang du mi gnas pa’o ||*

*de lta bas na de’i skyon yongs su spang ba’i phyir bcom ldan ‘das kyis de’i
phyir nyon la legs par rab tu⁴ yid la byos shig ces gsungs pa yin pas na⁵ mnyan
pa’i skyon de bdag cag la ‘byung na mi rung ba’i phyir | gus par chos mnyan par
bya’o || (VyY 5.2.1, D shi 116a3–6, P si 135a3–7)*

[Question] Why should we listen to the dharma with reverence?

[Answer] Three vessels (**bhājana*) do not work [to hold] water even if it rains from the sky.

(1) [The vessel] that is turned upside down or broken, so [rain] cannot not fall there,

(2) [The vessel] that is unclean, so even if it rains, [the water] will get dirty,

(3) [The vessel] that has a hole in it, so [rainwater] cannot be stored in it.

Likewise, the three vessels of listeners (**śrotṛjana*) say that even though the dharma-preacher may rain the dharma, the [rain] of the dharma does not function.

⁴ rab tu VyY(D) : rab tu nyon la VyY(P)

⁵ na VyY(D) : om. VyY(P)

- (1) Because [they are] distracted, depressed, or not listening to [the dharma] due to dozing, there is no [rain of the dharma] falling there [i.e., in the listeners],
- (2) Since correct attention is not directed, even if [rain of the dharma] falls there [i.e., in the listeners], it is sullied.
- (3) Because [their] memories are bad, there is no [rain of the dharma] staying there [i.e., in the listeners].

Therefore, in order to fully break down the above [three types of] negligence, it is said that the Buddha says, 'Therefore, listen and pay attention well and properly (*tad śṛṇuta, sādhu ca suṣṭhu ca manasikuruta*).' Thus, for us to give rise to such negligent listening is not appropriate, so you should listen to the dharma with reverence.

A passage with the same meaning as this description of the 'three vessels' can be found in the remaining part of the Sanskrit manuscript of Vasubandhu's *Pratīyasamutpādavyākhyā* (hereafter PSVy). This work is a commentary on the *Pratīyasamutpādasūtra*⁶ created after the VyY. In this work, 'three kinds of negligence' accompanying the listening are explained by Vasubandhu in the context of annotating the stock phrase '*tad śṛṇuta, sādhu ca suṣṭhu ca manasikuruta*.'

tad ity ayaṃ nipāto vākyopanyāse tasmādarthe ca. (1) śṛṇuteti śrotrāvdhāne prayojayati. (2) sādhu ca (3) suṣṭhu ca manasikurutety aviparītādaragrahaṇe parśado deśanābhājanatvāpādanārtham. anyathā hi deśanāyāḥ sāphalyaṃ na syāt tribhir doṣaiḥ. (1) ākṣepadoṣeṇa vyañjanasyāśravaṇāt. (2) prajñādoṣeṇa vā viparītavyañjanārthagrahaṇāt, svastyariṣṭādivat. (3) mandacchandadoṣeṇa vānādarodgrhītasādhāraṇāt.⁷ parāṇmukhāśucichidrabhājaneṣu vṛṣṭya-sāphalyavat tadapraveśavaiḥkrītyānavasthānataḥ. (PSVy 613.15–614.6)

This **therefore** is an appendage to sentences, and hence is used as an indeclinable participle. (1) '**listen**' means to guide the audience to listen. (2) '**[Pay attention] well,**' (3) '**pay attention . . . properly**' means not to apprehend invertedly, [to guide the audience] to grasp with reverence. It is to make the audience a vessel of the teachings. For if not, the teachings will not be fruitful because of the three faults. (1) Because one does not listen to syllables depending on the negligence of distraction. (2) Because of negligence in wisdom, one apprehends the meaning of the opposite syllable, like [confusing] a precursor of good (*svasti*) and a precursor of death (*ariṣṭa*). (3) Because of the negligence of weak motivation, [teaching] grasped without reverence is not retained.

⁶ On this sutra, see Chung 2008: 107–110; Chung 2017.

⁷ Tucci: *anāgraho-*. Correct *anāgraho-* to *anādaro-* based on the Tibetan translation and Sanskrit parallel. Cf. PSVy(Tib.) D 3b1, P 3b7: *ma gus pas bzung ba mi 'dzin pa'i phyir ro ||* ; AVSN 83.9: *anādarodgrhītasādhāraṇāt*.

[As if] (1) The mouth faced downwards, (2) unclean, (3) for vessels with holes, do not not lead to results of rainwater. It is because [rain] does not enter, it changes, it does not stay.

The famous ‘metaphor of three kinds of vessels’ is frequently cited by Indian and Tibetan Buddhists like Bu ston rin chen grub.⁸ Content that is listened to in an unrespectful way, is heard distractedly and does not stay inside the listener, so he writes, ‘[teaching] grasped without reverence is not retained.’ In other words, reverence is effective for keeping the preached teachings within one’s mind.

Four Extracts from Chapter 5 of the *Vyākhyāyukti*

This section presents translations of four passages I have chosen from Chapter 5 of VyY.

[1. A Relationship between the Dharma-preacher and the Listener (VyY 5.1.2)]

‘phags pa sh’a ri’i bus

tshe dang ldan pa dag dge slong chos smra ba pos gzhan dag la chos dang ldan pa’i gtam smra ba na | rnam pa nyi shu dag dang ldan pas gtam bya ste | (1) dus su gtam bya ba dang | (2) gus pa dang | (3) go rims dang zhes bya ba de lta bu la sogs pa dang

tshe dang ldan pa dag chos mnyan par ‘dod pas rnam pa bcu drug dang ldan pas chos mnyan par bya ste | (1) dus su chos mnyan par bya ba dang | (2) gus pa dang | (3) sri zhu dang

zhes bya ba de lta bu la sogs pa gsungs pa yin no || nged dam khyed kyi de ni bsgrub par dka’bas de’i phyir rnam pa nyi shu ‘am bcu drug lta zhog gi re zhig rnam pa gcig tsam yang byas la | ngas kyang gus par chos bshad par bya | khyod kyis kyang gus par chos nyon cig | (VyY 5.1.2, D shi 115a4–7, P si 134a3–6)

[1]

Sage Śāriputra taught the likes of the following:

Venerable sirs, when a preaching monk delivers a sermon, he should speak to others in these twenty ways. He should speak (1) at an opportune time, (2) respectfully, (3) in order, ... (**kathikenāyusmanto bhikṣuṇā dhārmīm kathāṃ*

⁸ *Bu ston chos ‘byung* = BU 141.12–142.6, Obermiller 1931: 79.

*kurvantānyeṣāṃ viṃśatibhir ākāraiḥ kathā karaṇīyā. (1) kālena kathā karaṇīyā (2) satkṛtya (3) anupūrvam ...)*⁹

As well as the likes of the following:

Venerable sirs, he who wishes to listen to the dharma should listen in sixteen ways. Namely, he should listen to the dharma (1) at an opportune time, (2) with respect, **(3) listen with reverence**,¹⁰ ... (... *śrotavyaḥ ... (1) kālena dharmāḥ śrotavyaḥ (2) satkṛtya (3) śuśrūṣamāṇena ...)¹¹

This is hard for me and you to do, and therefore, putting aside the twenty ways and the sixteen [ways] for the time being, at any rate, doing even just one of these ways, I am also going to preach the dharma with reverence. You also should listen to the dharma with reverence.

[2. The Dharma and the Dharma wheel (VyY5.2.7)]

yang ci'i phyir zhe na |

'khor lo legs par sbyar ba yang 'phul¹² bar byed pa dang | sa dang | gnyis kyi yon tan gyis 'dril te | gal te 'phul¹³ bar byed pas kyang legs par 'phul¹⁴ ba la | gang du dbul bar bya ba 'i sa yang mi mnyam pa med pa yin na 'o ||

de bzhin du de bzhin gshegs pa 'i¹⁵ chos kyi 'khor lo legs par bshad pa yang ston pa po dang | nyan pa po dang | gnyis kyi¹⁶ yon tan gyis bskor te | gal te ston pa pos yang dag par ston la¹⁷ gang la bstan par bya ba 'i nyan pa po yang dag par nyan na 'o ||

de nyid kyi phyir bcom ldan 'das kyi gang zag gnyis ni | de bzhin gshegs pa 'i chos dang ldan pa 'i chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba 'i rjes su skor¹⁸ bar byed pa yin te | gang zhig gus par chos 'chad pa dang | gang zhig de gus par nyan pa 'o || (VyY5.2.7,¹⁹ D shi 120a4–7, P si 139b6–140a2)

⁹ The source of this is *Arthavistara* §4, which describes twenty ways to preach. Before the VyY 5.1.2 that appears here, Vasubandhu provides a more detailed explanation in VyY 2.62. See Horiuchi 2013: 357–358.

¹⁰ The translation of the second (2) of sixteen ways to listen to the dharma is *gus pa* in VyY and *bkur sti* in Guṇamati's VyYT. Also, the translation of (3) in VyY is *sri zhu* and *nyan par gus pa* in VyYT. While their translations differ, it appears that the original terms were the same: *satkṛtya* for (2) and *śuśrūṣamāna* for (3).

¹¹ The source of this passage is *Arthavistara* §5. Before the VyY 5.1.2 that appears here, Vasubandhu provides a more detailed explanation in VyY 2.63. See Horiuchi 2013: 359–360.

¹² 'phul VyY(D) : phul VyY(P)

¹³ 'phul VyY(D) : 'bul VyY(P)

¹⁴ 'phul VyY(D) : phul VyY(P)

¹⁵ pa'i VyY(D) : pas VyY(P)

¹⁶ kyi VyY(D) : kyis VyY(P)

¹⁷ la VyY(P) : pa VyY(D)

¹⁸ skor VyY(D) : bskor VyY(P)

¹⁹ Cf. EĀ (Trip) 18.636:

*asāhasena dharmeṇa samyag evānuśiṣṭavān |
dharmacakraṃ vartayitvā asmin pṛthivīmaṇḍale ||*

[2]

[Question] Furthermore, why [should one listen with reverence]?**[Answer]** A correctly assembled wheel turns due to the virtue of the person propelling it and the ground. In other words, if the person propelling it correctly propels it and the ground upon which it advances is not uneven.

In the same way, the Wheel of the dharma correctly preached by the Tathāgata turns due to the virtue of both the teacher and the audience. In other words, if the teacher correctly teaches and the audience being preached to correctly listens.

It is for this very reason that for the World-Honored One two people continue to turn the dharma Wheel that is equipped with the Tathāgata's dharma. [These two people] are the person that preaches with reverence and the person that listens to this with reverence.

[3. The Avadāna of the cowherd Nanda (VyY 5.2.10)]

*brda*²⁰ *mi phrad pas kyang sangs rgyas kyi gsung gus par mnyan par bya ste |*
'di ltar dad pa tsam gyis kyang nyan na bsod nams chen po nyid dang ldan pa
*dang | shes rab kyi*²¹ *khams brtas*²² *par 'gyur na don rtogs pa la lta smos kyang*
ci dgos te |

ba lang rdzi dga' bos sbal pa khar bas mnan pa'i rtogs pa brjod pa yang
brjod par bya'o || 'dir yang bshad pa |
*dad pas mnyan pas*²³ *gang gis na ||*
mtho ris dga' ba'i bsod nams dang ||
gang gis mya ngan 'das thob pa'i ||
*shes rab sa bon brtas*²⁴ *par 'gyur ||*

*'dzin pa pos snod gzung ba ni sla'*²⁵ *ldugs pa pos bcud kyis*²⁶ *len blugs par*
*ni*²⁷ *dka' bas khyed kyis ni sems gtad par bya bas rna ba'i snod gzung*²⁸ *ba 'ba'*
*zhig bya zhing | bdag cag gis*²⁹ *ni dam ba'i chos kyi bcud kyis len blugs par bya*
*ste | khyed kyi bya*³⁰ *ni sla ba yin | nged kyi bya ba ni dka' ba yin no ||*

sla ba rigs pa dang ldan pa mi byed pa ni smad par bya ba yin pas de
lta bas na gus par chos mnyan par bya'o || (VyY 5.2.10, D shi 121a2–5, P si
*140b7–141a4)*³¹

²⁰ brda VyY(D) : brda' VyY(P)

²¹ kyi VyY(P) : kyis VyY(D)

²² brtas VyY(D) : rtas VyY(P)

²³ pas VyY(DP) : pa BU

²⁴ brtas VyY(D) : rtas VyY(P)

²⁵ sla'i VyY(P) : bla'i VyY(D)

²⁶ kyis VyY(D) : kyi VyY(P)

²⁷ ni VyY(D) : mi VyY(P)

²⁸ gzung VyY(P) : bzung VyY(D)

²⁹ gis VyY(D) : gi VyY(P)

³⁰ ba VyY(D) : om. VyY(P)

³¹ This part is quoted twice by *Bu ston chos 'byung*. The first quote, which is a quote only

[3]

Even those who cannot understand (**agamaka*) should listen reverently to the Buddha's words (**buddhavacana*). This is for the following reason: even by [just] listening with only belief [to the Buddha's words], [one becomes a person] with vast merit and cultivates the element of wisdom (**prajñādhātu*), and this is all the more so [if one] realizes the meaning [of the dharma].

[The preacher] should also tell the *avadāna*³² of the cowherd *Nanda who crushed a frog with a stick.³³ I will explain more about this.

Those who listen with belief will have merit [that is the cause of] joy [in] the heavenly realm (**svarga*) and their seeds of wisdom [that are the cause of] obtaining nirvāṇa cultivated.³⁴

While it is easy for the receiving side to hold a vessel, it is difficult for the pouring side to pour life-extending medicine. Therefore, you should only hold the vessel of the ears by directing the mind, and we will pour the life-extending medicine of the Saddharma. Your duty is easy [to do] and our duty is hard [to do].

Not doing easy things that make sense is worthy of criticism. Therefore, one should listen to the dharma with reverence.

[4. The Decline of Buddhism (VyY 5.2.28)]

- (1) *nyan pa 'i skye bo dag ni phal cher phyir phyogs dang ||*
 (2) *yongs su 'dzin par byed pa phal cher 'das pa dang ||*
 (3) *nyes par*³⁵ *rnam par bshad pa dag gis*³⁶ (4) *mthu bcom pas*³⁷ ||

deng sang legs par bshad pa mthar gyur to ||

[Interpretation 1] *tshigs su bcad pa 'dis ni deng sang phyogs gnyis la sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa yongs su nyams pa rnam pa bzhi dang | nub la thug*³⁸ *pa nyid du*³⁹ *ston pa yin no ||*

of the verse, is BU 37.2–5, Obermiller 1931: 13–14, n. 98. The second quote is BU 146.9–12, Obermiller 1931: 81 and ns. 729, 730.

