

FAITH IN BUDDHISM

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FAITH IN BUDDHISM

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To the memory of Archbishop-Nun KOMATSU Chiko
of Jakkoin Buddhist Temple

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at Bodhgaya by Rev. Chikō Komatsu

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Preface

The sixteen papers included in this volume were originally presented at the international symposium entitled “Faith in Buddhism,” which was held on October 26 and 27, 2013, at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, jointly organized by the Institute of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, and the Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute, Otani University in Kyoto. The two universities concluded an academic exchange agreement on October 15, 2007, and the symposium at ELTE in 2013 was a milestone in the continuing collaboration between the two institutions. It is our great pleasure to present the fruits of this endeavor here as the first volume in a series of Studies in Buddhism, Budapest Monographs in East Asian Studies.

The theme “Faith in Buddhism” may need some clarification at the outset. The organizers and participants of the symposium, many of whom were non-native speakers of English, are aware that the English word *faith* has implications that differ from its equivalents in Asian languages, such as *śraddhā* (Sanskrit), *saddhā* (Pāli), *dad-pa* (Tibetan), *bisirel* (Mongolian), and *xin* 信 (Chinese), *sin* (Korean), *shin* (Japanese), and that there have been numerous debates over whether the use of this English word for the translation of the Buddhist term is appropriate or not. However, concerning this, we take the position represented by Professor Luis O. Gómez in the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* that, with proper attention to contexts and the awareness of cultural differences, *faith* can be used as a descriptive, analytical, or comparative tool in the understanding of Buddhist ideas and practices.

The methodological issues, including the problems of translation and the diversity of Buddhist traditions, are discussed in the opening article by Professor Kiyotaka Kimura, emeritus professor of the University of Tokyo, entitled the “Meaning and Perspective of Buddhist Studies—With Special Reference to Faith,” which was based on his keynote address that set the scope and direction of the symposium.

As you can see by taking a glance at the table of contents, the extent of this volume is quite broad, reflecting the historical diversity of Buddhist traditions

in Asia as well as the wide range of research in which the contributors engage. Geographically, it covers India, Tibet, Mongolia, China, and Japan, and historically, from Śākyamuni's days to the present. By focusing on the Buddhist concept of faith and its related ideas and practices, the papers collectively present a relatively coherent picture of Buddhism, which has not been represented adequately in Buddhist Studies in the West.

The strength of this volume derives from the international cooperation between our two universities. While Eötvös Loránd University has a distinguished tradition of Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese studies based on modern philological and anthropological methods, Otani University has a long tradition of normative, sectarian study of Jōdo Shinshū (Shin Buddhism) as well as modern Buddhist Studies. The symposium provided a good opportunity for scholars belonging to these two institutions to discuss Buddhism in a fresh perspective under the guidance and encouragement of the learned Professor Kiyotaka Kimura. This cooperation resulted in a positive blending of a normative, subjective approach and modern scientific attitudes that reinforce one another.

It was the tremendous efforts and enthusiasm of Professor Imre Hamar, the director of the Institute of East Asian Studies, Professor Masanori Yamaji, the former head of the Japanese Department, and others at Eötvös Loránd University that made the symposium such a success, leading to this publication. Representing the International Buddhist Studies Group in the Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute of Otani University, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to them. Our thanks are also due to the generous grant from the Komatsu Chikō Foundation and the Khyentse Foundation that supported the conference and this publication.

As a co-editor of this volume, I would like to thank all the contributors for their cooperation and patience through the lengthy process to the publication stage. In closing, I need to acknowledge also the professional work of Dylan Luers, M.A. in Buddhist Studies at Otani's graduate school, who took charge of proofreading and copy-editing all the papers in this volume as a native speaker of English.

Takami Inoue

Preface

As Professor Inoue wrote in his preface, this volume is a result of the academic cooperation between Otani University and Eötvös Loránd University. However, it is only one of the outcomes of this very fruitful cooperation and of the friendship that has grown up between the faculties of these two institutions. Here, let me relate my own personal experiences that can actually be regarded as the first step in the history of our joint effort to understand and interpret the Buddha's teaching. I received a research grant from the Japan Foundation to study Kegon Buddhism from September 2001 to February 2002. Professor Hitoshi Kato of Osaka University, who had visited our Department of Japanese Studies and was also affiliated to Otani University, kindly arranged for me to be given the post of visiting professor at Otani University. What followed, I can honestly say, was the best period of my life as a researcher of Buddhism. Otani University generously offered me the visiting professor's office of the Research Institute on the Teramachi dōri. Every day as I rode my bicycle along the Teramachi dōri I would pass several Buddhist monasteries, and sometimes I could hear the monks' recitations or the sound of their rituals. After arriving at the traditional Japanese wooden building of the Kenkyūjo, I was able to focus on reading and translating abstruse and profound Huayan/Kegon texts, which are often hard to fathom, without being distracted by phone calls and administrative duties. In my work I received much help from my advisor, Prof. Noritoshi Aramaki, whose knowledge of Buddhist texts is so vast that it might intimidate his students. Prof. Robert Rhodes also gave me a great deal of support during my stay at Otani. Every week-end, with my wife, who was pregnant, and two small children I explored the infinite beauty of Buddhist monasteries and gardens in Kyoto. The vivid impressions made by these places will be embedded in our minds for the rest of our lives. I would like to say how grateful I am to the Japan Foundation and to my colleagues at Otani University for this unforgettable experience.

Then, the two presidents signed the cooperation agreement in 2007, and unlike so many other agreements that remain mere documents in the archives

of the universities, real work started very soon with an exchange of faculty. Otani University generously sent professors to our university to teach intensive two-week courses on Japanese Buddhism for students minoring in Buddhism in the BA program. Robert Rhodes, Shinya Yasutomi, Takami Inoue, Shōken Higashidate and Michael Conway gave fascinating, inspiring classes to our students. Gábor Kósa, associate professor at the Department of Chinese Studies at ELTE, visited Otani University in 2009 and 2011, and gave lectures entitled Buddhist Terminology in Chinese Manichaean Texts and Some Buddhist Iconographical Features of the Chinese Manichaean Paintings Found in Japan, respectively. Another field of academic cooperation is the joint guidance of doctoral students, which provides an exceptional opportunity for a Ph.D. student to profit from the advice of two professors with different backgrounds and to use the facilities of two universities. I am happy to say that Mónika Kiss, a Ph.D. student following the Japanese Program of our Institute whose advisor is Prof. Masanori Yamaji, received a one year fellowship from the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai. She spent this year at Otani University under the guidance of Professor Robert Rhodes and Professor Nozomu Saitō conducting research into a special Japanese iconographic representation of Samantabhadra bodhisattva. The proceedings of the first conference were published, and we have started to prepare for the next conference, on Buddha's Words and their Interpretations, which is to be held at Otani University in May 2016.

To summarise our joint endeavours, we can say that they cover almost every possible field of academic cooperation: exchange of faculty and students, joint conferences and joint publications. We hope that our cooperation will be even closer in the future with the introduction of the new Erasmus Plus program. This cooperation is based on the sincere wish of the faculties of both Universities to understand and interpret the various aspects of Buddhism. One of these aspects that is studied in this volume is the importance of faith in Buddhism. The issue is addressed by Japanese and Hungarian scholars who have quite different research backgrounds. In addition, the problem of faith is investigated in Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism. I believe it was the various approaches to this very important topic that made the conference so interesting, and I hope readers too will find useful materials and ideas in this volume. To conclude, I would like to thank to all the colleagues who attended the conference, and to express my particular gratitude to my co-editor, Professor Takami Inoue, for his careful work. I thank Otani University, Komatsu Chiko Foundation and Khyentse Foundation for their generous support.

Imre Hamar

The Meaning and Perspective of Buddhist Studies: With Special Reference to Faith

KIYOTAKA KIMURA

Preface

Today, we have gathered for an important symposium at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. It is my honor to present as a specially invited guest speaker. First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Imre Hamar, the Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies, and his colleagues for their considerable efforts to host this symposium.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect upon the history of Buddhist studies up until the present, and also consider how to promote the field in the future.

1. What is Buddhism?

One of the most frequently discussed issues with regard to Buddhist studies is the definition of “Buddhism.” I would like to first consider this issue as well.

The biggest reason that this issue is raised lies in the fact that it is uncertain what Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, actually taught. Almost all sūtras in early Buddhism were memorized by his disciples in India, standardized in the three councils held after his death, and then gradually transmitted to other countries. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, many of the sūtras were edited or newly written by his successors a couple of hundred years later.

The second reason the nature of Buddhism is so frequently discussed in Buddhist studies is that throughout its approximately 2,500 year history, Buddhism has developed and spread in various (primarily Asian) nations and regions that contain different ethnicities and cultures. Under these conditions, Buddhism has changed and even qualitatively transformed. In a sense, Buddhism as a whole is the product of cultural fusion. We could call it a great systemized cultural composite.

The third reason is that Buddhist texts are written in various languages. As is well known, many early Buddhist texts have been transmitted in Pāli, and the majority of Mahāyāna Buddhist literature are being preserved in the form of Tibetan or/and Chinese translation, and part of which along with their Sanskrit version or revision.

Here, we should keep in mind the creativity that translation entails. We especially need to deal with Chinese translations thoroughly and carefully because frequently they were deeply influenced by native Chinese thought. Sometimes Chinese Buddhist texts even appear to be new texts when compared to their Sanskrit versions containing the same names and stories. Relatedly, there is also the issue of pseudo-texts produced in East Asia. However, I will pass this over for the time being.

The fourth reason is that Buddhism contains various cultural elements, and therefore can be approached from almost all fields in the humanities: philosophy, religious studies, psychology, historical studies, esthetics, folklore, and so on. This is a reflection of the extent to which Buddhism has formed as a great systemized composite of cultures.

The last reason relates to so-called “Critical Buddhism.” First advocated by Noriaki Hakamaya 褐谷憲昭 in the early 1990’s, it has become an important concept in the field of Buddhist studies today. It strictly judges whether doctrines are Buddhist based on the concept of *pratītya-samutpāda* (縁起) as understood in the Mahāyāna Mādhyamika school (中觀派). According to its proponents, something is only Buddhist insofar as it coincides with the principle of *pratītya-samutpāda*, which they understand as meaning that all phenomena are produced by causation and empty in nature. However, the theory that the “Critical Buddhism” has attempted to prove might not be persuasive in many ways. Because strictly speaking, there is no existing evidence that proves the doctrine of *pratītya-samutpāda* was taught by Śākyamuni Buddha himself.

As can be seen, it is impossible to give a singular definition of Buddhism. Therefore, I would like to provisionally define it as “a system of composite religious culture that originated in Śākyamuni’s teachings.”

2. The Modality of Buddhist Studies

When studying Buddhism following the above definition, it appears to me that, roughly speaking, there are three possible approaches: ① traditional studies, ② sectarian studies, and ③ modern scientific studies.

Among these three types, the first one primarily relies on the mutually related religious practices of *sīla* (precepts), *adhicitta* (meditation for calmness of mind), and *paññā* (basic wisdom). Study of this type includes gradual intellectual training as well as continuous somatic exercises rooted in true faith.

The second approach is called *shūgaku* (宗学) in Japanese. The most developed approach in Japan, it is characterized by an emphasis on specific patriarchs rather than the Buddha. *Shūgaku* Buddhist scholars engage in their studies based on firm faith in these patriarchs and focus on learning their action, behavior, and speech, rather than the doctrines of general Buddhist sūtras.

The third approach, the scientific study of Buddhism, shares a common base with other fields in the humanities. It is expected to be objective, logical, and clear as much as possible, despite the fact that it is impossible for researchers to completely abandon their subjectivity.

Finally, I would like to briefly discuss the relationship between scientific studies and the first and the second traditional Buddhist approaches. On the one hand, they are opposed to each other: the former requires objectivity and a scientific mindset, while the latter two are subjective and based on specific beliefs. However, on the other hand, these approaches complement each other: the former makes clear the meaning of words, the structure of sentences, and historical facts, while the latter can disclose the essence of thought that cannot be clarified with a scientific approach (although this is sometimes insufficient in a methodological sense). We should try to sublate these two approaches, even if we have to tread a thorny path in order to do so.

3. The Present Situation and Issues to be Overcome

It is hard to be optimistic when considering Buddhist studies' present situation from a global perspective. Academic study is falling on hard times throughout the world, with the number of scholars decreasing, reduced financial support, and a slump in researchers' motivation. Furthermore, this is all taking place against the background of the violent stream of recent utilitarianism engulfing the world as a whole. However, there is still some hope, as can be seen by the fact that this symposium is being held here today.

What are the characteristics of present-day Buddhist studies? Firstly, the rapid development of computer technology has changed its methods to a considerable degree. Nowadays, nearly all Buddhist texts, dictionaries, and references materials are able to be used on a small personal computer, and many researchers use computers in their studies. In fact, some scholars rely almost entirely on computers in their research. While computers are certainly very convenient for looking up information on texts, comparing them, using indices, and so on, research that overly relies on computers cannot produce high-quality creative studies.

Secondly, Sanskrit and Chinese manuscripts of various Buddhist texts have been newly discovered and released to the public in the past several decades. This has meant that the field has had to add to or rethink its received knowledge.

Thirdly and relatedly, Buddhist studies has moved away from an exclusive dependence on printed texts, and started to take into account manuscripts. Buddhist studies that only rely on printed and published texts are becoming things of the past.

Fourthly, while this may appear to contradict my above statement, various systematized editions of Buddhist canons (called *daizokyō* 大藏經 or *issaikyō* 一切經 in Japanese) have been newly edited and published as books or electronic data by various organizations throughout the Buddhist world. We must be able to make use of these resources that allow for more approaches than exist at present.

However, I think there are issues in the field of Buddhist studies that should be pointed out. I would like to point out five of them.

Firstly, all of the scholars should make it clear about his/her purpose of research and then decide the most appropriate scope and method to carry out the project.

Secondly, as mentioned above, it is possible to study Buddhism from various viewpoints and using diverse methodologies. This means that it is easy for the process of study to fall into disorder. One must have firm awareness of the methodology being used in one's research.

Thirdly, Buddhist texts (manuscripts in particular) are not easy to read accurately and interpret appropriately. Therefore, each researcher has to always brush up on their text reading skills.

Fourthly, among the Buddhist texts, we often find writings that supposedly reflect religious experiences that can never be obtained or understood in an ordinary state. The problem is how we should deal with and present them. I believe that we need to make clear what can and cannot be understood, and logically and carefully explain the former within the scope of scientific research.

Lastly, we have to consider the mode of study. Generally speaking, close analysis of the subject at hand as well as the logical systematization and proper positioning in the field of the results obtained therein is required in the humanities.

We should not forget these matters as Buddhist studies researchers.

4. The Direction of Buddhist Studies

For a long time, Buddhist studies have produced high-quality research through both traditional and scientific methods. However, we have entered into a new era called the information age, and it is also being demanded that scientific researchers contribute to society with their research. What should Buddhist scholars do in response to such expectation in this new era? General speaking, they should 1) make efforts to promote the field's development, and 2) increase their influence in society.

With regard to the former, Buddhist texts should be reexamined as the cultural heritage of humankind and dealt with more carefully than before. They should be classified into five groups - original texts, revised texts, translated texts, interpreted texts and texts for education or civilization.

Regarding point two, I would like to propose propagating the ideas of peace, wisdom, and faith in Buddhism to people throughout the world through the English translations of Buddhist texts. Relatedly, I have advocated *kyōsei* (共成) since the 1990's, which means to stand on an awareness of *pratītya-samutpāda* as understood in Huayan Buddhism while working together for inner peace as well as peace in the world as a whole.

Buddhist scholars have studied and explained many of the significant teachings in Buddhism. However, the majority of these teachings are concerned with one's view of life and the world, and inner purification and peace. In other words, it is hard to find useful teachings for cooperating with other people and bettering society. However in the present age, people will not accept Buddhist teachings that lack a sound view on society and the promotion of social action. Therefore, I think that it is now necessary to advocate *kyōsei*. I arrived at this idea while studying Huayan teachings.

The Concept of “Faith” in the *Discourse on the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*

AKIHIRO ODA

1. The Structure of and Central Teaching in the *Discourse on the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*

Despite its short length – a mere eight pages in the *Taishō Daizōkyō* 大正大藏經 – the treatise *Discourse on the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* (Ch. *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論; hereafter referred to as *Awakening of Faith*) has received considerable attention for its straightforward exposition of Mahāyāna Buddhism’s view of sentient beings and their task on the Buddhist path, as well as its side-by-side use of the *tathāgatagarbha* (“womb of the Tathāgata,” Ch. *rulai zang* 如來藏) and *ālayavijñāna* (“store consciousness,” Ch. *alaiye shi* 阿賴耶識) concepts in its teachings.

There are two Chinese translations: that of Paramārtha (Ch. Zhendi 眞諦) and Śikṣānanda (Ch. Shichanantuo 實叉難陀).¹ The Huayan 華嚴 (“Flower Ornament”) sect patriarch Fazang 法藏 wrote a commentary on the former that was widely studied throughout China, Korea, and Japan, and thus it became the standard translation. For these reasons, in this presentation I would like to proceed forward using Paramārtha’s translation.

The structure of *Awakening of Faith* is as follows:

- Invocation of Reverence / Preface
- 1. Section on Causes and Conditions (*yinyuan fen* 因緣分): Eight reasons are listed for writing the treatise.
- 2. Section on Positing the Meaning (*liyifen* 立義分): A basic outline of the structure of the argument in the treatise.

¹ T No. 1666 and T No. 1667, respectively.

3. Interpretation Section (*jieshi fen* 解釋分): The original nature of sentient beings and the nature of their actual existence is examined from a wide variety of perspectives, turning the reader towards the Mahāyāna.
4. Section on Practicing Faith (*xiuxing xinxin fen* 修行信心分): The method of practice by which ordinary unenlightened beings can obtain faith.
5. Section Encouraging Practice and on the Benefits Thereof (*quanxiu liyi fen* 勸修利益分): An exposition of the merits of faith.
- Transfer of Merit Verse

As is clear from this structure, the title expresses the central teaching of this treatise: the awakening of Mahāyāna faith (Ch. *xin* 信). In terms of intellectual history, the teachings found in the “Section on Positing the Meaning” and the “Interpretation Section” have received particular attention, giving rise to various debates centered around the relationship between *tathāgatagarbha* and *ālayavijñāna*. On the other hand, the main topic of this presentation – the issue of faith – is expounded primarily in the Invocation of Reverence / Preface, “Section on Causes and Conditions,” and “Section on Practicing Faith.” While it receives some treatment in the “Interpretation Section,” it is nowhere near the extent of the former three. Despite the issue of faith being at the center of the text’s teachings, research on the *Awakening of Faith* has focused on the “Section on Positing the Meaning” and the “Interpretation Section,” overlooking the sections in which faith is addressed.

2. The Use of “Faith” in the *Awakening of Faith*

Instances of the *Awakening of Faith* addressing the issue of faith can be broadly classified in the following way:

- (a) Instances found in the Invocation of Reverence / Preface at the beginning of the treatise.
 - Invocation of Reverence
“May all sentient beings be made to discard their doubts, to cast aside their evil attachments, and to give rise to correct Mahāyāna faith, so that the lineage of the buddhas may not be broken off.”²

² T 575b: 爲欲令衆生 除疑捨邪執 起大乘正信 佛種不斷故。This and the other translations of passages from *The Awakening of Faith* in this paper are based to varying degrees on Hakeda 2006 [1967].

- Preface
 - “There is a teaching which can awaken in us the root of Mahāyāna faith.”³
- (b) Instances concentrated in the “Interpretation Section.”
 - “A person comes to *believe* in their essential nature...”⁴
 - “... *believing* that they have the principle of Suchness within them-self, to make up their mind to exert themselves.”⁵
 - “Why is it that there are infinite varieties of *believers* and *nonbelievers* who come to *belief* at different points?”⁶
 - “... to *believe* that nirvāṇa is real, and to cultivate their capacity for goodness.”⁷
- (c) Examples in the “Section on Practice and Faith.”
 - 1. “... faith in the Ultimate Source.”⁸
 - 2. “... faith in the numberless excellent qualities of the buddhas.”⁹
 - 3. “... faith in the great benefits of the teaching.”¹⁰
 - 4. “... faith that the *Sangha*’s members are able devote themselves to the practice of benefiting both themselves and others.”¹¹

Of these, the two quotations listed in (a) relate to the overall point of the treatise. In other words, *Awakening of Faith* aims to open the vision of all sentient beings to the Mahāyāna and awaken them to their own original nature. This logical structure is expounded in the “Section on Positing the Meaning” and the “Interpretation Section.” In order to make those who are called on a daily level “sentient beings” realize their original nature, a concrete path of cultivation is taught in the “Section on Practicing Faith” and the “Section Encouraging Practice and on the Benefits Thereof.”

Sentient beings’ original nature and the nature of their actual existence are described in the *Awakening of Faith*’s “Section on Positing the Meaning” in the following way:

³ T 575b: 論曰。有法能起摩訶衍信根。

⁴ T 578b: 自信己性。

⁵ T 578b: 自信己身有真如法發心修行。

⁶ T 578b: 云何有信無信。無量前後差別。

⁷ T 578c: 信有涅槃修習善根。

⁸ T 581c: 信根本。

⁹ T 581c: 信佛有無量功德。

¹⁰ T 581c: 信法有大利益 …

¹¹ T 581c: 信僧能正修行自利利他。

The principle is “the Mind of the sentient being.” This Mind includes in itself all of the phenomenal world and the transcendental world.¹²

First the treatise introduces the basis of its argument, the concept of “the Mind of the sentient being” (Ch. *zhongsheng xin* 衆生心), which is said to include “in itself all of the phenomenal world and the transcendental world.” The latter phrase is referring to sentient beings’ actual existence (“phenomenal world” – Ch. *shijian fa* 世間法) and their original nature (“transcendental world” – Ch. *chu shijian fa* 出世間法). Here, the treatise’s aim is to define the basis of its argument, and hence no further explanation is provided. However, a detailed explanation eventually appears in the “Interpretation Section”:

The revelation of the true meaning [of the principle of Mahāyāna can be achieved] by [unfolding the doctrine] that the principle of One Mind has two aspects. One is the aspect of Mind in terms of Suchness, and the other is the aspect of Mind in terms of arising and ceasing.¹³

Here, the original nature of sentient beings is defined as the “aspect of Mind in terms of Suchness” (Ch. *xin zhenru men* 心真如門) and the nature of their actual existence is defined as the “aspect of Mind in terms of arising and ceasing” (Ch. *xin shengmie men* 心生滅門). However, both are two aspects of the “principle of One Mind” (Ch. *yixin fa* 一心法) – referred to as the “the Mind of the sentient being” in the “Section on Positing the Meaning” – and thus they are not separate. Adopting this non-dualistic perspective and looking at the nature of sentient beings’ actual existence from the vantage point of their original nature, the treatise describes the former as “deluded thoughts” (Ch. *wangnian* 妄念) and the “erroneously conceived external world” (Ch. *wang jingjie* 妄境界). This is certainly not how sentient beings normally see the world. In the “Interpretation Section,” this structure of sentient beings’ deluded thoughts is explained from a variety of perspectives. In the passages listed in (b) above, it is done in terms of the process that takes place within this basic structure through which sentient beings gradually break away from their nature as sentient beings through buddhas’ and bodhisattvas’ edification. Thus, the idea of “faith” in this group of passages is not about any special aspect of the bodhisattva path. Rather,

¹² T 575c: 所言法者。謂衆生心。是心則攝一切世間法出世間法。

¹³ T 576a: 顯示正義者。依一心法。有二種門。云何爲二。一者心真如門。二者心生滅門。

it is about believing in something on an everyday level. However, with that said, since the object of this belief is “the original nature of the self,” “the principle of Suchness,” and “nirvāṇa,” even if the structure of this faith is ordinary, with its object being the transcendental world, it is certainly – to use a term from the Buddhist tradition – difficult to believe (Ch. *nanxin* 難信).

Therefore, the *Awakening of Faith* says that the “awakening of Mahāyāna faith” is the mission given to sentient beings. Its latter two sections explain this task, with the first covering “practicing faith.” This is made clear at the beginning of the section:

This discussion is intended for those who have not yet joined the group of beings for whom it is determined that they will attain enlightenment.¹⁴

Here, the treatise draws attention to the fact that these teachings are for ordinary unenlightened beings. From this perspective, one could say that “practicing having obtained faith” (Ch. *dexinxing* 得信行) is the task of bodhisattvas. The *Flower Ornament Sūtra* (Ch. *Huayan jing* 華嚴經) covers this issue in detail. While that is outside the scope of this presentation, the relationship between ordinary unenlightened beings and bodhisattvas / buddhas is covered in the *Awakening of Faith* as well. In other words, those who have completed the task given to ordinary unenlightened beings are called “bodhisattvas,” and those who have completed the task assigned to bodhisattvas are called “buddhas.” In the passage below and other places, it is made clear that “faith” is an issue completely for sentient beings.

Analysis of the Types of Aspiration for Enlightenment: All bodhisattvas aspire to the enlightenment realized by all the buddhas, disciplining themselves to this end, and advancing toward it. Briefly, three types of aspiration for enlightenment can be distinguished. The first the aspiration for enlightenment [that arises] through the perfection of faith. The second is the aspiration for enlightenment [that arises] through understanding and practice. The third is the aspiration for enlightenment [that arises] through insight.¹⁵

¹⁴ T 581c: 是中依未入正定。衆生故。說修行信心。

¹⁵ T 580b: 分別發趣道相者。謂一切諸佛所證之道。一切菩薩發心修行趣向義故。略說發心有三種。云何爲三。一者信成就發心。二者解行發心。三者證發心。

This passage, presented as an “analysis of the types of aspiration for enlightenment,” is the beginning of the end part of the “Interpretation Section,” which immediately precedes the previously considered “Section on Practicing Faith.” The “aspiration for enlightenment [that arises] through the perfection of faith” (Ch. *xin chengjiu faxin* 信成就發心) mentioned here is the content of the resolution sentient beings give rise to after they complete the practice of faith. A result of the edification of buddhas and bodhisattvas, this practice of faith is carried out by sentient beings whose destiny for enlightenment is undetermined. The “aspiration for enlightenment [that arises] through understanding and practice” (Ch. *jiexing faxin* 解行發心) is the so-called bodhisattva’s “first arousal of the aspiration for enlightenment” (Ch. *chu faxin* 初發心), and the “aspiration for enlightenment [that arises] through insight” (Ch. *zheng faxin* 證發心) is the resolution that arises when a bodhisattva has insight into buddhahood in their final thought-moment. Thus, the former two aspirations for enlightenment are like two aspects of a single moment. From the perspective of an ordinary unenlightened being, this single moment is “the perfection of faith” in that it is the end to one’s status as an ordinary unenlightened being. However, from the perspective of a bodhisattva, this single moment is “understanding and practice” in that it is one’s starting point as a bodhisattva. In summary, it is the “*faith, understanding and practice, and realization*” of the *bodhisattva path*, however the basic stance of the *Awakening of Faith* is that “faith” is until the very end an issue for ordinary unenlightened beings.

3. Conclusion

In the “Section on Practicing Faith,” five practices (Ch. *wumen* 五門) for obtaining faith are explained: the practice of charity (Ch. *shimen* 施門), the practice of the precepts (Ch. *jiemen* 戒門), the practice of patience (Ch. *renmen* 忍門), the practice of zeal (Ch. *jinmen* 進門), and the practice of cessation and observation (Ch. *zhiguan men* 止觀門). This is nothing other than the six perfections (Ch. *liu boluomi* 六波羅蜜). Yet, unlike the loftiness of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (Ch. *Bore jing* 般若經), these teachings fit with everyday life. However, the final practice of cessation and observation connects, in terms of its nature, to ultimate wisdom. Furthermore, for ordinary sentient beings that cannot withstand this kind of practice, here the treatise also preaches meditation on Amitābha Buddha (Ch. *Amituofo* 阿彌陀佛) and rebirth in his Western Paradise (Ch. *xifang jile shijie* 西方極樂世界) after which they will always see the buddha and never regress on the Buddhist path. From these points as well, it can be seen that “faith” is basically an issue for sentient beings.

However, the basis of this treatise’s argument is the non-duality of sentient beings (the “aspect of Mind in terms of arising and ceasing”) and buddhas (the “aspect of Mind in terms of Suchness”). Thus, it can be said that the qualitative extension of “faith” – the point at which these two connect – reaches all the way to buddhas. In other words, in the qualitative consistency that extends from ordinary unenlightened beings to buddhas, “faith” makes clear the task of ordinary unenlightened beings while recognizing the actual distinctions between them, bodhisattvas, and buddhas. As mentioned previously, at the beginning of the treatise there is the following statement:

There is a teaching which can awaken in us the root of Mahāyāna faith.

This succinctly expresses the above structure and the task particular to those at the stage of sentient beings.

Abbreviations

T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 85 vols. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭, eds. 1924–1932. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai.

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References to Faith in *Dhāraṇī* Literature¹

GERGELY HIDAS

Introduction

In this paper, I consider the role *śraddhā* (faith) plays in South Asian *dhāraṇī* scriptures. Out of the twenty-five texts I surveyed, seven of them reference this term. They often emphasize faith in a certain *dhāraṇī*-spell and its efficacy as an important quality of practitioners.

Dhāraṇī Literature

Dhāraṇī is an exclusively Buddhist term with a wide range of meanings depending on context.² The scriptures surveyed in this paper use *dhāraṇī* to mean a spell or magical formula (probably its most common meaning) and focus on a specific incantation, describing its benefits and use.³ *Dhāraṇī* literature, pieces of which can stretch from a few dozen to several thousand lines, dates back to around the beginning of the Common Era when individual apotropaic scriptures first started to appear.⁴ It is difficult to trace the actual origins of such texts as they share many aspects with various protective cultures within Buddhism.⁵ Furthermore, the affiliations of these scriptures are not straightforward: some are connected to Mainstream traditions, and others to Mahāyāna

¹ This paper was presented in October 2013 as part of the symposium “Faith in Buddhism” at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. I would like to express my gratitude to the Khyentse Foundation for its support.

² See Davidson 2009.

³ For an overview and lists of titles see Hidas 2015. On *dhāraṇī* literature in Chinese, see Copp 2011. For a survey of works on this topic see Copp (online).

⁴ Strauch 2014.

⁵ See Skilling 1992.

ones. There are approximately twenty-five surviving Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* texts, however there is the chance that more of them will be discovered hiding in unedited manuscripts.

References to Faith in *Dhāraṇī* Literature

Below I have listed incantation scriptures that contain references to *śraddhā*. While it is difficult to determine their precise dates, it is likely that they are from around the middle of the first millennium, if not slightly earlier. For each, I have included the original Sanskrit text and a translation.⁶

1. *Amoghapāśahṛdayadhāraṇī/Amoghapāśakalparāja*

saṃkṣepato bhagavan kāyapīdayā vā cittapīdayā vā | duḥsvapnadarśanena vā tat karmaṇa parikṣayaṇ gacchati | paryavādānaṇ gacchati | prāg eva śuddhasatvānāṁ śraddhādhimuktikānām | (Meisezahl 1962: 314-315)⁷

Briefly, O Victorious One, [every] physical or psychical pain or experiencing a bad dream; all this karman shall be exhausted. How much more shall be done for [morally] clean beings who lean toward faith. (Meisezahl 1962: 291)

vidyādhareṇa śucibhūtvā susnātaśucivastrāṇi dhāraka tr̄śuklabhojanabhojanām | buddhānusmṛtiṁ bhāsyetaḥ śraddhāgauravatativataḥ | (*Amoghapāśakalparāja* 19a)

The spell-master, having become clean, having bathed, put on clean clothes, and taken the three white foods,⁸ should utter the recollection of the Buddha accurately with faith and respect.

yah kaścit kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā bhikṣubhikṣuṇyopāsakopāsikā vā śradhānusāriṇā vā ayan dhāraṇīn dhārayati | vācayati | paṭhati | svādhyāyati | cintayiṣyanti | bhāvayiṣyati pūjayiṣyati | likhiṣyati likhāpayiṣyati | sa ca niyata-avai-varttiko bhaviṣyati anuttarāyām samyaksambodhau | (*Amoghapāśakalparāja* 27b-28a)

⁶ Translations by the author if not indicated otherwise.

⁷ Cf. *Amoghapāśakalparāja* 2a: saṃkṣepataḥ / bhagavan kāya / pīditacittapīdayām vā duḥsvapnadarśanena vā tat karmaṇa parikṣayaṇ gacchati / paryādānam prāg eva śuddhasatvānāṁ śraddhādhimuktikānām.

⁸ Most likely a reference to rice, milk, and ghee.

Any faithful son or daughter of good family, monk or nun, or layman or lay-woman who memorizes, recites, reads, repeats, recollects, meditates upon, worships, and writes down this *dhāraṇī* and has someone [else] write it down will surely not regress on the path to the highest perfect awakening.

evam mahānubhāvamahāprabhāva ceti | sarvvatathāgatādhiṣṭhitavyākṛtaś ca bhavati | mahāśarīraś ca bhavati | api tu bhagavan satvā duḥsādhyā duravabodhā duravagāhyā aśrāddhā matsariṇā pariveṣṭitapāpā (*Amoghapāśakalparāja* 66b-67a)

Thus one is furnished with great power and majesty; one is predicted to become empowered by all Tathāgatas; one is endowed with a great body - even those persons, O Lord, who are difficult to master, who have hard understanding and absorption, who lack faith, who are selfish and covered by sins.

ayam amogharājahrdayam mahākalparājamudrāmaṇḍalam duṣyapaṭam pariśuddhya manasikāreṇa śraddhāgauraveṇa sarvvatathāgatādhyāśayaprasādena likhiṣyati | śraddhāgauraveṇa lekhakena | (*Amoghapāśakalparāja* 69a)

This *Amogharājahrdaya-mahākalparāja* seal-circle is written on a purified piece of fine cloth by a faithful and respectful scribe with concentrated mind, faith, respect and the favour of the resolution of all Tathāgatas.

ye cānye vividhanārakī yā satvā mohāndhakārapatitā avīciparāyaṇapāñcānantaryakārakā āryāpavādakasaddharmapratikṣepaka te ‘pi sarvve tam āryāvalokiteśvaram ātmabhāvam paśyanti | sarvvesām ālāpati | samāśvāsayati | sarvvesām svakarmmaphalaśubham vā aśubham vā vipākan tat sarvam darśayati | sthāpayitvā vidyācauracanḍālasya | vidyānikṣepanāśakasya vidyādūṣakasya vidyā-aśrāddhāśuśrūṣasya tasya darśanam nāsti | (*Amoghapāśakalparāja* 90b)

Those beings in various hells, fallen into the darkness of delusion, having committed the five sins of immediate retribution leading to Avīci, defaming the noble ones, rejecting the true Dharma – even they all shall see the noble Avalokiteśvara embodied. He speaks to all of them, encourages them, shows them the fruit and ripening of all their good and bad actions; except for the one who is a despised thief of spells, who abandons and destroys spells, defiles spells or learns a spell without faith – he shall not see him.

suprayatnenāyam vidhi sādhayitavya paramaśraddhāgauravam iti |
(*Amoghapāśakalparāja* 90b)

This ritual manual should be actualized with great effort, highest faith and respect.

2. Bodhigarbhālankāralakṣadhadhāraṇī

yaḥ kaścid bhikṣur vā bhikṣuṇī vā upāsako vā upāsikā vā | anyo vā yaḥ kaścit śrāddhah kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā imāṁ dhāraṇīṁ likhitvā ‘bhyamṛtaram prakṣipya caityam kariṣyati | tenaikena caityena kṛtena lakṣam tathāgatacaityānāṁ kṛtam bhavati (Schopen 1985: 136)

Whatsoever monk or nun or layman or woman, or whatsoever other devout son or daughter of good family, after having written this Dhāraṇī, after having deposited it inside, will make a *caitya*, by that single *caitya* being made a hundred thousand *caityas* of the Tathāgata are (in effect) made. (Schopen 1985: 137)

3. Ekādaśamukhahṛdaya

evam bahukaro ‘yam hṛdayam tasmāt tarhi śrāddhena kulaputreṇa vā kuladihitrā vā satkṛtyāyam hṛdayam sādhayitavyam (Dutt 1939: 37)

Thus this heart-essence is useful in many ways; therefore, having honored it, this heart-essence should be actualized by a faithful son or daughter of good family.