³² This refers to the following *avadāna*. When the cowherd Nanda was listening intently to Śākyamuni, a frog was being crushed by his cane. While his vital body parts were severed off and joints split, he thought, 'If I move my body or raise my voice, this will interfere with Nanda's listening to the World-Honored One.' He then died after awakening his faith in the Buddha, and was reborn in the heaven of the four divine kings. This comes from *Bhaiṣajyavastu* (Bhaiṣaj 51.1–6, Yao 2013: 271). There are many parallel materials, including Chinese *Samyuktāgama* sutra no. 1174, Chinese *Ekottarikāgama* 43.3, and SN 35.200 of the Pāli-Nikāya. See Chung 2008: 82.

³³ I have understood this part as being an instruction of Vasubandhu to (potential) preachers: 'Tell of the *avadāna* about the cowherd Nanda.'

³⁴ Looking at the introductory phrase '*dir yang bshad pa*, it appears that this is a summary verse by Vasubandhu. One does not find this verse in the corresponding part of *Bhaiṣajyavastu*.

³⁵ *nyes par* VyY(DP) VyYT(P) : nye bar VyYT(D)

³⁶ *gis* VyY(DP) VyYT(D) : gi VyYT(P)

³⁷ *pas ||* VyY(DP) : zhing | VyYT(DP)

³⁸ *thug* VyY(D) VyYT(D) : thub VyY(P) VyYT(P)

³⁹ *du* VyY(D) : om. VyY(P)

(1) *nyan pa 'i skye bo dag ni phal cher phyir phyogs dang || zhes bya bas ni khyim pa 'i phyogs la nyan pa yongs su nyams par ston pa yin te | de dag ni phal cher nyan pa po yin pas so ||*

(2) *yongs su 'dzin par⁴⁰ byed pa phal cher 'das pa dang || zhes bya bas ni rab tu byung ba 'i phyogs la 'don pa yongs su nyams par ston pa yin te | de dag ni phal cher yongs su 'dzin par byed pa yin te | thos pa⁴¹ 'dzin pa 'i phyir ro ||*

(3) *nyes par rnam par bshad pa dag gis⁴² zhes bya bas ni de nyid la don bshad pa yongs su nyams par ston pa yin te | don log par 'chad pa 'i phyir ro ||*

(4) *mthu bcom pas zhes bya bas ni rtogs pa nyams par ston pa yin te | gang gi don du ste | dge slong gi tshul gyi 'bras bu rtogs pa 'i don du bshad pa ste | de nus par mi byed pa 'i phyir ro ||*

'di ni mdor bsdu na⁴³ yongs su nyams pa rnam pa gnyis su 'gyur te | tshig dang don gnyis kyi lung yongs su nyams pa dang | rtogs⁴⁴ pa yongs su nyams pa 'o ||

[Interpretation 2] *gzhan yang (1) nyan pa 'i skye bo phyir phyogs pa nyid dang | (2) yongs su 'dzin par byed pa phal cher 'das pa nyid kyis ni thos pa yongs su nyams pa yin la | (3) nyes par bshad pa nyid kyis ni yang dag par bsam pa yongs su nyams pa yin no || (4) mthu bcom pa nyid kyis ni yang dag par bsgom pa yongs su nyams pa yin no ||*

deng sang legs par bshad pa mthar gyur to || zhes bya ba ni nub la thug pa nyid du ston pa yin no ||

[Summary] *de ltar sangs rgyas kyi gsung ni yongs su nyams pa dang yun ring du mi gnas par rig par byas nas ji srid du cung zad lus pa de srid du 'di mnyan pa dang gzung⁴⁵ ba dang⁴⁶ don mthun par bsgrub pa la dad pa can rnams kyis⁴⁷ rab tu 'bad par bya 'o || (VyY 5.2.28, D shi 124b1–125a1, P si 144b5–145a6)*

[4]

Due to (1) those who listen to [the teachings] largely having betrayed,

(2) those who hold [the teachings] largely having gone on, and

(3) because of those who mistakenly explain [the teachings] (4) having broken the ability, currently [the Buddha's] good teachings (**subhāṣita*) are in danger of dying.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ par VyY(D) : pa VyY(P)

⁴¹ pa VyY(D) : la VyY(P)

⁴² gis VyY(D) : gi VyY(P)

⁴³ na VyYṬ(DP) : nas VyY(DP)

⁴⁴ rtogs VyY(D) VyYṬ(DP) : rtog VyY(P)

⁴⁵ gzung VyY(D) : bzung VyY(P)

⁴⁶ dang VyY(D) : om. VyY(P)

⁴⁷ kyis VyY(D) : kyi VyY(P)

⁴⁸ This brings to mind the verse found at the end of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*'s *Samāpattinirdeśa*. Cf. AKBh 460.4–13 ad AK VIII.41–43. I assume that the verse of VyY is quoted from Aśvaghōṣa's lost **Sūtrālamkāra*. On the relationship between Vasubandhu's view of the 'Decline of Buddhism' (*saddharmavipralopa*) and Aśvaghōṣa's *kāvya*s, see Ueno and Matsuda 2021. On the quotations of Aśvaghōṣa's *kāvya*s in chapter 5 of VyY, see Horiuchi 2022.

[Interpretation 1] This verse shows the current four kinds of decline in the Buddha's teachings on the two sides (of laypeople and renunciates), and that the [Buddha's teachings] are in danger of disappearing.⁴⁹

(1) 'Those who listen to [the teachings] largely having betrayed' shows that on the layperson side listeners have declined. This is because they (laypeople) are largely the listeners.

(2) 'Those who hold [the teachings] largely having gone on' shows that on the renunciate side [those who] read silently have declined. They (renunciates) are largely the holders [of teachings]. This is because they hold what they have heard.

(3) 'Because of those who mistakenly explain [the teachings]' shows that on that same [renunciate side] those who [correctly] preach the meaning have declined. This is because they explain mistaken meanings.

(4) By the [phrase] 'having broken the ability' it is shown that realization (**adhigama*) has declined. [Ability] for what [has declined]? The [ability] to explain how to attain the realization that is the fruit of practice (**śrāmaṇyaphala*). This is because [currently on the renunciate side] this is impossible.

Summarizing the above, there are two kinds of decline. Decline of the transmission of words and [their] meaning (**āgama*) and decline of realization (**adhigama*).

[Interpretation 2] In another [interpretation], [correct] listening (**śruta*) has declined due to (1) the betrayal of listeners and (2) those who hold [the teachings] generally having gone on. (3) Due to mistakenly explaining, correct thought (**cintā*) has declined. (4) Due to ability being broken [by those who mistakenly explain], correct practice (**bhāvanā*) has declined.

'Currently [the Buddha's] good teachings are in danger of dying' shows that they are in danger of disappearing.

[Summary] Knowing as shown above that the Buddha's teachings have declined and will not survive for long, insofar as they remain a little, those with belief should work to listen to and hold [the Buddha's teachings], and practice them in accordance with their meaning.

As we have seen above, Chapter 5 focuses on 'listening with reverence' to the Buddha's words. Vasubandhu positions this as the very first step in Buddhist practice. In other words, the VyY depicts the following process. First, someone listens reverentially to the Buddha's words, and continues to listen reverentially (Chapter 5). Then, they eventually leave home, listen to many things, retain that which they have heard, and accumulate that which they have heard (first half of Chapter 1). Finally, they grow into a preacher that has mastered scriptural

⁴⁹ The tibetan translation *nub pa* is a verb that expresses the setting of the sun. In other words, the decline of the Buddha's teachings is being likened to a sunset.

interpretation (second half of Chapter 1 to Chapter 4). In Chapter 5, it is said that those who transmit the Buddha's teachings as a dharma-preacher (*dhārmakathika*) should encourage listeners to 'listen with reverence' in order to turn them into 'those who are vessels of the teachings' (*deśanābhājanatva*).⁵⁰

In the background to Vasubandhu having written this work appears to have been his view regarding the disappearance of the dharma, in other words, as is shown in VyY 5.2.28 'The Decline of Buddhism,' the idea that Buddhism, having declined amongst laypeople and renunciates, was in danger of dying. This is also clearly expressed in the last verse of *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*'s *Samāpattinirdeśa*, which preceded VyY. However, in VyY, Vasubandhu expresses concern that the decline of speakers has influenced listeners and that renunciates who offer mistaken explanations to laypeople have increased. We can thus see that Vasubandhu wrote VyY with the transmission of traditional knowledge and the nurturing of future generations in mind.

Conclusion

According to Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*, the very first step of Buddhist practice is reverence, i.e., reverence toward the Buddha and the Buddha's word. One who listens to the Buddha's words with reverence can start Buddhist practice, and reverence will close the 'hole' in 'vessel' of Buddhist listeners' minds.

⁵⁰ Refer to the PSVy passage quoted previously in Part 3 of this paper.

References

Abbreviations

- AK *Abhidharmakośakārikā* (Vasubandhu): See AKBh.
- AKBh *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (Vasubandhu): P. Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967.
- AvDh *Arthavistara-dharmaparyāya*. See Hartmann 1991.
- AvDh(tib.) The Tibetan translations of the *Arthavistara-dharmaparyāya*. See Hartmann 1991.
- AVSN *Arthaviniścayasūtranibandhana* (Vīryaśrīdatta): N.H. Samtani, ed., *The Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra and Its Commentary (Nibandhana)*. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1971.
- Bhaiṣaj *Bhaiṣajyavastu*. Nalinaksha Dutt, ed., *Gilgit Manuscripts*, vol. III, Part 1. Calcutta: Calcutta Oriental Press, 1947.
- BoBh *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. Wogihara Unrai, ed., *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. Tokyo: 1930–1936.
- BU *Bu ston chos 'byung* (Bu ston rin chen grub): Tibetan Works Research Project ed., *Bu ston's Introduction to Buddhism: A Critical Edition of First Chapter of the Bu ston chos 'byung*. Kyoto: Ōtani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute, 2022.
- D Derge (sDe dge) blockprint edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka.
- EĀ(Trip) *Ekottarikāgama*. Chandrabhal Tripathi ed., *Ekottarikāgama Fragmente der Gilgit-Handschrift*. Reinbek: Dr. Inge Wezler Verlag für Orientalistische Fachpublikationen, 1995.
- P Peking edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka held at Otani University, Kyoto.
- PSVy *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā* (Vasubandhu): Giuseppe Tucci, 'Fragment from the *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā* of Vasubandhu,' *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 1930: 611–630. (Reprint: *Opera Minora*, parte I. Roma 1971, 277–304.)
- PSVy(tib.) The Tibetan translations of the *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā*. D 3995, P 5496.
- VyY *Vyākhyāyukti* (Vasubandhu): D 4061, P 5562.
- VyYT *Vyākhyāyuktiṭīkā* (Guṇamati): D 4069, P 5570.
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Practice and Understanding in Modern Chinese Pure Land Buddhism¹

Abstract

The present paper aims to contribute to the ongoing scholarly discussion about the impact of Western concepts on the modern East Asian understanding of Buddhism. Previous studies on the intellectual and cultural history of Chinese Buddhism in China's Republican (1911–1949) period suggest that the newly imported distinctions between religion and philosophy, and reason and faith, were instrumental in creating a new secular discourse that favoured the doctrinally orientated Buddhist traditions (notably Consciousness-only/Yogācāra) and belittled the more practical and devotional Buddhist currents (especially Pure Land Buddhism). While those observations pertain to the views of secular elites, a much more complex picture emerges from the confessional literature of the Republican period, for example Buddhist journals. As the present paper demonstrates, while some followers of the movement of 'Consciousness-only studies' were indeed critical of Pure Land devotionalism, they did not necessarily problematise it by appealing to the newly introduced Western conceptual framework.

The first part of the present paper reexamines the devotional model of Pure Land practice associated with the influential Republican-era monk Yinguang. It argues that Yinguang's lukewarm attitude towards intellectual approach to Buddhism was itself based in his particular interpretation of traditional Buddhist thought – especially the scholastic distinction between 'principle' and 'phenomena', and the Sinitic Buddha-Nature thought, which prioritises practical and non-conceptual wisdom over discursive knowledge. In the second part the paper turns to the critique of popular Pure Land piety undertaken by the lay Consciousness-only scholar Tang Dayuan, who opted for including doctrinal study in the practice of Pure Land Buddhism. Whereas Tang's arguments for this case refer to the increasingly globalised and Westernised intellectual scene of Republican China, his reformist postulates mainly target the aforementioned exegetical and doctrinal assumptions that were shared by Yinguang and other Pure Land preachers. For example, Tang appears to sideline the dichotomy of principle (insight) and phenomena (practice) and opts instead for a unified standard of Pure Land practice grounded in doctrinal understanding. At the same time, he adduces Consciousness-only scholasticism to argue for a broader and more nuanced

¹ The present paper contains revised fragments of my unpublished dissertation *Demythologizing Amitābha: A Consciousness-Only Hermeneutics of Pure Land Buddhism in Modern East Asia* (National Chengchi University, 2016).

understanding of Buddhist wisdom, which includes discursive and communicable knowledge. In these respects Tang's critique reveals a continuity between late imperial and modern Buddhist thought, both in terms of underlying concerns and the concepts that were used to articulate them.

Keywords: Yinguang, Tang Dayuan, Consciousness-only studies, Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, Ouyang Jingwu, Buddha-Nature thought, *genbenzhi*, *houdezhi*

Introduction

What exactly defines 'modernity' in the intellectual history of East Asia is a notoriously tricky issue. However, most scholars would probably agree that one of the salient characteristics of 'modern' East Asian thought is its reliance on the framework of Western concepts that have continuously been introduced into Japanese and Chinese vocabularies since the second half of the 19th century. One such conceptual innovation is the distinction between 'religion' (Jp. *shūkyō* /Ch. *Zongjiao* 宗教) and 'philosophy' (Jp. *tetsugaku* /Ch. *zhexue* 哲學), which is closely tied to the more general opposition between 'faith' and 'reason'.² Domesticating these concepts had particularly far-reaching consequences for East Asian Buddhists. Beginning with Meiji-period (1868–1912) Japan, modern apologists sought to raise the profile of Buddhism by representing it as a rational system of thought, devoid of the 'superstitious' practices and dogmatism associated with traditional religions; quite often, this entailed a new emphasis on the philosophical credentials of the Buddhism.³ At the same time, these new standards of rationality were applied to the Buddhist tradition itself, creating a distinctively modern set of expectations and priorities. The idea of 'philosophical' reason as something superior to merely 'religious' belief defined new hierarchies between various currents and 'schools' of Buddhism and generated new dynamics between their doctrinal and practical aspects.