4. Mahāpratisarāmahāvidyārājñī

anyatamasmin pradeśe bhikṣur aśrāddhas tathāgatakulaśiksākhanḍakah adat-tādāyī (Hidas 2012: 134)

In a certain province there was a monk, not having faith, ruining the teachings of the Tathāgata-families and taking what had not been given to him. (Hidas 2012: 218)

antaśo mahābrāhmaṇa iyam mahāvidyāmantrapadarakṣā tiryagyonigatānām api mrgapaksinām karnapute nipatiṣyati te sarve ‘vaivartikā bhaviṣyanty anuttarāyām samyaksambodhau | kah punar vādo ya imāṁ mahāpratisarāṁ dhāraṇīṁ śrāddhah kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā bhikṣur vā bhikṣuṇī vā upāsako vā upāsikā vā rājā vā rājaputro vā brāhmaṇo vā kṣatriyo vā tadanyo vā yaḥ kaścit sakṛc chroṣyati śrutvā ca mahatyā śraddhayā gauravenādhyāśayena likhiṣyati likhāpayisyati dhārayisyati vācayisyati tīvrena manasā bhāvayisyati parebhyāś ca vistareṇa samprakāśayisyati (Hidas 2012: 184-185)

Furthermore, Great Brahmā, animals, wild animals and birds who hear this protection of great spells and *mantrapadas* will all be unable to regress on the path to the highest perfect awakening, not to speak of the faithful son or daughter of a good family, a monk or nun, a layman or laywoman, a king, a prince, a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or anybody else who once hears this Great Amulet *dhārānī* and having heard it writes it down, gets it written down, memorises it and recites it with great faith, respect and determination, meditates upon it with sharp mind and reveals it to others in detail. (Hidas 2012: 246-247)

5. Mahāsannipātaratnaketudhārānī-sūtra/Ratnaketuparivarta

ye ca śraddhāḥ kulaputrāḥ kuladuhitaraś ca imāṁ mahāsannipātadharmaparyāyam dhārayisyanti yāval likhitvā bhikṣubhikṣunyupāsakopāsikāḥ sad-dharmadhārakāḥ pudgalāś tān sarvān yuṣmākam haste nyāyatāḥ parindāmāḥ ārakṣaparipālanātai (Kurumiya 1978: 147)

Those faithful sons and daughters of good families, those monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, persons upholding the True Law, who memorize this *Mahāsannipāta* Dharma-discourse having written it down: we place all of them in your hands in a fitting manner for protection and safeguard.

ye ca śraddhāḥ kulaputrāḥ kuladuhitaraś ca saddharmadhārakāḥ pudgalā bhikṣubhikṣunyupāsakopāsikāḥ ya imāṁ mahāsannipātam dharmaparyāyam dhārayanti yāvat pustakalikhitam api kṛtvā dhārayanti dharmabhāṇakā dharmaśravaṇikā dhyānayuktāḥ saddharmadhārakā yuṣmābhis te rakṣitavyāḥ pūjayitavyāḥ (Kurumiya 1978: 149)

Those faithful sons and daughters of good families, persons upholding the True Law, monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, Dharma-preachers, Dharma-listeners, engaged in meditation, upholders of the True Law, who memorize this *Mahāsannipāta* Dharma-discourse and write it down as a book and preserve it: they are to be protected and worshipped by you.

tena ca dharmarasena santarpitā jambudvīparājānah parasparahitacittā bhavisyanti karmavipākam śraddadhāsyanti (Kurumiya 1978: 149)

Having been delighted by this Dharma-essence, the kings of Jambudvīpa will become benevolent-minded towards each other and shall have faith in the ripening of actions.

ye ca dharmapratipattisthā dharmabhāṇakā dharmaśravanikā bhikṣu-bhikṣunyupāsakopāsikāḥ śraddhāḥ kulaputraḥ kuladuhitaraś ca imam dharma-paryāyam udgrīṣyanti yāvat pustakalikhitam api kṛtvā dhārayiṣyanti dhyānābhiyuktāḥ tān vayaṁ sarvān rakṣiṣyāmaḥ paripālayiṣyāmaḥ satkariṣyāmo gurukariṣyāmo mānayiṣyāmaḥ pūjyiṣyāmaḥ cīvaracchatradhvajapatākāvilepanair yāvat sarvabhaiṣajyapariṣkāriḥ satkariṣyāmaḥ (Kurumiya 1978: 154)

Those faithful Dharma-preachers and Dharma-listeners, monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, and sons and daughters of good families, established in the performance of the Dharma, engaged in meditation, who comprehend this Dharma-discourse and memorize it having written it down as a book: we will protect and safeguard them all, admire, venerate, honor, worship, and revere them with robes, parasols, flagpoles, banners, ointments, and all kinds of medicine and utensils.

samyagdr̥ṣṭimārge ṣjuke śraddhādamasamyamahrīravatrāpyeṣu sanniy-oksyyāmaḥ (Kurumiya 1978: 156)

We will establish them in the straight path of right view, faith, self-restraint, self-control, modesty, and remorse.

īdṛśām ca gambhīrām dhāraṇīm śrutvānenaiva hetunā paścāc chraddhām pratilapsyate ‘nuttarāyām samyaksambodhau (Kurumiya 1978: 161)

He will gain faith in the highest perfect awakening because he heard such a profound *dhāraṇī*.

6. Sarvatathāgatādhīṣṭhānavyūhasūtra

ayaṁ ca kulaputra dharmaparyāyah paścime kāle paścime samaye da-kṣināpathe pracariṣyati tatrāpi bhikṣubhikṣunyupāsakopāsikārājarājaputra-mahāmātrāmātyā bhājanībhūtāḥ pūjakā dhārakā vācakā bhaviṣyanti śradhāsyanti pattīṣyanti (Dutt 1939: 80)

O son of good family, this Dharma-discourse will circulate in the southern region in the last time, in the last age.⁹ There too, monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, kings and princes, and prime ministers and ministers will become partakers, worshippers, preservers, and reciters. They will have faith and trust.

⁹ On the Buddhist concept of decline, see Nattier 1991.

7. *Vasudhārādhāraṇī*

tena khalu punah samayena kauśāmbyāṁ mahānagaryāṁ sucandro nāma gṛhapatih prativasati sma ... śrāddho mahāśrāddhaḥ (“Āryavasudhārādhāraṇīsūtra” 2007: 131)

At that time there lived in Kauśāmbī a layman called Sucandra ... a man of faith, of great faith.

yasya ca kulaputra iyam sā gṛhapate vasudhārā nāma dhāraṇī śrāddhasya kulaputrasya vā kuladuhitur vā hṛdayagatā gṛhagatā hastagatā pustakagatā śrutiṁātragatā paryavāptā manasā suparicintitā dhāritā vācitā likhitā anumoditā parebhyāś ca vistareṇa samprakāśitā ca tad bhaviṣyati tasya kulaputrasya kuladuhitur vā dīrgharātram arthāya hitāya sukhāya kṣemāya subhikṣāya yogasambhārāya bhaviṣyati (“Āryavasudhārādhāraṇīsūtra” 2007: 133)

O son of good family, O householder: the faithful son or daughter of a good family who, having had this *Vasudhārā-dhāraṇī* enter his or her heart, house, hand, book or ear, thinks it over well in the mind having mastered it, memorizes, recites, writes down, and rejoices in it, and teaches it to others in detail: for that son or daughter of a good family it will be of advantage, benefit, comfort, peace, and prosperity, and equipment for discipline for a long time.

eṣa hṛdayo bhagavatyā mahāpāpakarmakāriṇo ‘pi mantrapadāni siddhyanti | kiṁ punah śraddhyādhimuktikasya puruṣasya puruṣapramāṇam mahābhogaṁ dadāti | īpsitam manoratham paripūrayati (“Āryavasudhārādhāraṇīsūtra” 2007: 142)

This is the heart-essence of the Glorious One; these *mantrapadas* will be effective even for one who has committed great sins. How much more it will give great wealth of human measure for a man who is inclined towards faith. It fulfills desired wishes.

yasmin sthāne pūjyate pauṣṭikārtham svagṛhe vā paragṛhe vā śraddhayā para-
maśraddhayā vasudhārā pratimāṁ bhaṭṭārikāṁ vā paṭam vā agrato ‘nuprasārya candanena caturasram maṇḍalakam kṛtvā... (“Āryavasudhārādhāraṇīsūtra” 2007: 143)

Wherever it is worshipped for the sake of prosperity, with faith, with the highest faith, [such as] in one’s own or someone else’s house -[there] one should place an image of the venerable Vasudhārā or a painted scroll in front of him and prepare a rectangular *maṇḍalaka* of sandalwood [powder]...

... udārām pūjām kṛtvā susamāhitah tām eva bhagavatīm bhāvayenn eka-cittotpādena dānapatihitasukhāśayah śraddhyā paramāśraddhyā sanidānām imām dhāraṇīm ekam ahorātram saptāhorātrāṇi vā parikṣālayann avicchin-nam āvartayet | (“Āryavasudhārādhāraṇīsūtra” 2007: 144)

...having greatly worshipped with a concentrated mind, he should meditate absorbed in one thought upon that Glorious One, with the intent of benefit and comfort for the donor. With faith, with the highest faith, he should recite this *dhāraṇī* with its *nidāna* for one day and night or seven days and nights continuously with purifying sprinkling.

The Role of Faith in *Dhāraṇī* Literature

As the above passages show, *śraddhā* is described in various ways and appears in various contexts and roles in *dhāraṇī* literature. They can be summarized as follows:

- The emergence of faith in a *dhāraṇī* teaching (*Sarvatathāgatādhīṣṭhāna*).
- The protagonist of a *dhāraṇī* scripture is endowed with great faith (*Vasudhārā*).
- The lack of faith is a highly negative attribute (*Amoghapāśa*, *Mahāpratisarā*).
- Faith as a desired quality for followers of a *dhāraṇī* tradition (*Ratnaketu*, *Vasudhārā*).
- A *dhāraṇī* is more effective for those who have faith (*Amoghapāśa*, *Vasudhārā*).
- Faith as a desirable quality for *dhāraṇī* ritual and *sādhana* (*Amoghapāśa*, *Bodhigarbhālaṅkāra*, *Ekādaśamukha*, *Vasudhārā*).
- The emergence of faith in the law of karma as a result of a *dhāraṇī* teaching (*Ratnaketu*).
- The emergence of faith in highest perfect awakening as a result of a *dhāraṇī* teaching (*Ratnaketu*).

- Faith as a desired quality of *dhāraṇī* users for progressing towards the highest perfect awakening (*Amoghapāśa*, *Mahāpratisarā*).

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The Concept of Tibetan *Dad-pa* (Faith) in *Lam-rim* (Stages of the Path to Enlightenment)

ERZSÉBET TÓTH

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss the fundamental role “faith” (Tib. *dad-pa*) plays in the teachings of the Dalai Lama-led Dge-lugs-pa school, the most influential order of Buddhism in Tibet for several centuries. The school’s foundational works on the *lam-rim* (stages of the path to enlightenment) by its founder Tsong-kha-pa (1357–1419) and their commentaries emphasize that faith is essential for entering the path to enlightenment. They instruct students to, relying on a good teacher, generate, sustain, and further develop faith. The present paper focuses on Tsong-kha-pa’s treatment of faith in his *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (*Lam-rim chen-mo*), a key work in *lam-rim* literature.

1. *Lam-rim*: The System of the Tibetan Dge-lugs-pa School

There are several Buddhist schools in Tibet, and all of them have their own specific teachings. They do not disagree with each other regarding the tenets of Buddhism or the words of the Buddha. Rather, they differ in terms of emphasis and methods for leading students to enlightenment.

The *lam-rim* system, which was first expounded by Tsong-kha-pa in 1402 in his *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (short title in Tibetan: *Lam-rim chen-mo*),¹ is a teaching specific to the Dge-lugs-pas. The term *lam-rim* (stages of the path) is an abbreviation of the expression *byang-chub-lam-gyi rim-pa*, which means “the stages of the path to enlightenment.”

¹ This text is usually referred to by the short titles *Lam-rim chen-mo* and *Byang-chub-lam-rim chen-mo*. Its full title is: *Skyes-bu gsum-gyi nyams-su blang-ba'i rim-pa thams-cad tshang-bar ston-pa'i byang-chub-lam-gyi rim-pa* (Stages of the path to enlightenment, completely showing all the stages to be taken to heart by the three orders of persons).

The *lam-rim* doctrine was first introduced to the western world in 1838 when Alexander Csoma de Körös published his brief account of Tibetan Buddhist philosophical systems under the title “Notices on the Different Systems of Buddhism, Extracted from the Tibetan Authorities” (*JASB* vol. VII, part I, 142–147).² Csoma presents the main points of *lam-rim* on pages 145–146, providing the following basic information:

“Some writers have used the name of “Lám-rim”, degrees of way (to perfection), considering men on three different degrees of intellectual and moral capacity; as, men of little, middle, and highest capacities. Under this title there are now in Tibet (among those of the Géluk-pa sect) several manual works on the principles of the Buddhistic religion. Among these “Lám-rims” the most esteemed and the most comprehensive is that of TSONKHA-PA, a celebrated Láma, who flourished in the beginning of the fifteenth century.

According to the Lám-rim there are three degrees of principles with respect to the theory of the Buddha faith.

1. Men of vulgar capacity must believe that there is a God,³ there is a future life, and that they shall therein have the fruits of their works in this life.
2. Those that are on a middle degree of intellectual and moral capacity, besides admitting the former positions, must know, that every compound thing is perishable, that there is no reality in things; that every imperfection is pain, and that deliverance from pain or bodily existence is final happiness or beatitude.
3. Those of the highest capacities, besides the above enumerated articles, know that from the body or last object to the supreme soul, nothing is existing by itself, neither can be said that it will continue always, or cease absolutely; but that every thing exists by a dependent or causal connection or concatenation.

² The very first Europeans to become acquainted with Tsong-kha-pa’s work were two Italian fathers: the Jesuit Ippolito Desideri (in Lhasa: 1716–1721) and the Capuchin Orazio della Penna (in Lhasa: 1719–1732). The latter, realizing the importance of the *Lam-rim chen-mo*, even translated it into Italian, but remains unpublished. Regarding Italian missionary activities, see, e.g., de Filippi 1932, Petech 1952–1956, MacGregor 1970, and Bargiacchi 2008.

³ Being one of the pioneers in rendering Buddhist concepts in English, Csoma in some cases resorts to Christian terms.

With respect to practice, those of vulgar capacity are content with the exercise of the ten virtues. Those of a middle degree, besides the fulfilling of the ten virtues, endeavour to excel in morality, meditation, and ingenuity or wisdom. Those of the highest capacities besides the former will perfectly exercise the six transcendal [sic!] virtues.

With respect to their summum bonum.

The first seeing the miseries of those suffering in the bad places of transmigration; as, in hell, *Yidáks*, and beasts, wish to be born among *men*, the *asurs* [sic!] and the *gods*.

Those of the second class, not contended with the happiness of the former, wish for themselves only to be delivered entirely from pain and bodily existence. Lastly: these regarding as pain, every bodily existence, in whatever region of the world it be, aspire to final emancipation, and wish to arrive at the supreme perfection, that they may become able to help others in their miseries.”

(Csoma de Kőrös 1838: 145–146)

Csoma’s particular interest in this doctrine is reflected by the fact that his small collection of Tibetan manuscripts and woodblock printings⁴ (which is now held as part of the Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) included six books on the subject.⁵

⁴ Csoma’s bequest comprises altogether 36 items, however, “Csoma is known to have collected a large number of xylographs and manuscripts during his seven year stay in monasteries; it can, therefore, be safely presumed that the books to be found in the Collection are but a fraction of what he originally collected” (Terjék 1976: 9). Terjék gives a full description of the collection, and also calls attention to Csoma’s interest in the topic of *lam-rim*: “Of Buddhist and Lamaist scholastics Csoma was primarily interested in *lam-rim*, that is the doctrine created by Coñ-kha-pa, represented by his own works and their commentaries” (Terjék 1976: 10).

⁵ These six books include two works of Tsong-kha-pa (his main text on the subject *Byang-chub-lam-rim chen-mo* [The great treatise on the stages of the path to enlightenment], No. 14, 354 ff.; its approximately half-size, abbreviated explication *Byang-chub-lam-gyi rim-pa chung-ba* [The small treatise on the stages of the path to enlightenment] No. 15, 181 ff.), two commentaries and a historical work by the 2nd Panchen Lama Blo-bzang Ye-shes (*Byang-chub-lam-gyi rim-pa'i dmar-khrid* “*Thams-cad mkhyen-par bgrod-pa'i myur-lam*” [“The rapid way leading to perfect understanding” – The guiding principle of the stages of the path to enlightenment] No. 16, 82 ff.; *Byang-chub-lam-gyi rim-pa'i bla-ma-brgyud-pa'i rnam-par thar-pa* “*Padma dkar-po'i phreng-ba*” [“A garland of white lotus flowers” – History of the transmission of the stages of the path to enlightenment] No. 17, 61 ff.; “*Lam-gyi gtso-bo rnam gsun*”-gyi *rnam-bshad gsung-rab kun-gyi gnad bsdus-pa* “*Legs-bshad snying-po*” [“The essence of the wise commentaries” – Detailed commentary on the work entitled “The three subjects leading to the path,” which sums up the essence of every theory] No. 19, 57 ff.), and the root text by Dpal Mar-me-mdzad Ye-shes (Atísa) (*Byang-chub-lam-gyi sgron-ma*, Skt. *Bodhi-patha-pradīpa* [The lamp for the path to enlightenment] No. 18, 6 ff.). Terjék 1976: 54–68 provides detailed descriptions of the six books.

Several decades passed until Europeans could obtain more information on Tsong-kha-pa's teachings. At the beginning of the 20th century, Gombojab Tsebekovich Tsybikov published a Russian translation of *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Cybikov 1913), and decades later Algirdas Kugevicius prepared a new Russian translation (Chzhe Conkapa 1994–2000). In the meantime, Alex Wayman translated two significant chapters⁶ from the work into English (Tson-kha-pa 1978). As a result of the efforts of the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, a complete English translation is now also available (Tsong-kha-pa 2000–2004).⁷

2. *Lam-rim*: A Gradual Path for the Three Types of People

Tsong-kha-pa's teachings are based on the short verse work entitled *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* (Skt. *Bodhi-patha-pradīpa*, Tib. *Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma*) written by the brilliant Indian master Atīśa⁸ (982–1054), who was the leading personality in the second spread of Buddhism in Tibet.⁹

Atīśa arranges people into three groups depending on their mental capabilities and objectives: (1) the group of “least” persons (Tib. *skyes-bu chung-ngu* “small person”), (2) the group of “medium” persons (Tib. *skyes-bu ’bring-po* “middle person”), and (3) the group of “superior” persons (Tib. *skyes-bu chen-po* “big person”).

He gives a concise definition of each:

gang-zhil thabs ni gang-dag-gis //
 ’khor-ba’i bde-ba-tsam-dag-la //
 rang-nyid don-du gnyer byed-pa //
 de ni skyes-bu tha-mar shes //

⁶ Wayman translated the chapters on what he terms “calming the mind” (Tib. *zhi-gnas*, Skt. *samatha*) and “discerning the real” (Tib. *lhag-mthong*, Skt. *vipaśyanā*). See Tson-kha-pa 1978.

⁷ For a list of partial translations in French and Japanese, see the introduction by D. S. Ruegg in Tsong-kha-pa 2000–2004: vol. 1, 31–32.

⁸ He is usually called by this name. His other name is Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna (Tib. Dpal Mar-me-mdzad Ye-shes).

⁹ Buddhism entered Tibet twice: the first or “earlier” spread (Tib. *snga-dar*) started in the 7th century and lasted until the middle of the 9th century. After a period of decline, a revival began in the 11th century that is called the second or “later” spread (Tib. *phyi-dar*).

srid-pa'i bde-la rgyab-phyogs-shing //
sdig-pa'i las-las ldog bdag-nyid //
gang-zhil rang-zhi-tsam don-gnyer //
skyes-bu de ni 'bring zhes bya //
rang-rgyud gtogs-pa'i sdug-bsngal-gyis //
gang-zhil gzhans-gyi sdug-bsngal kun //
yang-dag zad-par kun-nas 'dod //
skyes-bu de ni mchog yin-no //
(D3947, f. 238b1–3; P5343, f. 274b3–5)

“Know to be ‘least’ those persons
Who diligently strive to attain
Solely the joys of cyclic existence
By any means for their welfare alone. (...)
Those persons are called ‘medium’
Who stop sinful actions,
Turn their backs on the joys of cyclic existence,
And diligently strive just for their own peace. (...)
Those persons are called ‘superior’
Who sincerely want to extinguish
All the sufferings of others
By understanding their own suffering.”
(Tsong-kha-pa 2000–2004: vol. I, 130–131)

3. The Sources of the *Lam-rim* System

Tsong-kha-pa declares that his work is a commentary on Atīśa's above-mentioned *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. Actually, its content is in full accordance with the Buddha's words as well as with the teachings of the eminent Indian masters. This is supported by not only the numerous quotations from scriptures representing the Buddha's words and the works of outstanding Buddhist authorities,¹⁰ but also the guru lineage that traces back all the elements of *lam-rim* as far as Śākyamuni Buddha himself.¹¹

¹⁰ Tsong-kha-pa refers to dozens of sūtras, tantras and other texts attributed to the Buddha. Among the most frequently cited works are *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* – Tib. *Sa bcu-pa'i mdo* D44/31, P761/31 [Sūtra on the Ten Levels], *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* – Tib. *Sdong-po bkod-pa'i mdo* D44/45, P761/45 [Array of Stalks Sūtra], *Lalitavistara-sūtra* – Tib. *Rgya-cher rol-pa* D95, P763 [Extensive Sport Sūtra], *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* – Tib. *Yongs-su myangan-las 'das-pa chen-po'i mdo* D120, P787 [The Great Final Nirvāṇa Sūtra], *Ratnamegha-sūtra* – Tib. *Dkon-mchog-sprin* D231, P897 [Cloud of Jewels Sūtra], *Samādhīrāja-sūtra* – Tib. *Ting-nge-'dzin-gyi rgyal-po'i mdo* D127, P795 [King of Concentrations Sūtra], *Samdhī-nirmocana-sūtra* – Tib. *Dgongs-pa nges-par 'grel-pa* D106, P774 [Sūtra Revealing the Intended Meaning], *Subāhu-pariprcchā-tantra* – Tib. *Dpung-bzang-gis zhus-pa zhes bya-ba'i rgyud* D805, P428 [Tantra Requested by Subāhu], *Udānavarga* – Tib. *Ched-du brjod-pa'i tshoms* D326, D4099, P992, P5600 (included both in the Bka'-gyur and the Bstan-'gyur) [Collection of Indicative Verses], and several versions of the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* – Tib. *Shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa* [Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]. He also quotes dozens of treatises by outstanding Indian masters such as Asaṅga, Aśvaghoṣa, Atīśa, Candrakīrti, Kamalaśīla, Nāgārjuna, Śāntideva, and Vasubandhu.

¹¹ Terjék presents the content of Blo-bzang Ye-shes' "A garland of white lotus flowers" – *History of the transmission of the stages of the path to enlightenment* (see note 5), listing the Indian and Tibetan masters of the *lam-rim* teaching, then concludes as follows: "The tradition starts with Śākyā muni himself (No. 1), then forks off in two directions. The first, founded by Thogs-med [i.e. Asaṅga], is the Wide Way (rgya-čhe-ba'i lam), which was first cultivated by the Indian pandits (No. 2–No. 11) and was later transmitted by Dgon-pa-pa in Tibet to Nam-mkha' rgyal-mchan, the master of Coṇ-kha-pa (No. 12–No. 19). The other line, founded by Klu-sgrub [i.e. Nāgārjuna], is the Deep Way (zab-mo'i lam). This was taken up and maintained in Tibet by Po-to-pa, and handed down to Coṇ-kha-pa's other master, Āchos-skyon bzai-po (No. 20–No. 34). Following this the author directs his attention to the Bka'-gdams-pa masters, who trace back the origin of their traditions to Spyān-sīa chul-khrims, the disciple of 'Brom-ston (No. 35–No. 38). All the lines meet in the person of Coṇ-kha-pa (No. 39), from whom his disciples receive and carry on a unified teaching" (Terjék 1976: 61–64).

4. The Basis of Entering the Path: Relying on a Master

In his voluminous work Tsong-kha-pa gives masters¹² detailed instructions regarding how to lead the devoted students of each group along the path and help the members of the higher groups move to the next stage, and also provides students with advice how to rely¹³ on their teachers and strive for results under their guidance.

Tsong-kha-pa stresses that the help of a master is indispensable:

... slob-ma-la rgyud-la yon-tan sna gcig skye-ba dang skyon sna
gcig 'grib-pa-yan-chad bde-legs thams-cad-kyi 'byung-gnas ni
dam-pa'i bshes yin-pas thog-mar de bsten-pa'i tshul gal-che-ste /
Byang-chub-sems-dpa'i sde-snod-las /

« mdor-na byang-chub-sems-dpa'i spyod-pa thams-cad 'thob-
cing yongs-su rdzogs-pa dang de-bzhin-du pha-rol-tu phyin-pa
dang / sa dang bzod-pa dang ting-nge-'dzin dang mngon-par
shes-pa dang gzungs dang spobs-pa dang bsngo-ba dang smon-
lam dang sangs-rgyas-kyi chos thams-cad 'thob-cing yongs-su
rdzogs-pa ni bla-ma-la rag-las / bla-ma rtsa-bar gyur bla-ma-
las byung bla-ma skye-gnas dang skye-mched-du gyur bla-mas
bskyed bla-mas spel bla-ma-la brten bla-ma rgyur gyur-pa-dag-
go // » zhes gsungs-pa'i phyir-ro //

Po-to-ba'i zhal-nas kyang /

« rnam-grol bsgrub-pa-la bla-ma-las gal-che-ba med-de / tshe
'di'i bya-ba bltas-nas byas-pas chog-pa-la'ang slob-mkhan med-
par mi 'ong-na ngan-song-nas 'ongs-ma-thag-pa 'gro-ma-myong-
ba'i sar 'gro-ba-la bla-ma med-par ga-na 'ong » gsung-ngo //

(Tsong-kha-pa xyl., ff. 22b3–23a1)

“... the excellent teacher is the source of all temporary happiness and certain goodness, beginning with the production of a single good quality and the reduction of a single fault in a student's mind and eventually encompassing all the knowledge beyond that. Therefore, the way you initially rely on the teacher is important, for the *Scriptural Collection of the Bodhisattvas* (*Bodhisattva-pitaka*) states:

¹² Tib. *dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen* (Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*) literally means ‘virtuous friend’, or *bla-ma* (“the upper one” or “the higher one”).

¹³ Tib. *bsten* (“rely on somebody; respect, attend, serve somebody”).

In short, attaining and bringing to completion all the bodhisattva deeds, and, likewise, attaining and bringing to completion the perfections, levels, forbearances, concentrations, superknowledges, retentions of teachings heard, dedications, aspirational prayers, confidence to speak, and all the qualities of a buddha are contingent upon the guru. The guru is the root from which they arise. The guru is the source and creator from which they are produced. The guru increases them. They depend upon the guru. The guru is their cause.

Also, Bo-do-wa said:

For attaining freedom there is nothing more important than the guru. It is sufficient to learn the activities of this life by watching others, but you will not learn them well without an instructor. Likewise, without a guru, how can we succeed in traveling to a place where we have never been, having just been reborn from a miserable realm?"
 (Tsong-kha-pa 2000–2004: vol. I, 70)

5. Student Qualities Required for Entering the Path to Enlightenment

Students are expected to be in possession of certain qualities that enable them to behave according to the instructions of their masters. The below four are regarded as the most important:

- (1) chos-la don-gnyer che ба
 - (2) nyan-pa'i tshe yid legs-par gtod-pa
 - (3) chos dang chos smra-ba-la gus-pa chen-po 'jog-pa
 - (4) nyes-bshad dor-nas legs-bshad 'dzin-pa
- (Tsong-kha-pa xyl., f. 26b6)

- (1) striving very diligently at the teaching,
 - (2) focusing the mind well when listening to the teaching,
 - (3) having great respect for the teaching and its instructor, and
 - (4) discarding bad explanations and retaining good explanations.
- (Tsong-kha-pa 2000–2004: vol. I, 77)

In other words, students must be able to be diligent, listen to the master attentively, be respectful of the Buddha's teaching and the master, and differentiate between false and correct teachings.

Great respect (Tib. *gus-pa chen-po*) towards the Buddha's words (Tib. *chos*) and the teacher (Tib. *chos smra-ba*) is required, however at this point (before individuals enter the path) faith is not.

6. “The Root of All Good Qualities”: Generating and Training Faith

Tsong-kha-pa argues that faith has to be cultivated, generated, sustained and further developed, and also asserts that it is the very first quality that has to be attained.

He quotes the Buddha’s words in order to elucidate the nature and stress the importance of faith:

*Dkon-mchog ta-la-la'i gzungs-las /
 « dad-pa sngon-'gro ma-ltar bskyed-pa-ste //
 yon-tan thams-cad bsrung-zhing 'phel-bar byed //
 dogs-pa sel-zhing chu-bo-rnams-las sgrol //
 dad-pa bde-legs grong-khyer mtshon-byed yin //
 dad-pa rnyog-pa med-cing sems dang-byed //
 nga-rgyal spong-zhing gus-pa'i rtsa-ba yin //
 dad-pa nor dang gter dang rkang-pa'i mchog /
 lag-pa bzhin-du dge-sdud rtsa-ba yin // » zhes dang /*

*Chos bcu-pa-las kyang /
 « gang-gis 'dren-pa nges-'byung-la //
 dad-pa theg-pa'i mchog yin-te //
 de-phyir blo-dang ldan-pa'i mis //
 dad-pa'i rjes-su 'brang-ba bstten //
 ma-dad-pa-yi mi-dag-la //
 dkar-po'i chos-rnams mi skye-ste //
 sa-bon me-yis tshig-pa-la //
 myu-gu sngon-po ji-bzhin-no // »*

zhes rjes-su 'gro-lodog-gi sgo-nas dad-pa yon-tan thams-cad-kyi
 gzhir gsungs-so //

Jo-bo-la / ston-pas « Bod-la sgom-sgrub byed-pa mang-po yod-
 pa-la yon-tan khyad-par-can brnyes-pa mi bdog » zhus-pas / Jo-bo'i
 zhal-nas / « theg-chen-gyi yon-tan che-skyes chung-skyes thams-cad
 bla-ma-la bstten-nas skye-ba-la khyed Bod bla-ma-la tha-mal-pa'i
 'du-shes-las med ga-na skye » gsung-ba dang / Jo-bo-la / « A-ti-sha
 gdams-ngag zhu » zhes skad chen-pos zhus-pa-na / « he-he kho-bo-
 la rna-ba ta bzang-po bzang-po bdog-ste man-ngag bya-ba dad-pa
 yin dad-pa dad-pa gsung-ba-ltar dad-pa shin-tu gal-che'o // »
 (Tsong-kha-pa xyl. ff. 28b6–29a6)

“The *Formulae of the Three Jewels’ Blaze* (*Ratnolka-dhāraṇī*) states:

Faith is the prerequisite of all good qualities –
A procreator of them, like a mother
Who then protects and increases them.
It clears away doubts, frees you from the four rivers [ignorance,
attachment, craving, and wrong views],
And establishes you in the prosperous city of happiness and
goodness.
Faith cuts through gloom and clarifies the mind.
It eliminates pride and is the root of respect.
It is a jewel and a treasure.
Like hands, it is the basis of gathering virtue.
It is the best of feet for going to liberation.

Also the *Ten Teaching Sūtra* (*Daśadharmaśāstra*) states:

Faith is the best of vehicles,
Definitely delivering you into buddhahood.
Therefore, persons of intelligence
Rely on the guidance of faith.
Virtues will not arise
In people who have no faith,
Just as green sprouts do not grow
From seeds scorched by fire.

Thus, in light of what you gain when it is present and what you lose when it is not present, faith is the basis of all good qualities.

Geshe Drom-don-ba said to Atisha, “In Tibet there are many who are meditating and practicing, yet they are not attaining any special good qualities.” The Elder said, “All the significant and insignificant good qualities that pertain to the Mahāyāna arise from relying on a guru. You Tibetans only think of gurus as being common persons. How can good qualities arise?” Then again, when someone asked the Elder in a loud voice, “Atisha, please give an instruction,” he laughed. “Ha, ha. My hearing is very good. For me to give personal instructions you need faith, faith, faith!” Thus, faith is extremely important.”

(Tsong-kha-pa 2000–2004: vol. I, 80)

7. The Nature of the Faith

Tsong-kha-pa emphasizes that a master plays an essential role in helping a student progress. Even if the master is not perfect in his qualities, students should focus on his good qualities and disregard his faults. Such an attitude helps them trust and rely on him as well as believe (or, rather, be certain) that he is in full possession of both the Buddha's teachings and the methods for correctly guiding his students. Thus, students should approach their master as if he were the Buddha himself.

de-la spyir dkon-mchog dang las-'bras dang bden bzhi-la dad-pa
mang-du yod-kyang 'dir ni bla-ma-la dad-pa'o //
de yang bla-ma-la slob-mas ji-ltar blta-ba ni / *Lag-na-rdo-rje dbang-bskur-ba'i rgyud-las /*

« Gsang-ba-ba'i bdag-po slob-dpon-la slob-mas ji-ltar blta-bar
bya zhe-na / sangs-rgyas Bcom-ldan-'das-la ji-lta-ba de-bzhin-
du'o //
de-yi sems ni de-lta-na //
rtag-tu dge-ba skye-bar 'gyur //
de ni 'jig-rtan thams-cad-la //
phan-par byed-pa'i sangs-rgyas 'gyur // »

zhes gsungs-la / theg-pa chen-po'i mdo-sde-rnams-su'ang Ston-pa'i
'du-shes bskyed-dgos-par gsungs-shing / 'dul-ba-nas kyang de-ltar
gsungs-pa yod-do //

de-dag-gi don ni ji-ltar sangs-rgyas yin-par shes-pa-na de-la skyon
rtog-pa'i blo mi 'byung-zhing yon-tan sems-pa'i blo 'byung-ba-
ltar / bla-ma-la'ang ched-du byas-te skyon rtog-pa rnam-pa thams-
cad-du 'dor-zhing yon-tan rtog-pa'i blo sbyong-ba'o //

(Tsong-kha-pa xyl. f. 29a6–29b4)

“In general, faith is of many types – faith in the three jewels, faith in karma and its effects, faith in the four noble truths. However, here we are speaking of faith in the guru. With regard to how disciples should view their gurus, the *Tantra Bestowing the Initiation of Vajrapāṇi* (*Vajrapāṇi-abhiṣeka-mahā-tantra*) says:

If you would ask, O Lord of Secrets, how disciples should view masters, then I would answer that they should view them just as they view the Bhagavan.

If the disciples view their masters in this way,
 They will always cultivate virtues.
 They will become buddhas
 And benefit the entire world.

In the Mahāyāna sūtras as well it is taught that you must think of the guru as being the Teacher. The texts on discipline state this as well, and the meaning of their statements is as follows. When you recognize someone to be a buddha, you will not discern faults in that person, and you will pay attention to his or her good qualities.”

(Tsong-kha-pa 2000–2004: vol. I, 80–81)

Conclusion

The Tibetan word *dad-pa* is consistently used with the same meaning as the Sanskrit term *śraddhā*, and is usually translated as “faith” or “belief.” However, it is not belief in something incomprehensible or inconceivable. Rather, it is faith accompanied by certainty and confidence: a state of mind in which one is assured that the goal at the end of the path (enlightenment) is achievable and that one’s master is the right person for providing assistance to reach it.

Though “*dad-pa*” is one of the fundamental terms throughout the *Stages of the Path*, Tsong-kha-pa emphasizes that it is an indispensable starting point. Before he begins expounding his practical instructions for masters and students in the fourth chapter entitled “How to Lead Students with the Actual Instructions” (Tib. *gdams-pa dngos-kyis slob-ma ji-ltar bkri-ba'i rim-pa*), he devotes considerable attention to the methods of generating faith in students in its first subchapter entitled “How to Rely on the Teacher, the Root of the Path” (Tib. *lam-gyi rtsa-ba bshes-gnyen bsten-pa'i tshul*).

Abbreviations

- D The Sde-dge edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. Digitalized by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center. Catalogue numbers: Ui, Hakuju, et al., eds. 1934. *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bka-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur)*. Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University.
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- Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa. xyl. *Byang-chub-lam-rim che ба*. In The collected works (gsung 'bum) of the incomparable Lord Tsong kha pa Blo-bzang grags-pa. Xylograph, Sku 'bum Byams-pa gling Par khang, vol. 19 (pa), 519 ff.

The Two Basic Texts on Faith in the Tibetan *Bka'-gdams-pa* School

ALEXA PÉTER

In the West, the Dalai Lama-led *Dge-lugs-pa* school is the most well-known school of Tibetan Buddhism. In the 17th century, following violent strife among Buddhist sects, it emerged dominant and became the most powerful institution in Tibet.

The reformer Tsong-kha-pa founded the *Dge-lugs-pa* school, uniting the three *Bka'-gdams-pa* school lineages while integrating into his synthesis teachings from the *Sa-skya-pa*, *Bka'-brgyud-pa*, and other schools. To emphasize that he practiced training in the same spirit as the great Indian Buddhist master Atīśa and his disciples, Tsong-kha-pa named his school the “New *Bka'-gdams-pa*.¹ The term *Dge-lugs-pa* came into use only after his death.

Bka'-gdams-pa was a Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhist school. Its most characteristic teachings were Atīśa’s “awakening mind”² (Tib. *byang-chub-kyi sems*) and “stages of the path”³ (Tib. *lam-rim*). The school was founded in the 11th century by ’Brom-ston-pa, a Tibetan lay master and the foremost disciple of Atīśa. He transmitted the various lineages of Atīśa, dividing them among the so-called Three Noble Brothers:

¹ In 1991, Bskal-bzang rgya-mtsho, a Buddhist monk trained at Se-ra Monastery, founded the spiritual organization “New *Bka'-gdams-pa* Tradition – International *Bka'-gdams-pa* Buddhist Union.” He used the phrase “*Bka'-gdams-pa* Buddhism” not to cause confusion about the origins of the school’s teachings, but rather to emphasize that it was independent of other contemporary Tibetan Buddhist centers and Tibetan politics, and that he wanted to return to the purity and sincerity of the ancient *Bka'-gdams-pa* school (Ringu and Helm 2006: 164).

² The practice involves refining and purifying one’s motivations and attitude.

³ Atīśa’s teaching of the “stages of the path” includes the stages in the complete path to enlightenment. In 12th-century Tibet, it became known as “mind training” (Tib. *blo-sbyong*). “Geshe Chekhawa (1102–1176), a great *Bka'-gdams-pa* meditation master, was the author of the celebrated root text on the topic, *Training the Mind in Seven Points* (Tib. *Blo-sbyong don bdun-ma*), which is an explanation of Buddha’s instructions regarding “mind training” in Tibetan” (Kelsang 2002).

- Spyān-sngan tshul-khrims-'bar was entrusted with the oral transmission lineage, which mainly dealt with the Four Noble Truths.
- Phu-chung-ba gzhon-nu rgyal-mtshan was entrusted with the secret oral teachings of Atīśa.
- Po-to-ba rin-chen gsal-phyogs-las rnam-rgyal was entrusted with the teachings of the scriptural traditions, the six *Bka'-gdams-pa* treatises, and the hidden verbal sūtra and tantra transmissions.

Po-to-ba established the tradition of taking Atīśa's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* (Skt. *Bodhipathapradipam*, Tib. *Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma*) as the principal text of practice and complementing it with other Indian Buddhist texts, such as Nāgārjuna's *Six Collections of Reasoning*,⁴ commentaries on them, and Atīśa's commentaries on the middle view and on the nature of the "two truths"⁵ (Skt. *satya-dvaya*, Tib. *bden-pa gnyis*). These were the principal scriptures studied in the *Bka'-gdams-pa* school.

The *Bka'-gdams-pa* school divided their six basic texts (Tib. *gzhung drug*) into three groups and used them to elucidate the nature of a bodhisattva's vast activities. The same model was followed by the *Dge-lugs-pa* school.

The primary aim of the first two works is to teach conduct (Skt. *cārya*, Tib. *spyod-pa*):

1. Šāntideva: *A Compendium of Precepts* (Skt. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Tib. *Bslab-pa kun-las btus-pa*)⁶

This is a nineteen-chapter prose work containing commentaries on twenty-seven short mnemonic verses (Skt. *Śikṣāsamuccaya kārikā*, Tib. *Bslab-pa kun-las btus-pa'i tshigs le'ur byas-pa*).⁷ It consists primarily of quotations of varying length from sūtras considered to be the word of the Buddha.

⁴ *Six Collections of Reasoning* (Tib. *Rigs-tshogs drug*): *Discriminating Awareness* (Skt. *Prajñā-nāma mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, Tib. *Dbu-ma rtsa-ba shes-rab*), *Precious Garland* (Skt. *Ratnāvalī*, Tib. *Rin-chen 'phreng-ba*), *Refutation of Objections* (Skt. *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, Tib. *Rtsod-pa zlog-pa*), *Seventy Verses on Voidness* (Skt. *Śūnyatāsaptati*, Tib. *Stong-nyid bdun-bcu-pa*), *Finely Woven Sūtra* (Skt. *Vaidalya-sūtra-nāma*, Tib. *Zhib-mo rnam-thag zhes-byā-ba'i mdo*), *Sixty Verses of Reasoning* (Skt. *Yuktisaṃtika*, Tib. *Rigs-pa drug-cu-pa*).

⁵ The Buddhist doctrine of the "two truths" differentiates between two levels of truth: relative or commonsensical truth (Skt. *saṃvṛtisatya*, Tib. *kun rdzob bden-pa*) and absolute or ultimate truth (Skt. *paramārtha satya*, Tib. *don dam bden-pa*).

⁶ D3940, Bstan-'gyur, Dbu-ma, vol. 213 (khi), 3-194 ff (Translators: Jinamitra, Dānaśīla, Ye-shes sde).

⁷ D3939, Bstan-'gyur, Dbu-ma, vol. 213 (khi), 1-3 ff (Translators: Jinamitra, Dānaśīla, Ye-shes sde).

2. Śāntideva: *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (Skt. *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, Tib. *Byang-chub-sems-dpa'i spyod-pa-la 'jug-pa*)⁸

This is a famous Mahāyāna Buddhist text written in Sanskrit verse. It has ten chapters dedicated to the development of the mind of enlightenment through the practice of the six perfections. Tibetan scholars consider the ninth chapter to be one of the most succinct expositions of the *Madhyamaka* view. The tenth chapter became one of the most popular Mahāyāna prayers.

The second group of writings was intended to help practitioners in meditation (Skt. *samādhi*, Tib. *ting-nge-'dzin*):

3. Asaṅga: *The Bodhisattva Stages* (Skt. *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, Tib. *Byang-chub-sems-dpa'i sa*)⁹

This is the fifteenth section of the *Discourse on the Stages of Yogic Practice* (Skt. *Yogācārabhūmi*, Tib. *Rnal-'byor spyod-pa'i sa*),¹⁰ an encyclopedic *Yogācāra* work. While it is alternately attributed to either Asaṅga or Maitreya, it is likely the work of several 5th-century writers. The complete work is comprised of five major sections that describe seventeen levels, which cover the entire range of mental and spiritual stages in Buddhism as taught in the Mahāyāna.

4. Maitreya-nātha: *The Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras* (Skt. *Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra*, Tib. *Theg-pa-chen-po mdo-sde'i rgyan*).¹¹

This is a major work of Buddhist philosophy that is said to have been dictated to Asaṅga by Maitreya-nātha. The text presents the Mahāyāna path from a *Yogācāra* perspective. It consists of twenty-two chapters containing a total of eight hundred verses, and shows considerable similarity in arrangement and content to the above-discussed *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.

⁸ D3871, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Dbu-ma*, vol. 207 (la), 1-40 ff (Translators: Sarvajñādeva and Dpal-brtsegs).

⁹ D4037, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Sems-tsam*, vol. 231 (wi), 1-247 ff (Translators: Prajñāvarman, Yeshe sde, etc.).

¹⁰ D4035, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Sems-tsam*, vol. 229 (tshi), 1-283 ff.

¹¹ D4020, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Sems-tsam*, vol. 225 (phi), 1-39 ff (Translators: Śākyasimha, Dpal-brtsegs).

The third group was written with the aim of inspiring faith (Skt. *śraddhā*, Tib. *dad-pa*):

5. Āryaśūra: *The Garland of Birth Stories* (Skt. *Jātakamālā*, Tib. *Skyes-rabs-kyi rgyud*)¹²

When Indian Buddhist monks first set out to spread the Buddha's teaching, they faced the problem shared by all missionary groups: how to convince people to give up their old, respected, and comfortable ways for something new, foreign and different.

Buddhist missionaries made use of legendary stories about the Buddha's deeds and misdeeds on his long path to enlightenment to encourage people to lead ethical lives and to magnify his glory and sanctity. These legends are found in the *jātaka* tales, which simultaneously illustrate the doctrines of the faith. They were continually used in the religious discourses of the Buddhist teachers.

While many of the elements of the *jātakas* are rooted in ancient Indian literature, Buddhist missionaries also adopted and adapted many local legends, transforming them into stories of the Buddha's previous lives.¹³

Some legends about the Buddha's past lives became part of Buddhist scriptures. 500 *jātakas* are found in order of length (shortest to longest) in the *Minor Collection* division (Pāli *Khudhakanikāya*) of the Pāli Canon's *Suttapiṭaka*.¹⁴

Jātakas were translated into Tibetan in the 9th century. In the *Bka'-gyur*, there are two collections of *jātaka* tales: *The Sage and the Fool* (Skt. *Damamūko-nāma-sūtra*, Tib. *'Dzangs-blun zhes bya-ba'i mdo*)¹⁵ and *The Story of Birth* (Skt. *Jātaka nidāna*, Tib. *Skyes-pa rabs-kyi gleng-gzhi*).¹⁶

¹² D4150, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Skyes-rabs*, vol. 270 (hu), 1-135 ff.

¹³ "Many *jātakas* have parallels in the *Mahābhārata* ("Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty"), the *Pañcatantra* (animal fables), and the *Purāṇas*. Some turn up again in such places as Aesop's fables" (Doniger 1999: 562).

¹⁴ This work is a wide-ranging collection of fifteen books containing complete sūtras, verses, and smaller fragments of teachings.

¹⁵ D341, *Bka'-gyur*, *Mdo-sde*, vol. 74 (a), 129-298 ff.

¹⁶ D32, *Bka'-gyur*, *Shes-phyin*, vol. 34 (ka), 183-250 ff.

In the *Bstan-'gyur*, there is a separate part entitled *Skyes-rabs* in the *Commentaries of Parables* section (Tib. *Mdo-'grel*) that is over 1100 folios long.¹⁷

The collection *Jātakamālā* was compiled around the 4th century by Āryaśūra. It recounts thirty-four stories¹⁸ of the Buddha's previous births as a god, man or animal. The earlier Tibetan translation was made by Vidyākarasimha and 'Jam-dpal go-cha (Mañjuśrīvarman), who lived during the time of King Ral-pa-can (early 9th century).¹⁹

Most of the *jātakas* have a story-within-a-story structure that takes the form of “prose and verse” (Skt. *campukavya*). They begin with a “story of the present” (Skt. *paccuppanna-vatthu*), generally an account of some event in the life of the historical Buddha, such as an act of disobedience or folly among the brethren of the order, a discussion surrounding an ethical question, or an instance of eminent virtue.

The Buddha then tells a “story of the past” (Skt. *atīta-vatthu*) that shows that the event in question is similar to something that happened in one of his former lives, and presents a moral lesson.

Verses (Skt. *gāthā*) play important role in all *jātaka* tales as they summarize the moral of the stories in a poetic form that can be easily memorized.

¹⁷ *Skyes-pa rabs-kyi bstod-pa*: D1178, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Bstod-tshogs*, vol. 103 (ka), 255-277 ff.
Skyes-pa'i rabs-kyi rgya-cher bshad-pa: D4151, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Skyes-rabs*, vol. 270 (hu), 135-340 ff.

Seng-ge zhabs 'brin-pa'i skyes-pa rabs-kyi phreng-ba: D4152, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Skyes-rabs*, vol. 271 (u), 1-197 ff.

Byang-chub sems-dpa'i skyes-pa'i rabs-kyi chos-kyi gandī: D4157, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Skyes-rabs*, vol. 273 (ge), 103-107 ff.

Skyes-pa'i rabs-kyi rgyud-kyi dka'-'grel-pa: T4460, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Sna-tshogs*, vol. 314 (po), 275-312 ff.

¹⁸ The author intended to write one hundred stories connected to the “ten perfections” (Skt. *pāramitā*, Tib. *pha-rol-tu phyin-pa*), but only finished thirty-four (Chimpa 1990: 135).

¹⁹ Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan and Blo-gros dpal-bzang completed the later translation at Sa-skyā at the order of Mkhās-pa blo-gros brtan-pa in the early 15th century (Martin 2006: 521).

Below is an example that shows the characteristic structure of *jātakas*:

The Woodpecker²⁰

[*The story of the present (frame):*]

This story was told by the Master while dwelling at Jetavana, about the ingratitude of Devadatta. He ended it by saying, “*Not only now, but in former days did Devadatta show ingratitude.*”

[*The story of the past:*]

Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisattva came to life as a woodpecker in the Himālaya country.

Now a certain lion, while devouring his prey, had a bone stick in his throat. His throat swelled up so that he could not take any food and severe pains set in. Then this woodpecker, while intent on seeking its own food, as it was perched on a bough, saw the lion and asked him, saying, “*Friend, what ails you?*” He told him what was the matter, and the bird said, “*I would take the bone out of your throat, friend, but I dare not put my head into your mouth for fear you should eat me up.*” “*Do not be afraid, friend; I will not eat you up. Only save my life.*” “*All right,*” said the bird, and ordered the lion to lie down upon his side.

Then it thought: “*Who knows what this fellow will be about?*” And to prevent his closing his mouth, it fixed a stick between his upper and lower jaw, and then putting its head into the lion’s mouth, it struck the end of the bone with its beak. The bone fell out and disappeared. Then the woodpecker drew out its head from the lion’s mouth, and with a blow from its beak knocked out the stick, and hopping off sat on the top of a bough.

The lion recovered from his sickness, and one day was devouring a wild buffalo which he had killed.

Thought the woodpecker: “*I will now put him to the test,*” and perching on a bough above the lion’s head, it fell to conversing with him and uttered the first stanza:

“*Kindness as much as in us lay,
To thee, my lord, we once did show:
On us in turn, we humbly pray,
Do thou a trifling boon bestow.*”

²⁰ Translation from Francis and Neil 1897: 139–140.

On hearing this the lion repeated the second stanza:

“*To trust thy head to a lion’s jaw.
A creature red in tooth and claw,
To dare such a deed and be living still,
Is token enough of my good will.*”

The woodpecker on hearing this uttered one more stanza:

“*From the base ingrate hope not to obtain*

The due requital of good service done;

From bitter thought and angry word refrain,
But haste the presence of the wretch to shun.”

With these words the woodpecker flew away.

[*The story of the present (frame); the identification of the characters* (Skt. *samodhāna*):]

The Master, his lesson ended, identified the birth: “*At that time Devadatta was the lion and I myself was the woodpecker.*”

6. Dharmatrāta: *The Collected Sayings of the Buddha* (Skt. *Udānavarga*, Tib. *Ched-du brjod-pa'i tshoms*).²¹

The *Udānavarga* is an early Buddhist collection of topically organized chapters (Skt. *varga*) containing aphoristic verses or utterances (Skt. *udāna*) attributed to the Buddha. It was compiled by Dharmatrāta, a celebrated 1st-century doctor of the *Sarvāstivāda* school. The verses are generally found at the end of sermons or *sūtras*, and the Buddha probably used them to convey the essence of teachings to his audience in a few memorable lines.²²

Vidyākaraprabha and Rin-chen-mchog translated the text into Tibetan during the 9th century. Since the Tibetan version only says that the verses were translated from an Indian language, it is not known whether the original was in Sanskrit, Pāli or a vernacular Prakrit language.²³ It can be found – probably unintentionally – both in the *Bka'-gyur* and the *Bstan-'gyur* collections. Because Tibetans tend to accept it as Buddha’s original words, it was put in the *Parables* section (Tib. *Mdo-sde*) of the *Bka'-gyur*.

²¹ D326, *Bka'-gyur*, *Mdo-sde*, vol. 72 (sa), 209-253 ff.
D4099, *Bstan-'gyur*, *Mngon-pa* vol. 250 (hu), 1-45 ff.

²² There is a similar collection in the Pāli Canon (*Suttapiṭaka*, *Khuddhakanikāya* section) entitled *Dhammapada*.

²³ “Prakrit: Middle Indo-Aryan languages known from inscriptions, literary works and grammarians’ descriptions. Prakrit languages are related to Sanskrit but differ from and are contrasted with it in several ways” (Cardona 2013).

However, since it was compiled and arranged by Dharmatrāta, it was also included in the *Bstan-'gyur*, together with two commentaries.²⁴

The *Udānavarga* has around 950 verses divided into thirty-three chapters by topic. These chapters comprise four books, each of which contains about the same number of verses:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Book I. | 1. Impermanency, 2. Desire, 3. Craving, 4. Heedfulness,
5. Affection, 6. Morality, 7. Good Conduct, 8. Words,
9. Karma, 10. Faith, 11. The Ascetic, 12. The Path,
13. Honors |
| Book II. | 14. Hostility, 15. Mindfulness, 16. Miscellaneous,
17. Water, 18. Flower, 19. Horse, 20. Wrath,
21. The Tathāgata, 22. The Hearer, 23. Self, 24. Numbers |
| Book III. | 25. Friendship, 26. Nirvāṇa, 27. Sight, 28. Sin,
29. Day and Night, 30. Happiness |
| Book IV. | 31. The Mind, 32. The Bhikṣu, 33. The Brahmana |

The commentaries adopt the same structure. Each verse is generally preceded by a short description of the circumstances in which it was uttered. Such stories appear to have some historical basis, but the great majority of them were evidently invented for the purposes of the text.

The language of the *Udānavarga* is easy to understand, and it is therefore among the most popular canonical texts in the Buddhist world. It is known for the beauty of its poetry and the universality of its message.

Below are two verses from “Faith,” the tenth section:²⁵

“Faith is the greatest treasure of man in this world,
for he who in this world observes this law,
finds happiness: truth has the sweetest of all flavours and to live according to
knowledge is,
I declare, the best of lives.”
“The wise man, who has real faith,
morality, wisdom and who does keep them present in his mind,
casts off all sins; he is in the good way.”

²⁴ *Ched-du brjod-pa'i tshoms-kyi rnam-par 'grel-pa*: D4100, *Bstan-'gyur*, Mngon-pa vol. 250 (tu), 45-223 ff (Author: She-rab go-tsha, translators: Janardhana, Śākya blo-gros).
Ched-du brjod-pa'i gtam: D4173, *Bstan-'gyur*, Spring-yig, vol. 275 (hu), 1-4 ff (Author: Zla-ba, translator: Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba).

²⁵ Translation from Rockhill 1883: 15.

Conclusion

The six basic books of the *Bka'-gdams-pa* school lay the foundation for the practical side of students' education. The first two books show how to lead a virtuous life, the third and fourth teach proper meditation, and the fifth and six focus on the basis of all activities, namely, on the strengthening of faith, particularly in karma and its results. Teachers of the *Dge-lugs-pa* school put special emphasis on the importance of generating and developing faith in karma. They state that students should be aware of the workings of karma: while one cannot predict when its results will appear, they are certain and inescapable, and even a small karmic deed (whether good or bad) can bear great consequences. When instructing students, *Dge-lugs-pa* teachers often cite the *jātakas* and the *Udānavarga* in order to verify their teachings, and thus these two books have been regarded as principal sources for centuries.

Abbreviations

- D The Sde-dge edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. Digitalized by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center. Catalogue numbers: Ui, Hakuju, et al., eds. 1934. *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur)*. Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University.

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The Concept of Faith in Zhanran's *Diamond Scalpel* Treatise

MELINDA PAP

I. Introduction – The Role of Faith in the Tiantai Tradition

Before analyzing the concept of faith (*xin* 信) as it appears in the Diamond Scalpel (*Jin'gangbei* 金剛鉗; T46:1932) treatise, one of Zhanran's¹ 湛然 (711–782) most important works, let us examine through a few examples how faith is understood in the Tiantai 天台 tradition.

The following definition of faith is found in Guanding's 灌頂 (561–632) introduction to Zhiyi's² 智顥 (538–597) masterpiece on meditation, *The Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀; T46: 1911):

What is perfect faith? It is the conviction that all dharmas are empty, that they are nevertheless provisionally existent, and that they are the middle between these extremes. Though ultimately there are not one, two, three [separate views], yet there are one, two, three [separate views]. To say that these three do not exist [separately] forestalls the notion that they are one, two, and three, while to say that the three do exist [separately] illuminates this [multiplicity of] one, two, and three. When there is neither forestalling nor illuminating, all are alike ultimate, pure, and unimpeded. When hearing of the profundity not to fear, and the vastness not to doubt, and to be bold in hearing that they are neither profound nor vast – this is what is called having perfect faith.³

¹ Zhanran, according to the traditional view, was the ninth patriarch of the Tiantai school of Chinese Buddhism. He was also undoubtedly its second most important figure after its founder, Zhiyi. Zhanran is credited with reviving the Tiantai school during the Tang Dynasty (618–906). For information on his life, see Penkover 1993: 10-112.

² Regarding the life and ideas of Zhiyi, the fourth patriarch and de facto founder of Tiantai school, see Hurvitz 1962.

³ T46, no. 1911, p. 2, a14-18 Translation from Donner and Stevenson 1993: 114-115.

云何圓信？信一切法即空即假即中。無一二三而一二三。無一二三是遮一二三，而一二三是照一二三。無遮無照皆究竟清淨自在。聞深不怖，聞廣不疑，聞非深非廣意而有勇，是名圓信。

According to the above passage, “perfect faith” is the correct understanding and acceptance of the theory of the three truths / the threefold truth (*san di* 三諦), namely the doctrine of the complete interpenetration (*yuanrong* 圓融) of the truths of emptiness (*kong di* 空諦), conventional existence (*jia di* 假諦), and the middle (*zhong di* 中諦). Furthermore, it implies the simultaneous contemplation of these three truths in accordance with the teachings of Zhiyi, the founder of the Tiantai school.⁴ Therefore, faith in this case means acceptance of and belief in a religious theory central to Tiantai philosophy.

However, faith is not only the mere understanding and/or acceptance of a doctrine. It also implies practice based on it, since doctrine and practice cannot be separated. In the words of Zhiyi, they are like “the two wings of a bird” and “the two wheels of a cart.”⁵ In *Zhiguan fuxing zhuan hongjue* 止觀輔行傳弘決 a commentary on the *Mohe zhiguan*, Zhanran states that faith is the foundation of practice:⁶

From faith practice must arise.⁷ 信必起行。

In this case, faith is understood as the starting point and the very basis of religious practice.

In his *Mohe zhiguan*, Zhiyi also compares faith and wisdom, claiming that both are essential for correctly understanding the teachings.

If wisdom and faith are both present then when one hears that any single instant of thought is itself the right [thought of enlightenment], one’s faith will prevent one from disparaging [this teaching], while one’s wisdom will prevent one from fearing it.

In this case the beginning and the end will both be right. But if one lacks faith, one will think of the saintly realms as so lofty

⁴ On the threefold truth and threefold contemplation, see Swanson 1989: 113-123 and Ng 1993: 124-152.

⁵ Donner and Stevenson 1993: 4.

⁶ Donner and Stevenson 1993: 115.

⁷ T46, no. 1912, p. 153, a3 Translated by the author. Also see Donner and Stevenson 1993: 115.

and far-removed that one has no stake in their wisdom, while if one lacks wisdom, one will become exceedingly arrogant, declaring oneself to be equal of the Buddha. Under such circumstances, beginning and end will both be in error.⁸

若智信具足。聞一念即是，信故不謗，智故不懼。初後皆是。若無信高推聖境非己智分。若無智起增上慢謂己均佛。初後俱非。

According to Zhiyi, faith and wisdom are required in order to correctly understand the Buddhist teachings, and if one lacks either, one will not progress along the Buddhist path.

From the above examples, we can conclude that in Tiantai religious practice, faith was seen as having a very important role equal to that of wisdom. For the school, faith basically meant believing in the correctly understood teachings and basic doctrines of the school, and was thought to form the solid ground from which religious practice arises.

II. The Concept of Faith in Zhanran's *Diamond Scalpel* Treatise

Although the *Diamond Scalpel* treatise is basically a philosophical work that focuses on theoretical explanations of the Buddha-nature of the insentient realm, it also contains references to religious practice in general, and to the concept of faith in particular.

The core of this treatise is an imaginary philosophical debate that is presented as taking place in Zhanran's dream between him and an imaginary adversary called "guest" (*ke* 客), who by the end of the treatise becomes his disciple. We can thereby see the process of conversion and acquiring faith, as well as the method of teaching and giving rise to faith in a disciple. In the text, the guest gradually moves from his initial doubt (*yi* 疑) and complete rejection of Zhanran's teachings to partial belief and deepened faith, and finally obtains complete faith that is ready to be put into practice.

Below, I would like to examine the different stages of acquiring faith found in the treatise.

⁸ T46, no. 1911, p. 10, b9-12. Translation from Donner and Stevenson 1993: 207-208.

1. Introduction – Defining the Target of Faith

Before entering the philosophical debate, Zhanran defines the main theme and the purpose of his treatise: the explication of the Buddha-nature of the insentient realm. In this work he particularly emphasizes that the Buddhist practitioner needs to have faith in Buddha-nature, which he deems the very essence of Mahāyāna. However, first Buddha-nature must be understood correctly as an all-inclusive and universal principle.

The title of the work references the symbolic “golden scalpel” (*jin bei* 金鉗) from a parable in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (*Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經; T12: 374, T12:375)⁹ that alludes to Buddha-nature.¹⁰ Guanding’s Tiantai interpretation of the parable discusses the aforementioned three truths theory, one of the most important tenets of the school,¹¹ concluding that the true essence of Buddha-nature can only be seen through the simultaneous contemplation of the three truths. Zhanran stresses the importance of understanding

⁹ The parable from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* tells of a good doctor (the Buddha), who, with the use of a golden scalpel (the teachings of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*), removes the scales from the eyes of a totally blind person (unenlightened sentient beings). The doctor then shows the blind person one finger, two fingers and finally three fingers, asking him whether he can see them or not. After showing the third finger, the patient says he is able to hazily see the three fingers. The parable is a metaphor for the most advanced bodhisattvas being able to gain a vague understanding of their own Buddha-nature after hearing the teachings of the sūtra. For the original text, see T12: 375, p. 652, b28-c14.

¹⁰ The relation of this symbol and its meaning to Zhanran’s treatise was first explained in the earliest commentary on the treatise, *Personal Notes to the Diamond Scalpel Treatise* (*Jin’gang bei lun siji* 金剛鉗論私記; X56: 932), which was written by his disciple Mingkuang 明曠. See: X56, no. 932, p. 490, c2-7. For a Hungarian translation and interpretation of *Jin’gang bei* and *Jin’gang bei lun siji*, see Pap 2011: 99-314.

¹¹ In his *Commentary to the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Da banniepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏; T38: 1767), Zhiyi’s disciple Guanding (the fifth patriarch according to the Tiantai tradition) correlates the three fingers of the doctor (Buddha) in the aforementioned parable with the theory of the three truths, stating that Buddha-nature cannot be understood solely through meditating on the truth of emptiness or the two truths of emptiness and conventional existence, but can only be “slightly seen” through the simultaneous contemplation of the three truths. T38: 1767, p. 108, c2-5.

Buddha-nature, stating that Buddha-nature is the very essence of Mahāyāna.¹² According to him, the correct understanding of and faith in Buddha-nature is crucial for Buddhists in their path towards enlightenment. Here, the object of faith is the correctly understood idea of Buddha-nature.

The introductory section ends with Zhanran falling asleep on a silent evening while meditating on Buddha-nature. This is when Zhanran proclaims the basic formula of the text that is debated throughout the treatise: “Insentient things do possess Buddha-nature” (*wu qing you xing* 無情有性).¹³ In his dream, an uninvited “guest” appears, who challenges this statement. The rest of the treatise contains a philosophical debate between Zhanran and the guest. In the present article, I will attempt to describe the transformation that takes place in the mind of the guest, who first refuses to show Zhanran even basic respect (he does not bow in front of him), but by the end of the text accepts him as his master. Zhanran’s most important tools in awakening faith in the mind of his disciple are logical reasoning, presenting and interpreting a large number of quotations from various Buddhist scriptures in support of his theory, and finally, awakening wisdom that reaches beyond the boundaries of logical reasoning.

¹² “Many years have passed since I engaged myself in the study of Buddhist scriptures, but I have never embraced the sūtras without [searching for] the meaning of Buddha-nature. I’m afraid that if one doesn’t understand it, practicing religious austerity is in vain. The great teaching [Mahāyāna] is based on this [concept of Buddha-nature], effectiveness lies within this. It is the common path of every school [of Buddhism], it is where the multitude of streams rush to return, it is the essence of the many teachings, and the very aim of religious practice. If we think according to this [Buddha-nature], and we contemplate relying on it, then the worldly and the saint appear as one. Just as [every] color and [every] scent vanishes and becomes clear, [we realize that] the environment and the sentient beings of the Avīci hell all reside inside the mind of the most sacred one [Buddha], and the body and realm of Vairocana does not surpass one instant of thought of the most ignorant.” 自濫霑釋典，積有歲年，未嘗不以佛性義經懷。恐不了之，徒為苦行。大教斯立，功在於茲。萬派之通途，眾流之歸趣，諸法之大旨，造行之所期。若是而思之，依而觀之，則凡聖一，如色香混淨，阿鼻依正全處極聖之自心，毘盧身土不逾下凡之一念。 T46, no. 1932, p. 781, a21-26. Translated by the author.

¹³ T46, no. 1932, p. 781, a27-28.

2. The Stages of Acquiring Faith

2.1 The Phase of Complete Refusal and Opposition

In this stage, the guest rejects the idea that insentient things possess Buddha-nature, which he supports with a quotation from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*.¹⁴ Zhanran starts by refuting the strongest argument which stands against his own: a quotation from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* – the most authoritative text on the subject matter – explicitly stating that Buddha-nature does not refer to insentient things:

The guest said: I unworthily sought for the teachings of the Buddha, and slightly studied the basics, [yet] I often heard the exposition of this tenet: Isn't it so that, [when the Buddha] went to the śāla trees, with his very last words, in his final discourse he said: "Buddha-nature does not refer to insentient things." How can you alone say that insentient things do possess [Buddha-nature]?¹⁵

客曰：僕忝尋釋教，薄究根源，盛演斯宗：豈過雙林，最後極唱，究竟之談，而云：“佛性非謂無情。”仁何獨言無情有耶？

Zhanran's arguments can be summarized as follows: (1) The above statement belongs to the category of the relative teachings (*quan* 權) of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and is only an expedient method (*upāya*), like the teachings holding that *icchantikas* (the worse type of beings without any desire for enlightenment) do not have Buddha-nature. He argues that just as it is commonly believed that *icchantikas* have Buddha-nature (in spite of the fact that certain passages from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* state the contrary), the Buddha-nature of the insentient should also be accepted.¹⁶ (2) While the Hīnayāna divides things into the two categories of sentient and insentient, the Mahāyāna does not. This is the reason it is not stated in the scriptures that insentient things also have Buddha-nature.

Zhanran continues with a detailed analysis of the context in which the above statement in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* appears based on the idea of the relative and final teachings of the Buddha as understood by the Tiantai

¹⁴ The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* states, "Those things that lack Buddha-nature are walls, screens, tiles, stones, the so-called insentient things." 非佛性者，所謂一切牆壁瓦石，無情之物。 T12: 375, p. 828, b27-28. Translated by the author.

¹⁵ T46, no. 1932, p. 781, b2-4. In the present article every translation from the *Diamond Scalpel* treatise is my own. They differ from other translations available in English.

¹⁶ For the problem of the *icchantika* in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, see Liu 1984.

school. At this point, the conversion contains logical reasoning, quotations from the holy scriptures, and their explanations according to Tiantai doctrines.

2.2 The Phase of Doubt and Raising Questions

In this phase, while the guest still doubts the master, he asks more questions, reflecting his curiosity and interest. This allows him to gain new knowledge and advance towards faith. For example:

The guest said: Why is it that the relative teaching does not say that the conditional and revealing causes [of Buddha-nature]¹⁷ are omnipresent / universal?¹⁸

客曰：何故權教不說緣、了二因遍耶？

The guest said: Is it so that the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* only teaches [the relative and the final teachings] simultaneously?¹⁹

客曰：《涅槃》豈唯兼帶說耶？

In this section, Zhanran provides explanations of other examples of relative and final teachings from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, as well as those of final teachings from other sūtras. He argues that according to the final teaching, Buddha-nature is a universal, boundless, and omnipresent absolute principle that is free of any duality or categorization. For a Buddhist follower, it is essential to clearly see and understand the distinction between these two types of teachings in the scriptures. Zhanran refers to the final teachings of the *Lotus* and *Nirvāṇa-sūtras*, and further demonstrates his point using the concepts of mind-only (*wei xin* 唯心) and suchness (*zhenru* 真如; *bhūtatathatā*). Some of his stronger arguments are the following:

¹⁷ The three causes of Buddha-nature are the following: (1) the conditional cause (*yuan yin* 緣因), which allows sentient beings to practice and create proper causes and conditions for enlightenment, (2) the revealing / complete cause (*liao yin* 了因), which refers to the inherent potential for wisdom, and (3) the direct cause (*zheng yin* 正因), which refers to the principle that all beings are inherently endowed with Buddha-nature (Swanson 1989: 133-134).

¹⁸ T46, no. 1932, p. 782, b7.

¹⁹ T46, no. 1932, p. 782, b20.

To believe that the mind-only includes [everything] and yet question whether [insentient things] have [Buddha-nature] or not is to question whether your own mind has [Buddha-nature] or not.²⁰

信唯心具，復疑有無，則疑己心之有無也。

Therefore you must know that the ten-thousand dharmas are equal to suchness, because of the unchanging [aspect of suchness], as well as that suchness is equal to the ten-thousand dharmas, because of the ‘changing according to conditions’ [aspect of suchness]. If you believe that insentient things do not have Buddha-nature, then isn’t this [belief of yours] the same as [saying that] the ten-thousand dharmas do not possess suchness? For this reason would you exclude dust from the notion of ten-thousand dharmas? For what reason would you separate the essence of suchness into those [insentient things] and self [sentient beings]?²¹

故子應知：萬法是真如，由不變故。真如是萬法，由隨緣故。子信無情無佛性者，豈非萬法無真如耶？故萬法之稱，寧隔於纖塵？真如之體，何專於彼我？

2.3 The Phase of Partial Belief

After hearing the above arguments, the guest’s attitude changes: he now partially believes Zhanran’s arguments, but still has more questions. Only now does he give Zhanran proper respect:

After this, the guest respectfully stepped back, bent his knee and uttered politely: The principle behind the parable of water and waves is truly [as you said]. Once I heard someone quoting from the *Dazhidu lun*, saying, “Suchness inside insentient things should only be named dharma-nature, and only inside sentient beings should it be called Buddha-nature.” Why do you use the term Buddha-nature [in both cases]?²²

²⁰ T46, no. 1932, p. 782, c8-9.

²¹ T46, no. 1932, p. 782, c19-22.

²² T46, no. 1932, p. 783, a4-7.

於是野客恭退，吳跪而諮曰：波水之譬，其理實然。僕曾聞人引《大智度論》，云：“真如在無情中，但名法性，在有情內，方名佛性。”仁何故立佛性之名？

In his answer to the above question, Zhanran first points out that the above statement is not from the *Dazhidu lun*, but from a commentary.²³ Then, he offers a detailed analysis and categorization of certain terms, which can be seen as synonyms for the notion of Buddha-nature. He argues that it is irrelevant and wrong to differentiate dharma-nature from Buddha-nature.

2.4 The Phase of Complete Belief

At this point, the guest admits that he was wrong, and openly declares that he now believes Zhanran. However, he still has uncertainties, which he asks Zhanran to clarify. This is his first step towards acquiring faith, since he is ready to fully trust a master and completely believe in his teachings.

The guest said: You have well discerned [right from wrong], indeed you have destroyed my serious doubts. I believe [now] that each and every dharma has the direct cause of Buddha-nature. Yet I still don't know what to think about the theory that the three causes [of Buddha-nature] contained inside the direct cause are also universal as seeds, as practice, and as result, and that every particle of dust and every single mind is identical with the nature of mind of every sentient being and every buddha.²⁴

客曰：仁善分別，實壞重疑。信一切法皆正因性。而云，正中三因，種遍，修遍，果遍，又云，一塵一心即一切生佛之心性，情猶未決。

Not only does the guest's attitude change, but Zhanran's debating and teaching method does as well. Up until this point, Zhanran used strictly logical arguments and scriptural interpretations, and succeeded in convincing the guest

²³ The above statement can be found in Fazang's 法藏 (643-712; the founding patriarch of the Huayan 華嚴 school) work, *Notes on the Meaning of Treatise on the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun yiji* 大乘起信論義記): “[Suchness] inside sentient beings is called Buddha-nature, and inside insentient things is called dharma-nature.” 抑眾生數中，名為佛性，抑非眾生數中，名為法性。T44: 1846, 0247c13–c14. Translated by the author.

²⁴ T46, no. 1932, p. 783, c11-13.

about the correctness of his theory. Now, he proceeds to awaken faith inside his disciple, for which intuitive insight and wisdom that goes beyond the rational mind is necessary. Therefore, he presents 46 questions to the disciple, each of which contains a logical paradox. Zhanran promises that by correctly answering even only one, all of his doubts will vanish and he will be able to see the whole universe in perfect harmony and unity as the inter-penetration of all dharmas. Each question has a twofold aim: to directly refute a mistaken theory and to indirectly point towards the truth. At this point, the questions are not answered by Zhanran because they are meant to awaken intuitive insight in the disciple (and the reader) by urging him to meditate on their meaning. The keys to answering them are basically two tenets of Tiantai philosophy: the theories of non-duality (*bu'er* 不二) and mutual containment (*hu ju* 互具). To correctly answer to these questions, one must reach beyond the boundaries of the rational mind and find intuitive wisdom inside.²⁵ This type of argumentation is not unusual in Tiantai philosophy - Zhiyi similarly characterizes the final truth as being inconceivable (*bu ke siyi* 不可思議) and subtle / wonderful (*miao* 妙).²⁶

Therefore, it can be said that perfect faith, just like wisdom, surpasses the boundaries of the rational mind.

2.5 The Phase of Gaining Faith – The Conversion of the Guest

After hearing these questions, faith arises inside the mind of the guest. Faith, wisdom, and deeper understanding enable him to summarize the essence of the teachings he has heard. He himself becomes a teacher and an interpreter of doctrine. Not only does he admit that he was wrong before, but he also explains the cause of his misunderstanding and formulates his newly gained vision of Buddhist teachings:

The guest said: The meaning [of the truth] you have established clearly differed from what I have heard before. When I first heard [you saying that insentient things have Buddha-nature], I thought

²⁵ For example, the fourteenth and fifteenth questions are as follows: “Question: Is mind-only only mind, or is it form-only as well? If it is not form-only, then is form not mind? Question: The mind-only creates only the realm and the self. Are the realm and the self / the creator and created the same, or are they different?” 問：唯心唯心，亦唯色耶？若不唯色，色非心耶？ 問：唯心所造，唯依與正。依正、能所同耶？異耶？T46, no. 1932, p. 784, a6-8.

²⁶ For Zhiyi’s interpretation of ‘subtle’ (*miao*), see Swanson 1989: 135-138.

[you meant] that one blade of grass, one piece of wood, one piece of tile, and one particle of dust each has its own Buddha-nature, and that each of them [separately possesses] the cause and result [of Buddha-nature] and includes completely the conditional and revealing causes [of Buddha-nature]. If it was so, I could not accept it. Why? Because grasses and trees flourish, then fade, dust and tile exist for an eon, and then disappear. Aren't these things alone unable to cultivate the cause and reach the result? Otherwise Buddha-nature would perish and reborn the same way [within these].²⁷ Everywhere in the world these are called insentient things, and therefore they say that insentient things cannot have Buddha-nature. So, on the basis of common knowledge circulating in the world, I doubted the principle set forth by you. It was my deepest loss! There's no mistake greater than this!²⁸

客曰：仁所立義，灼然異僕於昔所聞。僕初聞之，乃謂一草、一木、一礫、一塵，各一佛性，各一因果，具足緣、了。若其然者，僕實不忍。何者？草、木有生有滅，塵、礫隨劫有無。豈唯不能修因得果？亦乃佛性，有滅有生。世皆謂此，以為無情，故曰，無情不應有性。僕乃誤以世所傳習，難仁至理。失之甚矣！過莫大矣！

Convinced that the guest now basically understands the essence of his teachings, Zhanran further urges him to answer one of the 46 questions. His gesture can be interpreted to mean that while insight and understanding is essential, one has to be able to verbally express newly gained knowledge of the truth. In other words, one has to be able to find words to express faith. The guest presents his newly gained faith by summarizing the very essence of the teachings Zhanran has just taught him:

If we already understood that Buddha-nature is universal, than we realize that buddhahood as a result contains the Buddha-nature as a cause of self and others, and that one's own mind contains the virtue of the result of all buddhas. If we contemplate [existence] from the level of result, with the eyes of a buddha and the wisdom of a buddha, then there are only buddhas, and no sentient beings. If at the level of cause, true wisdom and true

²⁷ For an explanation of this passage, see Schmithausen 2009: 259-264.