Previous studies on the intellectual and cultural history of Buddhism in Republican China (1911–1949) provide ample illustrations of this last point. Beginning with the likes of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1868–1936) and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), secular thinkers and academics tend to discuss Buddhism as a system of rational metaphysics and ethics. The previously marginalised scholastic tradition of Sinitic Yogācāra (the so-called 'Tradition of Characteris-

² For detailed studies, see Hida (2002: 237–246), Godart (2008), Josephson (2012) and Suzuki (2015).

³ See Toda (2014: 101–105). As pointed out by Sueki (2004: 274) in Japan this rationalistic trend was to some extent reversed by the late Meiji period, when leading Japanese Buddhist thinkers began to define Buddhism in terms of practical spirituality that *transcends* rational thought rather than conforms to it.

tics', *Faxiang zong* 法相宗) is now singled out for its intellectual sophistication and philosophical credentials; these are also underlined by the doctrinally orientated and theory-heavy Buddhist movement of 'Consciousness-only studies' (*weishixue* 唯識學).⁴ Conversely, the more popular and practice-oriented currents, notably Pure Land Buddhism,⁵ begin to come across as either irrelevant or problematic. In the discourse of modern Chinese elites, the Pure Land becomes demoted to the status of a 'religious' belief that needs verification in the light of 'philosophically' mature doctrines.^{6,7} In academic studies it is mentioned, if at all, as an untypically 'religious' outlier among the 'philosophically' minded 'schools' of Chinese Buddhism⁸ – an assessment that justifies the relatively scant attention given to its historical evolution or doctrinal details.

While these views may be considered as representative of the secular elites of the Republican period, a somewhat more complex picture emerges when one considers contemporaneous confessional literature – for example, the content of Chinese Buddhist journals published in the 1920s and 1930s. Remarkably, these two decades witnessed a significant revival of Pure Land piety in its least philosophically sophisticated and the most religiously fervent form. This revival owed much of its impetus to the charismatic monk Yinguang (印光, 1861–1940), whose stance has been described by previous scholars as 'conservative' and explicitly anti-modernist.⁹ As Yinguang distanced himself from

⁴ For details, see Makeham (2014). This is not to say that modern Chinese proponents of 'Consciousness-only' Buddhism were unanimous in regarding it as a form of positivist 'philosophy' – far from it. However, many of them discussed Yogācāra as an object of 'Buddhist study' (*foxue* 佛學) rather than belief, and emphasised the intellectual rigor and rationalist credentials of this tradition by juxtaposing it with contemporary science, logic or neo-Confucian thought (Makeham 2014: 13–38).

⁵ The term 'Pure Land Buddhism' here refers to the tradition of Pure Land-orientated practices and doctrines that in contemporary Chinese-language scholarship is somewhat misleadingly labeled as 'Pure Land school' (*jingtu zong* 淨土宗). In fact, Pure Land practitioners in China never developed a clear-cut separate institutional or doctrinal identity, as was the case with the Pure Land 'schools' operating in Japan. For details, see Jones (2019).

⁶ Miyagawa 1998: 53–64.

⁷ Miyagawa (1998: 31) traces the beginnings of this tendency to Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911), the lay propagator who is often regarded as the spiritual 'father' of Chinese Buddhist modernism. According to Miyagawa, Yang was the first to stress a qualitative distinction between his Pure Land 'belief' (*shinkō* 信仰) and the Buddhist 'doctrine' (*giri* 義理) based on the teachings Huayan 華嚴 school (in the Chinese sources, this distinction is rendered as one between 'practice' and 'teachings' – *xing* 行 and *jiao* 教, respectively). Whereas Yang was a committed Pure Land devotee, his more secular contemporaries endorsed a more radical distinction between the 'philosophical' and 'religious' (and therefore, potentially 'superstitious') aspects of Buddhism (ibid, 60–64).

⁸ Zhang 2011: 354–355, 358–362.

⁹ See e.g. Millican (1929: 126), Chan (1953: 67, n.23), Welch (1968: 119), Pittman (2001: 2) or Jones (2003: 128, 130). For modern scholarship on Yinguang, see Chen (2002), Zhang (2011) or Kiely (2017).

the intellectual aspirations of contemporaneous Yogācāra scholars, his influence provided a ground for tension between the Pure Land devotionalism and the doctrinal approach associated with ‘Consciousness-only studies’.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the proponents of ‘Consciousness-only studies’ were not likely to respond to this challenge by appealing to the Westernised standards of rationality that were current among secular intellectuals. In fact, many of them shared Yinguang’s belief that Buddhism is, first and foremost, a form of practice, not an academic theory akin to Western philosophy, and that the truths that Buddhism teaches transcend the mundane reasonings on which philosophy is based. It was against such a background that Consciousness-only scholars had to negotiate the value of a theoretical understanding of the Buddhist doctrine and denounce the allegedly excessive anti-intellectualism of Yinguang and his followers. What use they made of modern Western notions of rationality in this context is far from obvious, and as such, merits careful investigation.

The present paper attempts to discuss this question by juxtaposing the arguments of both sides of the debate. In the first part it examines the doctrinal foundations that supported the devotional model of Pure Land practice associated with Yinguang’s name. In the second part it discusses the critique of popular Pure Land piety undertaken by the lay Consciousness-only scholar Tang Dayuan (唐大圓, 1890–1941 [or 1885–1941])¹¹ who opted for including doctrinal study in the practice of Pure Land Buddhism. As subsequently shown, Tang’s arguments for this case have a clear modernist ring, in the sense that they refer to the increasingly globalised and Westernised intellectual scene of Republican China. Yet, they make scant use of the aforementioned Westernised categories, such as rational philosophy and religious belief. On the contrary, Tang’s critique reveals a continuity between late imperial and modern Buddhist thought, both in terms of underlying concerns and the concepts that were used to articulate them. A closer look at his arguments may therefore provide a more nuanced perspective on the modernisation of Chinese discourse about Pure Land Buddhism in the early 20th century.

¹⁰ Chen 2002: 100–104.

¹¹ For standard biographical accounts, see Dongchu (1984: 682–687) or Yu (2004: 809–811). For the discussion of the dates of Tang’s birth and death, see Yin (2011).

Practice and Understanding in Traditional Chinese Pure Land Buddhism

The Chinese tradition of Pure Land Buddhism constitutes a ‘tradition of practice’¹² rather than a doctrinally and institutionally autonomous denomination in the manner of Japanese Pure Land ‘schools’. The practice that has become virtually synonymous with Pure Land Buddhism in China is the so-called *nianfo* 念佛, which involves ‘recollecting’, ‘remembering’ and, in the most widespread understanding, ‘reciting’ the name of Buddha Amitābha. In its most popular form *nianfo* is performed to secure rebirth in the paradise-like Western Pure Land, whose glorious adornments are described in canonical scriptures such as the *Smaller* or *Larger Sukhāvativyūha*.¹³ According to the standard Buddhist interpretation, this Pure Land is beyond the cycle of births and deaths and has been established by Amitābha so that reborn devotees can swiftly attain liberating wisdom and realise Buddhahood. In contrast to theorists of the Japanese (Jōdo-Shin) variety of Pure Land Buddhism, where Pure Land rebirth is conditioned on the attitude of faith and the working of the so-called ‘Other-power’ of Amitābha, the Chinese proponents of *nianfo* typically advocated a ‘single-minded’ practice that amounted to at least some degree of mental self-cultivation.¹⁴ Nonetheless, Pure Land devotion has long remained a controversial subject among the doctrinally educated Chinese Buddhists. Its detractors challenged the objectives of *nianfo* that is motivated by a literal belief in Amitābha’s Pure Land by pointing out that all perceived phenomena are empty and ‘nothing but Mind’ (*weixin* 唯心) and that the impersonal principle of Buddhahood is already present in everyone’s mind – hence there is no need to strive for rebirth in a particular place in the West and to seek help from an external savior-buddha.¹⁵

There is a tradition of describing these criticisms in terms of a doctrinal polemic between the two rival ‘schools’ – the school of Chan (*chanzong* 禪宗) and the Pure Land school (*jingtu zong* 淨土宗). As has been pointed out in some of the more recent studies, such a narrative is rather misleading, as it projects essentialised sectarian identities that were historically absent in China.¹⁶ Doctrinal charges against Pure Land practice were indeed often raised by the authors

¹² Jones 2019.

¹³ These Sanskrit titles refer to scriptures known in several Chinese translations, the most influential among them being the *Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經 and the *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經.

¹⁴ In the words of Charles B. Jones (2004: 278), ‘Pure Land practice in China is hard work’. Regarding the importance of practice and ethics in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, see e.g. Ogasawara (1963: 175–178, 208–216), Zhang (2011: 304–305) and Jones (2019: 61–105).

¹⁵ For overviews of Pure Land-related controversies within Chinese Buddhism, see Chappell (1986), Huang (2004: 127–164) or Jones (2019: 106–126).

¹⁶ Sharf 2002.

affiliated with Chan lineages and practitioners of Chan meditation. However, pre-modern Chinese scholiasts who quoted such Chan-inspired charges against the Pure Land often did so in order to *reconcile* these two perspectives rather than to take one side in a sectarian conflict. The influential commentaries on Pure Land sutras by the eminent scholiasts Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535–1615) and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655) evince a sense of doctrinal consensus that may be considered as characteristic of late-imperial Chinese Buddhism. On the one hand, their authors construe the scriptural depictions of the Pure Land and Amitābha as descriptions of the pure nature of one’s own mind, in keeping with the dictum ‘Mind-Only Pure Land, Self-Nature Amitābha’ (*weixin jingtu, zixing mituo* 唯心淨土 自性彌陀). On the other hand, they appear to vindicate a straightforward practice of *nianfo* undertaken by those who have not yet developed such a profound understanding. In doing so, they turn to one of the central tenets of Sinitic Buddhist thought – the dialectical relationship between the all-pervading and abstract principle (*li* 理), on the one hand, and the manifold and concrete phenomena (*shi* 事), on the other. Chinese scholiasts traditionally maintained that these two domains are ‘non-dual’, ‘mutually non-obstructing’ or even ‘mutually interpenetrating’. In the context of the Pure Land, this is taken to mean that sincere practice motivated by literal belief in Amitābha’s Western paradise will facilitate, rather than hinder, the direct realisation of one’s innate Buddhahood.¹⁷

A solution of this kind could not, however, settle all polemical issues. Some Chan monks continued to criticise the devotional form of Buddha-recollection as a last-resort expedient method, suitable for only the dullest of practitioners. Pure Land devotees retorted by accusing Chan monks of self-conceit and exhibiting a lack of respect for the compassionate intent that motivated the Buddha to preach about Amitābha and his land. Tensions of this kind were still running high at the beginning of the 20th century and left their traces in Buddhist literature of the Republican period. They form the intellectual background of Yinguang’s Pure Land revivalism and his rise to fame as the most influential Pure Land apologist of the early 20th century.¹⁸

¹⁷ For detailed discussions of Yunqi and Ouyi’s Pure Land thought, see e.g. Yü (1981), Araki (1985), Shengyan (2000: 169–174, 177–186) or Cun (2016: 384–414).

¹⁸ See Yinguang’s apologetic *Treatise Resolving Doubts About the Pure Land* (*Jingtu jueyi lun* 淨土決疑論; English translation by Jones, 2012) or the debate raised by monk Shoupei’s (守培, 1884–1955) essay called *Yixin nianfo ji de wangsheng lun* 一心念佛即得往生論 (‘On Being Instantly Reborn in the Pure Land through Single-Minded Buddha-Recitation’), involving Yinguang and Wang Jingzhou (王鏡周, dates unknown). See MFQ 162: 139–146, 163: 29–41, 164: 417–422.

Practice and Understanding According to Yinguang

One of the most interesting assessments of Yinguang's doctrinal stance has been proposed by the famous Japanese scholar Daisetz T. Suzuki, who touched upon his persona and teachings in his *Impressions of Chinese Buddhism* (1935). Suzuki interpreted the rhetorical clash between Chan and Pure Land as a conflict between two psychological types: 'intellectual or philosophical', on the one hand, and 'affectional and devotional', on the other. The former type, embodied by the spirit of Chan (Japanese Zen), tends to approach reality as an object of inquiry, something that can be 'made clear' (*ming* 明), 'seen into' (*jian* 見), 'illuminated' (*zhao* 照), 'awoken to' or 'understood' (*wu* 悟) or 'discerned' or 'penetrated' (*che* 徹). The latter type gravitates towards introspection and self-reflection, culminating in an acute consciousness of one's own 'karmic hindrances' – shortcomings and weaknesses.¹⁹ On Suzuki's account, Yinguang fully identified himself with the latter camp, not because he rejected the goal of insight into reality as such, but because he did not believe that such a lofty goal can be accomplished by the human beings he personally knew or even read about. According to Suzuki's paraphrase of Yinguang's words,

What the Zen masters express themselves in words sound fine and enhancing and alluring too. But really, they are no more than statements of metaphysical understanding, and the masters' inner life which they are actually living betrays all forms of karma-hindrances both intellectual and affectional. And because of this, they are still in the clutches of birth-and-death.²⁰

In other words, through their self-cultivation, adepts of Chan strive for the experience of 'seeing' the truth about reality, but 'seeing' alone does not actually liberate them from their karmic hindrances. Their 'understanding' of reality is not enough to transform their human existence into the enlightened existence of buddhas. Such transformation can be brought about only by attaining the 'supreme enlightenment' which, however, is 'extremely hard to attain for most of us of these days'.²¹ The path of the Pure Land, as advocated by Yinguang and as understood by Suzuki, is designed for those who have already realised that they will not be able to attain supreme enlightenment in the circumstances of their present life. For this reason, they choose to take advantage of Amitābha's support and seek rebirth in his Pure Land where that lofty goal can be accomplished swiftly. What it means in practical terms, here and now, is that Pure Land practitioners should set their priorities differently than do the adepts of

¹⁹ Suzuki 1935: 365–366.