²⁸ T46, no. 1932, p. 784, b20-26.

eyes [eyes able to see the truth] deeply accord with it, then here too every sentient being is a buddha, there is no other result of the buddhas, and therefore there are no buddhas other than sentient beings. If sentient beings [try to] grasp this [concept of Buddha-nature] while positing the concept of ego, then there are no buddhas, only sentient beings. When a novice is able to have faith in the teaching, and venerates the principle, than there are no sentient beings as well, there are only buddhas. If we loose it, then there are neither sentient beings, nor buddhas. If we understand it, then [the non-duality of] cause and result will be clear.²⁹

了性遍已，則識，佛果具自他之因性，我心具諸佛之果德。果上以佛眼、佛智觀之，則唯佛，無生。因中，若實慧、實眼冥符，亦全生是佛，無別果佛，故生外無佛。眾生以我執取之，即無佛，唯生。初心能信教，仰理，亦無生，唯佛。亡之，則無生無佛。照之，則因果昭然。

We must know that sentient beings only possess the absolute principle [of Buddha-nature], and the buddhas have attained its realization. Sentient beings only see phenomena, and buddhas have realized the absolute principle. Therefore sentient beings only possess phenomena and absolute principle within delusion, but buddhas possess phenomena and absolute principle within enlightenment. Although delusion and enlightenment are different, the essence of phenomena and absolute principle is one and the same. Therefore when one buddha fulfills the Path, there's nothing in the whole reality-realm (*dharma-dhātu*) that is not identical with the realm and the self of this buddha. This is true for one buddha and all the buddhas. Sentient beings themselves are within the realm and self of the buddhas, but they see pain and pleasure, rising and falling differently. They consider everything separately, they create their own person and realm, where purity and defilement intermingle, and creation and destruction are both within. Wasn't this the general meaning of your questions?³⁰

²⁹ T46, no. 1932, p. 784, c18-24.

³⁰ T46, no. 1932, p. 784, c24-p. 785, a1.

應知，眾生但理，諸佛得事。眾生但事，諸佛證理。是則眾生，唯有迷中之事、理。諸佛，具有悟中之事、理。迷悟雖殊，事理體一。故一佛成道，法界無非此佛之依正。一佛既爾，諸佛咸然。眾生自於佛依正中，而生殊見苦藥(樂)、昇沈。一一皆計，為己身土，淨穢宛然，成壞斯在。仁所問意，豈不略爾？

2.6 Faith put into Practice – Meditation

In this section, further dimensions of faith are revealed. Here, it is argued that faith not only means theoretical knowledge, but also involves religious practice and meditation, and necessitates teaching and converting others.

After praising his disciple for correctly answering his questions and proving the accuracy of his theoretical knowledge, Zhanran further points out that theoretical knowledge is worth nothing without practice. While answering his disciple's questions about religious practice, he points out that Zhiyi established the core of Tiantai practice in his masterpiece on meditation, the *Mohe zhiguan*, and states that true practice and meditation should rely on the instructions contained therein. Since Zhanran does not wish to discuss Tiantai practice in detail here, he only gives a brief outline of it.

After highlighting the importance of practice, Zhanran returns to the main subject of his treatise, the Buddha-nature of the insentient. He explains why masters of other schools of Buddhism mistakenly perceive Buddha-nature, and how Buddha-nature should be understood in accordance with the four teachings (*si jiao* 四教) as set forth by the Tiantai school. He further explains some basic teachings and key concepts of Tiantai philosophy, such as the three thousand worlds present in one instance of thought (*yi nian san qian* 一念三千), the prominence of the *Lotus Sūtra*, etc.

Zhanran concludes his words by encouraging his disciple to practice persistently:

With regard to you having been able to hear this, one can say that for a long time [you have accumulated good karmic] seeds. Practice it diligently and do not loose it. I wish to meet you in the future in the congregation of buddhas.³¹

子得聞之，可謂久種。勤而習之，無使焦敗。願未來世，諸佛會中與子相遇。

³¹ T46, no. 1932, p. 785, c28-29.

2.7 Faith put into Practice – The Necessity of Teaching Others

The last part of the treatise begins with a declaration by the guest, who wants to be a preacher of the truth. He says that the only appropriate means of expressing his gratitude to the master is to spread the true teaching:

Hence the guest said with mixed feelings of sorrow and joy: Even the sacrifice of my body would not be a [proper] recompense, even the smashing of my bones would not be a [proper] reward. What if I repay you for what I have heard only with spreading everywhere the meaning [of your teachings]?

於是野客悲喜交集曰：投身莫報，粉骨寧酬。唯以此義，隨方轉說，以報所聞，如何？³²

First Zhanran states that one has to teach others according to their spiritual level, using expedient methods (*upāya*) as taught by the *Lotus Sūtra*. Secondly, he explains how to teach the principle of Buddha-nature in general and the theory of the Buddha-nature of the insentient in particular. In the process of teaching, the listener's former beliefs must be taken into account: one must consider his words, and gradually move to explaining the ultimate truth in accordance with what he already believes, as well as what he has not accepted or understood yet.

Zhanran presents the following steps in teaching others about the Buddha-nature of the insentient:

1. Explanation of Buddha-nature as cause. For the deluded mind, the three causes of Buddha-nature are equal to the threefold path of *samsāra* (defilement, karma and suffering), and these are equal to the three causes of Buddha-nature. Enlightenment is present inside delusion, and delusion is the starting point for achieving enlightenment:

If a sentient being, who has not yet received the teachings, comes to your place, then first you have to say the following: From timeless beginnings you only possess defilement (*kleśa*), karma and suffering, and nothing else, all of these are equal with the absolute principle of Buddha-nature. Because you have never resolved to seek enlightenment, and you have never done any

³² T46, no. 1932, p. 786, a1-2.

religious practice for this, the three causes [of Buddha-nature in your case] should equally be called the direct cause. Therefore I say that every sentient being possesses the direct cause of Buddha-nature.³³

若有眾生未稟教者，來至汝所，先當語云：汝無始來，唯有煩惱、業、苦而已，即此全是理性。三因，由未發心，未曾加行，故性緣了，同名正因。故云眾生，皆有正性。

2. After the disciple believes the above theory, one has to define Buddha-nature as being universal, omnipresent, and infinite like space:

After [your disciple] already believes that this [Buddha-]nature is present in his own mind, then show him that this [Buddha-]nature is neither external nor internal, that it pervades infinite space, is the same as every Buddha's [nature], and is equal to the *dharma-dhātu*.³⁴

既信己心有此性已，次示此性非內外，遍虛空，同諸佛，等法界。

3. When the disciple already believes the above theory, the teacher has to show that according to the principle of inter-penetration Buddha-nature also includes everything. Since the bodies and realms of the buddhas at the level of result are characterized by non-duality, in the same way, at the level of cause, non-duality should define sentient beings and their realms of existence. Since the realm of existence includes insentient things, one has to realize that insentient things also possess Buddha-nature:

After your disciple already believes that [Buddha-nature] pervades everything, then show him that it includes everything. Because it is [shared in] common with all the buddhas, and is equal with the *dharma-dhātu*, it includes the bodies of all the buddhas, one buddha, and every buddha, as well as the realms of all the buddhas, one realm, and every realm. The bodies and realms [of the buddhas] are equal, [therefore] what can be said about the body can also be said about the realm. This is the same with regard to big

³³ T46, no. 1932, p. 786, a12-15. For an explanation of this passage, see Ziporyn 2006: 186–195.

³⁴ T46, no. 1932, p. 786, a15-18.

and small, and one and many. Because [the insentient realm] possesses this nature, it should be said that it has Buddha-nature.³⁵

既信遍已，次示遍具。既同諸佛，等於法界，故此遍性，具諸佛之身，一身一切身，如諸佛之感土，一土一切土。身土相即，身說土說，大小一多，亦復如是。有彼性故，故名有性。

After presenting a methodology of teaching, the treatise ends with the guest proclaiming his faith, and Zhanran waking up from his dream:

I now allow for you to be further guided by the path of the one [Tiantai] school. Be able to see all these inside you without a master. You should also follow this teaching, and spread it the same way [as I taught you]. At this point the guest revered joyously [and said]: I will forever hold to and keep this [teaching], I will spread and proclaim it wherever I will be, and I will never go against your will. With a serene face he bowed once more, and then left quietly.³⁶

余今准此一家宗途獎導於子。非師己見。子亦順教，如是流行。野客於是歡喜頂受：自爾永劫唯奉持之，所在宣弘，不違尊命。歛容再拜，安庠而出。

I suddenly woke up from my dream, and the one who was asking, the one who was answering, the questions, and the answers were nowhere to be found.³⁷

忽然夢覺，問者、答者、所問、所答，都無所得。

III. Conclusion

The *Diamond Scalpel* treatise can be seen as the story of a conversion and gradual evolution of doubt into faith. The stages presented above can be seen in this process. Faith in this case means faith in the correctly understood

³⁵ T46, no. 1932, p. 786, a17-21.

³⁶ T46, no. 1932, p. 786, b16-19.

³⁷ T46, no. 1932, p. 786, b19-20.

principle of Buddha-nature, in other words, Buddha-nature in light of the threefold truth theory as a universal principle that includes sentient beings and the insentient realm. The first phase of gaining faith is gained through rational understanding, knowledge based on the holy scriptures, and understanding the heritage of the former patriarchs of the tradition. The second phase goes deeper and requires wisdom and intuitive vision that reaches beyond the boundaries of the rational mind. By the end of the treatise we learn that faith still has further dimensions. In other words, religious practice and meditation should arise from it, and that one should be able to find the right words to express one's faith, to teach others, and to spread the Dharma.

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“Trusting Words” in Pre-Buddhist Chinese Texts

GÁBOR KÓSA

This study explores the pre-Buddhist Chinese background of the word *xin* 信. I argue that the traditional Chinese understanding of this word is “to consider something or someone trustworthy,” and that the pre-Buddhist Chinese tradition usually associated it with the act of speech and sometimes the written word. First, I will briefly summarize some well-known facts on its usage in Buddhist texts, and then offer some approaches to the analysis of the character *xin* 信. The remainder of the paper will be devoted to considering a number of cases which demonstrate that *xin* 信 and *yan* 言 (or, in Buddhist texts, *xin* and *yu* 語) appear together on a regular basis.

Trusting Words in Buddhist Scriptures

Buddhist sūtras are replete with expressions that refer to believers’ willingness to trust, and therefore to accept, the Buddha’s words (*buddhavacana*).¹ One of the typical constructions to express this notion is simply “trust the Buddha’s word” (*xin fo yu* 信佛語). Below are some examples:

“If there is someone who believes the Buddha’s words...”²

“...(they) all believed the words of the Buddha.”³

¹ I would like to thank everyone that participated in this conference, especially Prof. Imre Hamar, who offered some comments regarding my talk. In collecting Buddhist and pre-Buddhist Chinese examples for the present paper, I heavily relied on the electronic version of the Taishō Buddhist Canon (CBETA) and the homepage of the Thesaurus Linguae Sericae project (http://tls.uni-hd.de/main/basic_ch_main.lasso, abbreviated as TLS). I primarily used the TLS to locate certain passages, and therefore in this paper most non-Buddhist references are given as they appear in this database. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted. When I modified pre-existing translations, I made a note that I did so in a footnote. In my paper I use *pinyin* transcription throughout, and made all texts consistent in this respect.

² *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經 (T01n0026: p0484b13): 若有信佛語者…

³ *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經 (T04n0202: p0442b11): …皆信佛語。

“Those other voice-hearers—it is because they have faith in the Buddha’s words that they can comply with this sūtra, not because of any wisdom of their own.”⁴

“When the hearers listened to the explanation, in their heart, they believed in the Buddha’s words.”⁵

“Trust only the Buddha’s words, recite exclusively according to the scripture, and you will be reborn (in the Pure Land).”⁶

“Furthermore the sentient beings believed the words of the Buddha, the words of the bodhisattvas, and the words of the virtuous friends [*kalyāṇamitra*].”⁷

Similarly, a standard motif of the major Buddhist sūtras is a special ending in which the disciples depart from the site of a longer sermon with utmost joy and the intention to apply the sermon’s message in their life. One of the expressions used is “joyously trust and accept” (*huanxi xinshou* 歡喜信受). For example, consider the following excerpt:

“After the Buddha had spoken this sūtra, Śāriputra along with all the bhiksus, as well as the devas, humans, and asuras from all worlds, heard what the Buddha had said, and joyously believing and accepting (the Buddha’s teachings), they paid their respects and departed.”⁸

Trust and words are therefore related in various Buddhist scriptures. Interestingly, however, this intimate relationship is already present in pre-Buddhist Chinese writings. In the following, without claiming that the latter influenced the former, I would like to explore this.

Etymology and Part of Speech

It is widely known that trust (*xin* 信) is one of the fundamental virtues in Confucianism; in the present study, however, I will not analyze the philosophical

⁴ Translation from Watson 1993: 74; *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (T09n0262: 0015b18a): 其餘聲聞信佛語故，隨順此經，非己智分。

⁵ *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (T25n1509: p0563b24–25): 聽者聞說，心信佛語。

⁶ *Jingtu lun* 淨土論 (T47n1963: p0085a): 但信佛語，依經專念，即得往生。

⁷ *Jingtu lun* 淨土論 (T47n1963: p0102b19–20): 又眾生信佛語、諸菩薩語、善知識語。

⁸ *Fo shuo Amituo jing* 佛說阿彌陀經 (T12n0366: p0348a26–28): 佛說此經已，舍利弗及諸比丘、一切世間天、人、阿修羅等聞佛所說，歡喜信受，作禮而去。

notions associated with this word. Instead, I will concentrate on the apparently close relation of trust and words.

Xin 信 appears to be etymologically related to *yan* 言, and therefore it does seem predestined to be used in the same context. It is standard to regard it as a so-called *huiyi* 會意 character. For example, consider the famous postface of Xu Shen's 許慎 (ca. 58 – ca. 147) *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters), where the author introduces six types of script (*liushu* 六書):

“According to the *Zhōulǐ*, school begins at the age of eight. When the Protector teaches the sons of the state, he begins with the *liushū*. The first of these is *zhǐshí* ('pointing at things'). *Zhǐshí* characters are the ones that can be understood by looking at them, the meaning of which can be seen through observation. The characters 上 and 下 are like this. (...) The fourth is *huiyi* ('joining ideas'). *Huiyi* characters are the ones that conjoin categories to present the indicated meaning. The characters 武 and 信 are like this.”⁹

The passage thus suggests that Xu Shen saw *xin* 信 as being comprised of two individual parts, the meanings of which come together to express its overall meaning. However, we must also bear in mind that, as is clear from the educational context, Xu Shen devised this system of the six types of characters as a mnemonic aid and not as an objective etymological description (although it was usually understood as such in subsequent centuries).¹⁰ *Xin* as a *huiyi* compound would mean someone who is “close” to his words, or who is standing by his word.¹¹ However, as Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 remarks, in the archaic script “we seldom find characters which depend on a combination of graphic components to convey a meaning.”¹² He also adds that “most scholars nowadays regard the character *xìn* as a *xíngshēng* [形聲] graph, derived from 言 *yán*, and 人 *rén* as phonetic (Táng Lán [唐蘭], however, holds that *yán* is phonetic).”¹³

⁹ Translation from Galambos 2011: 396. *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, Xu 敘: 周禮八歲入小學, 保氏教國子, 先以六書。一曰:指事。指事者, 視而可識, 察而可見, 上下是也。(...) 四曰:會意。會意者, 比類合誼, 以見指撝, 武信是也。

¹⁰ Galambos 2006: 54–55.

¹¹ Galambos 2006: 58.

¹² Qiu 2000: 155.

¹³ Qiu 2000: 155.

In favor of the general view that, despite its strange position, *yán* 言 is the semantic radical, one could point to the Guodian version of the graph (GD3.1.20) from the 3rd century B.C., which more clearly suggests that *yan* 言 (音) is the radical of the character:¹⁴  =  +  /  / .¹⁵

The graph *yan* 言 appears several times in the Guodian corpus with the same basic structure:

GD1.1.26:  ; GD1.4.1:  ; GD1.17.11:  ; GD1.27.7:  ; GD1.31.20:  ;
 ; GD2.10.11:  ; GD3.2.8:  ; GD3.9.9:  ; GD18.1.1:  ;
GD18.1.8:  ; GD18.1.15:  ; GD18.2.7:  ; GD18.2.11:  ; GD18.3.1:  ; GD18.4.9:  ; GD18.5.13:  ; GD18.23.13:  ;

As is the case with *xin*, the same graph appears as a radical in other Guodian characters:

GD1.4.28:  =  +  = 詒 ; GD2.14.21:  =  +  = 詔 ; GD18.6.8:  = 詔

Although Classical Chinese, unlike numerous other languages, does not really observably distinguish between parts of speech,¹⁶ nevertheless, in the majority of instances, a word can be described as having a basic propensity towards being one. *Xin* is fundamentally used as an adjective (“trustful, reliable, faithful”), however it must be noted that adjectives basically constitute a subcategory of verbs in classical Chinese:¹⁷

“... my prince had a faithful servant...”¹⁸

“Trustworthy words are not pleasant.”¹⁹

“...loyal to the friends.”²⁰

¹⁴ Galambos 2006: 58–59.

¹⁵ See Matthias L. Richter’s Database (<http://www.colorado.edu/ealc/matthiasrichter/database.html>, accessed on December 12, 2013).

¹⁶ See e.g. Kennedy 1964, Mártonfi 1977. For other opinions, also see Harbsmeier 1998: 127–130.

¹⁷ Pulleyblank 1995: 12, 24–25.

¹⁸ Translation from Legge 1960: 328; *Zuozhuan* 左傳 7.15.2: 寡君有信臣...

¹⁹ *Daodejing* 道德經 81.1: 信言不美。

²⁰ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 19.6 (Lai–Fu 2000: 175): 信於朋友...

This adjectival use of the word is the base of the verbal usage “to consider something/somebody trustworthy, to deem something/somebody reliable.” This type of verbal meaning of an adjective can be called its ‘putative’ usage. In the Buddhist context, including the examples cited above (*xin fo yu* 信佛語, *xinshou fo yu* 信受佛語, *xinjie ...fo yu* 信解...佛語), *xin* 信 is usually used in this way. Thus, these examples could be literally translated as “(he/she/they) found the Buddha’s word reliable/trustworthy” (*xin fo yu* 信佛語).

Naturally, *xin* can also be used as a noun, as exemplified, for example, in the following sentences:

“By rectifying his countenance, he welcomes [he is close to] trustworthiness.”²¹

“When a ruler loves trustworthiness, then none of his people will dare to not be honest.”²²

“...then there is no way for him to gain the confidence of ordinary people.”²³

An interesting example of using the same word multiple times as a different part of speech can be found in the *Xunzi* 荀子.

“Trusting the trustworthy is trust (*xin xin*, *xin ye* 信信、信也); suspecting the suspect is also trust.”²⁴

Trusting Words in Pre-Buddhist Chinese Writings

In the examples above, *xin* appears in a general context as an adjective, verb, or noun. The examples below, however, clearly exhibit a close relationship between trust (*xin* 信) and word (*yan* 言). Firstly, let us look at some pre-Buddhist works in which *xin* appears as an adjective:

²¹ Translation from Slingerland 2003: 79; *Lunyu* 論語 8.4: 正顏色，斯近信矣...

²² Translation from Slingerland 2003: 140; *Lunyu* 論語 13.4: 上好信，則民莫敢不用情。

²³ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 18.1 (Lai-Fu 2000: 158): ...無道得小人之信矣。

²⁴ Translation from Knoblock 1988: 225; *Xunzi* 6.9 (Wang Zhang 1991: 106): 信信、信也，疑疑、亦信也。

“In his speech, he insists on being trustworthy (*yan bi xin* 言必信), and with regard to his actions, he insists that they bear fruit.”²⁵

“In your speech, be dutiful and trustworthy (*yan zhong xin* 言忠信), and in your conduct be sincere and respectful.”²⁶

“Trustworthy words (*xin yan* 信言) are not pleasant.”²⁷

“... even if it was successful, the proposal was not reliable (*jin yan bu xin* 進言不信).”²⁸

“(His) speech is more trustworthy (*yan xin* 言信) than metal...”²⁹

“How trustworthy (信) are these words (言)!”³⁰

“These words (言) are indeed trustworthy (信)!”³¹

In several other cases, the “*putativus*” of *xin* is used to express the idea that a person believes or does not believe certain words, i.e. a person finds or does not find someone else’s words trustworthy.

“Do not believe (信) slanderous words (言)!”³²

“So the ruler believed (信) in concubine Yu’s fraudulent remarks (*zha* 詐) and for her sake he divorced his regular wife.”³³

“Now when, because one listens to words which one trusts (*xin zhi yan* 信之言), one’s sons as well as the father get killed, this is the kind of trouble which arises because one does not check facts.”³⁴

“Liu Zijun believed (信) the vain speeches (*xu yan* 虛言) of the magicians, who (said) that one may become a divine immortal through study.”³⁵

²⁵ Translation from Slingerland 2003: 148; *Lunyu* 論語 13.20: 言必信，行必果。

²⁶ Translation from Slingerland 2003: 148; *Lunyu* 論語 15.6: 言忠信，行篤敬...

²⁷ *Daodejing* 道德經 81.1: 信言不美。

²⁸ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 18.2 (Lai–Fu 2000: 159): ...雖有功，其進言不信。

²⁹ *Xinlun* 新論 9.12/1: 言信於金...

³⁰ *Shiji* 史記 79.2425: 信哉是言也！ [Also see *Shiji* 118.3098, *Shiji* 122.3131.]

³¹ *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 3.30 (Tao–Ye 1998: 196): 此言也信矣！

³² Translation from Karlgren 1950: 172. *Shijing* 詩經 219.1: 無信讒言！

³³ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 14.6 (Lai–Fu 2000: 131): 君因信妾餘之詐，為棄正妻。

³⁴ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 30.13 (Lai–Fu 2000: 320) 夫聽所信之言而父子為人僇，此不參之患也。

³⁵ Translation from Pokora 1975: 156; *Xinlun* 新論 13.14: 劉子駿信方士虛言，為神仙可學。

“The world trusts (信) in delusive books (*xuwang zhi shu* 虛妄之書), taking everything transmitted on bamboo and silk for the records of wise and sage men, which contains untrue events. They trust (信) them and consider them truth, hum, and read them.”³⁶

While in some passages *yan* does not appear, even in such cases it is often obvious from the context that they are referring to an oral report:

“He said (*yue* 曰) that there is a Holy Man living on faraway Guye Mountain, with skin like ice and snow, and gentle and shy like a young girl. (...) I thought this was all insane and did not believe (it) (*bu xin* 不信).”³⁷

“A perverse and confused man, on being informed about the right conduct between prince and minister, the principles of father and son, and the distinctions between the honored and lowly, would not believe (*bu xin* 不信) in the words (言) of the sage.”³⁸

“Pang Gong was a hostage in Handan together with the heir apparent and he said to the King of Wei: ‘Suppose there is one man who says (言): “There is a tiger in the market place,” would Your Majesty believe (信) that?’ The King said: ‘I would not.’ ‘If two men say (言): “There is a tiger in the market place,” would Your Majesty believe (信) that?’”³⁹

In the below examples, I have provided excerpts from three texts. The first two, the *Guliangzhan* 穀梁傳 (2nd century BC, one of the three commentaries on the *Chunqiu* 春秋) and the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (3rd century BC), explicitly link speech with the virtue of trustworthiness. The third, from the Mohist canons, illustrates that some ancient Chinese thinkers were well aware that the two notions were closely related.

³⁶ Translation from Forke 1911: 240 (slightly modified); *Lunheng* 論衡 16.1 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 193): 世信虛妄之書，以為載於竹帛上者，皆賢聖所傳，無不然之事，故信而是之，諷而讀之。

³⁷ Translation from Watson 2003: 27 (slightly modified); *Zhuangzi* 莊子 1.2.7 (Huang 1996: 53): 曰：藐姑射之山有神人居焉，肌膚若冰雪，淖約若處子。(...) 藐姑吾以是狂而不信也。

³⁸ Rickett 2001: 88 (modified); *Guanzi* 管子 2.1/176: 狂惑之人，告之以君臣之義，父子之理，貴賤之分，不信聖人之言也。

³⁹ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 30.17 (Lai–Fu 2000: 324): 龐恭與太子質於邯鄲，謂魏王曰：「今一人言市有虎，王信之乎？」 曰：「不。」 「二人言市有虎，王信之乎？」

“The reason why words (言) are considered (real) words lies in their trustworthiness (信). If a word (言) lacks trustworthiness (*bu xin* 不信), how could you consider it a (real) word (言)?”⁴⁰

“(If a ruler’s) words (言) are not trustworthy (*fei xin* 非信), then he will fail in everything he ventures. Hence, the accomplishments that result from trustworthiness (信) are great indeed! When trustworthiness (信) is the (ruler’s) established practice, empty words (*xuyan* 虛言) can be properly recompensed.”⁴¹

“*Xin* (good faith/trustworthiness) is the words agreeing with the thoughts.”⁴²

The *Lunyu* 論語 juxtaposes words and deeds, stating that one can be loyal and trustworthy in the former, and sincere and respectful in the latter. Words (*yan* 言) and deeds (*xing* 行), together with their respective virtues, are also mentioned together in the *Mozi* 墨子, *Xunzi*, and the Western Han Dynasty *Shiji* 史記.

“Zizhang asked about getting by in the world. The Master replied, ‘In your speech, be dutiful and trustworthy (*yan zhong xin* 言忠信), and in your conduct be sincere and respectful. In this way, you will always get by in the world, even if you find yourself in some barbarian state. If your words are not dutiful and trustworthy (*yan bu zhong xin* 言不忠信), and your conduct is not sincere and respectful, how can you possibly get along, even in your own region?’”⁴³

“Let us suppose, though, that both are trustworthy in what they say (*yan bi xin* 言必信) and reliable in what they do. And so their words and deeds fit together like the two halves of a tally, and they always follow through and act on what they say.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Guliangzhuan* 5/59: 言之所以為言也，信也；言而不信，何以為言？

⁴¹ Translation from Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 500 (modified; they translate *xin* 信 as ‘keeping promise’); *Liushi chunqiu* 19/7.1 (Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 500): 以言非信則百事不滿也，故信之為功大矣。信立則虛言可以賞矣。

⁴² Translation from Graham 1978: 276; *Mojing* 墨經 1.14: 信，言合於意也。

⁴³ Translation from Slingerland 2003: 176; *Lunyu* 15.6: 子張問行。子曰：「言忠信，行篤敬，雖蠻貊之邦行矣；言不忠信，行不篤敬，雖州里行乎哉？」

⁴⁴ Translation from Ivanhoe 2000: 66; *Mozi* 墨子 16.3 (Zhang 1988: 111): 常使若二君者，言必信，行必果，使言行之合猶合符節也，無言而不行也。

“If one’s words (言) are not trustworthy (信), one’s actions will not be fruitful.”⁴⁵

“Only one who is certain to be honest (信) in ordinary speech (*yong yan* 廉言) and prudent in ordinary behavior, who is awe-inspired by the model and goes along with popular customs, and does not presume to consider what is unique to himself as correct, is properly termed a ‘cautious scholar.’”⁴⁶

“As for the wandering knights, though their actions may not conform to perfect righteousness, yet they are always true to their word (*qi yan bi xin* 其言必信). What they undertake they invariably fulfill; what they have promised they are invariably sincere.”⁴⁷

Similarly, as can be seen below, the *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳, a collection of commentaries on the *Shijing* 詩經 compiled by Han Ying 韓嬰 (2nd century BC), clearly links trust with the act of speaking, as does the *Daodejing* 道德經.

“There is the traditional saying: If there is balance in rest, the face will be beautiful. If there is balance in eating and drinking, the *qi* will be defined. If there is balance in speech (*yanyu* 言語), it will be heard with trust (*xinting* 信聽). If the thoughts are balanced, they will succeed.”⁴⁸

“In a residence, the good lies in location. In hearts, the good lies in depth. In interactions with others, the good lies in benevolence. In words, the good lies in trustworthiness (*yan shan xin* 言善信). In government, the good lies in orderliness. In carrying out one’s business, the good lies in ability. In actions, the good lies in timeliness.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Mozi* 2.4 (Zhang 1988: 12): 言不信者，行不果。

⁴⁶ Translation from Knoblock 1988: 180; *Xunzi* 3.11 (Wang–Zhang 1991: 78): 廉言必信之，廉行必慎之，畏法流俗，而不敢以其所獨甚，若是則可謂慤士矣。

⁴⁷ Translation from Watson 1961: II.453 (slightly modified); *Shiji* 124.3181: 今游俠，其行雖不軌於正義，然其言必信，其行必果，已諾必誠。

⁴⁸ Translation from Hightower 1952: 213 (slightly modified); *Hanshi waizhuan* 8.28 (Lai 1972: 299): 傳曰：居處齊則色殊，食飲齊則氣珍，言語齊則信聽，思齊則成，志齊則盈。

⁴⁹ Translation from Ivanhoe 2002: 8; *Daodejing* 8: 居善地，心善淵，與善仁，言善信，正善治，事善能，動善時。

The *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (2nd century BC) also links speech and trustworthiness, though in a Daoist paradoxical manner. It states that in contrast to average people, the real sage does not have to act in the usual sense of the word to accomplish things, and does not have to speak in order to be trusted. *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and *Liezi* 列子 also include the same paradoxical statement. In the case of the latter, the saying itself is formulated by Yan Hui and addressed to Confucius, who is otherwise a recurring mouthpiece of Daoist wisdom in the *Zhuangzi*.

“Thus, the sage does not adulterate Heaven with man, and does not allow desire to disturb his actual nature. He hits the mark without planning, his word is trusted without his having to speak (*bu yan er xin* 不言而信), he succeeds without deliberating, he accomplishes without doing.”⁵⁰

“The sage governs easily because his affairs are few, and the people are easily satisfied because his demands on them are few. He is benevolent without giving, he is trusted without speaking (不言而信), he gets without seeking, he accomplishes without doing.”⁵¹

“You (Confucius, GK) are believed even when you don’t speak (不言而信); that you encompass all without partiality; and that, although you do not possess the implements of state, the people throng before you—yet I (Yan Yuan, GK) do not know at all how this can be so.”⁵²

“Among the people of the Western regions there is a sage. He does not govern, yet there is no disorder; does not speak, yet is trusted spontaneously (*bu yan er zi xin* 不言而自信); does not reform, yet his influence prevails spontaneously. He is so great that none of his people can give a name to him.”⁵³

Though the Daoist nature of these words in the *Huainanzi* and *Zhuangzi* is evident, the same formulation also appears in other works such as the syncretistic *Lüshi chunqiu* and the Confucian *Xunzi* 荀子 and *Liji*.

⁵⁰ Translation from Ames and Lau 1998: 89; *Huainanzi* 1.10/6 (Xiong–Hou 1997: 18): 聖人不以人滑天，不以欲亂情。不謀而當，不言而信，不慮而得，不為而成。

⁵¹ Translation from Ames 1994: 171; *Huainanzi* 9.3 (Xiong–Hou 1997: 386): 故聖人事省而易治，求寡而易澹(瞻)，不施而仁，不言而信，不求而得，不為而成。

⁵² Translation from Mair 1994: 200; *Zhuangzi* 21.3.4 (Huang 1996: 242): 夫子不言而信，不比而周，无器而民滔乎前，而不知所以然而已矣。

⁵³ Translation from Graham 1960: 78; *Liezi* 4.3 (Yang 1979: 121): 西方之人，有聖者焉，不臺而不亂，不言而自信，不化而自行，蕩蕩乎民無能名焉。

“Such a person is trusted without speaking (不言而信), acts exactly as needed without devising schemes, and succeeds without planning ahead.”⁵⁴

“Accordingly, although the gentleman lacks rank, he is noble; although he lacks an emolument, he is wealthy; although he does not speak, he is trusted (不言而信); although he does not display anger, he is awe inspiring; although he dwells in poverty, he flourishes; and although he lives alone, he is happy.”⁵⁵

“Heaven-like, he is trusted without the use of words (不言而信).”⁵⁶

“Therefore the superior man, even when he is not acting, he is revered; and when he does not speak (言), he is still trusted (信).”⁵⁷

Similarly to several other quotations in the present article, the following citations from the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, *Shiji* 史記 and the *Xinlun* 新論 also confirm that trustworthy words are closely associated with exemplary figures and that to lack them was seen as the mark of morally weak individuals.

“The words of a superior man are true and supported by evidence, so that they keep enmity far from his own person; but the words of a small person are false and without evidence, so that enmity and blame come upon himself.”⁵⁸

“Yu was a man both diligent and indefatigable. His character was impartial, his personality was endearing, his words were trustworthy, his voice was the law, his behavior the standard.”⁵⁹

“She said, ‘The words of the chief minister are trustworthy and can be followed.’”⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Translation from Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 66; *Lüshi chunqiu* 1.2.4 (Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 65–66): 此人者：不言而信，不謀而當，不慮而得。

⁵⁵ Translation from Knoblock 1990: 2.74; *Xunzi* 8.5 (Wang–Zhang 1991: 123): 故君子無爵而貴，無祿而富，不言而信，不怒而威，窮處而榮，獨居而樂！

⁵⁶ Translation from Legge 1885: II.125 (slightly modified); *Liji* 19.3 [the same in *Liji* 24.2/17]: 天則不言而信…

⁵⁷ Translation from Legge 1885: II.329 (modified); *Liji* 31.2/62: 故君子不動而敬，不言而信。

⁵⁸ Translation from Legge 1960: 622; *Zuo zhuan* 10.8.1: 君子之言，信而有徵，故怨遠於其身。小人之言，僥倖而無徵，故怨咎及之。

⁵⁹ Translation from Nienhauser 1994: 22; *Shiji* 2.51: 禹為人敏給克勤；其德不違，其仁可親，其言可信；聲為律，身為度。

⁶⁰ *Lienüzhuan* 列女傳 5.2 (Zheng–Lin 2007: 468): 曰：「令尹之言信可從也。」

“As for his making an appointment and not keeping it and giving his word but not being trustworthy, these are the reasons for Yin’s (the Shang Dynasty, GK) demise.”⁶¹

While the majority of the examples cited in this study are explicit references to trusting the words of other people, below, I have provided some examples that contain direct quotations.

“Zilu said, ‘If a gentleman who was unable to be assiduous and work hard, or think lightly of death, or endure poverty, were to say, “I [am able to] do my duty,” I would not believe him.’”⁶²

“The Master said, ‘Zang Wuzhong took the walled city of Fang in order to demand from the Duke of Lu that his half-brother Wei be made his successor. Although he said that he was not trying to force his lord’s hand, I do not believe it.’”⁶³

“Stop! You cannot trust what people say!”⁶⁴

“When Pang Cong was to accompany the heir, who was going as hostage to Handan, he spoke to the king of Wei before he left. ‘If a man were to tell you there was a tiger in the market place, would you believe him, my lord?’ ‘No.’ ‘If two people told you there was a tiger in the market, would you believe them?’ ‘I would suspect something,’ replied the king. ‘If three people should tell you there was a tiger, would you believe it?’ ‘I would.’”⁶⁵

Next, I will present some more cases from some pre-Buddhist Chinese works that exemplify the close relationship between trust and spoken or written words.

⁶¹ Translation from Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 366; *Lüshi chunqiu* 15.7 (Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 366): 若夫期而不當，言而不信，此殷之所以亡也。

⁶² Translation from Hightower 1952: 64; *Hanshi waizhuan* 2.25 (Lai 1972: 66): 子路曰：「士不能勤苦，不能輕死亡，不能恬貧窮，而曰我能行義，吾不信也。」

⁶³ Translation from Slingerland 2003: 159; *Lunyu* 14/14: 子曰：「臧武仲以防求為後於魯，雖曰不要君，吾不信也。」

⁶⁴ *Xiaolin* 笑林 11 (Wang 1956: 3): 且止！人言不可皆信。

⁶⁵ Translation from Crump 1979: 377; *Zhanguoce* 戰國策 23.17 (Wen 1996: 1041, also see *Hanfeizi* 30.17): 龐葱與太子質於邯鄲，謂魏王曰：「今一人言市有虎，王信之乎？」王曰：「否。」「二人言市有虎，王信之乎？」王曰：「寡人疑之矣。」「三人言市有虎，王信之乎？」王曰：「寡人信之矣。」*Zhi* 之 in the story can refer either to the people (believe him/them) or to the assertion (believe it).

The original version of the *Guanzi* 管子 is attributed to Guan Zhong 管仲, who was one of the counselors of Duke Huan 桓公 (r. 685–643 BC) in the state of Qi 齊 during what was later termed the *Chunqiu* period. Several centuries after Guan Zhong, at the end of the 1st century BC Liu Xiang 劉向 edited the text based on earlier materials.

“Speech (言) that always promises is not necessarily trustworthy (信). Therefore his promises (言) are always trustworthy (信).”⁶⁶

“If [the ruler’s] speech (言) is trustworthy (信), his movements sedate...”⁶⁷

“Words (言) not fit to be reiterated are not trustworthy (信).”⁶⁸

“If your statements (言) are sure to be reliable (信), your orders will not be in vain. This is the way to employ the people.”⁶⁹

The *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 is a work from the 3rd century B.C. that summarizes all major teachings of the Legalist school of thought (*fajia* 法家). It is attributed to Han Fei 韓非, one of Xunzi’s荀子-disciples, but Liu Xiang (1st century BC) again played a major role in finalizing the text as we know it now. In this case, the art of argumentation (*bian* 辩), or the refined and persuasive usage of words (eloquence in Ch. Harbsmeier’s translation), is also mentioned and linked to trust.

“Inevitably, on the basis of their previous agreement with him the ruler will trust (信) their current words (言).”⁷⁰

“What one really cherishes in one’s heart but does not fully understand, one therefore making beautiful words (言) and elaborate expressions one causes others to trust (信) one [sic].”⁷¹

“This is what the vulgar saying refers to when it says: “When a slave tries to sell his own coat he will not get it sold. If a scholar praises his own eloquence (辯) he does not get believed (信).”⁷²

⁶⁶ Translation from Rickett 1985: 74; *Guanzi* 2.1/88: 必諾之言，不足信也。故其諾未嘗不信也。

⁶⁷ Translation from Rickett 1985: 79; *Guanzi* 2.1/116: 言辭信，動作莊...

⁶⁸ Translation from Rickett 1985: 90; *Guanzi* 2.1/202: 言之不可復者，其言不信也。

⁶⁹ Translation from Rickett 1985: 328; *Guanzi* 20.1/53: 出言必信，則令不窮矣，此使民之道也。

⁷⁰ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS (modified); *Hanfeizi* 14.1 (Lai–Fu 2000: 123): ...必將以曩之合已信今之言...

⁷¹ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS, slightly modified; *Hanfeizi* 20.5 (Lai–Fu 2000: 178): 實心愛而不知，故好言繁辭以信之。

⁷² Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 23.26 (Lai–Fu 2000: 271): 此鄙諺所謂：「虜自賣裘而不售，士自譽辯而不信」者也。

“When a tongue-tied person says something one is in doubt, when an eloquent person says (辯者言) something we believe (信) it to be true. When the wicked encroach on the power of their superiors they gain support from the masses, they gain trust from their rhetoric (信乎辯), and through (distorting) categorizations they paste over their selfishness.”⁷³

“One shows confidence (信) in talk (說) about integrity and love...”⁷⁴

The *Liji* 禮記 (The Book of Rites) is a collection of variegated topics concerning ancient Chinese rituals in the wide sense of the word. It was compiled by Dai Sheng 戴聖 (fl. 1st c. BC), and included in the group of the Five Classics (*wujing* 五經) of Confucianism. Two of its 49 chapters (*Daxue* 大學, *Zhongyong* 中庸) were also selected by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200 AD) as two of the Four Classics (*sishu* 四書). In this way, it is the only work that appears in both Confucian canonical groupings.

“Hence if his practice of ceremonies be not according to the rules, men will not respect them; and if his words (言) be not according to those rules, men will not believe (信) them.”⁷⁵

“Heaven-like, he is trusted (信) without the use of words (言). Spirit-like, he is regarded with awe, without any display of rage. So it is, when one by his mastering of music regulates his mind and heart.”⁷⁶

“He shows himself, and the people all revere him; he speaks (言), and the people all trust (信) him; he acts, and the people all are pleased with him.”⁷⁷

“Therefore the superior man, even when he is not acting, he is revered; and when he does not speak (言), he is still trusted (信).”⁷⁸

⁷³ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 48.6 (Lai–Fu 2000: 700): 喃者言之疑，辯者言之信。姦之食（蝕）上也，取資乎眾，籍信乎辯，而以類飾其私。

⁷⁴ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Hanfeizi* 49.10 (Lai–Fu 2000: 721): 信廉愛之說...

⁷⁵ Translation from Legge 1885: I.408–409; *Liji* 10.2/14: 故作事不以禮，弗之敬矣。出言不以禮，弗之信矣。

⁷⁶ Translation from Legge 1885: II.125 (slightly modified); *Liji* 19.3/42 [the same in *Liji* 24.2/17]: 天則不言而信，神則不怒而威，致樂以治心者也。

⁷⁷ Translation from Legge 1885: II.326 (slightly modified); *Liji* 31.2/54: 見而民莫不敬，言而民莫不信，行而民莫不說。

⁷⁸ Translation from Legge 1885: II.329 (modified); *Liji* 31.2/62: 故君子不動而敬，不言而信。

“These were the words of the Master: – ‘Let us return.’ The superior man, in obscurity, yet makes himself manifest; without giving himself any airs, his gravity is acknowledged; without the exercise of severity, he inspires awe; without speaking (言), he is trusted (信).”⁷⁹

“Therefore his demeanour induces awe, his countenance induces fear, and his words (言) produce confidence (信).”⁸⁰

“... although men will say (曰) that he is not trying to force (his ruler), I will not believe (言) them.”⁸¹

“The Master said, ‘In the service by an inferior of his superior, if his personal character be not correct, his words will not be believed (言不信); and in this case their views will not be the same, and the conduct (of the superior) will not correspond (to the advice given to him).’”⁸²

“Though men may say (曰) that he is not influenced by (the love of) gain, I do not believe (信) them.”⁸³

“A *rú* (scholar) is such that in private life he is grave [as if apprehending] difficulties. In standing up and sitting down he is polite and respectful. In his words truthfulness is always primary, in his deeds he is always loyal and correct.”⁸⁴

“If for long he has not seen them, and hears rumours (流言), he does not believe (信) them.”⁸⁵

“When Confucius came (from his wanderings to Lu) to his own house, duke Ai gave him a (public) lodging. When the duke heard these words, he became more sincere in his speech (言加信), and more righteous in his conduct.”⁸⁶

⁷⁹ Translation from Legge 1885: II.330 (slightly modified); *Liji* 32.1/1: 子言之：「歸乎！君子隱而顯，不矜而莊，不厲而威，不言而信。」

⁸⁰ Translation from Legge 1885: II.330; *Liji* 32.1/2: 是故君子貌足畏也，色足憚也，言足信也。

⁸¹ Translation from Legge 1885: II.346; *Liji* 32.1/59: 人雖曰不要，吾弗信也。

⁸² Translation from Legge 1885: II.360; *Liji* 33.1/36: 子曰：「下之事上也，身不正，言不信，則義不壹，行無類也。」

⁸³ Translation from Legge 1885: II.361; *Liji* 33.1/40: 人雖曰不利，吾不信也。

⁸⁴ Translation from Kramers 1950: 216 (slightly modified); *Liji* 41.1/6: 儒有居處齊難，其坐起恭敬，言必先信，行必中正... The *Kongzi jiayu* (5.8; Chen 1936: 21) contains a slightly different version: 儒有居處齊難，其起坐恭敬，言必誠信，行必忠正.... I adapted Kramers' translation of the latter to the *Liji*.

⁸⁵ Translation from Legge 1885: II.408 (slightly modified); *Liji* 41.1/22: 久不相見，聞流言不信...

⁸⁶ Translation from Legge 1885: II.409; *Liji* 41.1/26: 孔子至舍，哀公館之，聞此言也，言加信，行加義：

The *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語 is a collection of various sayings attributed to Confucius and Confucian scholars. The work was compiled by Wang Su 王肅 (195–256 CE), but it evidently goes back to earlier traditions.

“Then separated for a long time they do not believe (信) the gossip (流言) they hear [about each other].”⁸⁷

“When Duke Āi had heard these words, his words (言) were more trustworthy (信) and his behaviour more respectful.”⁸⁸

“Confucius said: ‘What I call a noble man, while in his speech (言) he is always loyal and truthful (信), in his heart he is not resentful...’”⁸⁹

“Zengzi said: ‘When one enters this country, [and one finds that], in words (言), there is trustworthiness (信) among the [lower] ministers, then one may stay...’”⁹⁰

“Confucius was studying the Annals. On coming to [the story of how] Chu gave back Chen, he heaved a deep sigh and said: ‘He was a worthy, the King of Chu! He considered a state of a thousand war chariots less important than the trustworthiness (信) of one word (一言). But for his trustworthiness Shen Shushi could not have realized justice. But for his worthiness King Zhuang would not have accepted the admonition.’”⁹¹

The *Lunheng* 論衡 was written by Wang Chong 王充 (27–97 CE), a unique mind in the history of Chinese philosophy. His “Balanced Inquiries” contains his critical discussions on various topics, especially concentrating on the popular ideas of his time.

“Or the governors are biased in favour of some of their subordinates and believe in what they say (*xin qi yan* 信其言). These

⁸⁷ Translation from Kramers 1950: 219 (slightly modified); *Kongzi jiayu* 5.26 (Chen 1936: 22): 久別則聞，流言不信。

⁸⁸ Translation from Kramers 1950: 220 (slightly modified); *Kongzi jiayu* 5.30 (Chen 1936: 22): 哀公既得聞此言也，言加信，行加敬。

⁸⁹ Translation from Kramers 1950: 224; *Kongzi jiayu* 7.1/16 (Chen 1936: 29): 孔子曰：「所謂君子者，言必忠信而心不怨...」

⁹⁰ Translation from Kramers 1950: 224; *Kongzi jiayu* 8.7/1 (Chen 1936: 44): 曾子曰：「入是國也，言信於群臣，而留可也...」

⁹¹ Translation from Kramers 1950: 224 (slightly modified); *Kongzi jiayu* 10.2/1 (Chen 1936: 61): 孔子讀史至楚復陳，喟然歎曰：「賢哉楚王！輕千乘之國，而重一言之信，匪申叔之信，不能達其義，匪莊王之賢，不能受其訓。」

subordinates will, against all propriety, recommend their friends for extraordinary promotion.”⁹²

“The world trusts in delusive books (*xin xuwang zhi shu* 信虛妄之書), taking everything transmitted on bamboo and silk for the records of wise and sage men, which contain no untrue events. In this belief they uphold, hum, and read them.”⁹³

“Sunshu Ao believed in the vulgar words (*xin su yan* 信俗言; Forke: superstition), thus buried the snake, and his mother, believed in the vulgar judgements (*xin su yi* 信俗議; Forke: addicted to the prejudice), firmly relied on the heavenly retaliation. This would amount to nothing else than that life and death were not depending on fate, but on the death of a snake.”⁹⁴

“Dragons alone have no wings, and when they rise, ride on the clouds. Had Lu Ao said that the stranger had wings, his words might be credible (*yan nai ke xin* 言乃可信).”⁹⁵

“Had Xiang Mandu’s body had wings, his tale (言 = words) might be reliable (*ke xin* 可信), but since it had not, his talk is futile and not more trustworthy than Lu Ao’s.”⁹⁶

“In this way the statements of Zou Yan cannot be controverted, and what the ‘Chronicle of Yu’, ‘(the Book) of the Mountains and Seas’, and Huainanzi’s lucubrations on the shape of the earth appear unreliable (*wei ke xin ye* 未可信也).”⁹⁷

“(The Emperor) trusts in the suggestions of his cunning adviser and dispenses with the services (of the worthy).”⁹⁸

“Were King Yan’s knowledge like that of Confucius, his utterance could be believed (*qi yan ke xin* 其言可信), but as a leading

⁹² Translation from Forke 1911 (1962²): 39; *Lunheng* 2.2 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 19): 將或幸佐吏之身，納信其言，佐吏非清節，必拔人越次。

⁹³ Translation from Forke 1911 (1962²): 240 (slightly modified); *Lunheng* 16.1 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 193): 世信虛妄之書，以為載於竹帛上者，皆賢聖所傳，無不然之事，故信而是之，諷而讀之。

⁹⁴ Translation from Forke 1907: 161 (modified); *Lunheng* 20.8 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 292–293): 叔敖信俗言而埋蛇，其母信俗議而必報，是謂死生無命，在一蛇之死。

⁹⁵ Translation from Forke 1907: 339; *Lunheng* 24.11 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 357, slightly modified): 若盧敖者，唯龍無翼者升則乘云。盧敖言若土者有翼，言乃可信。

⁹⁶ Translation from Forke 1907: 341; *Lunheng* 24.14 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 361): 見曼都之身有羽翼乎，言乃可信；身無羽翼，言虛妄也。虛則與盧敖同一實也。

⁹⁷ Translation from Forke 1907: 255 (slightly modified); *Lunheng* 31.10 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 541): 鄒衍之言未可非，《禹紀》、《山海》、《淮南地形》未可信也。

⁹⁸ Translation from Forke 1907: 51; *Lunheng* 33.11 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 595): 信僕人之言，遂置不用。

prince during a time of decay, he did not possess more ability than the phenomenalist, and his words are not to be trusted (*yan wei bi xin* 言未必信). Hence my doubts.”⁹⁹

“Hence, are there not serious doubts about the alleged reprimands of Heaven, or must we believe in them?”¹⁰⁰

“Yet people do not believe the words of the Sages. They trust in the fluid of calamitous events, and strive to make out Heaven’s meaning therefrom. Why go so far?”¹⁰¹

Lastly, I would like to present some passages from the *Baiju piyu jing* 百句譬喻經 (The Sūtra of the Hundred Parables, abbreviated as *Baiyujing* 百喻經, translated into Chinese by Guṇavṛddhi in ca. 500 AD), in order to show that what was usually *xin yan* 信言 in Classical Chinese frequently became *xin yu* 信語 in Buddhist texts. Here, I will only quote examples that use *xin yu* in a non-Buddhist sense, even if the story they are found in is itself Buddhist.

“You should now believe in our words (*xin wo yu* 信我語) and cultivate the ascetic practices.”¹⁰²

“Although they heard these words, because they believed the king’s words (*xin wang yu* 信王語) to the very end they refused to let go (of their belief).”¹⁰³

“I can see that your fraudulent words cannot be trusted (*yu dou bu ke xin* 語都不可信).”¹⁰⁴

“When his group of people heard this they deep trusted his words (*shen xin qi yu* 深信其語).”¹⁰⁵

“At that time that man believed what the old woman said (*xin laomu yu* 信老母語).”¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Translation from Forke 1907: 120; *Lunheng* 42.2 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 733): 使嚴王知如孔子，則其言可信。衰世霸者之才，猶夫變復之家也，言未必信，故疑之。

¹⁰⁰ Translation from Forke 1907: 126; *Lunheng* 42.10 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 746): 由斯言之，譴告之言，疑乎？必信也？

¹⁰¹ Translation from Forke 1907: 129; *Lunheng* 42.17 (Zhou–Cai 1997: 752): 不信聖人之言，反然災異之氣，求索上天之意，何其遠哉？

¹⁰² Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Baiyujing* 29.3 (T04n0209: 547b): 汝今當信我語修諸苦行。

¹⁰³ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Baiyujing* 34.2 (T04n0209: 548a): 雖聞此言，信王語故，終不肯捨。

¹⁰⁴ *Baiyujing* 46.3 (T04n0209: 550b): 知爾妄語都不可信。

¹⁰⁵ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS (slightly modified); *Baiyujing* 66.2 (T04n0209: 553c): 眇人聞已深信其語。

¹⁰⁶ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS (slightly modified); *Baiyujing* 93.2 (T04n0209: 557a): 時彼人者信老母語。

“This is real gold. If you do not trust my words (*ruo bu xin wo yu* 若不信我語), in the undergrowth here there is a goldsmith, and one can go and consult him.”¹⁰⁷

“Then the little boy, because he believed in these words (*xin qi yu* 信其語), threw the turtle into the water, and when the turtle had got into the water, it immediately swam off.”¹⁰⁸

Possible Perspectives of Further Research

In addition to the widely used phrases cited at the beginning of this paper, there are several other ways to express that someone trusts the Buddha’s words. Some phrases contain compounds that simultaneously indicate the act of trusting and acceptance or understanding. Below I have provided some examples of such expressions (*xinshou* 信受 or *xinjie* 信解) from the highly influential *Lotus Sūtra* (Kumārajīva’s translation, T09n0262).¹⁰⁹

“Shariputra, you and the others should with a single mind believe and accept the words of the Buddha. The words of the buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, are not empty or false. There is no other vehicle, there is only the one Buddha vehicle.”¹¹⁰

“At that time the Buddha spoke to the bodhisattvas and all the great assembly: ‘Good men, you must believe and understand the truthful words of the Thus Come One.’ And again he said to the great assembly: ‘You must believe and understand the truthful words of the Thus Come One.’ And once more he said to the great assembly: ‘You must believe and understand the truthful words of the Thus Come One.’”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Baiyujing* 97.2 (T04n0209: 557b): 此是真金。若不信我語，今此草中有好金師，可往問之。

¹⁰⁸ Translation from Harbsmeier in TLS; *Baiyujing* 98.1 (T04n0209: 557c): 爾時小兒信其語故即擲水中。龜得水已即便走去。

¹⁰⁹ Karashima 2001: 306–309.

¹¹⁰ Translation from Watson 1993: 33; T09n0262: p0007c07–09: 舍利弗！汝等當一心信解受持佛語，諸佛如來言無虛妄，無有餘乘，唯一佛乘。

¹¹¹ Translation from Watson 1993: 224; T09n0262: p0042b01–04: 爾時，佛告諸菩薩及一切大眾：「諸善男子！汝等當信解如來誠諦之語。」復告大眾：「汝等當信解如來誠諦之語。」又復告諸大眾：「汝等當信解如來誠諦之語。」

“What I speak now are true words – with a single mind you must believe them! Ever since the long distant past I’ve been teaching in converting this multitude.”¹¹²

“Persons of this type are capable of believing and understanding. Therefore for them you should preach the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law.”¹¹³

“The things he says people will not believe...”¹¹⁴

“If you and the others are capable of believing and accepting my words, then all of you are certain to attain the Buddha way.”¹¹⁵

It is interesting to note that the original Sanskrit version (Kern-Nanjo edition) and Dharmarakṣa’s earlier (267 A.D.) translation have different phrases that sometimes do not reference the act of belief or trust.¹¹⁶ For example, in the passage that corresponds to the last quotation cited above, Dharmarakṣa’s translation simply says: “accepted these words” (*shou shi yu* 受是語), and the available Sanskrit versions similarly simply have *parigr̥ṇathā* (Kern-Nanjo ed. ‘K’ 90,10) or *pratigr̥ṇathā* (Kashgar ms. ‘O’). Neither speak of the act of trust.¹¹⁷ Although there might be other ways to explain this phenomenon (e.g., the translation was prepared from another textual version), it might be interesting to gather all such references from other sūtras, especially those that have Chinese translations that differ in their inclusion of the idea of trust, and then, by comparing these references with Sanskrit originals, explore the extent to which these Chinese translations are indebted to the pre-Buddhist Chinese substratum, where ‘trust’ and ‘words’ are, as I tried to show in the present study, intricately connected.

¹¹² Translation from Watson 1993: 220; T09n0262: p0041b27–28: 我今說實語，汝等一心信，我從久遠來，教化是等眾。

¹¹³ Translation from Watson 1993: 79; T09n0262: p0016b05–6: 如是等人，則能信解汝當為說妙法華經。

¹¹⁴ Translation from Watson 1993: 74; T09n0262: p0015c17: 有所言說，人不信受…

¹¹⁵ Translation from Watson 1993: 70; T09n0262: p0015a06–07: 汝等若能信受是語一切皆當，得成佛道。

¹¹⁶ Karashima 2001: 307–308.

¹¹⁷ Karashima 2001: 307–308.

Conclusion

While I do not mean to claim in this paper that *xin* 信 always refers to “trusting words,” it does seem that it appears in such contexts more frequently than can be statistically expected. In pre-Buddhist Chinese texts, *xin* 信 appears as a noun (virtue of trustworthiness), as an adjective (trustworthy), and as a verb (trust something or somebody, believe that something is true). I argued that the so-called putative usage of the word is especially prevalent, and that *xin* should be translated more frequently to mean ‘to consider someone/something reliable, trustworthy.’ I also attempted to demonstrate that the semantic field of *xin* frequently implies that somebody’s words are to be trusted. Although *xin* 信 does not appear in religious contexts in pre-Buddhist Chinese texts, the basic structure of trusting somebody and especially somebody’s words was already present before the emergence of Chinese Buddhist translations.

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Faith, Practice and Enlightenment in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* and the Huayan School

IMRE HAMAR

“Faith” in Buddhism

In the West, it is quite common to think that Buddhism is different from other world religions in that it does not require its followers to have solid faith in a transcendental being. This faith is a prerequisite for Christians, who first have to accept the existence of God and of his will. Westerners who favor the rational aspect of Buddhism tend to regard it as a kind of philosophy or attitude towards life, and emphasize that Buddhism can be practiced without faith in an external God, as Buddha himself never relied on such forces.

As Luis O. Gómez says, “The most common English theological meanings are the ones that have the most questionable similarity to historical Buddhist belief and practice: acceptance of and secure belief in the existence of a personal creator deity (‘belief in’), acceptance of such deity as a unique person with a distinctive name, the unquestioned acceptance of this deity’s will, and the adoption of the articles of dogma believed to express the deity’s will.”¹

In terms of a creative God who can influence the lives of living beings, it is certainly true that Buddha and his early followers did not proclaim the necessity of this kind of faith. However, Buddhism does require faith of a kind unrelated to a transcendental being. First of all, it is impossible to practice Buddhism without accepting the law of karma and rebirth. If someone does not believe that his/her deeds have a consequence for this life or even subsequent lives, then why would they follow the noble eightfold path of the Buddha, meditate, or bother with Buddhist ethics? Of course, the law of karma and rebirth can be experienced at an advanced level of meditation, but unfortunately it cannot be reached by ordinary practitioners. Thus, they have to suppose or have faith that Buddhist practice is beneficial for their future.

¹ Gómez 2004: 277.

An early Buddhist text, recognizing that to do so is to take a risk on the part of the practitioner, notes that followers should pursue a moral life regardless of whether or not karma and rebirth exist because at the very least they will be praised by wise people for their meritorious deeds.²

In early Buddhism, the historical Buddha was not regarded a transcendental being, and in this sense he was different from Jesus, who was said to have a transcendental nature as the son of God. Yet, Buddha's followers must have had faith in the Buddha as an authentic religious teacher and in his teachings for eliminating suffering and bringing happiness. As mentioned above, even in early Buddhism faith played a crucial role in the process of proselytizing. With the rise of the Mahāyāna, faith became an increasingly integral part of the religion.

After the nirvāna of the Buddha, he gradually became deified and was endowed with transcendental characteristics. Hirakawa Akira probably exaggerated the role of the laity in the stūpa cult, but he rightly pointed out that participation of the laity in this cult may have been central in elevating the Buddha to a transcendental level.³ The Mahāyāna sūtras provided rich and complex details of the Buddha's transcendent nature. The *Lotus Sūtra* introduced a paradigmatic change in the concept of the Buddha by claiming that his nirvāna was only an *upāya*: he, in fact, did not enter nirvāna, and is ever-abiding, always present, and always available to come into contact with. With the nirvāna of the Buddha, it appeared to followers that authentic teachings were no longer accessible, and that their transmission had ended forever. With the appearance of this new teaching, however, transmission could start again, and all the later scriptures attributed to Buddha could be authentic sources of Buddha's word, or the *buddhavacana*.

All these transcendental qualities - ever-abiding, eternal, omnipresent, compassionate and so on - paved the way for Buddha to become an object of faith, in the same way that God became the center of worship in other world religions. It is hard to deny that this concept is in contradiction with the original aim of the founder, who spread the ascetic teaching of curbing desire in order to reach liberation. The art of Gandhāra served as the ideal physical objects for the worship of Buddha, who is depicted as an idealized god with perfect harmony and transcendental wisdom.

² Harvey 1990: 44.

³ Hirakawa 1963.

Faith and the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*

The *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*, or *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, is said to be the most perfect teaching of the Buddha as it directly reveals the experience of enlightenment that Buddha went through under the bodhi tree. It shows the *dharma-dhātu*, or the realm of reality (phenomena) viewed from the spiritual level of the Buddha. Of course this world-view is not easy to access, as it presupposes the experience of enlightenment that ordinary people have had. The following is a famous passage from the sūtra:

Children of the Buddha, just as if there was a great sūtra, as extensive as the great universe, in which are written down all phenomena in the great universe. That is to say, in it is written about the phenomena in the great enclosing iron mountains, as extensively as the great enclosing iron mountains; it is written about the phenomena on earth, as extensively as the earth; it is written about the phenomena in the medium universe, as extensively as the medium universe; it is written about the phenomena in the small universe, as extensively as the small universe. In the same vein, all phenomena – be they of the four continents, or the great oceans, Sumeru mountains, the palaces of the Gods in the heavens of the realm of desire, the palaces in the realm of form, and the palaces of the formless realm – are written down to an equal length. Even though this sūtra is as extensive as the great universe, it can be fully comprised within a single particle of dust. As it is with one particle, so it is with all particles of dust.⁴

佛子！譬如有大經卷，量等三千大千世界，書寫三千大千世界中事，一切皆盡。所謂：書寫大鐵圍山中事，量等大鐵圍山；書寫大地中事，量等大地；書寫中千世界中事，量等中千世界；書寫小千世界中事，量等小千世界；如是，若四天下，若大海，若須彌山，若地天宮殿，若欲界空居天宮殿，若色界宮殿，若無色界宮殿，一一書寫，其量悉等。此大經卷雖復量等大千世界，而全住在一微塵中；如一微塵，一切微塵皆亦如是。⁵

⁴ Chien 1993: 105-106.

⁵ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 272, c7-17.

It is not easy to imagine and accept that the whole world can be contained in a single particle of dust. However, according to the sūtra, this world-view came out of the Buddha's enlightenment, and its teachings are *buddhavacana* and therefore true. Here, the reader must have faith to acknowledge the statement of the sūtra as a valid teaching. The sūtra explicitly stresses the importance of this faith:

Faith is the basis of the path, the mother of virtues,
 Nourishing and growing all good ways,
 Cutting away the net of doubt,
 Freeing from the torrent of passion,
 Revealing the unsurpassed road of ultimate peace.

信為道元功德母，長養一切諸善法，
 斷除疑網出愛流，開示涅槃無上道。⁶

...

Faith can go beyond the pathways of demons,
 And reveal the unsurpassed road of liberation.
 Faith is the unspoiled seed of virtue,
 Faith can grow the seed of enlightenment.⁷

信能超出眾魔路，示現無上解脫道。
 信為功德不壞種，信能生長菩提樹⁸

As the text says, faith is the “basis of the path” because through it practitioners become convinced that practice has a purpose, that is, enlightenment or liberation from all suffering. On the one hand, faith in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* is required to accept the teachings about the Buddha's realm described in the scripture, and, on the other hand, it is necessary for religious practice. Faith is mentioned as a prerequisite for proceeding on the religious path in several chapters of the sūtra, and is described as bringing about positive results, such as eliminating difficulties and an understanding of the Dharma. Thus faith has a “causative” role.⁹ The Bodhisattva Diamond Treasury hesitates to teach

⁶ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 72, b18-19.

⁷ Cleary 1993: 331-332.

⁸ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 72, b27-28.

⁹ Dirck Vorenkamp has carried out a detailed study on the meaning of faith in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* and Fazang's understanding with regard to it. He concludes that the sūtra represents the traditional Buddhist view on faith, which holds that faith brings about wisdom. However, Fazang, based on the Huayan doctrine of intercontainment, claims that faith must rely on prior understanding. See Vorenkamp 1997: 65-135.

about the ten grounds, suspecting that the disciples gathered together do not have the necessary faith to listen to profound teaching. He starts teaching only after he has been assured of the presence of faith in the listeners.¹⁰

Fifty-two Stages

In a detailed study, Itō Zuiei showed that the central concepts of the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra* are the cause of enlightenment, bodhisattva's activity, *bodhisattva-caryā*, and the result of practice (enlightenment). The cause aspect is depicted in the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, and the result aspect is the *Tathāgatot-patti-sambhava-nirdeśa-sūtra*.¹¹ The two sūtras once circulated independently, but eventually were incorporated into the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*.¹²

These two chapters might have served as a model for the fifty-two stages that stretch from initial faith to final enlightenment through which a bodhisattva must pass. The fifty-two stages include the ten stages of faith (*shixin* 十信), ten abodes (*shizhu* 十住), ten practices (*shixing* 十行), ten dedications of merit (*shihuixiang* 十迴向), ten grounds (*shidi* 十地), virtual enlightenment (*dengjue* 等覺), also known as *wugou di* 無垢地), and marvelous enlightenment (*miao jue* 妙覺).¹³

However, the category of ten faiths did not originate in the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*; it can be found in the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (*Renwang hu guo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經)¹⁴ and the *Bodhisattvas' Diadem Primary Activities Sūtra* (*Pusa yingluo benye jing* 菩薩瓔珞本業經).¹⁵ The ten faiths are: 1. the stage of faith (*xinxin* 信心), 2. the stage of mindfulness (*nianxin* 念心), 3. the stage of endeavor (*jingjin xin* 精進心), 4. the stage of mental stability (*dingxin* 定心), 5. the stage of the wisdom of understanding emptiness (*huixin* 慧心), 6. the stage of pure self-restraint (*jiexin* 戒心), 7. the stage of the returning of merit (*huixiang xin* 回向心), 8. the stage of maintaining the dharma within oneself (*hufa xin* 護法心), 9. the stage of detachment (*shexin* 捨心), and 10. the stage of aspiration (*yuanxin* 願心).

¹⁰ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T09, no. 278, p. 543, a24-b6.

¹¹ Itō 1988.

¹² Hamar 2007a.

¹³ Charles Muller: Digital Dictionary of Buddhism [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?4e.xml+id,\(b4e94-5341-4e8c-4f4d'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?4e.xml+id,(b4e94-5341-4e8c-4f4d'))

¹⁴ *Renwang hu guo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經, T08, no. 246, p. 836, b17-22.

¹⁵ *Pusa yingluo benye jing* 菩薩瓔珞本業經, T24, no. 1485, p. 1017, a18-22.

When introducing the stages of the bodhisattva in terms of the distinct teaching (*biejiao* 別教), the founder of the Tiantai school Zhiyi 智顥 (538–597) mentions the fifty-two stages of the *Bodhisattvas' Diadem Primary Activities Sūtra*.¹⁶ While he also notes that Huayan includes forty-one stages, since Huayan is regarded as a distinct teaching, the fifty-two stages became associated with Huayan in Tiantai Buddhism, and Huayan scholars also adopted this view.¹⁷ The concept of ten faiths might have been a Chinese innovation, for the two sūtras where it is found are thought to be apocryphal (authored in China).¹⁸

While the concept is called the “ten faiths,” only the first item, the state of mind of faith, is connected to faith (*xin* 信): the other members all represent various aspects of religious practice that are just generally related to mind / mental states (*xin* 心). These ten faiths are not elaborated upon in the sūtra, but the 12th chapter *Chief in Goodness* contains many passages about the importance of faith. Therefore, this chapter, which precedes the chapters *Ten Abodes* (15), *Ten Practices* (21), *Ten Dedications* (25) and *Ten Grounds* (26), can be regarded the source of the ten faiths. Chengguan 澄觀, arranging the chapters into assemblies, states that the ten faiths were taught in the Hall of Universal Light at the second assembly during which the chapter *Chief in Goodness* was preached.¹⁹

Faith is Complete Enlightenment

The bodhisattva path is divided into stages that require various capacities, and involves the practitioner’s spiritual evolution as he/she goes through them until finally reaching complete enlightenment. In its elaboration of fifty-two stages, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* appears to teach a gradual path that begins with initial faith and goes up to enlightenment. However, this is not necessarily the case: there is one sentence in the sūtra that seems to suggest a different meaning. Below is the sentence in its full context.

¹⁶ *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33, no. 1716, p. 732, a7-14.

¹⁷ Yoshizu 1992. On the later incorporation of the ten faiths into Tiantai Buddhism, see Chappell 1983: 131.

¹⁸ Another piece of evidence of their Chinese origins is that only Paramārtha’s translation of Vasubandhu’s commentary on the *Mahāyāna-samgraha* (*She dasheng lun* 攝大乘論) includes references to ten faiths. See Yoshizu 1992: 274.

¹⁹ 第二會普光法堂說十信法門, *Da huayanjing celüe* 大華嚴經略策, T36, no. 1737, p. 702, b6.

Ten things should also be cultivated: knowledge of what is so and what is not; knowledge of past, present, and future consequences of actions; knowledge of all meditations, liberations, and concentrations; knowledge of superiority and inferiority of faculties; knowledge of all kinds of understandings; knowledge of all kinds of realms; knowledge of where all paths lead; unhindered clairvoyance; unhindered knowledge of past lives, knowledge of the eternal cancellation of habit energy. Contemplating on all these ten powers of the enlightened, in each power are innumerable meanings; one should ask about them, and after having heard about them should arouse a mind of great kindness and compassion and observe sentient beings without abandoning them, reflect on the teaching unceasingly, carry out superlative deeds without seeking rewards, comprehend that objects are like dreams, like illusions, like reflections, like echoes, and like magical productions. If enlightening beings can unite with such contemplations, they will not entertain a dualistic understanding of things; and all enlightening teachings will become evident to them: at the time of their first determination they will immediately attain complete perfect enlightenment, will know all things are the mind's own nature, and will perfect the body of wisdom and understand without relying on another.²⁰

復應修習十種法。何者為十？所謂：處非處智、過現未來業報智、諸禪解脫三昧智、諸根勝劣智、種種解智、種種界智、一切至處道智、天眼無礙智、宿命無礙智、永斷習氣智。於如來十力，一一觀察；一力中，有無量義，悉應詰問。聞已，應起大慈悲心，觀察眾生而不捨離；思惟諸法，無有休息；行無上業，不求果報；了知境界如幻如夢，如影如響，亦如變化。若諸菩薩能與如是觀行相應，於諸法中不生二解，一切佛法疾得現前，初發心時即得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提，知一切法即心自性，成就慧身，不由他悟。²¹

²⁰ Cleary 1993: 402-403.

²¹ See *Chapter Religious Practice (Fanxing pin* 梵行品) T10, no. 279, p. 88, c21-p. 89, a3.

The passage says that a bodhisattva should contemplate on the Buddha's ten powers, give rise to a compassionate mind toward living beings, and understand the non-reality of all things. At this initial stage, having attained this non-dual mind, all Buddha's teachings become clear, and he can have a perfect enlightenment, which makes him realize that all things or teachings are none other than the self-nature of the mind. The last statement seems to refer to Yogācāra teachings, but Buddhabhadra's translation is different:

At the time of their first determination they will immediately attain Buddhahood, and understand the real nature of all things.

初發心時便成正覺。知一切法真實之性。²²

If we compare these two versions with the Tibetan text, we find that the Tibetan version supports the former Chinese version. It also says that the bodhisattva realizes that all dharmas have the nature of mind, and thus can obtain wisdom that is not dependent on others:

He understands the non-dual nature of all dharmas, and by the first determination he will achieve the state of full enlightenment. As he knows all dharmas as the nature of mind, and, not dependent on any others, he becomes endowed with the embodiment of wisdom.

des chos de dag gnyis-su med-par rtogs-pas sems dang-po bskyed-pa nyid-kyis / blana-med-pa yang-dag-par rdzogs-pa'i byang-chub-tu mngon par 'tshang-rgya-ba'i gnas yod-do / chos thams-cad sems-kyi rang-bzhin-du shes-pas gzhan gyi dring mi 'jog-par shes-rab-kyi phung-po dang yang ldan-par 'gyur-ro^{/23}

²² *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T09, no. 278, p. 449, c14-15.

²³ Chapter 21 *Tshangs-par spyod-pa*, p. 11. Tog Palace manuscript of Tibetan Kanjur.

Enlightenment at the Stage of Faith in Huayan Buddhism

Zhiyan 智儼 (602-668), the second Huayan patriarch who inherited the teaching of the Dilun 地論 and Shelun 攝論 schools, recognized the importance of enlightenment at the stage of faith, but placed more emphasis on the gradual path of the ten grounds in a bodhisattva's career. It was the third patriarch, Fazang 法藏 (643-712), who claimed that enlightenment at the stage of faith (*xinman cheng fo* 信滿成佛) is a unique doctrine of the distinct teaching of One Vehicle (*biejiao yisheng* 別教一乘).²⁴ He underlined the importance of faith as follows:

Now, those wishing to enter the *dharma-dhātu* of non-hindrance must awaken penetrating, resolute faith. The reason is that resolute faith is made the basic foundation and the ground for a multitude of practice. All practices are born from resolute faith. Thus resolute faith is listed first and it is made the point of departure.²⁵

今欲入法界無礙者要先發得徹到信心。何者以信為初基。
眾行之本。一切諸行皆藉信生。是故最初舉信為始也。²⁶

Fazang's fellow disciple under Zhiyan, the Korean Ūisang 義湘 (625-702), might have influenced his views on the importance of enlightenment at the stage of faith.²⁷ Ūisang emphasizes that in the perfect teaching of the One Vehicle, a bodhisattva at the initial stage of faith is identical with a Buddha:

Question: A first stage bodhisattva means a bodhisattva of the [nascent] faith stage. If so, this is the position of the disciple. However, one who has achieved right enlightenment is in the stage of buddha. This is a great teacher. Superior and inferior are not equal. Positions and stages are also different. Why then are head and feet placed in the same position?

²⁴ Yoshizu 1992: 282-287.

²⁵ Unno 1964: 69.

²⁶ *Huayan you xin fajie ji* 華嚴遊心法界記, T45, no. 1877, p. 645, b22-25.

²⁷ Fazang's friendship with the Korean monk is well attested by his letter to him. See Forte 2000.

Answer: The dharma and function of the three vehicle law of expedient means and the one vehicle law in the round teaching are different. Both of them should be distinguished without confusion. What is meant by this? In the three vehicle law, head and feet are different. The years and months of an old man and a baby are not the same. Why so? Because it is based on marks. Because of producing the heart of [nascent] faith in the one vehicle round teaching, head and feet are comprehensively one. [Now] the years and months of an old man and a baby are the same. How? Because they are [both] established by causal conditions and based upon universal-principle.²⁸

問。初發心菩薩者。信地菩薩。即是弟子位。成正覺者佛地。即是大師位。高下不同。位地今一別。何以故。同處並頭腳耶。

答。三乘方便法。與圓教一乘法。法用逗留。各別不得雜用。其其義云何。三乘法頭腳各別何耶兒子年月不同。何故如是。約相說故。生信心故。圓教一乘法者。頭腳總一。阿耶兒子年月皆同總。何以故。由緣成故。約道理說故。²⁹

Fazang regarded dependent arising from the *dharma-dhātu* (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起) as the central concept of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. One of the most important Chinese Huayan innovations is the tenet of the ten mysterious gates, which is said to describe the interrelated existence of the *dharma-dhātu*. The third gate reveals that all dharmas are mutually identified freely (*zhufa xiangji zizai* 諸法相即自在). Here, Fazang refers to the enlightenment at the stage of faith, saying that after the arousal of *bodhicitta*, the bodhisattva has limitless merit. This implies that at the beginning of his spiritual path, a bodhisattva already accomplishes all the merits of the subsequent stages.