²⁰ Suzuki 1935: 364.

²¹ Suzuki 1935: 363.

Chan: they should abandon the search for understanding the principle of reality and aim instead at securing their future rebirth in the Pure Land. As indicated by the doctrinal commentaries to the sutras, the conditions for a Pure Land rebirth are essentially threefold: the unswerving belief in the existence of the Pure Land and the possibility of being reborn there; the sincere aspiration to achieve this goal and, last but not least, the assiduous practice of *nianfo* (backed by ethical self-cultivation according to basic Buddhist precepts).²²

As can be seen from Suzuki's account, Yinguang promoted a fairly straightforward interpretation of the Pure Land doctrine that may have appeared as stripped of all intellectual overtones. He generally advocated Buddha-recollection in its most basic form – as a single-minded recitation of Amitābha's name.²³ He urged everyone who asked for his advice to give up a more profound doctrinal insight into the Pure Land dogma and focus on this simple practice, even if it had to be supported with unexamined faith. Conversely, he was known for emotional diatribes against Chan-inspired interpretations of Pure Land scriptures that explicated Amitābha and his realm as allegories of the intrinsically enlightened mind. Such people, claimed Yinguang, were not truly practicing the Pure Land path, as they failed to establish a meaningful connection with Amitābha and relied too much on their own powers of insight.²⁴ While Yinguang devoted much of his polemical zeal to criticising the elitist approach of Chan, his refutations extended to other forms of Buddhism that tended to garner interest of educated elites – the so-called Esoteric Buddhism (*mijiao* 密教), with its ambitious ideal of becoming a buddha in the present body, and the newly fashionable Consciousness-only studies.²⁵ Yinguang perceived these two currents as potentially aligned with Chan against the humble Pure Land piety. Just as practitioners of Chan, the adepts of Esoteric Buddhism and Consciousness-only optimistically appealed to the 'self-power' (*zili* 自力) of individuals and failed to account for human limitations and weaknesses. In his popular letters to lay Buddhists, Yinguang decried the contemporary hubris of self-avowed 'scholars' who prioritised the study of complex doctrines over basic essentials of Buddhism, such as belief in the law of karma and practice of *nianfo*. Referring specifically to the scholars of Consciousness-only studies, Yinguang remarked:

Those who espouse the Tradition of Characteristics make the same kind of mistake. What they advocate has nothing to do with ending [the cycle of] births and deaths. It is only about how to understand rational principles and how to talk

²² The triad of 'belief' (*xin* 信), 'aspiration' (*yuan* 願) and 'practice' (*xing* 行). In Suzuki's parlance these are called 'faith', 'will' and 'work' (1935: 364). See Ogasawara (1963: 200–203).

²³ Chen 2002: 177–185.

²⁴ For a summary of Yinguang's ideas about Chan, see Chen (2002: 104–108, 152–165).

²⁵ Yinguang's attitudes towards these two traditions are also discussed by Chen (2002: 94–104).

about them. If only they had known how difficult it is to end the cycle of births and deaths by the means of their self-power, they would have never dared to occupy themselves only with things such as those. They would not have dared to ignore the Pure Land, or even slander it as inferior. Those people are all of the same type – they like what they consider lofty and apply themselves to what they consider superior. Yet, they do not know why these things are lofty and superior. Had they known, never in their life would they have dared to discard the method of the Pure Land and shun Pure Land practice. Study of the Way truly is a formidable task.²⁶

The above quote is a representative sample of the rhetoric that Yinguang employed to discourage his contemporaries from studying Consciousness-only thought. In other cases, he accused Consciousness-only scholiasts of ‘talking about food and counting treasures’ (*shuo shi shu bao* 說食數寶) – a byword for fruitless theoretical speculations – or he portrayed them as ineffectual scholastics busy with memorising and analysing ‘names and appearances’ (*mingxiang* 名相) instead of combating attachments to self and external reality.²⁷ Whereas Yinguang expressed respect for those who wanted to broaden their knowledge of the doctrine, he found himself incapable of joining their ranks. Moreover, he implored others to follow his example and be wary of their own limitations.²⁸

It is, however, important to note that Yinguang’s practice-based and theory-averse approach did not merely reflect a psychological introspection of his own shortcomings. In fact, his rhetorically impressive writings are replete with numerous erudite references to Buddhist canonical literature and present a fairly coherent and sophisticated doctrinal stance. For example, commenting on the quasi-mythical narrative about the Pure Land contained in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha*, Yinguang opined that the doctrinal teaching (*jiaoyi* 教義) expounded in this scripture is essentially the same as teachings contained in the *Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing*). However, since the *Avatamsaka* preaches the truth directly, it can be fully comprehended and appreciated only by those whose insight is comparable with that of a buddha. In the Pure Land sūtra, the same lofty principles are intimated in figurative ways, accessible to those who have not yet attained Buddhahood. Without such proclamation, weak and ignorant people

²⁶ 「今之崇相宗者，其弊亦復如是。彼提倡者，實不為了生死。只為通理性，能講說耳。使彼知自力了生死之難，斷不肯唯此是務，置淨土於不問或有誹薄之者。此其人皆屬好高務勝而不知其所以高勝也。使真知之，殺了亦不肯棄置淨土法門而不力修也。甚矣，學道之難也。」 From ‘The Seventh Letter in Response to the Layman Zhou Qunzheng’ (復周群錚居士書七, YFW 2: 409–10).

²⁷ Cf. ‘Response to the Layman Yao Weiyi’ (復姚維一居士書, YFW 8:102) or ‘Response to the Layman Min Zongjing’ (復閔宗經居士書, YFW 8: 105).

²⁸ See e.g. ‘The Ninth Response to a Layman from Yongjia’ (復永嘉某居士書九, YFW 2: 248–9).

living in the age of ‘Declining Dharma’ could find no means to escape the cycle of births and deaths. To wit, while both *Avatamsaka* and *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* teach the same truth, only the latter scripture shows how to relate this truth to the existential condition of a ‘commoner’ (*fanfu* 凡夫) living in a degenerate age.²⁹

By pointing to the *Huayan jing* as the standard of interpretation of the Pure Land myth, Yinguang followed in the path well trodden by the previous generations of Chinese Pure Land exegetes. Consequently, he subscribed to the tradition of interpreting the Pure Land in terms of ‘Mind-only’ and ‘Buddha-Nature’ thought. After all, the Chinese text of the *Avatamsaka* explicates the experienced world as a construct of the Mind that is ‘not different’ from both sentient beings and buddhas.³⁰ In this world human beings are endowed with ‘the Wisdom of Tathāgata’, which is hidden by ignorance, but can be spontaneously recovered as soon as ‘false mentations’ are discarded.³¹ Conversely, buddhas attain their perfect enlightenment within minds of sentient beings.³² They can be encountered at any time and in any place, and they are not different from the perceiving mind, as images reflected in the water.³³

In Yinguang’s writings the motif of inherent universal Buddhahood, derived from not only his reading of the *Huayan jing* but also other canonical sources – notably the apocryphal *Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經 (the Śūraṅgama Sūtra) – is unequivocally affirmed. In fact, it provides a theoretical background behind his simple practical injunctions.³⁴ In some of his letters, Yinguang reminds lay practitioners that ‘the Mind is One’ and that the difference between ‘Holy Ones’ and commoners is only due to the latter’s confusion.³⁵ He explains human suffering as a result of detachment from one’s own original endowment of Buddha-Wisdom (*benju fozhi* 本具佛智), which forms the ‘substance’ or ‘essence’ (*ti* 體) of cognition; the mistaken views and emotions entertained by the unenlightened people (their ‘false knowledge’ [*wangzhi* 妄知]) are merely secondary manifestations that arise on the basis of this essence. Consequently, Yinguang explicates the method of Buddha-recollection in terms of ‘gathering one’s mind’ in order

²⁹ Cf. Yinguang’s preface to *Wuliangshou jing* (無量壽經頌序, YFW 11: 721–22).

³⁰ T 9.278: 465c28–29.

³¹ T 10.279: 272c4–7.

³² T 10.279: 275b23–29.

³³ T 10.279: 339c21–340a2.

³⁴ On Yinguang’s interpretation of the *Shoulengyan jing*, see Chen, 2009: 179–208.

³⁵ ‘The Eighth Letter in Reply to a Layman from Yongjia’ (復永嘉某居士書八, YFW 2: 245). See also Yinguang’s collected pronouncements on ‘Mind and Nature’ (*xinxing* 心性) in his ‘Explanation of Common Doubts’ (*Shi putong yihuo* 釋普通疑惑; Yinguang 1989: 118–122). As noted by Zhang (2011: 346–352), this particular motif in Yinguang’s thinking might have also been influenced by Neo-Confucian ideas.

to purify one's mental activity and return to its true origin or root (*ben* 本) – the innate Buddha-Wisdom.³⁶

In his more scholastic writings Yinguang often reflects on the old theme of Sinitic Pure Land exegetes – namely, that the 'principle' cannot stand by itself but is revealed through and within 'phenomena'.³⁷ The concepts of 'principle' and 'phenomena' originated from the philosophy of the so-called Huayan 華嚴 school, associated with Chinese exegetes of the *Avatamsaka*. They are usually invoked to describe the dynamics between the unifying all-pervasive principle of reality and its particular manifold manifestations. In Yinguang's usage, however, the 'principle' often refers to the unity (non-duality) between sentient beings and Amitābha, while 'phenomena' refers to the actual practice (*shixiu* 事修, *shigong* 事功) through which this principle is intuitively realised:

When we study Buddhism, we need to establish the principle right through the phenomena and establish the phenomena right through the principle. [...] If one claims that one is already a buddha right away, then one clings to the principle and forsakes the phenomena – this is already a grave error. We must put effort into actual practice and recollect the Buddha single-mindedly; beginning with the phenomena, we make the principle manifest and after the principle is manifest we still pay attention to the phenomena. Only in this way can we attain real benefit.³⁸

What this means from the perspective of ordinary people is that they cannot fathom the principle in any other way than by practice. Penetrating the universal Buddhahood directly, through some extraordinary insight into the true nature of reality, is neither a feasible nor a desirable goal. The most pragmatic method of recovering the original pure nature of one's own mind is to 'stimulate' (*gan* 感) the 'response' (*ying* 應) of Amitābha, who appears within the mind of a pious practitioner just as the reflection of the Moon appears in clarified water.³⁹ Attaining such 'clarity' of mind does not require intellectual effort; it can be achieved through simple faith, ethical conduct and the single-minded recitation of the name:

In case of ordinary people, it is not necessary to recommend them to extensively study profound sūtras or treatises. It is enough to instruct them to avoid doing evil and to uphold good deeds, and to single-mindedly recollect Buddha,

³⁶ 'Reply to the layman Yuan Wenchun' 「復袁聞純居士書」(YFW 2: 359).

³⁷ See the section on 'principle' and 'phenomena' in the 'Explanation of Common Doubts' (Yinguang 1989: 112–117).

³⁸ 「吾人學佛，必須即事而成理，即理而成事[...] 若自謂我即是佛，執理廢事，差之遠矣。故當用力修持，一心念佛，從事而顯理，顯理而仍注于事，方有實益」 'A Sermon for the Dharma Congregation for the Protection of the Country and for the Quelling of Calamities held in Shanghai' (上海護國息災法會法語, YFW 20: 1610).

³⁹ Cf. 'The Guide for those Beginning Pure Land Practice' (初機淨業指南, YFW 5: 916).

seeking rebirth in the West [...] ‘It is by modestly recollecting the Buddha that ignorant men and women can secretly penetrate Buddha-Wisdom and attune themselves to the marvels of the Way’.⁴⁰ By doing so, they achieve much greater benefit than those experts who spend all their days fiddling with their knowledge, immersed in conceptual discrimination. For this reason, for ignorant men and women it is easy to gain benefit. So it is for the experts, as long as they are able to fully divert themselves. If they are only occupied with their theories, they will reap no benefit at all. On the contrary, they may even harm themselves.⁴¹

As can be seen, Yinguang’s by and large anti-intellectual stance cannot be attributed solely to his sternly pessimistic assessment of human condition. Whereas this motif is undoubtedly present in his writings, it is qualified by his far-reaching endorsement of Sinitic ‘Buddha-Nature’ thought, in particular his belief in the inherent wisdom possessed even by ‘the ignorant men and women’. This assumption is central to Yinguang’s claim that faith in the Pure Land represents a path to enlightenment that is parallel to the path of (doctrinal and meditative) ‘understanding’ – and, all things considered, the more efficient of the two. The underpinnings of Buddha-Nature thought also justify Yinguang’s generalised distrust of discursive knowledge, which he deemed as relatively useless in comparison with the ineffable ‘internal’ wisdom activated by ethical habits and *nianfo* practice. As shown below, these doctrinal (as opposed to merely psychological) elements of Yinguang’s stance are singled out for criticism in the reformist manifestos of Tang Dayuan.

Practice and Understanding According to Tang Dayuan

Tang Dayuan, best known as a lay associate of the much more famous monk Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), was one of the most prolific authors of the Republican period’s ‘Consciousness-only’ revival. Tang’s involvement in Buddhist affairs can be dated to the early 1910s when he took refuge (*guiyi* 皈依) under Yinguang.⁴² In the next decade Tang continued to identify himself with the Pure Land ‘tradition of practice’, even though his views on *nianfo* consequently veered away from those advocated by Yinguang. In the first half of the 1920s, Tang moved towards an explicitly modernist doctrinal position, readily visible

⁴⁰ A quote from Ouyi Zhixu’s commentary to the *Amituo jing* (X61.1164: 655c1–2).

⁴¹ 「若普通人，則亦不必令其遍研深經奧論，但令諸惡莫作，眾善奉行，一心念佛求生西方即已[...] 良以愚夫愚婦顛蒙念佛，即能潛通佛智，暗合道妙。校比大通家之卜度思量，終日在分別中弄識神者，為益多多也。以故愚夫愚婦念佛易得益。大通家能通身放下，亦易得益。若唯以義理是卜度者，則不得益，或反得病」 ‘Letter in Response to the Layman Xie Chengming from Sichuan’ (復四川謝誠明居士書, YFW 3:475–6).