All dharmas are mutually identified freely. All these above meanings [i.e., the dharmas of dependent origination] are [such that] one is identical with all and all are identical with the one, and they are perfectly free and unhindered in their interfusion. With reference to common essence, [one] of itself possesses and includes all dharmas. However, the all of these [dharma “A”]

²⁸ Odin 1982: 210.

²⁹ *Hwan ilsūng pōkyedo* 華嚴一乘法界圖, T45, no. 1887A, p. 715, b3-10.

also in themselves are mutually inclusive, because they are repeatedly inexhaustible [in their interrelations]. However, this inexhaustibility is within the first category. Therefore this [Avatāmsaka] sūtra says, ‘The qualities of a single thought of a bodhisattva who has aroused the first thought of enlightenment are deep and extensive, without boundaries. The Tathāgata [himself] could not finish describing them if he took an eon.’³⁰ How much more so if [the bodhisattva] were to possess and cultivate the meritorious practices of the ten perfections [pāramitā] and ten stages [bhūmi] for boundless, innumerable, immeasurable eons!³¹

三者諸法相即自在門。此上諸義一即一切。一切即一。圓融自在無礙成耳。若約同體門中。即自具足攝一切法也。然此自一切復自相入。重重無盡故也。然此無盡皆悉在初門中也。故此經云。初發心菩薩。一念之切德。深廣無邊際。如來分別說。窮劫不能盡。何況於無邊無數無量劫。具足修諸度諸地功德行。³²

Zhiyan emphasized the gradual path of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, while Fazang advocated its idea of enlightenment by obtaining faith. The fourth patriarch Chengguan was aware of this contradiction in the scripture, and made efforts to interpret the text in such a way that the obvious contradiction (unacceptable for a sūtra) is resolved. Fazang, explaining the stages of the spiritual path, established two categories: the gradual (*cidi xingbu* 次第行布) and mutual interfusion (*yuanrong xiāngshe* 圓融相攝).³³ Chengguan further elaborated on them:

The sixth is elucidating the stages. It shows bodhisattvas the practice as the cause of Buddhahood. To reach the end of a road it must have stages. ‘The great treasure of a sage is his rank.’³⁴ If there is no stage, practice cannot be completed. There are two aspects. The first is the gradual way, as different stages are established. The second is a way of interfusion, as one stage includes the other stages. If any of the stages is completed, it leads to Buddhahood. The first ground says: ‘One ground includes

³⁰ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T09, no. 278, p. 433, a2-6.

³¹ Cook 1970: 498-499.

³² *Huayan yisheng jiaoyifensi zhang* 華嚴一乘教義分齊章, T45, no. 1866, p. 505, a26-b4.

³³ *Huayanjing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T35, no. 1733, p. 108, c3-8.

³⁴ Reference to *Zhouyi xici xia zhuan* 周易繫辭下傳, Chapter 1.

the merits of all grounds.³⁵ Faith comprises the ocean of result. ‘At the time of their first determination they will immediately attain Buddhahood.’ However, these two ways are unobstructed. The gradual way is from the perspective of teaching, and the way of interfusion is from the perspective of the function of absolute nature. The phenomena are the phenomena that are identical with nature, thus the gradual way does not obstruct the way of interfusion. The nature is the nature that is identical with the phenomena, thus the way of interfusion does not obstruct the gradual way. The way of interfusion does not obstruct the gradual way, thus one is immeasurable. The gradual way does not obstruct the way of interfusion, thus the immeasurable is one. The immeasurable is one, thus the phenomena are interfused in a hidden way. One is immeasurable, thus phenomena are interconnected in innumerable ways.

六彰地位者。為顯菩薩修行佛因。一道至果有階差故。夫聖人之大寶曰位。若無此位行無成故。此亦二種。一行布門。立位差別故。二圓融門。一位即攝一切位故。一一位滿即至佛故。初地云。一地之中。具攝一切諸地功德。信該果海。初發心時便成正覺等。然此二無礙。以行布是教相施設。圓融是理性德用。相是即性之相。故行布不礙圓融。性是即相之性。故圓融不礙行布。圓融不礙行布。故一為無量。行布不礙圓融。故無量為一。無量為一。故融通隱隱。一為無量故涉入重重。³⁶

Chengguan explains that the stages on the religious path can be viewed from two perspectives: teaching and the absolute truth. In teaching, there are various stages and thus the fifty-two stages discussed above are depicted as the bodhisattva’s way to reach enlightenment. However, in terms of the final truth, in other words, on the level of *tathatā* or thusness that is realized by the Buddha in his enlightenment, these stages are interfused. This is the reason why the sūtra also teaches that at the first stage the practitioner is completely enlightened. In addition, these two perspectives do not contradict each other, and therefore can be true at the same time. In this way, the sūtra puts forth the idea of endless interconnection.

³⁵ The original text of the sūtra says: 住於一地。普攝一切諸地功德, *Shijian jingyan pin* 世間淨眼品, T09, no. 278, p. 395, b25-26.

³⁶ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, T35, no. 1735, p. 504, b16-28.

The Four Models of Cultivation and Enlightenment

As we have seen above, on the basis of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, Huayan monks attempted to combine initial enlightenment at the level of faith with the final enlightenment at the end of bodhisattva path. However, the new Chinese paradigm of sudden enlightenment had become widespread in Chinese religious thinking due to the growing influence of Chan Buddhism. This framework does not link sudden enlightenment to initial enlightenment at the stage of faith: the former is said to occur with the realization of Buddha-nature. The practitioner becomes aware of his/her possession of Buddha nature, and at that moment experiences enlightenment. However, the question then naturally arises: why should one bother with any kind of religious practice once one is enlightened? While Chan monks challenged the Indian way of gradual cultivation, Huayan monks tried to show that cultivation is still necessary even after one has experienced sudden enlightenment. The fourth patriarch Chengguan provide a theoretical context to support the idea of gradual practice, and the fifth patriarch Zongmi (who was both a disciple of Chengguan greatly indebted to his master's works and the patriarch of the Heze 濟澤 lineage of Chan Buddhism), argued for the importance of gradual cultivation after sudden enlightenment.

In his commentary on the first chapter of the *Huayanjing*, Chengguan refers to the scene in the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* in which Mahāmati asks how Buddha purges living beings of the manifestations of their minds (*zixin xianliu* 自心現流).³⁷ Buddha provides four similes for gradual purification and four similes for sudden purification,³⁸ stating that the process of purification is gradual like the ripening of mango fruit, making pottery, the creation of the world, and mastering various skills, and that it is sudden like objects being reflected by a bright mirror, objects being illuminated by the sun and moon, the creation of the environment by *ālayavijñāna*, and the illumination of Buddha's light. Next, Chengguan further elaborates upon the term “sudden” as follows:

³⁷ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 164, b10-p. 165, a2.

³⁸ *Lengqie abaduoluo baojing* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, T 16, 670: 485c27-486a10.

1. Sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (*dunwu jianxiu* 頓悟漸修). This is like suddenly seeing a nine-layered platform that one must climb up before reaching the top. One suddenly understands the nature of the mind, realizing that her/his mind is identical with Buddha, and that it includes all dharmas. Then one must collect merits by cultivating various practices. This is from the aspect of initial enlightenment (*jiewu* 解悟).
2. Sudden cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment (*dunxiu jianwu* 頓修漸悟). This is like rubbing a mirror: the mirror is rubbed everywhere at the same time, yet its brightness appears gradually. All practices are cultivated suddenly, but enlightenment is reached gradually. This is from the aspect of final enlightenment (*zhengwu* 證悟).
3. Sudden cultivation followed by sudden enlightenment (*dunxiu dunwu* 頓修頓悟). This is like when silk is cut with a sharp sword and all the fibers are cut simultaneously, or when an entire piece of silk immediately takes on a new color when being dyed. All practices are cultivated together and at the same time enlightenment is bright.
4. Gradual cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment (*jianxiu jianwu* 漸修漸悟). This is like cutting bamboo gnarl by gnarl.

At first glance, this gradual / sudden cultivation and enlightenment scheme appears to recognize the possibility of both gradual and sudden enlightenment. However, Chengguan wants to emphasize the importance of cultivation, whether gradual or sudden. Elsewhere, he criticizes Chan monks who neglect cultivation, claiming that “the mirror is originally bright.”³⁹ Chengguan argues that from the aspect of principle, we can speak about inherent wisdom, and from the aspect of phenomena, we can speak about the wisdom of Buddha. Even if the mirror of mind is originally clear, it is buried by infinite afflictions, and ordinary people do not have the same realization as the Buddha. As principle and phenomena are unobstructed, the pursuit of cultivation is identical with its non-pursuit. This kind of cultivation is non-cultivation (*wuxiu* 無修), and non-cultivation is the real cultivation (*zhenxiu* 真修).⁴⁰

³⁹ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 164, c20-22.

⁴⁰ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 9, a26-27

After the translation of the forty-fascicle *Huayanjing* was completed in 798, Chengguan wrote a commentary on it by imperial command. By this time, as a leader of the Buddhist community, he must have experienced the growing influence of Chan Buddhism. In his new commentary, he responded to the challenges of Chan by including a chapter entitled “The Discussion of Various Levels of Cultivation and Realization” (*bian xiuzheng qianshen* 辨修證淺深),⁴¹ which is not found in his earlier commentary. There, adopting a famous Chan slogan, he says that the teachings of *Huayanjing* have been transmitted mind-to-mind since the time of the Buddha without relying on writing.

He divides the learning of wisdom (*huixue* 慧學) into nature and characteristics, and the learning of meditation (*dingxue* 定學) into gradual and sudden. Just as he does with the ten differences between nature and characteristics in a previous chapter,⁴² he then expounds the meaning of gradual and sudden. He presents the Northern school of Chan as an example of the latter, characterizing it as the practices of observing the mind and cultivating purification (*kanxin xiujing* 看心修淨). He offers two models under the category of gradual: sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (*dunwu jianxiu* 頓悟漸修) and gradual cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment (*jianxiu jianwu* 漸修漸悟). On the other hand, he states that “sudden” means the direct pointing at the essence of mind and the sudden elimination of verbal expressions, and again offers two models: sudden cultivation followed by sudden enlightenment (*dunxiu dunwu* 頓修頓悟) and non-cultivation followed by non-enlightenment (*wuxiu wuwu* 無修無悟). Chengguan claims that though these sudden and gradual methods seem to be different, in fact they are only different paths that lead to the same goal. According to him, what is really crucial is whether one can obtain meaning (*deyi* 得意) or not. If one understands the meaning of the teachings through them, then both methods are praiseworthy, but if not, they are problematic.

Next, he explains the object of enlightenment (*suowu* 所悟), the method of enlightenment (*neng wuru fa* 能悟入法), and the characteristics of enlightenment (*wuxiang* 悟相). He describes the object of enlightenment in the following way:

The object of enlightenment is the following. Some say that the essence of mind is separated from thought, that original nature is pure and neither born nor perishes. This [statement] is mostly from the aspect of gradual [way]. Some say that the non-abiding,

⁴¹ *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* 華嚴經行願品疏, X05, no. 227, p. 64, a20-p. 65, a15.

⁴² For a detailed explanation on the ten differences, see Hamar 2007b.

empty and quiescent *Tathatā* transcends characteristics; or the false is empty and the absolute is existent; or the false is existent and the absolute is empty; or mind is identical with Buddha and the teaching of Buddha inherently exists [in all living beings]. These [statements] mostly belong to the sudden way. However, as neither of [the sudden and gradual ways] go beyond the nature and characteristics of mind, they can be applied together.

然其所悟：或言心體離念，本性清淨，不生不滅，多約漸也。或云無住空寂真如絕相，或妄空真有，或妄有真空，或即心即佛，非心非佛，本具佛法，多屬頓門。然皆不離心之性相，並可通用。⁴³

Despite the discrepancies between the Northern and Southern schools, he underlines that these two stances are not contradictory but rather complementary.⁴⁴

With regard to reaching enlightenment, Chengguan discusses meditation and wisdom. He emphasizes that the only correct approach is to practice these two methods together.

The last section on the characteristics of enlightenment is the longest, and occupies half of the chapter. At the beginning, he states that there are two kinds of enlightenment: initial enlightenment (*jiewu* 解悟) and final enlightenment (*zhengwu* 證悟). Initial enlightenment is the clear understanding of the nature and characteristics [of the mind] (*mingliao xingxiang* 明了性相), while final enlightenment is the arrival of mind at the enigmatic supreme (*xin zao xuanji* 心造玄極). Initial enlightenment is the realization of inherently pure nature, and final enlightenment is complete enlightenment after cultivation. This pair of terms resemble *benjue* 本覺 and *shijue* 始覺 from the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*.⁴⁵

Next, Chengguan discusses four models of enlightenment and cultivation.

⁴³ *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* 華嚴經行願品疏 , X05, no. 227, p. 64, b7-11 .

⁴⁴ *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 261, c7-13.

⁴⁵ *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論, T32, no. 1666, p. 576, b14-16.

1. Sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation. This is from the aspect of initial enlightenment. After the practitioner suddenly understands the nature of mind, he engages in gradual cultivation to become one with it. Enlightenment is like the shining of the moon, as it suddenly makes everything bright. Cultivation is like rubbing a mirror in that it makes things clear gradually.
2. Gradual cultivation followed by sudden enlightenment. This is from the aspect of final enlightenment. First the practitioner realizes that all objects are only consciousness and then sees the original purity of mind. Both mind and object become quiescent.
3. Gradual cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment. This also represents final enlightenment. Both cultivation and enlightenment are like climbing a tower: as one goes higher, more distant vistas come into sight.
4. Sudden cultivation and sudden enlightenment. While the above three models present enlightenment and cultivation as existing on a temporal plane, in this model Chengguan explicitly specifies the sequence of enlightenment and cultivation, presenting three possibilities: (1) enlightenment followed by cultivation (*xianwu houxiu* 先悟後修), or initial enlightenment, (2) practice followed by enlightenment, or final enlightenment, and (3) simultaneous practice and enlightenment, which includes both initial and final enlightenment.

In the following table I have summarize the four models of enlightenment and practice in Chengguan's subcommentary and new commentary.

Subcommentary	New Commentary 1.	New Commentary 2.
1.頓悟漸修 解悟	1.頓悟漸修 漸	1.頓悟漸修 解悟
2.頓修漸悟 證悟	4.無修無悟 頓	2.漸修頓悟 證悟
3.頓修頓悟	3.頓修頓悟 頓	4.頓修頓悟 先悟後修 解悟 先修後悟 證悟 修悟一時 悟道解證
4.漸修漸悟	2.漸修漸悟 漸	3.漸修漸悟 證悟

Three of the four models are identical, but the second row in the table contains different names. It appears that Chengguan saw initial enlightenment as something that is not the result of a practice but rather appears before it, and final enlightenment as being preceded by cultivation. Using these terms, Chengguan transplanted the words *benjue* and *shijue* of *Awakening of Faith* into the context of Chan Buddhism, thereby retaining the meaning and importance of Buddhist cultivation. His disciple Zongmi 宗密 (780-841), who was not only the patriarch of the Huayan lineage but also one of the Chan lineage, adopted his master's scheme and elaborated further on the significance of initial and final enlightenment. He saw the model of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation as the ideal way for Buddhist practitioners.

Li Tongxuan: Faith in the Identity of Sentient Beings and Buddhas

Fazang and Chengguan represent the scholar-monk lineage of Huayan Buddhism that emphasized a scholastic interpretation of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* in which religious practice seems to be only secondary. However, the famous Huayan hermit Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635-730), who was worshipped as a saint by the people even though he was not an ordained monk, was less scholastic in his writings on the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*.⁴⁶ Kojima Taizan argued that Li Tongxuan represented the Wutaishan 五台山 lineage of the Huayan school, which stressed religious practice.⁴⁷ Although Seunghak Koh has disproved Kojima's claims by showing that Li Tongxuan had no close relation with Wutaishan, his Huayan can still be described as practice-oriented.⁴⁸

Li Tongxuan advocated the practice of no practice based on the idea that all sentient beings are originally enlightened and there is no difference between the sacred and the ordinary, stating that the absolute and the ordinary are both real (*zhen su ju zhen* 真俗俱真) in the one true *dharma-dhātu* (*yi zhen fajie* 一真法界).⁴⁹ He rejected temporal causality, which would imply the need for assiduous religious cultivation before attaining buddhahood, and instead proposed the simultaneity of cause and effect (*yinguo tongshi* 因果同時).⁵⁰

⁴⁶ For a summary of Li Tongxuan's teaching, see Gimello 1983. For his ideas on faith and practice, see Shim 1987.

⁴⁷ Kojima 1996, 1997.

⁴⁸ Koh 2011: 275-280.

⁴⁹ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 739, c21-24.

⁵⁰ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 740, b29-c4.

While Fazang and Chengguan stated that due to the mutual unobstruction, one level of the bodhisattva path can include all the other levels, Li Tongxuan claimed that the fifty-two stages are only expedient means and that in reality each level is identical with the Buddha and the Buddha is identical with all levels (*zhuwei ze fo fo ze zhuwei* 諸位則佛佛則諸位).⁵¹ He says that Manjuśrī represents the cause, while the Buddha of immovable wisdom is the result. However, the cause and result are not different in terms of essence (*yinguo tongti wu er* 因果同體無二).⁵²

On the level of ordinary beings, the identity of the realm of the Buddhas' and the realm of sentient beings' is difficult to realize, and thus only faith can bridge the gap between the two. Sentient beings must believe that their minds are no different from Buddhas' minds. As Li says:

If they do not believe that their body and the Buddha's body are non-dual in terms of cause and effect in the stage of the ten faiths, they cannot establish [firm] faith and understanding. Therefore it is said in the chapter *The Tathāgata's Manifestation* (*Rulai chuxian pin* 如來出現品), “Bodhisattvas should know that a moment of their own mind contains all buddhas from the ten directions who attain right enlightenment and turn the wheel of correct dharma. Why is it so? The Buddha's mind and their minds are non-dual.” Only when you have such faith can it be called faith.⁵³

十信之中若不信自身與佛身因果無二者。不成信解。是故如來出現品云。菩薩摩訶薩應知自心之內一念中有十方諸佛成等正覺轉正法輪。何以故。佛心與自心無二故。如是信心方名信故。⁵⁴

At the stage of the ten faiths, which as we saw comes at the beginning of the fifty-two stages, the practitioner must believe that his mind is not different from the buddhas' who come from the ten directions. Li Tongxuan says that after this, faith is born in the practitioner, and he will have a vision of the way at the first level of the ten abidings.⁵⁵ Traditionally, this vision is seen as arising at the first ground when the mind of enlightenment is created. However,

⁵¹ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 741, a7.

⁵² *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 752, a7. Shibasaki 1987.

⁵³ Koh 2011: 40.

⁵⁴ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 744, b5-9.

⁵⁵ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 787, a20-23.

Li stresses that ordinary people can attain buddhahood by seeing their true nature at the first stage of the ten abidings just after they have passed through the levels of ten faiths, and that later they only deepen this wisdom.⁵⁶

As we saw above, the traditional list of ten faiths is not actually closely related to faith, and the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* does not include them: they were adopted from other scriptures. Li Tongxuan seems to have been aware of this problem, and he devised a new scheme of ten faiths that emphasizes the belief in the identity of living beings and buddhas from various aspects. The first of ten faiths is ordinary beings seeing faith as the most important and resolving to attain all the results of buddhahood. Thus ordinary beings at this initial stage must believe that:

1. the immovable wisdom of the minds of all buddhas of the ten directions is not different from their own mind,
2. the fundamental wisdom of the bodies of all buddhas of the ten directions and their body are not different,
3. they can carry out the Tathāgata's ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications and ten grounds,
4. they too can attain the *samādhi* of which all buddhas of ten directions were born,
5. they can attain all the supernatural power (*shentong* 神通) of all buddhas of the ten directions,
6. they will receive the buddhas' wisdom,
7. they will receive the buddhas' compassion, which covers everything,
8. they will receive the buddhas' freedom, and
9. while not moving for a movement they will go through endless eons of cultivation and reach all levels in a way equal to all buddhas.

Li Tongxuan explains the reasons why ordinary beings can have these results of buddhahood in the following way:

In the chapter “Chief in Goodness,” from the stage of ordinary people faith is regarded as foremost. This is the decision that they will receive the result of Buddha’s great bodhi. Thus from the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “the immovable wisdom of the minds of all buddhas of the ten directions are not different from our own minds. Only due to ignorance are they deluded.

⁵⁶ Koh 2011: 42-44.

Ignorance and the mind of buddhas of the ten directions originally are not different.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “the fundamental wisdom of the bodies of all buddhas of ten directions and our bodies are not different. Why? Because they originate from the same fundamental wisdom of the same dharma-nature body (*yi faxing shen yi genben zhi* 一法性身一根本智). It is similar to the branch of a tree. One root can grow many branches and leaves. Depending on conditions a tree can grow different branches and leaves of a different quality.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we can carry out the Tathāgata’s ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications and ten grounds. Why? We remember the ocean of worldly suffering. We have carried out activities that did not benefit anybody. Now, we can carry out activities that benefit others, and the various practices of bodhisattvas can save sentient beings. How could we not perform these?” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “the *samādhi* from which all buddhas of ten directions were born they also can attain. Why? The *samādhis* of all buddhas were born from the *upāya* of the Tathāgata’s self-nature. We are all endowed with the *Tathāgata*’s nature with pure self-essence and are equal with buddhas.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we can attain all supernatural power (*shentong* 神通) of all buddhas of the ten directions. Why? All supernatural power of buddhas can be received on the base of absolute wisdom (*zhēnzhì* 真智). Due to its absolute nature wisdom has no mental disturbances (*fannao* 煩惱), and our ignorance can become wisdom. All karma is destroyed, only wisdom and compassion exist, and the supernatural powers are freely manifested to liberate [living beings]. From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we will receive buddhas’ wisdom. Why? Because all buddhas originate from ordinary beings.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we will receive the buddhas’ compassion that covers everything. Why? Because all buddhas’ compassion originates from the great vow. Like all buddhas we also take the great vow.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe “we will receive the buddhas’ freedom. Why? Because all buddhas’ wisdom is manifested in the dharmas of nature-origination. The wisdom-body and the dharma-body enter the realms of the living beings. The untainted visible material objects and sense organs function freely. We are also not detached from Tathāgata’s wisdom that manifests its nature in the world.” From the stage of

ordinary people, they believe, “we will go through endless eons of cultivation and reach all levels equal with all buddhas, but will not move for a moment. Why? Because the three periods of time [past, present, future] have no time.”

故從凡夫地。信十方諸佛心不動智與自心無異故。只為無明所迷故。無明與十方諸佛心。本來無二故。從凡夫地信十方諸佛身根本智與自身不異故。何以故皆是一法性身一根本智。猶如樹枝一根生多枝葉等。以因緣故。一樹枝上成壞不同故。從凡夫地信如來十住十行十迴向十地我悉盡能行之。何以故。自憶無始時來波流苦海。無益之事尚以行之。何況如今有益之事。菩薩萬行濟眾生事。豈不能為。從凡夫地。信十方諸佛皆從三昧生我亦當得。何以故。諸佛三昧皆從如來自性方便生。我亦具有如來自體清淨之性與佛平等。從凡夫地信十方諸佛一切神通我亦當得。何以故。諸佛神通依真智而得。我但依真性智中無有煩惱無明成智。一切業亡唯有智慈。通化自在。從凡夫地信佛智慧我亦當得。何以故。一切諸佛悉從凡夫來故。從凡夫地信佛大悲普覆一切我亦當得。何以故。諸佛大悲從大願起。我亦如諸佛發大願故。從凡夫地信佛自在我亦當得。何以故。諸佛自在於性起法門。智身法身入眾生界。不染色塵諸根自在。我亦不離性起如來智故。從凡夫地信自發心經無盡劫修功行滿位齊諸佛。不移一念。何以故。為三世無時故。⁵⁷

According to Li Tongxuan, faith is not related to any external objects; even buddhas or bodhisattvas cannot be relied on. The aspiration of enlightenment must rely on Buddha's omniscience (*yiqie zhi* 一切智), which is the wisdom of no reliance (*wusuoyi* 無所依).⁵⁸ Li stresses the importance of immovable wisdom (*bu dong zhi* 不動智) that is inherent in all living beings. This wisdom is described in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* as a wisdom that is created by faith:

They have removed the webs of doubts of all time
 And aroused faith in those who have realized thusness.
 By faith they've attained immovable wisdom,⁵⁹
 And because their knowledge is pure their understanding is true.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, 1739, p. 745, c17-p. 746, a12.

⁵⁸ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 825, c16-18.

⁵⁹ Here, Cleary's original translation uses the phrase "immutable knowledge."

⁶⁰ Cleary 1993: 415-416.

三世疑網悉已除，
於如來所起淨信，
以信得成不動智，
智清淨故解真實。⁶¹

However, this wisdom can lead living beings to follow delusion but also can cause them to awaken. If this wisdom functions as illusion then this discriminatory aspect is called consciousness, while the awakening aspect is called wisdom. The Yogācāra model of transforming consciousness into wisdom (*zhuanshi de zhi* 轉識得智) might have inspired Li Tongxuan to propose this tenet.⁶² This fundamental wisdom is realized suddenly (*dun zheng ben zhi* 頓證本智) at the stage of generating *bodhicitta*.⁶³

Conclusion

In this article, I have shown the relationship between faith, practice and enlightenment in the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*, and the way in which this problem was addressed in the Huayan school of Chinese Buddhism. The importance of faith in the Buddha, bodhisattvas and the Buddha's teaching was emphasized in several chapters of this sūtra as a prerequisite for Buddhist practice. Even though the concept of ten faiths does not originate in the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*, in its Chinese interpretation, it became an integral part of the bodhisattva path. The practice and ensuing enlightenment of the bodhisattva are described in great detail by bodhisattvas in the sūtra. Although the majority of this scripture explains traditional gradual cultivation, it contains a passage stating that the bodhisattva experiences enlightenment at the beginning of his spiritual path when he has generated *bodhicitta*.

This reference to initial enlightenment had a great impact on the development of East Asian Buddhism. While the second patriarch of the Huayan school, Zhiyan, had already acknowledged the importance of faith, the third patriarch, Fazang, presented the teaching of enlightenment through the accomplishment of faith (*xinman cheng fo* 信滿成佛) as a unique tenet of the distinct teaching of the One Vehicle, which he saw as referring exclusively to Huayan teachings. Chengguan, who had a broad erudition in Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature, attempted to harmonize all Buddhist tenets by including them in his commentary and subcommentary on the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*.

⁶¹ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 92, c22-24.

⁶² Kimura 1972.

⁶³ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 752, a27.

He proclaimed the nonobstruction of the gradual (*cidi xingbu* 次第行布) and mutual interfusion (*yuanrong xiangshe* 圓融相攝), stating that while in terms of teaching there is a gradual path, in terms of absolute nature the first stage includes all the other stages.

As we have seen, the problem of faith, practice and enlightenment was discussed in Huayan Buddhism in relation to the *Avatāra-sūtra*. However, Chan Buddhism's popular ideas of sudden enlightenment had to be dealt with by the late Tang patriarchs. Chengguan established four models of enlightenment and practice, asserting that while sudden enlightenment arises after the practitioner sees Buddha-nature, this does not mean that practice should be abandoned: on the contrary, gradual cultivation should follow sudden awakening. This model can actually be traced back to the *Avatāra-sūtra*, where a bodhisattva experiences awakening at the stage of faith but then goes through all the subsequent stages until he reaches the supreme awakening. Zongmi, who was much indebted to his master, Chengguan, advocated sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation. Even though he was also a patriarch of Chan Buddhism, he retained his belief in the importance of religious practice.

Li Tongxuan's Huayan teaching is quite different from the lineage known as the “five Huayan patriarchs.” Li was brave innovator ready to devise new ideas and was not held back by previous teachings. He emphasized that initial enlightenment occurs when the practitioner has faith that he is identical with Buddha. He devised a new set of ten faiths related to the belief that a sentient being is no different from a Buddha. He explicitly states that belief should not be directed to outside buddhas or bodhisattvas, but to one's internal identity with buddhas. Li Tongxuan's idea of faith in the identity with buddhas was discovered by Chan Buddhism in East Asia.⁶⁴ His teachings had a great impact on Chinul 知訥 (1158–1210), the famous Sōn (Chan) master who described initial faith in the identity of living beings with the Buddha as patriarchal faith.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Buswell 1986: 210-213.

⁶⁵ Park 1983: 19-24.

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A Genealogy of Other-Power Faith: From Śākyamuni to Shinran

TAKAMI INOUE

Introduction

Shinran 親鸞, the founder of Jōdo Shinshū, sought a way to overcome the most fundamental problem in orthodox Pure Land Buddhism: practitioners' *hakarai* はからい, or conscious calculations, and finally discovered it in Other-power faith. In fact, *hakarai* is the most tenacious problem not only in the Pure Land tradition, but also in the entire history of Buddhism. Writing on the issues of "consciousness, self, morality, and others" involved in *hakarai*, Paul Williams, the author of *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, observes the following:

Perhaps in Buddhism it was only the great Japanese Buddhist Shinran (1173-1262) who saw the implications of all this. Concern with one's own experiences—all that meditation—cannot finally escape charges of egoity. Indeed, all concern with experiences implicates egoity. For Shinran this means that *nothing* one does can bring about enlightenment, for enlightenment is essentially beyond egoity. In finally realising that one cannot do it, in finally letting go of one's own ability to attain enlightenment, the Other who is Amitābha Buddha shines forth from within one's own depths, where he has been shining fully enlightened all along. One turns from self-power (*jiriki*) to Other-power (*tariki*). This is what Shinran calls 'faith' (*shinjin*).¹

According to Shinran, Other-power faith 他力の信 (*tariki no shin*) enables one to overcome *hakarai*, and when such faith is awakened, one immediately enters "*shōjōju*" 正定聚 ("the company of the truly settled"; Pāli *niyata rāsi*; Skt. *niyata rāśi*). In his radical interpretation of the Pure Land, "*shōjōju*" is a crucial term that captures the realization of this Other-power faith.

¹ Williams 2002: 58.

In this paper, therefore, I would like to discuss Shinran's idea of *shōjōju* within the broader framework of Buddhist history. I will first examine his understanding of the term by looking at its usage in his principal work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, as well as in his other writings, while paying close attention to context. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate that Shinran considered this Other-power faith-based *shōjōju* to be the only realistic goal of the Buddhist path, open to everyone, and attainable in this life at one's very moment of true entrusting. This interpretation reflects his deep insight into human nature and the conditions in which ordinary people, not the monastic elite, live their daily lives in society. Then, in the second section, I will compare Shinran's understanding of *shōjōju* with the concept of *sotāpanna* ("stream-entry") in early Indian Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism. By quoting similar passages from the Pāli Nikāya and the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, I would like to demonstrate that Shinran's radical re-interpretation of the Pure Land was actually a restoration of the original Buddhist idea of nirvāṇa that existed during Sākyamuni's lifetime.

I. *Shōjōju* in Shinran's Writings

At the beginning of the "Chapter on Realization" in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran expounds upon "true realization," which centers on the moment of joining "the company of the truly settled":

It is the wondrous state attained through Amida's perfect benefiting of others; it is the ultimate fruition of supreme nirvāṇa. It arises from the Vow of necessary attainment of nirvāṇa, also known as the Vow of realization of great nirvāṇa.

When foolish beings possessed of blind passions, the multitudes caught in birth-and-death and defiled by evil karma, realize the mind and practice that Amida directs to them for their going forth, they immediately join in the company of the truly settled of the Mahāyāna. Because they dwell among the truly settled, they necessarily attain nirvāṇa. To necessarily attain nirvāṇa is [to attain] eternal bliss...²

² Translation from CWS 153. For this paper, the author have slightly modified the translations found in CWS.

While Shinran bases this interpretation on the “Vow of Necessary Attainment of Nirvāṇa” (the 11th of Amida Buddha’s 48 Original Vows), in the original text where the vow is found, the “dwelling among the truly settled” and the “attaining of nirvāṇa” are both states reached by humans and devas in the Pure Land, not by foolish beings in this world “immediately.” Shinran’s interpretations of the “wondrous state” and “ultimate fruition” (*shōjōju* and *nirvāṇa*, respectively) appear to be not literal but metaphorical and pragmatic, are based on the exegeses of preceding Pure Land masters, and reflect his own keen awareness of human nature and the conditions of human life.

According to the passage quoted above, the key to “true realization” is the “mind and practice,” (*shinjin* 信心 and *nenbutsu* 念仏, respectively) that Amida bestows upon all sentient beings by transferring and transforming his infinite merit. This “mind and practice” enables their going forth in the direction of “ultimate fruition.” Hence, hearing the *nenbutsu* (or *myōgō* 名号, Amida’s Name) and entrusting oneself to Amida Buddha is the essential part of being “truly settled.” This organic process is succinctly stated in the *Shōshin nenbutsu ge* 正信念仏偈 (The Gāthā of True Faith and the *Nenbutsu*), which concludes the “Chapter on Practice” in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*:

The Name embodying the Primal Vow is the act of true settlement, [=17th Vow]

The Vow of entrusting with sincere mind is the cause of birth, [=18th Vow]

We realize the equal of enlightenment and supreme nirvāṇa
Through the fulfillment of the Vow of attaining nirvāṇa without
fail.³ [=11th Vow]

Shinran finds definite and authoritative grounds for his understanding of Śākyamuni Buddha’s discourse in the fulfillment of the “Vow of Entrusting with Sincere Mind” in the *Larger Sūtra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*, which is cited in the “Chapter on Faith” in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*,⁴ as well as in the *Jō-dosangyō ōjōmonrui* 淨土三經往生文類 (The Collection of Passages on the Types of Birth in the Three Pure Land Sūtras). Here, I quote from an extant copy of the latter that Shinran handwrote in 1255, when he was 83. In its introduction, he explicitly states that it is “in this life” (*genshō ni* 現生に) that we dwell in the stage of the truly settled.

³ CWS 69.

⁴ CWS 80.

Birth in accord with the *Larger Sūtra* is [brought about by] the Tathāgata's selected Primal Vow [=18th Vow], the inconceivable ocean-like vow. This is Other Power. In other words, by the cause of the Vow of birth through the *nenbutsu* [18th Vow], we gain the fruit of the Vow of necessary attainment of nirvāṇa [11th Vow]. In this life we dwell in the stage of the truly settled (現生に正定聚のくらいに住して) and we necessarily attain the true and real fulfilled land. Thus, because of the true cause—Amida Tathāgata's directing of virtue for our going forth—we realize the enlightenment of supreme nirvāṇa. This is the true intent of the *Larger Sūtra*. . . .

The passage on the fulfillment of the Primal Vow states:

All sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of *shinjin* and joy, which is directed to them from Amida's sincere mind, and aspiring to be born in that land, they immediately attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma.⁵

(諸有衆生 聞其名号 信心歡喜 乃至一念 至心回向 願生彼國
即得往生 住不退転 唯除五逆 謗謗正法)

This passage on the fulfillment of the 18th Vow has a momentous significance in Shinran's Pure Land thought. Subtle exegetical issues are involved in its interpretation relating to his irregular reading of the original Chinese, clearly indicated by the marks he added in *kana* script, as well as his multi-layered understanding of the so-called “exclusion clause” at the end. Regarding the concept of *shōjōju*, it is significant that it is connected here with the idea of *futaiten* (不退転, “non-retrogression,” Skt. *avaivartika*). He considers the two to be the same: they are both ideal states or stages in which persons of *shinjin* dwell “in the present life.” This understanding relates to his radical interpretation of the concept of “attaining birth” (往生 *ōjō*), which he articulates in his *Yuishinshō mon'i* 唯信鈔文意 (Notes on *Essentials of Faith Alone*). There are two extant copies of this text in his handwriting, both of which are dated 1257 (when Shinran was 85):

⁵ CWS 639. This English translation is from the longer version of the *Jōdosangyō ōjō-monrui*, dated two years later (1257).

The *Larger Sūtra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* states:

[All sentient beings] aspire to be born in that land; they immediately attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. (願生彼國 即得往生 住不退転)

“Aspire to be born in that land” is a command: All beings should aspire to be born in that land!

“They immediately attain birth” means that when a person realizes *shinjin*, he or she is born immediately. “To be born immediately” is to dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. To dwell in the stage of non-retrogression is to become established in the stage of the truly settled. Such is the meaning of “immediately attain birth.”

“Immediately (即)” means instantly (すなわち); “instantly” means without any passage of time and without any passage of days.⁶

A very similar explanation of the “immediacy” of “attaining birth” in connection with the stages of “non-retrogression” and being “truly settled” is found in the *Ichenen tanen mon'i* 一念多念文意 (Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling),⁷ which was also composed in 1257. Shinran supports his interpretation by drawing from the exegeses of the Pure Land masters, as can be seen in his note in the *Gutokushō* 愚禿鈔 (Notes of the “Foolish Stubble-Headed One”):

“Entrusting of oneself to the Primal Vow” corresponds to [Shan-tao’s phrase]

“in the preceding moment, life ends...” (前念命終)

This means that “one immediately enters the group of the truly settled” [T’an-luan],

“one immediately enters the stage of the definitely settled” [Nāgārjuna],

or “one is termed a definitely-settled bodhisattva.”

“Immediately attaining birth” corresponds to

“in the next moment, you are immediately born.” (後念即生) [Shan-tao]⁸

⁶ CWS 455.

⁷ CWS 474-77.

⁸ CWS 594.