⁴² Yu 2004: 809.

in his passionate manifestos published in the more ‘progressive’ Buddhist journals of the time. Initially, he sought a textual basis for his reformist preaching in the *Huayan jing*, the scripture that was also highly regarded by Yinguang. Tang’s reading of this sūtra differed widely from that adopted by the old master: while fully embracing the *Huayan jing*’s broadly idealist Mind-only standpoint, Tang turned to this text for its model depiction of a bodhisattva as someone who remains engaged in the affairs of this world and actively searches for various kinds of knowledge, including knowledge of secular subjects.⁴³ It needs to be emphasised that in Tang’s modernist writings this secularised ideal of a bodhisattva represents a universal model that is applicable to all Buddhist practitioners. This includes less educated or less endowed believers who aspire for rebirth in the Pure Land. Already in 1924, Tang raised the prospect of building a ‘New Pure Land’ in this very world, thus suggesting a modern-sounding alternative to both traditional models of Pure Land practice – the popular ideal of rebirth in the Western paradise on the one hand, and the elitist goal of realising innate ‘Mind-only Pure Land’ on the other.⁴⁴

Around the same time Tang began to discuss his new ideals from the perspective of a scholar of ‘Consciousness-only studies’. In this way he joined a broader intellectual current represented by his new mentor Taixu but also his acquaintance and occasional polemical opponent Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無 (1871–1943).⁴⁵ What sets Tang apart from this larger trend was his insistence on identifying oneself as simultaneously a devout Pure Land practitioner and a Consciousness-only scholar. In some of his essays, Tang explains this double identity in terms of the rapprochement between ‘understanding’ (*jie* 解) and ‘practice’ (*xing* 行). Moreover, he appears to generalise this approach as a viable program for other contemporary Chinese Buddhists, as in the following quote from an essay titled ‘The General Guiding Principles of Today’s Study of Buddhism’ (*Jinri xuefo zhi da fangzhen* 今日學佛之大方針):

Therefore, in terms of my requisite for responding marvellously to [present] times and people’s capacities, and for benefitting oneself and others alike, I have the two following things to say: For understanding, there is Consciousness-only, while practice should be directed to the Pure Land. Since Consciousness-only is the skilful means for understanding the teachings, it guarantees that wisdom will be fully gained. Since it is the Pure Land to which all practice is directed, it guarantees that compassion will be wholly perfect.⁴⁶

⁴³ See e.g. ‘The Criteria of New Buddhification’ 新佛化之標準 (*Haichaoyin* 5/6: 13; MFQ 159: 257).

⁴⁴ ‘Constructing a New Pure Land’ 建設新淨土 (*Haichaoyin* 5/5: 7, MFQ 159: 131).

⁴⁵ See Aviv (2020).

⁴⁶ 「如是大圓當為妙應時機，作自利利他之資糧者，有二語曰：解在唯識、行歸淨土。蓋以唯識為通教之方便則智無不備。以淨為實行之歸趣，則悲無不圓」 (*Haichaoyin*, 6/3: 22,

Tang's postulate that Pure Land practice should be balanced with an 'understanding of the teachings' has a palpable polemical intent. One target of these polemics was popular Pure Land preachers, who – in Tang's view – condoned the attitude of proud ignorance and scorn for scriptural erudition. His campaign against the anti-intellectualism of the old-fashioned Pure Land devotees reached a broader audience in the latter half of the 1920s thanks to the two essays that appeared in the famous *Haichaoyin* 海潮音 journal: 'Advice to Contemporary Practitioners of Buddha-recollection: On the Necessity of Being Attentive to Scriptures and Treatises' (*Quan jinri nianfozhe xu jian chi jinglun wen* 勸今日念佛者須兼持經論文) published in December 1928⁴⁷ and 'Establishing the Pure Land School Anew' (*Jingtu zong zhi xin jianli* 淨土宗之新建立) from March 1929.⁴⁸ The first of these two texts is written in the form of a manifesto followed by a *gatha*, or a summary in verse. The second contains a mock dialogue between the author and an anonymous representative of the traditional 'Pure Land school' (Tang uses the relatively new term *jingtu zong* 淨土宗). Whereas neither of these essays mentions Yinguang by name, it is apparent that at least some of the opinions that Tang singles out for criticism could well be supported with Yinguang's authority.

The major claim of both aforementioned essays is that Chinese Buddhism is undergoing a grave crisis that may threaten its very survival in the modern age. In 'Establishing the Pure Land School Anew' Tang blames this crisis on the widespread ignorant attitudes of traditional Buddhist preachers, naming both Chan and Pure Land persuasion as targets of his rebuke. He notes that in spite of their sometimes tenuous relationship, both of these traditions appear aligned with each other in their arrogant disdain for scriptural and doctrinal studies. Chan masters cultivate the ideal of 'detachment from words and realising the Truth' (*li wenzi zheng shixiang* 離文字證實相), which is to say that they advocate abandoning conceptual discrimination as an obstacle in seeing the true nature of reality. Pure Land preachers, on the other hand, reduce the whole gamut of Buddha's teachings to the sole 'one phrase' (*yi ju* 一句) of Amitābha's name, recited by devout yet ignorant believers. Moreover, they are in the habit of denigrating the study of sūtras and treatises as 'talking about food and counting [other people's] treasures' – the label that had been attached to Tang himself.⁴⁹

Tang argues that these anti-intellectual overtones of Chan and Pure Land teachings reflect a grave misunderstanding of their original intent. The Buddha predicted that some people would become excessively attached to the body of

MFQ 161: 414).

⁴⁷ *Haichaoyin* 9/12: 16-17 (MFQ 171: 460-2).

⁴⁸ *Haichaoyin* 10/2: 26-30 (MFQ 172: 144-148).

⁴⁹ MFQ 172: 144.

doctrine written down in the voluminous Buddhist canon. This would result in developing what Consciousness-only scholiasts call ‘attachment to phenomena’ (*fazhi* 法執), which is the major obstruction that needs to be removed by someone aspiring to final enlightenment. For such people ‘detachment from words’ or reciting ‘one phrase’ may serve as a kind of remedy, likened to a kind of laxative commonly used in Chinese medicine. This therapeutic intent has completely escaped contemporary Chan masters and Pure Land preachers, who behave like someone who is overdosing on old medicine long after their original ailment has been cured.⁵⁰

According to Tang, this misunderstanding had grave consequences for the Republican period sangha. It obscured the true meaning of Buddha-recollection, making it unappealing to outsiders and ineffective as a path of insiders’ self-cultivation. The lack of a sound doctrinal background had led to widespread confusion regarding Pure Land tenets, such as ‘Other-power’ (*ta li* 他力), which had been erroneously taken to mean that *nianfo* does not need to be accompanied by good works or the study of the doctrine. Such vulgarised and naïve approaches to Pure Land practice made its adepts particularly vulnerable to the condemnation and ridicule of the non-Buddhists and other forces that Tang labels rather as ‘external demons’ (*waimo* 外魔). Pure Land devotees who pin their hopes on the simple practice of reciting Buddha’s name are routinely accused of promoting ‘seeking death’, ‘superstition’ and ‘passivity’. Confronted with such attitudes, many of them lose confidence in the path that they had first chosen to follow:

Not to mention these recent times, when Western influence has spread in the East. Heretical theories are thriving everywhere, various ways of thinking mingle with one another, tangled and incomprehensible. If we insist on containing all methods of Pure Land tradition within this [one practice of] keeping the Name, then those who are misguided will not be willing to awaken faith. Even those who are pious, no matter how strong their beliefs, need to base them firmly in the teachings. Otherwise, they are bound to be swayed by the opinions of others. Eventually, they may even be converted by the demonic ways.⁵¹

Tang maintains that the impending demise of traditional Chinese Buddhism can only be averted by the joint effort of the new generation of practitioners who will prove to be more doctrinally aware than their predecessors. He argues that every adept of Buddha-recollection should be encouraged to study scriptures to the extent that her or his abilities allow. Those of most inferior capacities – old, illiterate or infirm – can be allowed to continue with their simple Pure Land

⁵⁰ MFQ 172: 144–145.

⁵¹ 「況爾來西化東漸，邪說繁興，思想雜糅，千條萬緒。若專以持名攝淨土宗一切法，不獨狂者不肯起信，既捐者雖強信而不以經教固其基，則將來見異思遷，亦終為魔道所轉」 (MFQ 171: 460).

faith, although they should still be instructed about the basic meaning of reciting Amitābha's name. Those of middling capacities ought at least to digest the basic canon of Pure Land scriptures (ideally, the Three Sūtras and the *Pure Land Treatise* by Vasubandhu)⁵² so as to understand the basic rationale behind their practice. Everyone else should strive to realise the deeper meaning of *nianfo*, described by Tang as the Marvelous Import of Mahāyāna (*Dasheng miaoyi* 大乘妙義).⁵³

Tang's emphasis on scriptural study and theoretical understanding, rather than simple belief, clearly contradicts the model of Pure Land practice suited for 'ignorant men and women' envisaged by Yinguang. The basic difference between these two approaches is captured in the following exchange from 'Establishing the Pure Land School Anew':

Question: What is wondrous about Buddha-recollection is that it allows one to be reborn in the Pure Land. Would it be necessary to argue who is wise and who is stupid?

Answer: The Buddha is the one who knows everything. Hence, we who study Buddhist teachings are also seeking wisdom. Once there is wisdom, the wholesome recompense will follow. You should realize that the various glorious adornments of the Western Pure Land are all there because of Amitābha's omniscient wisdom. Now, if you recollect Amitābha but do not strive for wisdom, you will not be in accord with Amitābha's omniscient wisdom. How could you then attain the rebirth in [his Pure Land]?⁵⁴

Tang clarifies that a 'single-minded' recitation of Amitābha's name alone will not produce wisdom but only a state of meditative concentration (*ding* 定) or a complete mental focus on the object of one's practice. In this state one can hope for a vision of the recollected Buddha that appears merely as an image transformed by consciousness (*weishi suobian* 唯識所變). Yet, one cannot directly progress to actual understanding of the reality behind such appearances. A pious but ignorant person risks rebirth in peripheral areas of the Pure Land, whose conditions are not essentially different from the present world. In such condi-

⁵² The concept of 'Three Sūtras and One Treatise' appears to be borrowed from the Japanese Pure Land tradition. Interestingly, in spite of his self-proclaimed double identity as a follower of Consciousness-only and Pure Land, Tang did not write much about the so-called *Pure Land Treatise* (*Jingtu lun* 淨土論) attributed to Vasubandhu.

⁵³ See MFQ (172: 145). In the 'Advice...' Tang uses the phrase 'the Ultimate Way of the Wisdom of Pure Land Tradition' 淨土宗智究竟道 (MFQ 171: 460) in a similar context.

⁵⁴ 「問曰：念佛妙在往生淨土。何必要辯智愚乎？答曰：佛是一切智者。故，吾人學佛亦是求智慧。有智慧則福報隨之而生。當知西方極樂種種莊嚴皆是隨一切智慧之阿彌陀佛而有者。今若念佛而不求智慧，則與阿彌陀佛之一切智慧不相應。何能往生乎」 (MFQ 172: 146).

tions the ultimate liberating insight will become possible only after prolonged instruction, given by various bodhisattvas and teachers of Dharma.⁵⁵

With this argument, Tang effectively turns Yinguang's faith-based model of practice on its head. It will be remembered that according to Yinguang a single-minded recitation of Amitābha's name allows even 'ignorant men and women' to attain 'correspondence' between their mind and the mind of Amitābha and thereby to 'secretly penetrate Buddha-Wisdom'. Tang, on the contrary, defines the 'correspondence' between common practitioners and Amitābha in terms of the practitioners' aspiration to seek and develop wisdom – the same kind of aspiration that was developed by Amitābha on his way to Buddhahood. Apparently, there is something different about the way in which Yinguang and Tang Dayuan understand the very concept of wisdom. This difference becomes clear in the next passage in 'Establishing the Pure Land School Anew', which expresses yet another doubt of an archetypal traditional Pure Land preacher:

Question: The scriptures say that Wisdom is something that men are originally endowed with. It is enough to break through the obstacles to make it manifest. Why would it be necessary to seek wisdom by studying scriptures and treatises extensively?

Answer: When the scriptures say that Wisdom is something that men are originally endowed with, it refers to the Fundamental Wisdom, which is only a partial attainment of meditative concentration. Since this kind of wisdom does not involve conceptual discrimination, it cannot perform any function. It is not much different from ignorance. As for wisdom that discriminates properly and can actually be used, the aforementioned Fundamental Wisdom needs to give rise to the Subsequently Acquired Wisdom. Only then can it be applied without limits.⁵⁶

Tang insists that wisdom worthy of this name is necessarily conceptual and that it operates in the realm of physical objects and concepts by engaging in discrimination (*fenbie shili* 分別事理). The primordial luminosity of mind unstirred by conceptual thought is, *by itself*, no better than ignorance. It is called 'Wisdom' only because it facilitates enlightened conceptual cognition, the 'Subsequently Acquired Wisdom', which allows one to communicate and interact with others.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ MFQ 172: 145–146.

⁵⁶ 「問曰：經言智慧本具。只須破障顯之。豈必廣學經論以求智慧耶。答曰：經言智慧本具者只是根本智，不過定之一分。既無分別亦不能起作用。與愚癡略等。若善分別而有用之智慧，則須待由根本而起之後得智，方能運用無窮」 (MFQ 172: 146).