When seen from the overall Pure Land Buddhist tradition, this note suggests an extreme understanding of the “truly settled persons” and their “attaining birth.” This radical interpretation culminated in Shinran’s famous passage on *jinen-hōni* 自然法爾 (“the natural, spontaneous, [flow of the] Dharma itself”), written in the twelfth month in 1258 at the age of 86, which almost deconstructs the concept of the “Pure Land” and equates “Amida Buddha” with the flow of the formless Dharma.⁹

II. *Sotāpanna* in Indian Buddhism

Shinran’s interpretation of *shōjōju* described in the previous section can be compared to the concept of *sotāpanna* in early Indian Buddhism.¹⁰ Although it is usually understood today only as a technical term for the introductory “stage” on the Theravāda Buddhist path, originally *sotāpanna* was a very significant concept that represented, metaphorically, a mode of liberation based on faith (*saddhā*).¹¹ The first element of the compound “*sota-*” in Pāli can mean either “stream” (Skt. *srotas*) or “ear” (Skt. *śrotas*), while the latter “*āpanna*” (past participle of *āpajjati*) means “entered upon, fallen into, possessed of, having done.” Thus, although it is normally translated into English as “stream-entry” or “stream-winner,” it could also mean “ear-entry” or “ear-gainer,”¹² and in the Pāli suttas it probably was intended to be an ingenious pun, a double-meaning metaphor, signifying a person who has heard the Buddha’s words and entered the “flow of the Dharma” (*dhamma-sota*). In the following section, I will introduce a few notable examples from the Pāli Nikāya, and compare them with Shinran’s idea of *shōjōju*.

⁹ CWS 530. The fifth letter of the *Mattō-shō* 末燈鈔.
<http://www.shinranworks.com/letters/mattosho5.htm>

¹⁰ John Ross Carter has engaged in comparative studies on the topic. See Carter 1987 and Carter 2009.

¹¹ My understanding of the significance of *sotāpanna* relies heavily on groundbreaking work by Funahashi Issai. See Funahashi 1952 and Funahashi 1973. Also consult Fujita 1959.

¹² See Masefield 1987: 130-36, “The meaning of the term *sotāpanna*.” Masefield’s translation of the term is “one who has come into contact with (or undergone) the hearing” (134).

1. Piṅgiya's Case

The *Sutta Nipāta* is considered by scholars to be one of the oldest extant Buddhist texts. Towards the end of its final chapter, entitled *Pārāyana* (“the furthest point” or “the way to the other shore”), a very old and feeble Brahman named Piṅgiya, who was in the midst of devotionally praising the Buddha, suddenly hears the Buddha’s voice speaking to him:¹³

As Vakkali was liberated by faith (*mutta-saddha*),
 [as well as] Bhadrāvudha and Ālavi-Gotama,¹⁴
 You too should give forth faith (*pamuñcassu saddham*),
 And you will go, O Piṅgiya, to the further shore of the realm of
 death. (Sn 1146)¹⁵

This verse is actually the Buddha’s concluding remarks in the chapter as well as his final words in the entire volume of the *Sutta Nipāta*. The expressions “liberated by faith” (*mutta-saddha*) in the first line and “give forth faith” (*pamuñcassu saddham*) in the third correspond to the Buddha’s famous declaration at the beginning of his missionary career:

¹³ See Williams 2008: 209–10. Williams begins Chapter 10 (“Trust, Self-abandonment and Devotion: the Cults of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas”) with Piṅgiya’s recollection of the Buddha in the *Sutta Nipāta*, and ends with a long section on Shinran (259–266). See also Clough 2012: 75–76, where the author begins Chapter 3 (“The Path Based in Faith”) by introducing the discussion of Piṅgiya in Sn 1146. I have written about Piṅgiya’s *nembutsu* and *shinjin* in Inoue 2008.

¹⁴ Among the exemplary list of persons liberated by faith, Vakkali’s case is relatively well known. The Buddha declared him to be the “foremost among those liberated by faith” (*saddhādhimutta*). The second in the list is Bhadrāvudha, who appears only once in the dialogue section of the same *Pārāyana vagga* in the *Sutta Nipāta* (Sn 1101–1104). He praises the Buddha using the compound adjective *kappamijaham*, “one who has forsaken calculation,” or “beyond time.” The word “*kappa*” denotes a critically important concept, though very difficult to translate, and corresponds to “*hakarai*” in Shinran’s thought. The last one in the list is “Ālavi-Gotama,” an enigmatic figure who does not appear anywhere else in the Nikāya under such a name. I have carried out detailed research on persons related to the locale of Ālavī, such as Ālavaka Yakka, Vangīsa and Nigrodhakappa, and proposed that “Ālavi-Gotama” is a rhetorical device (*pariyāya*), adopted by the Buddha or the compilers of the *Sutta Nipāta* for the purpose of stressing and reconfirming the critical role of *saddhā* on the Buddhist path to awakening. See Inoue 2010.

¹⁵ *Yathā ahu vakkali muttasaddho, bhadrāvudho ālavi gotamo ca, evameva tvampi pamuñcasasu saddham, gamissasi tvam piṅgiya maccudheyyassa pāram*. The English translation is based on Müller et al. 1881 and Saddhatissa 1994.

The gate of immortality (*amata*) has been opened wide.
 Those who have ears to hear (*sota-vant*),
 Let them give forth faith (*pamuñcantu saddham*)! (D ii 39)¹⁶

Although his physical “ears” (*sota*) were not perfect due to his advanced age, Piṅgiya heard the Buddha’s voice clearly in what appears to be a prototype of ‘*buddhānussati*’ (“recollection of the Buddha,” *nenbutsu*). He responded in the following way:

As I hear the words of the Sage, I become more confident.

(*sutvāna munino vaco*) (*bhiyyo pasīdāmi*)

This man is Sambuddha: he has removed the veil and woken up.
 There is nothing barren there; his mind is clear and luminous.

(Sn 1147)

Everything accessible to knowledge is known to him,
 Even the ultimate subtleties of godhood.

There are no more questions for the doubtful who come to him:
 The teacher has answered them all. (Sn 1148)

Yes, I shall go there. I shall go beyond change, beyond formations;
 I shall go beyond comparison. There are no more doubts now (*na m’ettha kamkā*).

So recognize me as one whose mind is liberated (*adhimutta-cittan*)
 (Sn 1149)

In the first line of verse 1147, the verb “*pasīdāmi*” denotes a serene entrusting mind that is awakened while listening to Śākyamuni’s words (*munino vaco*). Its noun form is “*pasāda*” (Skt. *prasāda*, Ch. 淨信), and such firm conviction, described in this stanza, is technically termed “*aveccappasāda*,” or “perfect, absolute faith” (Skt. *avetya-prasāda*, Ch. 證淨 or 不壞淨). In early Indian Buddhism, those who were infused with and realized this *aveccappasāda* by hearing the Buddha’s words were called *sotāpanna*, “ear-entry,” “ear-gainers” or “stream-winners.” The wonderful place or state described in the last verse

¹⁶ *Apārutā tesampamatassa dvārā, ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham* (D ii 39, also, M i 169, S i 138, Vin i 7). The meaning of the last phrase ‘*pamuñcantu saddham*’ is problematic. Scholars who understand *saddhā* negatively as irrational “wrong belief” (such as Horner and Nakamura) translate it as “put away” or “renounce their faith.” However, put in this context of the Buddha’s declaration to preach, *saddhā* should be taken positively, and hence “put forth” or “awaken faith” is the proper translation. See the philological studies supporting this interpretation in Fujita 1957: 67-70, Sakamoto 1992: 470-71 n. 2, and Murakami 1993.

can be variously termed “immortality” (*amata*), “the further shore of the realm of death” (*maccudheyyapāram*), or *nibbāna*. Piṅgiya’s state that is confirmed in the last line of verse 1149 corresponds to *sotāpanna*, which is typically characterized in the Pāli Nikāya as one who is “not liable to be reborn into the lower realms of existence” (*avinipātadhamma*), “assured, settled” (*niyata*), and “proceeding towards perfect awakening” (*sambodhiparāyanā*).¹⁷

A striking parallel to this fundamental process of realization can be found in a passage in the Sanskrit version of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, where Śākyamuni Buddha explains the “Assurance of Awakening”:

Those living beings who hear the name of the Tathāgata Amitābha, and when they hear it they resolutely conceive of one thought of serene trust, even if it is only this single thought, will surely not fall back in their progress toward unsurpassable, perfect, full awakening.¹⁸

(ye kecit sattvās tasya 'mitābhasya tathāgatasya nāmadheyam śrṇvanti, śrutvā cāntaśa ekacittotpādam apy adhyāśayena prasādasahagatam utpādayanti, sarve te 'vaivarttikatāyām samtiṣṭhante 'nuttarāyāḥ samyaksambodheḥ)

Here, Śākyamuni guarantees the fulfillment of Bodhisattva Dharmākara’s 19th vow (18th in Chinese), in which Dharmākara states that “those living beings in other world spheres who conceive the aspiration to attain unsurpassable, perfect, full awakening, hear my name, and remember me with serene trust ...” (*mama nāmadheyam śrutvā prassannacittā mām anusmareyus*).¹⁹ In the statement concerning realization, the “name” (*nāmadheyam*) of Tathāgata Amitābha is functionally equivalent to the phrase “Śākyamuni’s words” found in Sn 1147. The name embodies the Dharma. The “hearing” (*śrutvā*) naturally leads to the “arising of one thought of serene trust” (*ekacittotpādam prasāda-sahagatam*), resulting in “true settling” (*niyata*) or a “non-retrogressive state” (*avaivarttikatā*), which is exactly the same in both texts. In fact, this “Assurance of Awakening” is the core passage on which Shinran based his radical interpretations of *shōjōju* and *futaiten* in this life. Of course, he neither had an opportunity to read the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha* in Sanskrit nor the conclusion

¹⁷ For example, SN v. *sotāpatti-samyutta*, 24, ime cāham mahāsāle vyākareyyam sotāpannā avinipātadhamma niyatā saṃbodhiparāyanā ti.

¹⁸ Gómez 1996: 92, 237 n. 62.

¹⁹ Gómez 1996: 71, 232 n. 24.

of the *Sutta Nipāta* in Pāli. He reached the crux of the *Larger Sūtra* through his insightful reading of the Chinese versions and their commentaries, which was driven by his concern for the awakening of the “multitudes caught in birth-and-death.” In this respect, it is significant that this Buddhist path based on faith, which surely leads to “unsurpassable, perfect, full awakening,” is open to all those who have ears to hear (*sotavant*). No “exclusion clause” is attached to the Sanskrit version of the passage on “true realization” quoted above.

2. Sotāpanna Attained by “Ordinary People”: Suppabuddha, Sarakānī, and the Indolent

In the Pāli Nikāya, there are depictions of “foolish beings possessed of blind passions” entering the flow of the Dhamma just by hearing the words of the Buddha, without any prior practices. Peter Masefield has presented a detailed study of these cases in his groundbreaking work entitled *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism* (1986). The first example, which he mentions, is Suppabuddha, a poor man afflicted with leprosy (Hansen’s Disease) and in misery in Rājagaha. He went to join a large group of people surrounding the Buddha, hoping to get some free food there. Although he didn’t receive what he expected, upon hearing the Dhamma, he was infused with serene, absolute faith and became a *sotāpanna*, which the Buddha confirmed when Suppabuddha was killed by a cow right after taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha.²⁰ Another good example is Sarakānī the Sakyānī, a lay follower who had taken refuge in the Three Treasures for a long time but could not keep the Five Precepts and had eventually taken to drink. When he died, the Buddha proclaimed him to be a *sotāpanna*, not subject to rebirth in states of woe, assured to proceed towards perfect awakening. When serious-minded, moralistic Sakyans heard of this, they became indignant and angry, saying, “If that is the case, anyone can become a *sotāpanna*.” In response to such skepticism, the Buddha expounded upon the crucial importance of hearing the Dhamma and having firm faith. The Buddha reaffirmed this to Mahānāma, who had reported the skepticism among the straitlaced Sakyans:

Mahānāma, when a lay-follower has gone for refuge over a long time to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, how could he go to the nether world? For if one speaking rightly were to say

²⁰ Ud 5.3: Kuṭṭhi Sutta. Translated from the Pāli in Masefield 2007: 88-91. See also Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s translation in Thanissaro 2012, as well as Masefield 1986: 10, 58-62.

of anyone: ‘He was a lay follower who had bone for refuge over a long time to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha,’ it is of Sarakānī the Sakyānī that one could rightly say this. Mahānāma, Sarakānī the Sakyānī had gone for refuge over a long time to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, so how could he go to the nether world?

Here, Mahānāma, some person possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha thus: “The Blessed One is ... teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.” And so in the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. He is one of joyous wisdom, of swift wisdom, and he has attained liberation. By the destruction of the taints, in this very life he enters and dwells in the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, realizing it for himself with direct knowledge. This person, Mahānāma, is freed from hell, the animal realm, and the domain of ghosts, freed from the plane of misery, the bad destinations, the nether world.²¹

In conclusion, the Buddha emphasized again the accessibility of the stream-entry using the following hyperbole:

Even if these great sal trees [*mahāsāle*], Mahānāma, could understand what is well spoken and what is badly spoken, then I would declare these great sal trees to be stream-enterers, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as their destination [*ime cāham mahāsāle vyākareyyam sotāpannā avinipātadhamma niyatā sambodhiparāyanā*]. How much more, then, Sarakānī the Sakyānī?²²

The path of *sotāpanna* seemed too easy and lax to serious followers, but every time they questioned the Buddha concerning its realization by ordinary followers, he replied in a positive vein. In the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, the Buddha called it the “Mirror of the Dhamma” (*dhammādāsa*), which is characterized by the following terms and phrases: “here-and-now” (*sandiṭṭhiko*), “timeless” (*akāliko*) “come-and-see” (*ehipassiko*), “leading [to *nibbāna*]” (*opanayiko*), and “should be personally experienced” (*paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*). Śākyamuni Buddha asserts that with the “Mirror of the Dhamma” one can clearly know that

²¹ SN 55.24: Sarakānī. Translation from Bodhi 2000: 1811-12.

²² Ibid. 1813. Here “the great sal trees” (*mahāsāle*) seems to be a metaphor for the masses, or “the multitudes caught in birth-and-death.”

There is no more rebirth for me in hell, nor as an animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*) am I, safe from falling into the states of misery, assured am I and bound for Enlightenment.²³

The stream-enterer is also associated with the “indolent person” in a recently discovered Gandhārī manuscript of a Mahāyāna sūtra related to *Akṣobhya-vyūha*. In this oldest extant manuscript of the Pure Land literature, the concept of *sotāpanna* (Gandhārī *sodavaṇa*) plays a definitive role in the explanation of the wonderful qualities of the Pure Land:

As (in the Buddha-land) of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya, the Arhat, the Perfectly Enlightened One, the indolent person who becomes a stream-enterer reaches in the fourth dharma-teaching (the perishing of evil influences, *āsravakṣaya*), thus at that time the indolent person who becomes a stream-enterer will reach in the fourth dharma-teaching the perishing of evil influences.

As (*in Śākyamuni’s land) a stream-enterer who is indolent is a *saptakṛtparāma*, (i.e.,) he will be reborn into at most seven existences, more than that he will not be reborn, so at that time (an indolent person who becomes a) stream-enterer will reach the perishing of evil influences in the fourth dharma-teaching.²⁴

In this explanation, the Buddha does not criticize the “indolent” (Gandhārī *kusida*, Skt. *kusīda*), as is often the case with strict followers, but tries rather to include and encourage them to stay on the path to awakening, by telling them that the Buddha-land is a more suitable place for them than Śākyamuni’s Sahā-loka. In the same manuscript, the 84,000 devas who heard Akṣobhya’s dharma-teaching say to him: “Venerable, ... (we) are directing our minds to the compassion with the world, to the benefit, the good and the happiness of gods and men....”²⁵ This seems to suggest that by being born in Akṣobhya’s Pure Land, even the slothful will be able to share in the Buddha’s compassionate mind. Although the traditional concept of *sotāpanna* seems to have been replaced by *avaivartika* in this early Mahāyāna sūtra, it is significant that *sotāpanna* continues to be used in connection with hearing the Dharma and entering its flow with ease, which does not exclude anybody.

²³ Translation from Vajira et al. 2013.

²⁴ Strauch 2010: 58. See also Strauch 2008: 53.

²⁵ Strauch 2008: 55 and n. 84. Cf. e.g. AN I 22: *lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānam*.

Concluding Remarks

I have discussed Shinran's idea of *shōjōju* as the key concept of Other-power faith and compared it with *sotāpanna* in early Indian Buddhism. In the process, it has become clear that Shinran understood "true realization" as something "immediate" and "timeless" that enables us to join the "company of the truly settled in this life," and that the idea is basically the same as what Śākyamuni taught as *sotāpanna* ("stream-enterer" or "ear-gainer") in the faith-based path to enlightenment. Although further investigation is needed, I think a genealogy of Other-power faith will be able to be established along this line of study in the future.

The centrality of faith and its realization in *shōjōju* is expressed most clearly in the opening lines of the *Tannishō* 歎異抄, a record of Shinran's sayings. I would like to conclude this paper by citing the famous passage that expresses the first principle of Jōdo Shinshū:

At the very moment when we are moved to utter the *nenbutsu* by a firm faith that our birth in the Pure Land is attained solely by virtue of the inconceivable working of Amida's Original Vow, we are enabled to share in its benefits that embrace all and forsake none. We should realize that Amida's Original Vow never discriminates between the old and the young, the good and the evil, and that what matters most is the Heart of Faith (*shinjin*) alone.²⁶

弥陀の誓願不思議にたすけられまいらせて、往生をばとぐるなりと信じて念佛もうさんとおもいたつこころのおくるとき、すなわち摂取不捨の利益にあすけしめたまうなり。弥陀の本願には老少善惡のひとをえらばれず。ただ信心を要とすとするべし。

Abbreviation

CWS: Hirota, Dennis, et al., translation from 1997. *The Collected Works of Shinran*, vol. 1. Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha.

²⁶ Translation from Bandō 1996: 3. Slightly modified.

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Faith and Practice in the *Ōjōyōshū*

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Pure Land Buddhism is one of the most popular forms of Japanese Buddhism today. The Jōdo 浄土 (Pure Land) school founded by Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212) and the Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗 school (popularly known as “Shin Buddhism”) founded by Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1262) are among the largest and most influential Buddhist denominations in contemporary Japan. Significantly, both of these schools arose in the Kamakura 鎌倉 period (1185-1333) from within the Japanese Tendai 天台 school which traces itself back to the Chinese Tiantai (Chinese for Tendai) school founded by Zhiyi 智顥 (538-597). Significantly, the Japanese Tendai school had developed its own distinctive form of Pure Land Buddhism during the Heian period (794-1185). In my paper, I will discuss the Pure Land soteriological system developed in Genshin’s 源信 (942-1017) *Ōjōyōshū* 往生要集 (Collection of Essential Passages on Birth in the Pure Land), unquestionably the most famous text of the Tendai Pure Land tradition, focusing in particular on its treatment of faith and the *nembutsu* practice.

Pure Land Buddhism can be characterized as a religion of faith, inasmuch as its distinguishing feature is devotion to a savior buddha called Amida. Faith in *Amida* and his saving power entails the acceptance of the foundational narrative of Pure Land Buddhism. This story is set forth in several Pure Land sūtras, most notably the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Life* 無量壽經. According to this text, when he was still a novice bodhisattva called Dharmakara (Hōzō 法藏 in Japanese), Amida made a solemn set of forty-eight vows in which he pledged to create a splendid Pure Land. After undertaking rigorous practices for fulfilling the vows, Amida succeeded in creating his Pure Land called the Land of Supreme Bliss (Sukhāvatī in Sanskrit, and Gokuraku 極樂 in Japanese). This land is depicted as a realm of utmost beauty and bliss, free from all the anxieties that characterize existence within the realms of transmigration. Moreover, it is stated that it is possible for people to be born in this paradise-like world after they die by undertaking certain practices. But, although the promise of a blissful afterlife is a central feature of Pure Land soteriology,

it is overlaid with another level of discourse, centered on the notion that birth in the Pure Land is a “short-cut” to buddhahood. According to Mahāyāna Buddhist discourse, before one can achieve buddhahood, it is necessary to undertake arduous practices as a bodhisattva for innumerable aeons. However, the Pure Land texts claim that Amida designed his realm so that it would provide an unsurpassed environment for undertaking the practices for reaching buddhahood. For this reason, once born in the Pure Land, it is possible for anyone to achieve buddhahood quickly and with ease.

If birth in the Pure Land brings about such wonderful results, it becomes crucial to determine just how one can attain birth in that land. Although the Buddhist sūtras state that birth in the Pure Land can be attained through a variety of practices, in the *Ōjōyōshū*, Genshin emphatically declared, “Among the practices for attaining birth in the Pure Land, the *nembutsu* 念佛 is fundamental” (T 84, 67a). Although in contemporary Japan, the *nembutsu*, which literally means “buddha mindfulness,” is considered to be synonymous with the recitation of Amida’s “name” (*myōgō* 名号), i.e. the phrase “*Namu Amida butsu*” 南無阿彌陀佛 (meaning “Homage to Amida Buddha”), according to Genshin, it refers to wide variety of spiritual exercises for focusing the mind on Amida, from the lofty practice of meditating on the features of this buddha, down to the simple act of reciting “*Namu Amida butsu*.” The major portion of the *Ōjōyōshū* is devoted to elucidating the nature of the *nembutsu* practice and the correct manner in which to undertake it. In contrast, there is relatively little discussion of faith and the mental attitude with which to practice *nembutsu*. However, this does not mean that Genshin was oblivious to the issue of faith. In fact, he accorded an important role to it and even proclaimed, “In cultivating the way, faith is foremost” (T 84, 58b). This shows that he considered faith to be a basic requirement for practicing the Pure Land path.

Ennin and the Introduction of Pure Land Buddhism into the Tendai School

Before turning to the *Ōjōyōshū*, it may be useful to briefly review the origin and development of Tendai Pure Land Buddhism in order to situate this text within the history of this tradition. The Japanese Tendai school was founded by Saichō 最澄 (767-822) in the early years of the Heian period.¹ In 804, he traveled to China as part of an imperial embassy and studied on Mount Tiantai 天台 before returning to Japan the next year. But although Saichō brought back a variety of Buddhist practices from China, he did not transmit the Pure

¹ On Saichō, see Groner 2000.

Land teaching to Japan. The person credited with introducing it to the Tendai school was Saichō's disciple Ennin 圓仁 (794-864), who became the school's third chief abbot (*zasu 座主*). In the *Jikaku Daishiden* 慈覺大師傳 (The Biography of Jikaku Daishi [Ennin]),² we find the following entry: "In the first year of Ninju 仁壽 (851), Ennin transmitted to his disciples the *nembutsu samādhi* which he introduced from Mount Wutai 五台山 and began to practice the constantly walking *samādhi*."³ According to this passage, Ennin transmitted to Japan the constantly walking *samādhi*, one of the four kinds of meditative practices described in the *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (Great Cessation and Contemplation), the central meditation manual of Tiantai/Tendai Buddhism. This is a significant point since, in this meditation, the practitioners are enjoined to circumambulate a statue of Amida Buddha while reciting this buddha's name and focusing their minds on the features of this buddha (specifically, the thirty-two marks [*lakṣaṇa* in Sanskrit] of this buddha).⁴ However, it seems that the constantly walking *samādhi* which Ennin began in 851 differed considerably from the traditional form of this practice. Most scholars contend that it was a type of *nembutsu* ritual then popular in China known as the "five tones *nembutsu*" (*goe nembutsu* 五會念佛). The five tones *nembutsu* is a form of musical *nembutsu* in which Amida's name is chanted using the ancient Chinese pentatonic scale.⁵ It was begun by Fazhao 法照 (c. 740-c.805), who resided for a time on Mount Wutai.⁶ Ennin spent nine years (from 838 to 847) in China and he visited Mount Wutai during his journey. However it is not clear whether Ennin encountered the five tones *nembutsu* on Mount Wutai and it has been suggested that he learned it in Chang'an 長安, where he spent most of his time on the continent.⁷ In any case, this musical *nembutsu* proved very popular and, under the name of "Nembutsu of the Mountain" (*yama no nembutsu* 山の念佛), it became an annual event at the Enryakuji, the head temple of the Tendai school located on Mount Hiei 比叡 just northeast of the capital city of Heiankyō 平安京 (modern Kyoto). The *nembutsu* also became popular among the monks of Ennin's lineage as well.

² This biography was composed sometime in the early tenth century. For an English translation, see Saitō 1992.

³ Saitō 1992, 58, slightly amended.

⁴ Donner and Stevenson 1993, 234-48.

⁵ On Fazhao's five tones *nembutsu*, see Sonoda 1981, 173-80.

⁶ On this monk, see Tsukamoto 1975, 98-192. A brief biography is also found in Sonoda 1981, 174-75.

⁷ Sonoda 1981, 171-72.

The Spread of Pure Land Buddhism in the Tenth Century

However, it was only in the first half of the 900's that Pure Land Buddhism began to spread rapidly among the Japanese population at large. As the historian Ishomoda Tadashi has pointed out, Japan experienced far-reaching political, social and economic changes around this time, leading to a thorough restructuring of Japanese society.⁸ It was under such circumstances that an increasing number of people began to turn to Pure Land Buddhism in search of spiritual tranquility and escape from suffering. A major figure behind the rapid growth of Pure Land Buddhism during this age was the itinerant monk Kūya 空也 (903-972, also known as Kōya).⁹ This monk continually recited the *nembutsu* and for this reason was given the nickname "Amida hijiri" 阿彌陀聖 or "the Amida Saint." After spending the first half of his life wandering about the country practicing austerities and constructing roads, wells and other facilities to benefit the people, he arrived in the capital in 938 and began to teach the people there to recite the *nembutsu*. He was quite successful in his work and his biography in the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* 日本往生極樂記 (Record of [People] in Japan Who Gained Birth in the Land of Supreme Bliss) written by Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤 (931-997) states: "Before the Tengyō 天慶 era (938-947) it was rare for a person to practice the *nembutsu samādhi* in the Buddhist halls (*dōjō* 道場) and villages.... After the saint (Kūya) came, he himself chanted (the *nembutsu*) and taught others to chant it. Subsequently everyone in the world practiced the *nembutsu*."¹⁰ Even though we should not take Yasutane's words at face value, it is evident that Kūya played an important role in spreading the Pure Land teaching among the people of Japan.

At the same time that Kūya was popularizing the Amida faith in the capital, monks on Mount Hiei were also busily at work trying to find a place for the new faith within the Tendai school. In order to achieve their goal, some monks created Tendai-based Pure Land rituals and produced liturgical texts for them, while others composed scholastic treatises integrating Pure Land practices into the traditional Tendai soteriological system. Prominent among

⁸ See Ishimoda 1985, 340. These changes included such things as the breakdown of the *ritsuryō* 律令 system of centralized government, the increasing domination of the court by the Fujiwara family, the proliferation of tax-free estates (*shōen* 莊園) which drastically reduced the income of the central government, the emergence of an increasingly powerful warrior class in the provinces and the rapid and uncontrolled growth of the capital city.

⁹ On Kūya, see Chilson 2007.

¹⁰ Inoue and Ōsone 1974, 29.

such monks was Kūya's contemporary, Senkan 千觀 (918-983). Senkan wrote a short work entitled *Jūgan hossinki* 十願發心記 (Ten Vows Arousing the Aspiration for Enlightenment). In this text, he sets forth ten vows in which he pledged to seek birth in Amida's Pure Land in the next lifetime so he can undertake bodhisattva practices for the salvation of all beings and ultimately attain complete buddhahood.

Tendai Buddhism holds that all beings have the capacity to realize buddhahood, but asserts that this goal can only be attained by practicing the difficult bodhisattva path for aeons. However, in the *Jūgan hossinki*, Senkan expresses his profound skepticism about the capacity of ordinary humans to reach buddhahood through the traditional path of bodhisattva practice. In his view, the standards of bodhisattva practice are so high that it is impossible for ordinary beings to carry them out, especially because the world is now in the age of the Latter Dharma (*mappō* 末法) far removed from Śākyamuni's time. Thus, even though all beings possess the Buddha-nature (the potential for buddhahood), Senkan asserts that the traditional Tendai path of practice is, in actuality, closed off to all ordinary beings, including himself. How, then, can ordinary people ever hope to gain buddhahood? Senkan's solution was to urge the people to first seek birth in Amida's Pure Land, which would then allow them to practice the bodhisattva path and reach buddhahood. Thus, in his ten vows, Senkan declares his intention to achieve buddhahood by first attaining birth in the Pure Land and then undertaking various bodhisattva practices required for buddhahood there. In this way, by presenting birth in the Pure Land as a step in the traditional Tendai path to buddhahood, Senkan sought to legitimate the absorption of Pure Land practice into Tendai Buddhism.

The Pure Land Teaching of Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū*

The growing interest in Pure Land Buddhism within the Tendai school culminated in Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū*, completed in 985, just two years after Senkan's death. The *Ōjōyōshū* is a lengthy work in three fascicles. It is a profoundly erudite work as well, quoting nearly a thousand passages from over 160 different Buddhist texts. In this work, Genshin follows Senkan's lead and argues that, since the world is now in the "defiled Latter Age" (*jokuse matsudai* 濁世末代) it is no longer possible to gain buddhahood by following the traditional Tendai path of bodhisattva practice. Hence, he concludes, one must first be born in Amida Buddha's Pure Land where one can effortlessly undertake bodhisattva practices necessary to attain buddhahood.

As noted above, in the *Ōjōyōshū*, Genshin argues that the central practice for attaining birth in the Pure Land is the *nembutsu*. However, for Genshin, the *nembutsu* does not simply refer to the recitation of the phrase “*Namu Amida butsu*.” Rather, he understands the *nembutsu* as referring to an entire range of practices focused on Amida Buddha, from sublime contemplation of the buddha’s figure undertaken in *samādhi*, down to the simple recitation of “*Namu Amida butsu*.” Reflecting the great emphasis traditionally placed on meditation in Tendai discourse, Genshin highlights the literal meaning of the word *nembutsu*—to remain mindful of the buddha—and emphasizes that the *nembutsu* is first and foremost a meditative practice focused on Amida.

The major portion of the *Ōjōyōshū* is devoted to a lengthy and systematic description of the way in which to undertake the *nembutsu*. In the fourth chapter, entitled “Proper Practice of the *Nembutsu*” (*shōshū nembutsu* 正脩念佛), Genshin discusses this practice in terms of the five gates of mindfulness (*gonenmon* 五念門) which first appears in Vasubandhu’s *Wangshenglun* 往生論 (Treatise on Birth in the Pure Land).¹¹ Then, in the following chapter, entitled “Aids to *Nembutsu*” (*jonen hōhō* 助念方法), Genshin enumerates various auxiliary practices designed to augment the efficacy of the *nembutsu*. This chapter is divided into seven sections and the second section (“Method of Cultivation” [*shugyō sōmyō* 僧行相貌]) provides a lengthy analysis of the proper way in which to practice the *nembutsu* and the mental attitude with which it is to be undertaken. The first part of this section is taken up with a discussion of the “four modes of cultivation” (*shishū* 四脩) while the latter half is centered on the “three minds” (*sanshin* 三心).

Significantly, the five gates, four modes of cultivation and the three minds are discussed together in a short text on Amida visualization, *Wangsheng lizanji* 往生禮讚偈 (Verses in Praise of Birth in the Pure Land), written by Shandao 善導 (613-681), an important figure in the development of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. Shandao begins the *Wangsheng lizanji* by asking rhetorically, “I want to encourage people to attain birth (in the Pure Land), but I don’t know how to settle our minds (*anjin* 安心), arouse our practices (*kigyō* 起行) and undertake our actions (*sagō* 作業) so that I can definitely attain birth in that realm” (T 47, 438c). In other words, he is asking here (1) what kinds of mental attitude are necessary to gain birth in the Pure Land, (2) what kinds of practices are necessary and (3) the proper manner in which to undertake the Pure Land practice. Shandao’s answer is that the three minds are the necessary mental attitudes, the five gates of mindfulness are the necessary practices and the four modes of cultivation represent the proper method of

¹¹ This treatise, which is extant only in Chinese, is also known as the *Jingtulun* 淨土論 (Pure Land Treatise). For a translation of this text, see Kiyota 1978.

undertaking the practices. As this shows, Shandao considered the three minds, five gates and four cultivations to be the basic elements of Pure Land practice. Apparently Genshin was following Shandao's lead in treating them in the core sections of the *Ōjōyōshū*. However, it is noteworthy that Genshin first takes up the five gates of mindfulness, then the four modes of cultivation and finally the three minds. This contrasts with Shandao, who first discussed the mental attitude necessary for undertaking Pure Land practices (i.e., the three minds) before turning to the practices themselves (i.e., the five gates) and the correct manner in which to undertake them (i.e., the four cultivations). This suggests that Genshin's foremost concern was with the proper cultivation of Pure Land practice and that the mental attitude with which to undertake the practice was a lesser, though far from unimportant, issue for him.

The Five Gates of Mindfulness

As described by Genshin, the five gates of mindfulness can be paraphrased briefly as follows.

1. The gate of veneration (*raihamon* 禮拝門): to pay obeisance to Amida Buddha by undertaking the *gotai tōchi* 五體投地 prostration. i.e., the act of prostrating oneself before the buddha so that the five parts of the body (arms, legs and forehead) touch the ground.
2. The gate of praise (*sandanmon* 讚嘆門): to praise Amida by reciting laudatory verses addressed to this buddha.
3. The gate of vow (*saganmon* 作願門): to arouse the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicitta*).
4. The gate of contemplation (*kanzatsumon* 觀察門): to practice the *nembutsu*.
5. The gate of merit transference (*ekōmon* 回向門): to transfer all of the merits gained from one's practice to all beings in order to achieve one's own birth and the birth of all others beings in the Pure Land—even while recognizing the emptiness of oneself, the Pure Land and the merits one has earned.

It may be noted that the description of the five gates in *Ōjōyōshū* differs, sometimes significantly, from that found in Shandao's *Wangsheng lizanji*. The difference is especially apparent in the case of the gate of vow. Hence it may not be out of place to describe the five gates as found in the *Wangsheng lizanji* here (the order of vow and contemplation are reversed in the *Wangsheng lizanji*, so that contemplation comes before vow).

1. The gate of veneration: to single-mindedly revere Amida by putting one's palms together (*gasshō* 合掌), scattering fragrant water and flowers, and venerating this buddha. One must venerate this buddha, and no other buddha, until the end of one's life.
2. The gate of praise: to concentrate one's mind and praise Amida's physical features and the light emanating from him, the physical features and light of the multitude of sages surrounding Amida, and the splendid adornments and light of the Pure Land.
3. The gate of contemplation: to contemplate the physical features and light of Amida and the multitude of sages surrounding him as well as the adornments of the Pure Land.
4. The gate of vow: to seek birth in the Pure Land at all times and in all places.
5. The gate of merit transference: to transfer all merits to the birth of oneself and all other beings in the Pure Land.¹²

As this shows, one crucial difference in the five gates of the *Ōjōyōshū* and the *Wangsheng lizanji* is found in their treatment of the gate of vow. As understood by Shandao, it refers to the vow to seek birth in the Pure Land. However, Genshin identifies it with the aspiration for enlightenment. According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, the aspiration for enlightenment refers to the solemn promise to seek buddhahood that bodhisattvas make when they first declare their intention to embark on the Buddhist path. This declaration is frequently accompanied by a vow outlining the kind of buddha they will become through their practices. Amida Buddha's set of forty-eight vows is a representative example of such vow. In interpreting the vow to mean the aspiration for enlightenment, Genshin was underscoring the fact that he understood birth in the Pure Land as one, albeit crucial, step in the bodhisattva quest for buddhahood—a position that had already been enunciated by Senkan.

Returning to the five gates in the *Ōjōyōshū*, it may be said that, among them, the central one for Genshin is the fourth gate, the gate of contemplation. In this section, the practice of contemplation is understood to refer to the *nembutsu*. Genshin understands the *nembutsu* in its literal sense (“buddha

¹² T 37, 438c-49a. It may also be noted in passing that the description of the five gates in the *Ōjōyōshū* differs from that found in Vasubandhu's *Wangshenglun* as well. In the *Wangshenglun*, they are (1) to pay obeisance to Amida, (2) to recite the name of Amida, (3) to continually and single-mindedly seek to be born ultimately in the Pure Land (this is said to correspond to the practice of *śamatha*, or the meditative practice of stilling the mind), (4) to contemplate the splendid adornments of the Pure Land, the merits of Amida and the merits of the bodhisattvas in the Pure Land (this corresponds to the practice of *vipaśyanā*, or meditative contemplation) and (5) to feel compassion for all suffering beings and transfer one's merits to their salvation. See T 26, 231b.

mindfulness”) and interprets it primarily as the practice of visualizing and contemplating, upon entering a state of *samādhi* (mental absorption), the figure of Amida Buddha. This is in keeping with the position of the *Mohe zhiguan*, in which (as we saw above) Amida is considered to be one of the main objects of meditative contemplation. In his discussion of the gate of contemplation, Genshin distinguishes the *nembutsu* practice into three types:

- (a) contemplation of the individual marks of Amida (*bessōkan* 別相觀),
- (b) contemplation of the comprehensive mark of Amida (*sōsōkan* 總相觀)
- (c) mixed and abbreviated contemplation (*zōryakukan* 雜略觀)

First, the contemplation of the individual marks of Amida means to contemplate the figure of Amida Buddha by visualizing one by one the thirty-two marks adorning this buddha’s body. Staring from the *nikkeisō* 肉髻相 or the prominent round lump of flesh on the top of the Amida’s head, the practitioner visualizes each of the marks individually, down to the lotus blossom upon which the buddha’s feet stand. Then the practitioner visualizes these marks in reverse order (i. e., from the lotus blossom to the *nikkeisō*). This process is repeated sixteen times, until one can visualize Amida’s figure perfectly.

The second type of contemplation is to visualize Amida either as (1) a brilliant luminous figure of gigantic proportions or (2) as the embodiment of all three bodies of the buddha: the response body, the recompense body and dharma-body. For Genshin, this represents the most sublime form of Amida visualization. However, for those people who feel incapable of undertaking such lofty contemplative exercises, Genshin recognizes simpler forms of Amida visualization. These practices constitute the third type of *nembutsu* listed above: the mixed and abbreviated contemplation. Although Genshin gives several forms of this contemplation of different levels of difficulty, particularly noteworthy here is the practice of visualizing the white tuft of hair between Amida’s brows (*byakugō* 白毫) and the salvific light emanating from it.