⁵⁷ The concepts of the Non-conceptual Wisdom (*wufenbiezhi* 無分別智), or Fundamental Wisdom (*genbenzhi* 根本智), and the Subsequently Acquired Wisdom (*houdezhi* 後得智) are derived from the doctrinal treatises associated with the Indian tradition of Yogācāra, such as the *Fo-dijinglun* 佛地經論 (T 26.1530: 302c25–26), or the commentary to Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgraha* (*Shedachenglungshi* 攝大乘論釋) attributed to Vasubandhu (see e.g. T 31.1595: 242c11–243a4,

Regarding ‘breaking the obstacles’, Tang reminds his interlocutor that in the view of Buddhist scholastics, ‘obstacles’ to liberation are twofold – some are related to mental states that cause suffering and anxiety (*fannaο zhang* 煩惱障), while others result from deep ignorance as to the nature of reality (*suozhi zhang* 所知障).⁵⁸ Practice limited to ethical conduct and contemplation can quell afflictions of the former kind, but it cannot eradicate the fundamental ignorance (the so-called ‘undefiled ignorance’, *buran wuzhi* 不染無知), which is the ultimate root of suffering. This latter, much more formidable hindrance cannot be overcome solely by pious conduct and the assiduous recitation of Amitābha’s name. It requires at least some degree of intellectual investigation into the core principles of Buddhist teachings in order to rectify one’s flawed perception of reality.⁵⁹

Tang was not the first or only Buddhist modernist of his age to question the traditional Chinese view of liberating wisdom as a wholly non-discursive cognition intrinsic to the nature of one’s mind. The most likely inspiration in this case is Ouyang Jingwu,⁶⁰ the scholar with whom Tang frequently corresponded on matters of Buddhist doctrine. In the early 1920s Ouyang took issue with the received Chinese interpretations of the concept of wisdom, or knowledge of true reality (*zhi* 智), which is the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice. In brief, Ouyang argued that Buddhist wisdom is never complete without ‘wondrous activity’ (*miaoyong* 妙用), which ‘produces verbal discourse for the benefit of others’ (*qi yanshuo yi li ta* 起言說以利他) – precisely the function of the ‘Subsequently Acquired Wisdom’.⁶¹ In a similar vein, in his popular philosophical essays Tang Dayuan reproached pre-modern Chinese scholiasts for their lack of appreciation of the Subsequently Acquired Wisdom, which allows one to employ conceptual discrimination and communicate one’s liberating insight to others (‘to turn the Dharma-wheel’). Tang’s seemingly scholastic discussions of the distinction between two kinds of wisdom were thus woven into larger arguments against old vices of traditional Chinese Buddhists, in particular the followers of Chan: their neglect of the ethical practice of the bodhisattva in favour of seeking self-benefit and their indifference towards the study, interpretation and preaching of the Buddhist doctrine, which was wrongly perceived as inferior to non-conceptual insight.⁶²

T 31.1597: 366a15–29). The latter text (T 31.1597: 366b20–29) already brings up the contentious status of the Non-conceptual Wisdom as a form of wisdom, although it discusses this issue from a stance that appears more nuanced than Tang’s.

⁵⁸ On the history of these concepts, see Muller (2014).

⁵⁹ MFQ 172: 147.

⁶⁰ Aviv 2020.

⁶¹ Ouyang 1977: 9–12. As a matter of fact, Ouyang referred to a threefold distinction between ‘Wisdom of Added Practice’ (*jixingzhi* 加行智), the ‘Fundamental Wisdom’ and the ‘Subsequently Acquired Wisdom’.

⁶² Some of Tang’s discussion of the two Wisdoms in this context can be found in his ‘Ex-

It should be noted, however, that Tang never meant to present the Subsequently Acquired Wisdom as a purely theoretical activity. His understanding of Buddhist wisdom is, all things considered, embedded in religious practice. In ‘Advice to Contemporary Practitioners of Buddha-recollection’, he explicitly rejects the approach to Consciousness-only studies that equate Buddhist teachings with ‘philosophy’ (*zhexue* 哲學).⁶³ Tang’s discussion with his traditionalist opponent in ‘Establishing...’ makes clear that he regards studying, explaining and preaching Buddhist sūtras or treatises as a form of virtuous conduct that engages intellect, but also speech and body. Echoing the famous Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming (1472–1529), Tang claims that an understanding that does not result in practice is never a real understanding. Those who only speak, but do not act, are simply lacking understanding, rather than forsaking practice in its favour. Therefore, there is no need to draw a contrast between the two and fear that scholars of Consciousness-only doctrines will abandon the path of Pure Land path practice altogether. As illustrated by Tang’s own example, they can still recollect the Buddha piously as long they perceive a personal karmic bond (*yuan* 緣) with Amitābha’s vows.⁶⁴

Such remarks indicate rather clearly that Tang’s reformist proposal has no dire consequences for popular Pure Land piety. It is only meant as a reminder to the pious devotees that their practice needs to be backed by doctrinal understanding in order to be successful *as* Buddhist practice. Acquiring this doctrinal understanding does not, by itself, weaken the resolve to recite the name of Amitābha or the aspiration to be reborn in a literally understood Pure Land. As Tang explained elsewhere, inasmuch as the Consciousness-only scholar regards all that is real as a product of the mind, he can still speak about Amitābha and Pure Land as entities no less ‘real’ than anything else.⁶⁵ Tang’s reformist postulates and critiques are targeted not so much against naïve Pure Land belief of the masses as against the traditional doctrinal framework that was accepted by most exegetes of the Pure Land tradition, including Yinguang – the framework that emphasises the ineffable and innate ‘Fundamental Wisdom’ at the expense of study and propagation of the doctrine. What Tang appears to be advocating is, therefore, not some philosophical ‘rationalisation’ of the Pure Land faith but rather a reinterpretation of its religious imagery. On

position of the Truth of Eastern Psychology’ 東方心理學闡真 and ‘The Experimental Study of Consciousness-only’ 唯識實驗學, collected in Tang (1927a: 70-71, 104–106; reprinted in WWQB 65: 544–545, 578–79).

⁶³ See MFQ (171: 461).

⁶⁴ MFQ 172: 147–8

⁶⁵ This point is made, for example, in Tang’s essay called ‘Detailed Exposition of Consciousness-only’ (*Weishi fawei* 唯識發微) (cf. Tang 1927b: 113–114, reprinted in WWQB 66: 189–190).

this interpretation the splendid Western Pure Land is first and foremost a place of study and instruction in Dharma. Amitābha, on the other hand, is a role model and teacher of true Wisdom – a wisdom that has to be communicated to those in need of instruction.

Concluding Remarks

In most of his published writings, Tang had nothing but praise for Yinguang, the man widely regarded as a beacon of Buddhist piety in contemporary China. However, in spite of numerous conciliatory remarks, Tang's principled criticism of simple Pure Land faith could not but create a division between himself and his old master. In a letter addressed directly to Tang (published in various collections of Yinguang's writings), Yinguang warns the ambitious layman that Buddhism is a matter related to life and death, not intellectual investigations. He points out that someone who seeks understanding (*mingliao* 明了) at the expense of practice (*shixing* 實行) is more like an actor parroting Buddhism than a student of doctrine.⁶⁶ After the publication of 'Establishing the Pure Land anew', Tang was publicly chastised by several critics, including the layman Feng Da'an 馮達庵, who denounced his reformism as a complete misunderstanding of the egalitarian spirit of the Pure Land.⁶⁷

Tang's conflict with Pure Land 'conservatives' reflects various internal tensions within the Chinese sangha, some of which were probably more personal than strictly doctrinal. Regardless of the exact motifs behind these polemics, it appears that neither side was particularly interested in appealing to the Western opposition between religion and philosophy – or, for that matter, any opposition of Western origin. Tang's critique of the contemporary Pure Land 'school' rebukes Pure Land believers for their unwarranted disdain towards those who employ intellect to study and discuss Buddhist doctrines. Tang appears aware that these anti-intellectual tendencies within the Pure Land tradition were themselves sanctioned by certain theoretical assumptions that had been deeply ingrained within mainstream intellectual traditions of Chinese Buddhism. Consequently, in his critiques of the Pure Land 'school', he either implicitly rejects those assumptions or subjects them to explicit criticism, without, however, departing too far from the framework of traditional scholasticism.

One of the traditional assumptions that Tang appears to be abandoning in his own exposition of the Pure Land is the application of the distinction between

⁶⁶ 'Reply to the layman Tang Dayuan' 復唐大圓居士書 (YFW 2: 339–340).

⁶⁷ See Feng's polemic 'Tang Dayuan's Reform of the Pure Land School – an Erroneous View' (唐大圓改革淨土宗之妄見) in the journal *Hongfa shekan* 弘法社刊 12: 1–3 (MFQB 36: 455–457).

‘principle’ and ‘phenomena’. In the late-imperial tradition of Pure Land exegesis, appropriated by Yinguang, these categories inform a two-track approach to the practice of *nianfo*: the insight into the ‘principle’ (i.e., the universal Buddhahood shared by Amitābha and the practitioner) is a goal assigned to the minority of gifted meditators, while the majority of ordinary practitioners is supposed to focus on the ‘phenomenal’ level of the practice, which allows for simple unexamined faith. In Tang’s vision this bifurcated model is effectively replaced with one unified standard: practice informed by doctrinal ‘understanding’ to which everyone alike should aspire. As pointed out above, this postulate has much to do with Tang’s awareness of the critical spirit of modernity, which pressed Pure Land believers to form a reasoned response to the external (secular, or perhaps Christian) critics of Buddhism. However, Tang’s major concern throughout his polemic appears somewhat more traditional. Namely, he argues that attaining wisdom in this life remains a universal goal of all kinds of Buddhist practices, including the Pure Land practice of *nianfo*. In this respect he appears to side with the elitist stance that was traditionally represented by Chan masters, who underlined the importance of ‘seeing’ or ‘understanding’ the truth about reality already in the present life. Yet, as shown above, Tang also challenges the traditional stance of Chan, which in his opinion misconstrues the Buddhist notion of ‘understanding’ as something passive, ineffable and oriented inwards.

The more explicit part of Tang’s critique can be construed as an attempt at reworking this traditional notion of ‘understanding’. He does this by underlining another aspect of Buddhist enlightenment, defined as the ‘Subsequently Acquired Wisdom’, which encompasses conceptual knowledge and is attained through intellectual effort. Once again, it is easy to relate Tang’s case to the modern promotion of ‘rational’ knowledge – especially considering that Tang himself touted Consciousness-only scholasticism as the Buddhist response to science and scientific thought.⁶⁸ Yet, it might make at least as much sense to contextualise his arguments within some larger and continuous themes of Chinese intellectual history. The problem of the value of theoretical understanding, as opposed to practical or ethical ‘know-how’, is a recurring topic of debate in the history of Chinese thought. Such issues were discussed among learned Confucians and, at least to some extent, educated Buddhists at least since the late Ming (1369–1644) period.⁶⁹ The extent to which Tang Dayuan’s criticism of Pure Land anti-intellectualism might be related to those earlier currents is, of course, a matter open to critical discussion. Nonetheless, they should at least be seriously considered as possible antecedents to this modern debate about Buddhist ‘practice’ and ‘understanding’.

⁶⁸ Hammerstrom 2014: 175–179.

⁶⁹ Yu 2018: 142–143.

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Abbreviations

- MFQ *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成 [Complete Collection of Republican-era Buddhist Journals] 2006. Edited by Huang Xianian 黃夏年 et al., vol. 1–204. Beijing: Quanguo Tushuguan Wenxian Suwei Fuzhi Zhongxin.
- MFQB *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng bubian* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成補編 [Supplementary Complete Collection of Republican-era Buddhist Journals] 2008. Edited by Huang Xianian 黃夏年 et al., vol. 1–83. Beijing: Zhongguo shudian.
- T *Taishō shīnshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [New Edition of the Buddhist Canon published in the Taishō Era] [2023]. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, vol. 1–85. Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association.
- WWQB *Weishi wenxian quanbian* 唯識文獻全編 [The Complete Anthology of Consciousness-only Texts] 2013. Edited by Wang Lianzhang 王聯章 et al, vol. 1–66. Beijing: Guojia Tushuguan.
- X *Manji shinsan Dainippon zokuzōkyō* 卍新纂大日本續藏經 [Manji Newly Compiled Supplementary Buddhist Canon of Great Japan] [2023]. Vol. 1–90. Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association.
- YFW *Xinbian quanben Yinguang fashi wenchao* 新編全本印光法師文鈔 [Newly Edited Complete Collected Works of Master Yinguang] 2009. Edited by Beijing Dafang Guang Huayan Shuju 北京大方廣華嚴書局, vol. 1–24. Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji.

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LÁSZLÓ ZALA

(Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

Preserving the Oral History of Mongolian Buddhism Before 1937

Krisztina Teleki: *Reminiscences of Old Mongolian Monks: Interviews about Mongolia's Buddhist Monasteries in the Early 20th Century*. (Budapest Monographs in East Asia Studies 10.) Budapest: Institute of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2022.

In Krisztina Teleki's *Reminiscences of Old Mongolian Monks: Interviews about Mongolia's Buddhist Monasteries in the Early 20th Century*, the author brings to light oral narratives of old Buddhist monks who lived in monastic communities in Mongolia until 1937. In particular, in the 1930s, due to the influence of soviet ideologies, 'all of the approximately 1,000 monastic sites in Mongolia were demolished' (p. 1). Overall, Teleki provides a detailed description of the monastic life and system in Mongolia until the 1930s. This includes information about everyday life and ceremonial customs.

The author presents information about previous research that has been done in the field of early 20th century monastic life in Mongolia. The National Archives of Mongolia contain archival sources, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences' Archives of Cinema provide old photographs, and several scholars (e.g., Damdinsüren 1959; Bawden 1997; Lkham – Yeröölt 2010; Yeröölt 2012, 2014) have published works on the oral narratives of old Monks. Moreover, the author's own previous research (Majer – Teleki; Teleki 2006; 2012, 2015) includes interviews with monks, and several initiatives (e.g., the *Oral History of 20th Century Mongolia* project and *Documentation of Mongolian Monasteries*) have preserved in part the memories of the Mongolian monks from the 1910s and 1920s. Still, despite the extant attention to the situation of Mongolian monasteries before the 1930s, Teleki argues that 'the history, monastic life, and ceremonial system of the majority of the old monasteries are unknown today' (p. 1).

To fill these gaps, the text provides the transcripts of 47 interviews conducted with 34 Mongolia monks, each born between 1900 and 1930 and who served

as Buddhist monks before 1937. The monks came from various types of monasteries in various locations around Mongolia. The interviews were conducted in two different contexts: (1) by Teleki and her colleague Zsuzsa Majer in 2006, 2007, and 2009, partly within the framework of the *Documentation of Mongolian Monasteries* project (2007) and the *Monaco–Mongolia Joint Archeological Expedition* (2009) and (2) by Teleki alone in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2017. At the time of the publication of *Reminiscences of Old Mongolian Monks: Interviews about Mongolia's Buddhist Monasteries in the Early 20th Century*, all of the interviews were under publication in the Mongolian language.

All of the interviewees were over 80 years old at the time of their interviews. The majority of them had been a child monk in the 1910s or 1920s before forcibly leaving their positions in 1937 to join the army for five to 10 years, and in the 1990s they again became monks and participated in the reestablishment of Buddhism in Mongolia. Their old age at the time of their interviews provided some difficulties for Teleki and Majer. For example, due to their being only five to seven years old in the 1910s and 1920s, the monks 'could not provide precise data on the history, collectivization, and destruction of their monasteries' (p. 17). Moreover, recalling specific dates was further confused by differences between the Gregorian calendar and the old calendar used in Mongolia. Further, some of the old monks were hard of hearing or did not understand the interviewers' questions.

Overall, in the text the interviews are organised according to the location of the interviewed monk's monastery. Accordingly, six main categories divide the transcripts: Ulaanbaatar, Central Mongolia, Khangai Region, Western Mongolia, Eastern Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia. A short biography is included for each monk before the transcript (or transcripts) of their interview (or interviews). Preceding the collection of transcripts, the author includes a short section titled 'Conclusion of the Interviews'. In this portion of the text, Teleki briefly summarises some of the main findings. In general, the findings relate to several topics, including the structure of the individual monasteries and the larger monastery systems; the ceremonies and services held at the monasteries (based on Tibetan texts and the Vajrayana tradition); everyday life in the monasteries; the physical layout of the monasteries and their larger complexes; and the resumption of the old monk's Buddhist activities in the 1990s.

The book successfully contributes to the field of preserving the history of Mongolian Buddhism before the 1930s. The English-language collection of interview transcripts record the memories of old monks whose monasteries and records had been purposefully destroyed and whose activities forcefully ceased due to soviet influence in 1937. Moreover, the book, with its transcribed and translated interviews, acts primarily as a reference material concerning

a population of often forgotten monks that is diminishing in size due to their old age.

Teleki's *Reminiscences of Old Mongolian Monks: Interviews about Mongolia's Buddhist Monasteries in the Early 20th Century* is part of the Budapest Monographs in East Asia Studies book series, published by Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest. Launched in 2006, the book series highlights scholarly achievements by members of ELTE's Institute of East Asian Studies, including doctoral dissertations, international conference volumes, and lecture series. Past books in the Budapest Monographs in East Asia Studies book series have covered topics on religion, philosophy, history, and linguistics in China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, and Mongolia.

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- Volume 11.** Ferenc Takó (ed.) 2023. *Fresh Looks on Japan: Proceedings of the Japan Foundation Budapest Office's Workshops for Doctoral Students of Japanese Studies in Central and Eastern Europe 2020 and 2022.* 245 p.

Khyentse Lecture Series

The Khyentse Foundation works with some of the world's top academic institutions, helping universities to develop their programmes of Buddhist Studies. Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) is one of the many universities worldwide (including the University of California at Berkeley, Northwestern University, the University of Arizona, the University of British Columbia, Hamburg University, SOAS University of London, and the University of Sidney) that was granted funds to establish its Department of Buddhology and Tibetan Studies and to start a Buddhist Studies master's programme (in Hungarian from 2019 and in English from 2024) and subsequently a Buddhist Studies PhD programme (from 2024). The supportive funds also allow the Budapest Centre for Buddhist Studies (BCBS) at ELTE (established in 2013) to host the Khyentse Lecture Series, which is a well-known lecture series on Buddhism. Since 2014, the centre has welcomed and hosted lectures of world-renowned scholars of Buddhist studies from all over the globe along with Hungarian specialists in Buddhist topics. The only year that the lectures were not held was 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, the lectures continued online with Hungarian lecturers. Moreover, since 2022, the lecture series has returned to its pre-pandemic format: the BCBS invites several foreign scholars every semester. The invited scholars usually give an hour-long lecture in their respective fields of Buddhist studies, which range from classical philological and philosophical topics to peripheral topics, such as art history and Buddhism in the modern world. Over the past 10 years, the BCBS has hosted a number of international scholars from noteworthy universities in Europe (from Vienna, Paris, Munich, Leiden, Ghent, Oxford, Cambridge, and London), China (Beijing) and the United States (Florida, California). Their lectures have added to the dissemination of current international research trends in Buddhist and Tibetan studies and have put Hungary and ELTE on the map of Buddhist studies internationally. The current contract for the support of the Khyentse Foundation covers the lectures until 2026, so the teachers and students of ELTE, the community of Hungarian Buddhist scholars, and all people who are interested in Buddhism can enjoy the fascinating presentations of prominent lecturers in the years to come.

Mónika Kiss

List of scholars and their lectures

- Prof. Dr Tom Tillemans (2014), Vienna University
Indian and Chan Buddhists on Meditation: What Has Thinking Got to Do with It?
- Prof. Dr Michael Torsten Wieser-Much (2015), Vienna University
Philosophy of Language in the Pramanavarttika
- Dr Gyula Wojtilla (2015), ELTE (retired)
A Buddha legfőbb női támogatói: Jó családból való nők és szépséges kurtizánok [The Main Female Supporters of the Buddha: Women of Good Families and Beautiful Courtesans]
- Dr Géza Bethlenfalvy* (2015), ELTE
Zanabazar, a bölcsesség vadzsraja [Zanabazar, the Vajra of Wisdom]
- Dr Françoise Pommaret (2015), Royal University of Bhutan
An Overview of Religious Female Practitioners in Bhutan
- Dr Gergely Hidas (2016), ELTE/Dharma Gate Buddhist College
A nagy dél-ázsiai varázsszöveg-gyűjtemény [The Great Dhāraṇī Collection of South Asia]
- Dr Béla Kelényi (2016), Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts
Gonkar Gyatso művészete és a tibeti önazonosság [The Art of Gonkar Gyatso and Tibetan Identity]
- Prof. Dr Klaus-Dieter Mathes (2016), University of Vienna
Maitripa's Fine Blend of Mahamudra and Madhyamakāi
- Dr Gábor Kósa (2016), ELTE
A Dunhuangban és Ningbóban népszerű buddhista 'Tíz király' ikonográfia speciális továbbélése a 14–15. századi Kínában [The Special Survival of the Buddhist 'Ten Sovereign' Iconography Popular at Dunhuang and Ningbo in 14th and 15th Centuries in China]
- Dr Erzsébet Tóth (2016), ELTE (retired)
Mongol buddhista zarándokok Tibentben [Mongolian Buddhist Pilgrims in Tibet]

Dr Zsuzsanna Majer (2017), ELTE

Modern buddhista temetések szertartásrendje Mongólia két krematóriummal rendelkező temetőjének kolostorában [Modern Buddhist Funerary Ceremonials at the Two Mongolian Monasteries that Operate Crematoriums]

Prof. Dr Ulrike Roesler (2017), University of Oxford

Lost in Translation: Tibetan Travellers in India

Dr Krisztina Teleki (2017), ELTE

Urga, a Bogd kán kolostorvárosa [Urga, the Monastery Town of Bogd Khan]

Prof. Dr Matthew T. Kapstein (2017), Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes/University of Chicago

Revisiting an Imperial Interstice: A Reading of Anxi Yulin Cave 25

Dr Gergely Hidas (2017), ELTE/Dharma Gate Buddhist College

Garuda és nágák: Időjárás-szabályozás az ókori indiai buddhizmusban [Garuda and Nāgas: Regulating the Weather in Ancient Indian Buddhism]

Prof. Dr Robert Michael Gimello (2018), University of Notre Dame

How to Map the Domain of Truth (Dharmadhātu): Ūsang's 義湘 Hwaōm Ilsūng Pōpkyedo 華嚴一乘法界圖 and the Visual Presentation of Buddhist

Prof. Dr Ferenc Ruzsa (2018), ELTE

A korai buddhizmus és az ind eszmetörténet nagy folyamatai [The Great Courses of Early Buddhism and Indian Thought]

Prof. Dr Lucia Dolce (2018), University of London SOAS

Documenting Ritual Knowledge: The 'Iconographical' Anthologies of Medieval Japan

Prof. Dr Michael Zimmermann (2018), University of Hamburg

The Buddhist King as Divine Being? Missing Evidence in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism

Prof. Dr Christoph Anderl (2018), Ghent University

The Mahāsattva Jātaka: Continuities and Discontinuities in the Transmission of a Birth Story

- Dr Alexa Péter (2018), ELTE
Tibeti kozmológiai útikalauzok a 13. és 19. századból [Tibetan Cosmological Guides from the 13th and 19th Centuries]
- Prof. Dr Stefano Zacchetti[†] (2019), University of Oxford
A Gilded Frame for the Dazangjing: Prefaces as Sources for the Intellectual History of the Chinese Buddhist Canon (2nd–4th Centuries CE)
- Dr Saerji (Khams pa ba Gsar brji) (2019), Peking University
Collective Memory or Personal Narrative: Khotan and Nepal in Tibetan Vision
- Dr Mario Poceski (2019), University of Florida
Buddhist Challenge to the Authoritarian State in Imperial China
- Dr Stefan Baums (2019), University of Munich
Ancient Buddhist Manuscripts from Gandhāra: An Introduction to Their Discovery and Study
- Dr Péter Dániel Szántó (2019), Leiden University
Tiltott, tűrt, támogatott – A tantrikus buddhizmus és a középkori ind állam [Banned, Tolerated, Advocated – Tantric Buddhism and the Medieval Indian State]
- Dr Dorji Wangchuk (2019), University of Hamburg
Multiple Models of Truth/Reality in Buddhism
- Prof. Dr Ferenc Ruzsa (2020, online), ELTE
A megvilágosodás: mese vagy valóság? [Enlightenment: Fiction or Reality?]
- Dr Mónika Szegedi (2021, online), ELTE
Atomizmus a buddhizmusban [Atomism in Buddhism]
- Prof. Dr Michael Radich (2022), Heidelberg University
New Findings in the Corpus of Dharmarakṣa
- Prof. Dr Lewis Doney (2022), University of Bonn
Dhāraṇī Texts at Dunhuang: A View from Tibet

- Prof. Dr Jens Braarvig (2022), University of Oslo
The Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra and its Early Mahāyāna Context
- Dr Jakub Zamorski (2022), Jagiellonian University
Reason and Belief in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism: A View from the Ming
- Prof. Dr Michael Zimmermann (2022), University of Hamburg
Meditative Insights Without Ethical Conduct? On the Relationship Between Meditation and Ethics in Early Buddhist Scriptures
- Prof. Dr Imre Galambos (2023), University of Cambridge
Shanzi, a szülőtisztelő fiú [Shanzi, the Respectful Son]
- Dr Berthe Jansen (2023), Leiden University
The Ritualized Banishment of Clergy, Clerks, and Criminals: Utkṣepaṇīya in Historical Tibet and Beyond
- Prof. Dr Jonathan Silk (2023), Leiden University
A Window into Sino-Tibetan Pure Land Practices at Dunhuang
- Dr Carmen Săpunaru Tămaș (2023), University of Hyogo
Ascetic Practices Within the Nichiren Sect: Between Individual Enlightenment and Community Service
- Prof. Dr Alexander von Rospatt (2023), University of California at Berkeley
Art and Ritual in Nepalese Buddhism. The Iconography, Use and Function of Uṣṇīṣavijayā Icons in Old Age Rituals

The 6th Annual Conference of the European Network of Japanese Philosophy

The 6th Annual Conference of the European Network of Japanese Philosophy (ENOJP) was held 1–4 February 2022 at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, Hungary, organised by the Department of Japanese Studies of the Faculty of Humanities of ELTE. The event, which attracts many researchers from around the world each year, was postponed twice due to the COVID pandemic, and in 2022 it was held as a hybrid event with more than 20 countries represented by more than 70 presentations.

The conference provided space for a great diversity of topics. Presentations were held partly in pre-organised thematic panels, partly in sections consisting of individual applications. The speakers included renowned representatives of the field, as well as graduate researchers and doctoral students. The main topic of the event was ‘(Counter)influences’, which provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss the internal currents in Japanese intellectual history, the Asian and European reception of Japanese thought, and the Japanese acceptance of non-Japanese traditions from many aspects.

In addition to the presentations within the sections, the event was highlighted by plenary presentations by Judit Árokay (University of Heidelberg), Graham Parkes (University of Vienna), and Naoki Sakai (Cornell University), a roundtable discussion chaired by ENOJP President Raquel Bouso (Pompeu Fabra University) along with the participation of renowned researchers, and a special programme presenting the ideological side of Aikidō, led by Balázs Szabó (ELTE).

The event was made possible by the support of the TOSHIBA International Foundation. A significant portion of the presentations is available on the YouTube Channel of ENOJP.

Ferenc Takó

The program of the conference

<i>Tuesday, 1st February</i>	
14:00–14:30	<i>Opening Address by Imre Hamar, ELTE Vice-Rector for International Affairs, Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies</i>
14:30–15:30	Keynote Speech Naoki Sakai Area Studies and National Philosophy <i>Chair: Ferenc Takó</i>
16:00–18:00	<i>Pre-organised panels</i>
16:00–18:00 Room 1	Panel I. CHANGING CONCEPTS OF JAPONISME IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE – INFLUENCES AND COUNTER-INFLUENCES <i>Chair: Ferenc Takó</i> Stefano Turina, Mirjam Dénes, Mária Ildikó Farkas
16:00–18:00 Room 2	Panel II. THE IDEA OF NATURE IN JAPANESE, CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE: THE MULTILINGUAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL INFLUENCES BEHIND THE WORD “自然” <i>Chair: Roman Pasca</i> Romarc Jannel, Nguyen Duy Hung, Laÿna Droz, Hung-Tao Chu
<i>Wednesday, 2nd February</i>	
8:30–10:30	<i>Panels of individual papers</i>
8:30–10:30 Room 3	WATSUJI AND THE ENVIRONMENT <i>Chair: Fernando Wirtz</i> Alexandra Mustatea Thinking about Confucianism and Modernity in the Early Postwar Period – Watsuji Tetsurō's 'The History of Ethical Thought in Japan' Roman Pasca Nature, Ahistoricity, and Environmental Ethics

	<p>Kyle Michael James Shuttleworth Overcoming Anthropocentrism: Watsuji, Ecology, and Symbiosis</p> <p>Steve Bein Unbalancing Act: Oppression and Resistance in the Ethics of Watsuji Tetsurō</p>
9:00–10:30 Room 2	<p>JAPAN AND JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY <i>Chair: Edward McDougall</i></p> <p>Joff P.N. Bradley Thinking otherwise than the caricature of “Japanese philosophy”</p> <p>Kimiwe Matsumoto 幽玄なる文化創造 — 茶道の「型」と西田哲学の「形のない文化」—</p> <p>Robert Ryan Smith Japanese Ambivalence Towards Contradiction: The Law of Non-Contradiction, and the Problem of Identity and Difference, as Philosophical Imports</p>
11:00–12:00	<i>Panels of individual papers</i>
11:00–12:00 Room 2	<p>COUNTERINFLUENCES IN JAPANESE RELIGION I. <i>Chair: Adam Loughnane</i></p> <p>Dean Anthony Brink Bakumatsu Crises and Posthuman Agency: Kami Cosmologies and Village Agronomy in the Hirata School Writings of Miyaoi Yasuo</p> <p>Yoshifumi Saito 日本中世の影と響き</p>
11:00–12:00 Room 3	<p>JAPAN THROUGH THE WEST AND BACK <i>Chair: Roman Pasca</i></p> <p>Raphael Chim Norinaga without kami: reading Norinaga’s senses of yonotsune in the light of Margaret Atherton’s “Berkeley without God”</p> <p>Montserrat Crispín Perales Migration of people and texts, shaping and transiting ideas: a philosophical case study about Nakajima Rikizo’s (1858-1918), “Kant’s Doctrine of the ‘thing-in-itself’” (1889)</p>
13:30–15:00	<i>Pre-organised panel & panel of individual papers</i>
13:30–15:00 Room 2	<p>Panel III. WATSUJI ON NATURE: JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY IN THE WAKE OF HEIDEGGER <i>Chair: Steve Bein</i></p> <p>David Johnson, Hans Peter Liederbach, Graham Parkes</p>

13:30–15:00 Room 3	<p>COUNTERINFLUENCES IN JAPANESE RELIGION II. <i>Chair: Carlos Barbosa Cepeda</i> Vladlena Fedianina A Medieval Buddhist Approach to Japanese History in Jien’s Works Rossella Lupacchini On Zen Logic and Quantum Physics. The Sound of One Hand Clapping Adam Loughnane “Flowers of Dim-Sightedness: Dōgen’s Mystical ‘Negative Ocularcentrism’”</p>
15:30–17:00	<i>Panels of individual papers</i>
15:30–17:00 Room 2	<p>MARXISM AND EXISTENCE <i>Chair: David Johnson</i> Reki Ando The Anti-Marxist Moment in the 1980s Japanese Left Ferenc Takó Subjectivism(s) – Maruyama Masao and the debate on <i>shutaisei</i> Raji Steineck Uchiyama Takashi’s Philosophy of Time</p>
15:30–16:30 Room 3	<p>HEIDEGGER AND JAPAN <i>Chair: Montserrat Crespín Perales</i> Ming Hon Chu Heidegger's concepts of boredom and anxiety in light of Kimura's psychopathological phenomenology Edward McDougall Heidegger Meeting <i>Inari</i> – What Folk-Shinto Practice Can Offer to Heidegger’s Understanding of Technology</p>
17:30–19:00	<p><i>Roundtable Discussion: Japanese (philosophical) studies across cultures</i> <i>Chair: Raquel Bouso</i> Judit Árokay, Carlos Barbosa Cepeda, Raquel Bouso, Vladlena Fedianina, David Johnson</p>

Thursday, 3rd February

9:00–10:00	<p>Keynote Speech Judit Árokay Translation Strategies in Transition <i>Chair: Raquel Bouso</i></p>
10:30–13:00	<i>Pre-organised panels & panel of individual papers</i>

10:30–13:00 Room 2	<p>Panel IV. 40 YEARS OF "CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEING". ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLICATION OF IZUTSU'S MAJOR WORK <i>Chair: Dean Brink</i> Jun'ichi Ono, Rodrigo Guerizoli, Hans Peter Liederbach, Ralf Müller, Rossa Ó Muireartaigh, Andrei Cunha, Lucas Nascimento Machado</p>
10:30–13:00 Room 3	<p>Panel V. MIND, FEELING, BODY (心気体): THEORY AND PRACTICE IN JAPANESE SELF-CULTIVATION <i>Chair: Wing Keung Lam</i> Leon Krings, Mika Imono, Yukiko Kuwayama, Jordanco Sekulovski, Raphaël Pierrès</p>
11:30–13:00 Room 1	<p>EAST AND WEST REFLECTED <i>Chair: Ferenc Takó</i> Yuliya Osadcha Ferreira Eastern Civilization and Western Enlightenment in Ariga Nagao's Bungakuron Lucy McCormick Weaponising Satori: Japanese Zen in Georges Bataille's 'War' on <i>tout ce qui est reconnu aujour-d'hui</i> Francesca Greco European Nihilism on Japanese Soil: Interwoven Influences in a Global Philosophical Perspective</p>
14:30–16:00	<p><i>Panels of individual papers</i></p>
14:30–15:30 Room 2	<p>LOST (?) IN TRANSLATION <i>Chair: Hans Peter Liederbach</i> Oleksandra Bibik To the Question of Religious Syncretism in Translations of the Qur'an and Adaptations of Islam in Twenty-Century Japan Luis Miguel Pujadas Torres Applying the Linguistic Relativity Theory to the Relation Between the Japanese Language and Japanese Philosophy</p>
14:30–15:30 Room 1	<p>COUNTERINFLUENCES IN NŌ <i>Chair: Filip Gurjanov</i> Dávid Sándor Cseh An Old Man in Red Brocade – Zeami's Sanemori and the Unlikely Beauty of Shuramono Nō Plays Daryl Jamieson Zenchiku and the resacralisation of nō</p>
16:30–18:30	<p><i>Panels of individual papers</i></p>

15:45–18:30	<p>ART AND AESTHETICS Chair: Raji Steineck Beáta Pusztai Lucius's Adventures in Wonderland Suguru Kawasato 柳宗悦の民芸理論の射程 ——「ヴァナキュラー」という概念を軸に—— Cláudia Ramos The Resonance of Zen Buddhism in Portuguese Contemporary Art Fernando Wirtz Myth and Aesthetics of the Machine Lorenzo Marinucci The Place of Scent: Japanese Philosophy and Olfaction</p>
18:45–19:45 Room 1	<p><i>Special Program</i> Balázs Szabó Aikidō: Theory and Practice</p>

Friday, 4th February

9:00–10:00	<p>Keynote Speech Graham Parkes Befriending Things with Zen Master Dōgen (and a little help from Nietzsche at the end) Chair: Ferenc Takó</p>
10:30–12:30	<p><i>Pre-organised panel & panels of individual papers</i></p>
10:30–12:00 Room 3	<p>Panel VI. KYOTO SCHOOL DIALECTIC REVISITED: NISHIDA, NISHITANI, AND WATSUJI Chair: Alexandra Mustatea Yūko Ishihara, SPK Cerda, Hans Peter Liederbach</p>
10:30–12:00 Room 1	<p>ACTION, EXISTENCE, EXPERIENCE Chair: Francesca Greco Ramona Fotiade Existential Mindscapes: Kuki Shuzo, Shestov and the East-West Dialogue Makoto Katsumori Hiromatsu on Role Action and Reification Kazuki Oda “Iki” of Two – Kuki Shūzō and Nakai Masakazu</p>

10:30–12:30 Room 2	<p>EAST, WEST AND THE KYOTO SCHOOL I. <i>Chair: Raquel Bouso</i> Frédéric Girard Motora Yujiro, Direct experience blogging to his Study on Oriental Philosophy (1905) and Dacheng qixinlun Carlos Barbosa Capeda Tracing the Daoist roots of Nishitani Keiji's Thought Niklas Södermann A relationship flipped on its head: Nishitani Keiji's critique of technology Filip Gurjanov Between Body and Historical World: Reflections on Photographic Practice with Later Nishida</p>
12:30–13:00	<i>Break</i>
13:00–15:00	<i>Panels of individual papers</i>
13:00–14:00 Room 3	<p>MEDIATIONS: TANABE HAJIME <i>Chair: Rosella Lupacchini</i> Quentin Blaevoet On the concept of body. Tanabe Hajime in dialogue with the French phenomenological tradition (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Henry) Satoshi Urai Mediation and Absolute Mediation in the Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime</p>
13:00–15:00 Room 2	<p>EAST, WEST AND THE KYOTO SCHOOL II. <i>Chair: Lorenzo Marinucci</i> Thorsten Botz-Bornstein Nishida Kitarō and Muhammad 'Abduh on God and Reason: Towards a Theology of Place Wing Keung Lam Nishida Kitarō and Shaftesbury: An Encounter of Moral Sentimentalism Sanada Wataru What Enables History to Move: A Reading of Nishida Kitarō's Later Works Tak-Lap Yeung Influences and answers from a transcultural perspective: Nishida Kitaro and Mou Zongsan on Intellectual Intuition</p>
16:30–18:00	<i>ENOJP General Assembly</i>

Joint PhD Conference of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and University of Cambridge in Chinese Studies

In 2023, the Department of Chinese Studies of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest is celebrating a century of fostering Chinese language education at the institution. As part of the centennial celebrations, the department organised a PhD conference 7–8 June 2023 in collaboration with the prestigious University of Cambridge. The event was opened by Rector of ELTE László Borhy, ELTE Vice-Rector for International Affairs and Head of the Department of Chinese Studies Imre Hamar, and University of Cambridge Professor Imre Galambos.



Photo 1: Imre Hamar opening the PhD Conference

The roots of Chinese language education in Hungary can be traced back to 1923, when ELTE (at that time Pázmány Péter University) established the East Asian Institute. Initially helmed by Vilmos Pröhle, the institute later saw the leadership of Lajos Ligeti, pioneer of Hungarian sinology, both former students of the world-renowned Parisian professor Paul Pelliot. The 1950s marked a turning point in Sino–Hungarian relations, creating opportunities for numerous scholars to pursue studies in China. Upon their return, they continued their academic endeavours within the department. A major breakthrough occurred in 1985 when it became possible to choose Chinese as a main subject, granting it the status of a major akin to English, French, or German. Subsequently, an increasing number of individuals embraced Chinese as their major field of study.

In his opening speech, Imre Hamar, who has been the head of the department since 2002, highlighted some of the department's achievements, including launching a PhD programme in sinology in 2000, a historic step forward in ensuring the education of a new generation of sinologists, and the establishment of the first teacher training master's programme in Chinese in 2015. The Chinese government has provided continuous support by bringing highly qualified Chinese language teachers to ELTE.

Rector László Borhy delivered a speech highlighting the continuous growth and unwavering popularity of Chinese language and cultural studies at ELTE, celebrating the department's steadfast progress, which is evident in the significant number of students currently enrolled in Chinese language programmes at undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels. In fact, this year alone, a record-breaking 201 students have chosen to study the Chinese language.

Professor of Chinese at the University of Cambridge Imre Galambos, who he himself pursued Chinese language and literature studies at ELTE, expressed his delight in witnessing the department's remarkable growth and scholarly achievements. He underscored the importance of fostering connections among PhD students working on topics related to China, facilitating knowledge exchange and collaborative research that transcends borders.

Enikő Gájász



Photo 2: Professor Borhy recalled the most important milestones of the last 100 years



Photo 3: Professor Galambos emphasised the significance of international conferences



Photo 4: Ceremonial music concert held by exchange students from the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music

The joint PhD conference provided a platform for 19 PhD students to present their research findings, showcasing the breadth and depth of their academic pursuits. These young scholars, representing both ELTE and the University of Cambridge, displayed their expertise and shared innovative perspectives on various aspects of Chinese studies.



Photo 5: Attendees of the conference gathered at ELTE's impressive Kodály Room

The program of the conference

7 June 2023

OPENING CEREMONY	
10:00–10:15:	Welcome speeches
10:15–10:30:	Concert of the students of Zhejiang Conservatory of Music

I. BUDDHIST THOUGHT AND PRACTICE	
11:00–11:30	Gediminas Giedraitis (ELTE): <i>Integrating Doctrines of Emptiness and Three-Natures in 6th Century China: A Case of Shiba Kong Lun 十八空論</i>
11:30–12:00	Anna Csikó (ELTE): <i>Biqiuni zhuan: problems and questions</i>
12:00–12:30	Mirella Keller (ELTE): <i>Dialogue with the Past – Public Cases (gong'an 公案) in the Writings of Yikui Chaochen 一揆超琛</i>
12:30–13:00	Péter Boros (ELTE): <i>Transgenerational Learning and Unlearning in early 20th century Chinese Buddhist education reform</i>

II. MUSINGS ON PRE-MODERN CHINA	
14:40–15:10	István Olajos (ELTE): <i>Wu 巫 in medieval Chinese politics: Intrigues and black magic in the imperial court</i>
15:10–15:40	Tatiana Frank (ELTE): <i>The phenomenon of slavery throughout the reign of Yuan Empire in China</i>
15:40–16:10	Yulong Tseng (ELTE): <i>A cross-border perception of Bayising (Pansheng 板升) among the government officials of Ming China</i>
<i>Break</i>	
16:40–17:10	Áron Somogyi (ELTE): <i>'Soft' aka Second Intention Offence? – Technical Terms of Martial Arts Theory in a Ming Dynasty Fencing Treatise'</i>

17:10–17:40	Junfu Wong (University of Cambridge): <i>Practising Ritual: A Functional Reexamination of Patronage Registers on Guanzhong Stone Stelae in the Premodern Period</i>
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8 June 2023

III. CHINESE LANGUAGE IN PAST AND PRESENT	
10:00–10:30	Dávid Jónás (ELTE): <i>A survey on rarely used Chinese idioms (chengyu) from Han Feizi</i>
10:30–11:00	Zehong Mou (ELTE): <i>An Error Analysis of Chinese Characters Writing by Local Hungarian Learners of Chinese as Foreign Language</i>

IV. THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD OF MANUSCRIPTS	
11:20–11:50	Ziwei Ye (University of Oxford): <i>A Study of the ‘Yinyi Style’ and its Evolution</i>
11:50–12:20	Nadine Bregler (Universität Hamburg): <i>Through the Lens of Hand Analysis – Dates on Dunhuang Manuscripts</i>
12:20 –12:50	Xiaoqiang Meng (Leiden University): <i>On the Brahmins’ Avoiding Death Story Attested in the Tocharian Udānālānkāra Fragment THT4</i>

V. CHINA YESTERDAY AND TODAY	
14:30–15:00	Szandra Ésik (ELTE): <i>Metaphors in Xi Jinping’s Speeches</i>
15:00–15:30	Enikő Gájász (ELTE): <i>Leftover women, or the postponement of marriage in China</i>
15:50–16:20	Laura Torma (ELTE): <i>Autofiction in Two Novels on the Cultural Revolution</i>
16:20–16:50	Norbert Nyári (ELTE): <i>Pathways of Chinese self-identity</i>
16:50–17:20	Richárd Gábor Gottner (ELTE): <i>The “soft” power of China: Chinese connection and origin theories of Japanese jūjutsu</i>