Finally, for those people who feel unable to pursue even these simplified forms of visualization, Genshin recommends the recitative *nembutsu*, or the single-minded recitation of “*Namu Amida butsu*.” He states,

If you are incapable of contemplating the marks and secondary marks, you should single-mindedly recite and remain mindful (*shōnen* 稱念) of (the name of the Amida Buddha, i.e., recite the phrase “*Namu Amida butsu*”). (You should do this) while imagining yourself taking refuge (in the buddha), while imagining yourself being led to the Pure Land at death or while imagining yourself attaining birth in the Pure Land. (T 84, 56b)

Here Pure Land practitioners are encouraged to recite “*Namu Amida butsu*” while imagining themselves taking refuge in the buddha, being led to the Pure Land at death or being born in the Pure Land.

In this way, in the *Ōjōyōshū*, Genshin provided a systematic and comprehensive account of the various types of nembutsu practices found in Buddhist texts. Reflecting his background as a Tendai monk, he considered the contemplative forms of the *nembutsu* to be the higher form of this practice. However, for those who are unable to undertake these lofty practices, he declared that the recitative form of the *nembutsu* suffices to attain birth in Amida’s Pure Land.

As the description above suggests, Genshin’s primary concern in the *Ōjōyōshū* was to delineate the proper method of undertaking Pure Land practice. However, in several places in his discussion of the five gates of mindfulness, Genshin also underscores the importance of the mental attitude with which to undertake these practices. This is especially evident in his discussion of the gate of praise, the second of the five gates. There he states,

These passages (i. e. verses in praise of Amida) ... must be (recited) with utmost sincerity. It does not matter (whether you recite it) many times or a few times. Even if you do not undertake any other practice, you will surely attain birth in the Pure Land in accordance with your desire. The verse in the *Lotus Sūtra* says,

If people, with joyous minds,
Praise the virtues of the buddha with a song,
Even if only one small sound is produced,
They have all have attained the Buddhist way.¹³

Even one sound has such efficacy. How much more if one should recite it constantly! It even (leads to) the attainment of buddhahood. How much more would (it ensure) birth in the Pure Land!
(T 84, 48b.)

Here Genshin argues that just the act of praising Amida, provided that it is done with genuine sincerity, will lead to birth in the Pure Land. Moreover, it does not matter whether the verses in praise of the buddha are recited many times or just a few times. The important thing is to recite them in sincerity. Although Genshin does not refer specifically to faith in this passage, it shows that he was fully aware of the importance of the mental attitude with which the practice is to be undertaken.

¹³ In the *Lotus Sūtra*, this passage is found at T 9, 9a. For an alternate English translation, see Hurvitz 1976, 40.

The Four Modes of Cultivations

After a lengthy discussion of the five gates of mindfulness, in the fifth chapter of the *Ōjōyōshū*, entitled “Aids to *Nembutsu*,” Genshin turns to various auxiliary practices designed to augment the efficacy of the *nembutsu*. This chapter is divided into seven sections and the second section (“Method of Cultivation”) provides a lengthy analysis of the way in which to practice the *nembutsu* and the mental attitude with which it is to be undertaken. The first part of this section is taken up with the discussion of the “four modes of cultivation” while the latter half is centered on the “three minds.” Of special interest is the latter, which deals with the issue of faith.

Let us first consider Genshin’s treatment of the four modes of cultivation. The four modes of cultivation are as follows.

1. Ceaseless cultivation (*chōjishū* 長時脩). The *nembutsu* must be practiced at all times, from the moment one arouses the aspiration for enlightenment until the moment one attains enlightenment.
2. Reverent cultivation (*onjūshū* 懇重脩). The *nembutsu* must be conducted with an attitude of utmost respect. One must never turn one’s back towards the west (the direction of the Pure Land) and one must not face the west when relieving oneself. In this way, by constantly thinking of Pure Land in the west, one will go there naturally when one dies, just as a tree naturally falls in the direction to which it is leaning when it is cut down.
3. Incessant cultivation (*mukenshū* 無間脩). The *nembutsu* must be practiced without interruption. Just as a person who is enslaved and carried away to a foreign land thinks of his or her parents and homeland at all times, one should always think of Amida and his Pure Land.
4. Unmixed cultivation (*muyoshū* 無餘脩). One must be exclusively devoted to Amida when practicing the *nembutsu*. One must continually recite the name of Amida. One must remain exclusively mindful of this buddha, think of him exclusively, venerate him exclusively and praise him exclusively.

Although Genshin states that the four modes of cultivation derive from the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, they actually appear in Vasubandhu’s commentary on this text (T 31, 209b). Unfortunately, the four cultivations are mentioned only in passing in this commentary and there is no explanation as to their concrete content. A slightly more detailed (but still extremely brief and far from

satisfactory) discussion is found in the *Abhidharmakośa*, Vasubandhu's celebrated compendium of Buddhist scholasticism (T 29, 141b). Be that as it may, however, neither of these texts are actually quoted in the *Ōjōyōshū*. Instead, Genshin relies heavily on two texts to describe the four modes of contemplation and cites them at length. The two texts are (1) Shandao's *Wangsheng lizanji* and (2) the *Xifang yaojue* 西方要決, a brief work on Pure Land Buddhism by the great Tang dynasty Faxiang 法相 scholar Ji 基 (also known as Kuiji 窓基, 632-682). Interestingly, Genshin invariably cites the *Xifang yaojue* before quoting the *Wangsheng lizanji*. Be that as it may, it can be said that, in Genshin's view, the nembutsu must satisfy these four conditions in order for it to be truly effective.

The Three Minds

It was already noted above that Genshin considered faith to be a prerequisite for undertaking Pure Land practices and even went so far as to declare that "in cultivating the way, faith is foremost" (T 84, 58a). Genshin's understanding of faith appears in the section devoted to the three minds, found immediately after his discussion of the four modes of cultivation. The three minds appear in an influential Pure Land text, the *Contemplation Sūtra* (full title is the *Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*; in Chinese its title is *Wuliangshoufojing* 觀無量壽佛經). The three minds are (1) sincere mind, (2) deep mind and (3) the mind that vows to attain birth in the Pure Land by transferring all of one's merits to that goal. These three minds are of major importance to Pure Land soteriology since, according to the sūtra, people who wish to be born in Amida's realm must possess these three minds. Unfortunately, the sūtra only mentions these three minds in passing and provides no explanation for them. Hence, in the *Ōjōyōshū*, Genshin paraphrases Shandao's distinctive interpretation of the three minds found in the *Wangsheng lizanji* to explain what they mean. Says Genshin,

First, the sincere mind. This means that the three actions of veneration, praise and contemplation must be undertaken with a true (mind).

Second, the deep mind. This means to know in faith that we are common mortals burdened by defilements, possessing little good roots (leading to enlightenment). We transmigrate through the triple realms and have yet to escape from the burning house (i. e., the world of birth-and-death). (It also means to) know in faith that we will definitely attain birth by reciting the name

down to ten times or (even) once, etc., (thanks to) Amida's original extensive vows. Not even for an instant should you harbor any doubt (about this).

Third, the mind that vows to attain birth in the Pure Land by transferring all of one's merits to that goal. This means to turn over all the virtuous roots which we have created without exception and vow to gain birth. If we completely possess these three minds, we will attain birth without fail, but if we lack even one mind, we will not be able to attain birth. (T 84, 58a)

Following Shandao, Genshin proclaims that birth in the Pure Land is impossible without these three mental attitudes. The first, sincere mind, means that all of one's actions directed towards Amida (in the quotation, veneration, praise and contemplation, three of the actions that constitute the five gates of mindfulness, are specifically mentioned) must be undertaken with genuine sincerity. As for the deep mind, Genshin (again paraphrasing Shandao) explains that it has two inter-related aspects: a profound realization that there is nothing one can do to gain salvation, as well as the realization that Amida's vows were especially made to save such powerless beings. Finally, the third mental attitude refers to the act of turning over all the merits one has created to the goal of attaining birth in the Pure Land. Although this section is relatively short, taking up only a few lines, it is of major significance since it is here that Genshin specifically takes up the issue of faith in Pure Land Buddhism.

Finally in a later passage, Genshin lists seven conditions necessary for birth in the Pure Land: (1) arousing the aspiration for enlightenment, (2) regulating one's physical, vocal and mental actions, (3) having deep faith, (4) being sincere and (5) remaining mindful of the buddha (i.e., to practicing the *nembutsu*), (6) being constant in practicing the *nembutsu* and (7) vowed for Pure Land birth (T 84, 66c-67a). Among these seven conditions, the third and fourth correspond to the first two of the three minds above (sincere mind and deep mind). Here again, Genshin maintains that faith is an important, indeed an essential, condition for Pure Land birth.

The Development of Pure Land Buddhism under Hōnen

The *Ojōyōshū* was extremely influential and it dominated Japanese thinking concerning Pure Land Buddhism for the next two hundred years. However, a major revolution in Pure Land thought occurred in the early years of the Kamakura period when Hōnen set forth his radical teaching of the exclusive

nembutsu (*senju nembutsu* 專脩念佛) or the teaching that anyone can attain birth in the Pure Land simply by reciting “*Namu Amida butsu*.” Hōnen was originally a monk of the Tendai school but left it to establish an independent Pure Land religious movement. His views are set forth most systematically in the *Senchaku hongan nembutsushū* 選擇本願念佛集 (Passages on the Selection of the *Nembutsu* of the Original Vow; cited hereafter as *Senchakushū*), written in 1198.¹⁴ It is no exaggeration to say that Hōnen’s new interpretation of the *nembutsu* brought about a massive paradigm change in the thinking concerning Pure Land soteriology. Since it is Hōnen’s Pure Land discourse that is dominant in contemporary Japan, in the final section of this paper I will briefly discuss his understanding of the *nembutsu* and compare it with that of Genshin.

Hōnen lived in an age of unprecedented social and political upheaval, symbolized by the collapse of the old imperial government and the establishment of a new warrior government in the city of Kamakura in eastern Japan. Moreover, in the warfare that preceded the establishment of the new Kamakura government, the warriors of the Taira 平 clan put the great temples of old capital of Nara to the torch, utterly destroying the ancient temples of Tōdaiji 東大寺 (which housed the Great Buddha) and Kōfukuji 興福寺. These catastrophic events convinced Hōnen that the world was truly in the age of the Latter Dharma (*mappō* 末法), a spiritually corrupt age in which the religious capacities of the people have degenerated to the point where they are no longer capable of practicing the Buddhist path and achieving enlightenment through their own efforts. Hōnen’s conviction that he was living in such benighted age profoundly influenced his understanding of Pure Land practice.

In the *Senchakushū*, Hōnen declares that, since we are now in the age of the Latter Dharma, it is no longer possible for anyone to achieve enlightenment through the traditional path of spiritual self-cultivation. It may be recalled that Genshin also took the same position, leading him to take refuge in the Pure Land teachings. However, unlike Genshin, Hōnen thought that even the Amida visualization exercises described in the *Ōjōyōshū* are far beyond the abilities of the people living in the age of the Latter Dharma to undertake. In Hōnen’s view, the only way for his contemporaries to gain birth in the Pure Land and reach buddhahood was to undertake the recitative *nembutsu* (the recitation of “*Namu Amida butsu*”). And, in fact, he stresses that it was precisely in order to save powerless beings like those living in the age of the Latter Dharma that Amida Buddha pledged, in the eighteenth of his forty-eight vows, to lead everyone who recites the *nembutsu* to the Pure Land.

¹⁴ For an English translation of this work, see *Senchakushū* English Translation Project 1998.

As paraphrased by Hōnen, the eighteenth vow reads, “When I attain buddhahood, if all sentient beings in the ten directions who aspire in all sincerity and faith to be born in my land and think of me even ten times are not born there, then may I not attain supreme enlightenment.”¹⁵ According to this passage, Amida, when he was still the bodhisattva Dharmakara, promised that unless everyone who thinks of him (which Hōnen, following Shandao, interprets as meaning reciting “*Namu Amida butsu*”) even as few as ten times are not born in the Pure Land, he will not attain enlightenment. In other words, in this vow, Amida specifically selected the *nembutsu* recitation to be the instrument by which to lead all beings to the Pure Land. Hence no other practice, including the act of meditating on Amida, is necessary. Everyone without exception can reach the Pure Land through the *nembutsu* recitation.

As noted above, Genshin also maintained that the *nembutsu* recitation suffices to attain birth in the Pure Land. However, he understood it as a kind of “last resort” for those who were incapable of undertaking the Amida visualization exercises that he considered to be the superior forms of the *nembutsu*. In Genshin’s view, there are different types of Pure Land practitioners, some possessing higher spiritual abilities than others, and they should undertake different types of *nembutsu* (including visualization exercises focused on Amida as well as the recitation of “*Namu Amida butsu*”) suited to their abilities and inclinations. In contrast, Hōnen claimed that, in the spiritually impoverished age of the Latter Dharma, everyone is equally incapable of undertaking the higher forms of *nembutsu* visualization (not to mention other advanced practices traditionally required of those following the bodhisattva path), no matter how hard he or she may try. The only hope lies in entrusting oneself to Amida’s salvific vow and reciting the *nembutsu*. In this way, Hōnen concluded that not only is the *nembutsu* recitation the sole practice necessary for attaining birth in the Pure Land, but it is also the sole practice capable of ensuring spiritual liberation of people living in the age of the Latter Dharma.

To repeat, the reason why Hōnen concluded that anyone can gain birth in the Pure Land simply by reciting the *nembutsu* is because that person’s recitation is sustained and empowered by Amida’s solemn promise, set forth in the eighteenth vow, to save all beings who recite it. Hence, for Hōnen, the power of Amida’s vow is the paramount factor in ensuring one’s birth in the Pure Land. Consequently, the role of faith becomes much more important for Hōnen than for Genshin, since, in the former monk’s understanding, an attitude of faithful entrusting in Amida and his vow is required if the *nembutsu* recitation is to be effective.

¹⁵ *Senchakushū* English Translation Project 1998, 72, slightly modified.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that, although Genshin strongly affirmed the necessity of faith in Pure Land practice, he was much more concerned with the proper method of spiritual self-cultivation, as evidenced by the amount of attention he paid to the five gates of mindfulness and the four modes of cultivation. Such an attitude most likely derived from the fact that he understood Pure Land Buddhism in the context of the traditional Tendai system of bodhisattva practice. Tendai Buddhism holds that a lengthy regimen of arduous, self-denying bodhisattva practice is indispensable for attaining buddhahood. Deeply influenced by the traditional Tendai emphasis on the importance of practice, Genshin gave a far more prominent role to self-cultivation than to faith when formulating his understanding of Pure Land soteriology. On this point, Genshin differed markedly from Hōnen, who placed over-riding importance on entrusting oneself to Amida's vow in attaining birth in the Pure Land.

Abbreviations

- T Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭, eds. 1924-1934. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai. All references to the *Taishō* edition of the Tripitaka will be marked by “T”, followed by volume number, page(s) number and column number (a, b or c, standing for the top, middle and bottom column on the respective page).

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Faith and Enlightenment in Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*

KIYOTAKA KIMURA

Preface

Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253) is considered today to be one of the most famous Japanese figures in the fields of philosophy and religion. From the 20th century onwards, many translations of and research papers on his works (such as the *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏) have been published in English and other languages.

However, I have my doubts as to whether Dōgen's works are being read accurately or understood properly. Therefore, I would like to present my understanding of his main work, the *Shōbōgenzō*.

1. Dōgen's Life and His Background

First, it is necessary to provide an outline of Dōgen's life and his background. Like anyone else, his thought was influenced and restricted by the age and society of which he was a part.

Dōgen was born when Japan was moving from an aristocratic society to one centered around samurai. However, his father, an aristocrat, and mother were not legally married, and the latter died when he was 8 years old. This death influenced, to some extent, his later renouncement of the secular world.

At age 13, Dōgen left the secular world and went to Mount Hiei, the center of the Tendai 天台 school. The next year, he became a disciple of Kōin 公胤 (1145-1216), one of the highest-ranked priests in the school, and began to study Tendai Buddhism. However, he was not content with it. When he was 18 years old, he entered Kennin-ji temple 建仁寺 in Kyoto to study Zen 禅 under Myōzen 明全 (1184-1225), an outstanding disciple of Eisai 栄西 (1141-1215). Eisai is held to be the founder of the Rinzai 臨濟宗 school of Zen in Japan, although he actually aimed at revitalizing the Tendai school by integrating Tendai, Shingon 真言, and Zen.

Dōgen then traveled to Song China with Myōzen to study Zen more deeply. Two years later, he met Rujing 如淨 (Jp. Nyojō, 1163-1228) and finally obtained the enlightenment he had been seeking, which was prompted by Rujing's words "*shinjin datsuraku*" 身心脱落, or "casting off body and mind."

Dōgen returned to Japan in the summer of 1227 at the age of 28, and based himself in Kyoto while propagating Sōtō Zen 曹洞禪, from his point of view the only true Buddhist practice that he had learned in China. However, his activities did not always proceed smoothly due to opposition from Tendai and other Buddhist sects. In 1243, he moved with members of his small religious order far away from Kyoto, to a mountain village in Echizen 越前 (present-day Fukui Prefecture).

Many of these members had previously practiced Zen under Dainichi Nōnin 大日能忍 (?-1205?), the founder of the Daruma 達磨 sect. Unfortunately, as there have not been enough studies carried out on this particular sect, our knowledge about it is quite limited. However, it is clear that it was a combination of Chinese Chan Buddhism and other Song Dynasty Buddhist schools. While Nōnin originally relied on the Buddhist doctrines of Tendai, Shingon, and so on, he eventually came to emphasize the importance of awakening to one's inherent Buddha-mind. Dōgen actually indirectly criticized Nōnin's attempt to have his enlightenment verified by the famous Chinese Zen Buddhist Deguang 德光 (1121-1203). Therefore, we can safely say that the Daruma sect was considerably different in character from Dōgen's Zen. Many of Nōnin's disciples decided to convert and enter Dōgen's order.

Dōgen also had a Chinese disciple named Jiyuan 寂圓 (Jp. Jakuen, ?-1299), who had studied with him under Rujing. After the latter's death a few months after Dōgen left China, Jiyuan came to Japan and became one of Dōgen's disciples. This shows that Dōgen was someone worthy of the title of Zen master and that Jiyuan was an extremely pure and serious Buddhist who willingly sacrificed everything to pursue the truth.

Dōgen's main aim in his propagation of Zen Buddhism seems to have changed when he moved to Echizen. In Kyoto, he worked to preach what he saw as true Zen Buddhism to all people for their enlightenment. However, in Echizen, he focused on training a limited number of close disciples in order to advance Zen Buddhism, stressing the importance of belief in causality and devotion in the Three Treasures of the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha in particular.

2. The Buddha's Way and Faith according to Dōgen

Let us now consider some basic characteristics of Dōgen's Zen Buddhism.

First, Dōgen did not see any difference between buddhas and orthodox Zen patriarchs. In other words, according to him, not only Śākyamuni Buddha, but also the Six Buddhas of past eras were all patriarchs, and those who had inherited the sole transmission of the true Dharma, such as Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Bodhidharma 菩提達磨, Huineng 慧能, and Rujing, were all buddhas as well.

Second, the basis of the Buddha-way is nothing other than pure Zen practice, which he called *shikantaza* 只管打坐, or “just sitting.” A practitioner is a buddha when he realizes this “just sitting.”

Third and relatedly, all beings – not only men and women, but also all kinds of creatures and plants – are in essence no different from buddhas. As Dōgen states in the *Shōbōgenzō*, “Every being realizes Buddha-nature itself” (*shitsu u wa busshō nari* 悉有は仮性なり.).¹

However, without true faith and practice, no one can awaken to this fact and attain a calm mind. Let us look at how Dōgen understands this religious faith (*shin* 信) or belief (*shinge* 信解) on the Zen Buddhist path.

There are many systems to organize the Buddhist teachings. The ‘five faculties of religious practice’ (faith, effort, confirmation, concentration, and insight) is one of them. Let us first look at Dōgen’s interpretation of the faculty of faith. He states:

信根は、しるべし、自己にあらず、他己にあらず、自己の強為にあらず、自己の結構にあらず、佗の牽挽にあらず、自立の規矩にあらざるゆゑに、東西密相付なり。

渾身似信を信と称するなり。かならず仏果位と随他去し、随自去す。仏果位にあらざれば、信現成あらず。このゆゑにいはく、仏法の大海上に信を能入と為すなり。およそ信現成のところは、仏祖現成のところなり。²

You should know that the faculty of faith (*shinkon* 信根, śraddhā-indriya) does not exist in the self, the other, anything the self has produced, anything the self has composed, anything the other has

¹ *Bussō no maki* T2582. 82.0091c20-21.

² 「三十七菩提分法」の巻 T2582. 82.0246b29-c09.

induced, or self-established discipline. Therefore, [the faculty of faith] can be secretly given to everyone in both east and west. Faith that permeates the whole body is what we call true faith, which always accompanies buddhahood. If it were not for the stage of buddhahood, faith would not appear. This is why it is stated [in *The Commentary of the Mahāprajñā-pāramitā Sūtra* 大智度論] that one can enter the great sea of Buddha-dharma due to faith. Faith appears itself wherever buddhas and patriarchs show up. (“*Sanjūshichi bodai bunpō no maki* 「三十七菩提分法」の巻.” Fascilce of the Thirty-seven Bodhi-aṅga in the *Shōbōgenzō*)

As can be seen here, for Dōgen, faith is neither merely the starting-point for practicing the Buddha's way, nor something that can only be related to with the senses and an intellectual mind. It totally relies on the whole body and realizes the modality of the Buddha himself.

Dōgen also explains faith in the five religious powers (*goriki* 五力) as follows:

信力は自らに瞞せられて廻避する処無きなり。他に喚ばれては必ず頭を廻らすなり。生より老に至るまで、只是れ這箇なり。
七顛や放行なり、八倒や拈來なり。このゆゑに、信は水清珠の如しとなり。伝法伝衣を信とす。伝仏伝祖なり。(同上)³

The power of faith (*shinriki* 信力, *śraddhā-bala*) leaves no room for self-deception or evasion. It is like how one looks back when being called by another. From the moment of birth until old age, it is always what it is.

Even in great suffering, it goes away and come back freely. Therefore, faith is like a crystal ball [that can clean and purify dirty water]. The transmission of the Dharma and the robe [a symbol of a Buddhist monk], is regarded as proof of true faith, by means of which one buddha authorizes the succession of the Dharma to another buddha, and one patriarch authorizes the succession of the Dharma to another patriarch. (*Ibid.*)

³ T2582. 82.0247a16-a20

These sentences by Dōgen are not easy to understand. However, it is clear that he thinks that faith is entirely pure, is part of the Buddhist life from its beginning to its end, and completes the Buddha's way in effect. From Dōgen's point of view, enlightenment, which is generally seen as the final goal of the Buddha-way, does not exist apart from faith, and also that enlightenment itself does not exist apart from faith. With regards to faith, Dōgen's thought seems to be similar in some respects to two famous Japanese Buddhists, Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1262), the founder of Jōdoshin-shū 浄土真宗, and Myōe Kōben 明惠高弁 (1173-1232), the restorer of Kegon 華嚴 school.

For example, Shinran says:

煩惱成就の凡夫、生死罪濁の群萌、往相回向の心行を獲れば、即の時に大乗正定聚の数に入るなり。正定聚に住するが故に、必ず滅度に至る。(原漢文。『教行信証』証巻)⁴

Even people who have a great deal of blind passions, or beings who are caught in birth-and-death and defiled by unwholesome karma, will immediately become a member of an assembly of ones promised birth in the Pure Land, once they receive faith given by Amida Buddha and call upon his name. (*Kyōgyōshinshō*, “*Shō no maki*”)

Shinran's point appears to be that faith confirms one's birth in the Pure Land while living in this world.

Myōe, on the other hand, emphasizes that faith is based on the identity of cause and effect in religious practice. He states:

仏教に依りて信心を生ずれば、諸仏の智悲、法爾に我に行わる。(原漢文。『華厳信種義』)⁵

If one gives rise to faith according to Śākyamuni Buddha's teaching, one will naturally realize the wisdom and mercy of all buddhas and be able to act as a buddha. (*Kegon shinshu gi*)

It is clear that in essence each of these two Buddhists' views of faith is similar to Dōgen's.

⁴ T2646. 83.0616a26-28. The original is in *kanbun*: 煩惱成就凡夫 生死罪濁群萌 獲往相回向心行 即時入大乘正定聚之數 住正定聚故必至滅度。

⁵ T2330. 72.0072c19-20. The original is in *kanbun*: 依佛教生信心 諸佛智悲 法爾我行。

3. Faith and Seeing the Buddha

Dōgen also talked about ‘seeing the Buddha,’ which he saw as an integral part of religious experience. This can be seen in his explanation in the *Shōbōgenzō* of a paragraph from the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is quoted as follows:

釈迦牟尼仏、大衆に告げて言はく、若し善男子善女人、我が寿命長遠なりと説くを聞きて、深心に信解せば、則ちこれ、仏常に耆闍崛山に在して、大菩薩と諸々の声聞衆と共にありて因縁せられ、説法したまふを見ん。(原漢文。「見仏」の巻)⁶

Śākyamuni said to his disciples. “When good men or women hear me teaching about my long life, if they believe it in their deep minds, they will be able to see the Buddha surrounded by many great bodhisattvas and śrāvakas on Mount Grdhrakūta, preaching.” (“Kenbutsu no maki”)

Dōgen states the following with regard to this paragraph:

この深心といふは娑婆世界なり。信解といふは無廻避処なり。誠諦の仏語、たれか信解せざらん。この經典にあひたてまつれるは、信解すべき機縁なり。深心信解是法華、深心信解寿命長遠のために、願生此娑婆國土しきたれり。

如來の神力・慈悲力・寿命長遠力、よく心を拈じて信解せしめ、身を拈じて信解せしめ、尽界を拈じて信解せしめ、仏祖を拈じて信解せしめ、諸法を拈じて信解せしめ、実相を拈じて信解せしめ、皮肉骨髓を拈じて信解せしめ、生死去來を拈じて信解せしむるなり。これらの信解、これ見仏なり。(「見仏」の巻)⁷

‘Deep mind’ means that it really occurs in the present secular world. The word “believe” indicates that there is no place for refuge. Who does not believe in the Buddha’s words that express truth? We have fortunately met this sūtra, and have the opportunity

⁶ T2582. 82.0224a13-16.

⁷ T2582. 82.0224a17-b01.

to believe in it. We were born into this world to believe the *Lotus Sūtra* in our deep minds, and also to believe in the Buddha's long life in our deep minds.

The Buddha's magical power (*jinriki* 神力), his power of mercy, and his power of longevity – these make one believe in and comprehend [the Buddha himself] with the elaboration of mind, with the elaboration of body, with the elaboration throughout the world, with the elaboration of buddhas and patriarchs, with the elaboration of dharmas, with the elaboration of ultimate truth, with the elaboration of skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, with the elaboration of birth, death, coming and going. Such belief is called 'seeing the Buddha'. (*Ibid.*)

Dōgen deeply believed in the teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Therefore, for him, the Buddha's words in the sūtra are absolutely believable and reliable, and he held that the Buddha's power generates belief in the Buddha-way. Here, 'seeing the Buddha' does not refer to an extraordinary experience. It is realized amidst true faith or certain belief.

At the beginning of the same fascicle, Dōgen also discusses a simple sentence from Kumārajīva's 鳩摩羅什 translation of the *Diamond Sūtra*. The Chinese is as follows:

若見諸相非相 即見如來⁸

This is generally understood to mean that you see the Buddha immediately if you realize that all things in existence do not have an unchangeable essence.

However, according to Dōgen, many Zen Buddhists during the Song Dynasty understood this as follows:

諸相を相にあらずとみる、すなはち見如來（「見仏」の卷）⁹

To see the Tathāgata is to see that all existing things are not as they are. ("Kenbutsu no maki")

⁸ T0235. 08.0749a24-25

⁹ T2582. 82.0222c06-c07.

However, Dōgen says:

諸相を見取し、非相を見取する、即見如来なり。(同上)¹⁰

To see the Tathāgata is to see the things in existence and see non-existing things.

This interpretation seems to be illogical and slightly forced. However, for Dōgen, when grasped through religious experience based on true faith, there is nothing false or doubtful in the universe. For him, it is perfect and full of dignity.

However, it is not easy to obtain right faith. Dōgen admits that he himself has trouble understanding some of the Buddha's teachings. For example, let us look at his discussion of *kṣaṇa* (*setsuna* 刹那), a very short unit of time:

この刹那の量は、ただ如来ひとりあきらかにしらせたまふ。一刹那心能起一語、一刹那語能説一字。

おほよそ壯士の一彈指のあひだに六十五の刹那ありて五蘊生滅すれども、凡夫かつて不覺不知なり。恒刹那の量よりは、凡夫もこれをしれり。

一日一夜をふるあひだに、六十四億九万九千九百八十の刹那ありて、五蘊ともに生滅す。しかあれども、凡夫かつて覺知せず。覺知せざるがゆゑに菩提心をおこさず。仏法をしらず、仏法を信ぜざるもののは、刹那生滅の道理を信ぜざるなり。もし如來の正法眼藏涅槃妙心をあきらむるがごときは、かならずこの刹那生滅の道理を信ずるなり。

いまわれら如來の説教にあふたてまつりて曉了するににたれども、わずかに恒刹那よりこれをしり、その道理しかあらべしと信受するのみなり。(十二巻本「發菩提心」の巻)¹¹

Only the Tathāgata clearly knows the length of *kṣaṇa*. [He is able to] utter a word by means of his mind on *kṣaṇa*, and show a letter by means of that word on *kṣaṇa*.

It is said that there are 65 *kṣaṇas* and the five aggregates [repeatedly] are born and extinguished in the time it takes a man to snap his fingers. However, deluded beings have never recognized this. The quantity of time that they are able to perceive is more than 1 *tankṣaṇa* [or 120 *kṣaṇas*.]

¹⁰ T2582. 82.0222c11-c12.

¹¹ T2582. 82.0240c13-0241a02

In one day and night, there are 6,400,099,980 *kṣanas*, and the five aggregates are born and extinguished along with each. However, deluded beings have not recognized this, and, therefore, never resolve to attain buddhahood. One who does not know the Buddha-dharma and does not have confidence in it does not believe in the law of moment-to-moment birth and extinction. One who understands the treasury of the true Dharma-eye and the marvelous mind of nirvāṇa will certainly believe in this law of moment-to-moment birth and extinction.

We have learned the Buddhist theory of time and only vaguely understood it as the result of meeting the Tathāgata's words. However, we can perceive no more than the rough units of time over *tankṣāṇa*. Concerning the reason of the total structure of time, we simply accept it with faith. ("Hotsu bodaishin no maki," Twelve fascicle redaction)

However, many people have doubts about the Buddha's teachings. Regarding this, Dōgen explains to his disciples:

又、心も肉も懈怠にもあり、不信にもあらんには、誠心をもはらして前仏に懺悔すべし。恁麼するとき前仏懺悔の功德力、われをすくひて清淨ならしむ。この功德、よく無礙の淨信精進を生長せしむるなり。淨信一現するとき、自他おなじく転ぜらるるなり。その利益あまねく情非情にかうぶらしむ。 (「溪声山色」の巻) ¹²

If you are mentally and physically tired or doubtful regarding the Buddha's teachings, you should sincerely repent in front of [Śākyamuni] Buddha. When doing so, the power of the merit of repenting in front of the Buddha will save you [from the bondage of karma] and purify you. This merit will cause your pure belief and efforts to grow. Once the pure belief appears, even for just a moment, both self and others are to be converted [to a true Buddhist]. The benefit of this universally reaches both sentient and non-sentient beings. ("Keisei sanshoku no maki")

As can be seen from this passage, Dōgen presents confession or repentance in front of Śākyamuni Buddha as a means to be saved. This is the only way to move from non-belief to right belief, which opens the door to the true Buddha-way.

¹² T2582. 82.0041c06-c13

4. Activities Relating to Faith

Let us now look at what religious activities Dōgen saw as being related to faith. With regard to this issue, we have to pay attention to his aforementioned change in approach. As discussed above, before going to Echizen, Dōgen almost always emphasized ‘just sitting’ as the ultimate Buddhist practice. However, in his last years in life after he moved to Echizen, he stressed the importance of embracing fundamental Buddhist teachings, especially belief in causality and taking refuge in the Three Treasures (the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha). I would like to focus on the practice of taking refuge in the Three Treasures, not only because it is less known than ‘just sitting,’ but also due to the fact that I think it was the most important practice for Dōgen in his later days. As he states:

あきらかにしりぬ、西天東土、仏祖正伝するところは、
恭敬仏法僧なり。帰依せざれば恭敬せず、恭敬せざれば
帰依すべからず。この帰依仏法僧の功徳、かならず感応
道交するとき成就するなり。（中略）

帰依三宝の功徳、つひに不朽なり。その帰依三宝とはま
さに淨心をもはらにして、あるいは如來現在世にもあれ、
あるいは如來滅後にもあれ、合掌し低頭して口にと
なへていはく、我某甲、今身より仏身にいたるまで、帰
依仏、帰依法、帰依僧。帰依仏両足尊、帰依法離欲尊、
帰依僧衆中尊。帰依仏竟、帰依法竟、帰依僧竟。

はるかに仏果菩提をこころざして、かくのごとく僧那を
始発するなり。しかあればすなはち、身心いまも剎那剎
那に生滅すといへども、法身かならず長養して菩提を成
就するなり。（十二巻本「帰依仏法僧宝」の巻）¹³

It is clear that the practice of honoring the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha is what the buddhas and patriarchs in India and China have transmitted from teacher to disciple. If one does not take refuge in this, one does not honor them, if one does not honor them, one does not take refuge in them. The merit of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha without fail is completed when one’s mind is in touch with the Buddha’s mind. ...

¹³ T2582. 82.0290c26-0291a22.

The merit of taking refuge in the Three Treasures never decays. The practice of taking refuge in the Three Treasures is as follows: With a pure mind – whether in a world in which the Tathāgata exists or one in which he does not exist – bring one's hands together, bow, and say, “I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the Dharma. I take refuge in the Saṅgha, from now until the time I attain buddhahood. I take refuge in the Buddha, the noblest existence amongst beings having two legs. I take refuge in the Dharma, the most worthy because of its leaving entirely from egoistic desires. I take refuge in the Saṅgha, the most respectable in comparison with various other societies. I have just taken refuge in the Buddha; I have just taken refuge in the Dharma; I have just taken refuge in the Saṅgha.”

One should start the course for attaining buddhahood with these vows. If doing so, one should necessarily grow the Dharmakāya as the original self, and complete the Buddha's enlightenment as a result. (“*Kie buppōsō hō no maki*,” Twelve fascicle redaction)

We can see here that true belief for Dōgen needs to be connected to the practice of vocally taking refuge in the Three Treasures. However, needless to say, this religious practice does not end with doing so. He discusses this in the last paragraph in the same fascicle:

おほよそ仏子の行道、かならずまづ十方の三宝を敬礼したてまつり、十方の三宝を勧請したてまつりて、そのみまへに焼香散華して、まさに諸行を修するなり。 (中略) 仏仏祖祖の法は、かならずそのはじめに帰依三宝の儀軌あるなり。¹⁴

On the whole, when following the path, the disciple of the Buddha should without fail first respectfully worship the Three Treasures in the ten directions, and ask them to be present. Next, the disciple should offer incense and scatter flowers in front of them. After these actions, the disciple should engage in various practices... In the law of the buddhas and patriarchs, the ritual protocol of taking refuge in the Three Treasures always comes first.

¹⁴ T258. 82.0294a11-a20.

Conclusion

As discussed above, Dōgen often refers to religious faith or belief and seriously discusses its essential meaning. According to him, in essence, faith or belief is equal to enlightenment, and is actually realized in every manner of transmission in Chan/Zen Buddhism. Dōgen also states that belief is obtained through the working of the Buddha. As mentioned above, it can be said that his religious standpoint resembles those of Shinran's and Myōe's. In this respect, further research should be carried out on Dōgen, especially in comparison with these individuals who were almost his contemporaries.

Abbreviation

- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 85 vols. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭, eds. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932.

The Faith Elucidated by Shinran: The Faith of Amida's Directing of Virtue

MYŌSHIN FUJITAKE

Regarding true and real faith (Jp. *shinjitsu shinjin* 真実信心), Shinran 親鸞 writes the following:

True and real faith is [given by] Amida Tathāgata's directing of virtue [Jp. *ekō* 回向].¹

Furthermore, he also states:

“Faith” is the faith [given by] the power of the Primal Vow’s directing of virtue.²

The Primal Vow Shinran speaks of here is nothing other than Amida Tathāgata’s Primal Vow (Jp. *hongan* 本願). The distinctive characteristic of the faith Shinran illuminates is that it is given by Amida’s directing of virtue. In this presentation, I will discuss this faith of Amida’s directing of virtue in five sections entitled as follows: (1) The Faith Granted by Amida, (2) The Cause of and Condition for Acquiring Faith, (3) The Two Aspects of Deep Faith as the Content of the Realization of True and Real Faith, (4) Amida’s Directing of Virtue and Sentient Being’s Change of Mind, and (5) Amida’s Directing of Virtue.

¹ 「弥陀如来回向の真実信心なり」 (“Songō shinzō meimon” 尊号真像銘文, SST 531). The English translations of Buddhist texts that appear in this paper are based to varying degrees on Hirota et al. 1997.

² 「「信心」と言うは、すなわち本願力回向の信心なり」 (“Kyōgyōshinshō: Shin no maki” 教行信証 信卷, SST 240).

1. The Faith Granted by Amida

Shinran states that true and real faith is “faith granted by Amida.” In other words, it is the faith received from Amida. He originally used this expression in the following context. During Shinran’s life, there arose a competition over disciples amongst those who were similarly walking the path of the *nenbutsu* 念仏 (“remembrance of the Buddha[’s name]”), with people arguing and saying things like, “This person is my own disciple and that person is this other person’s disciple.” Teachers worked very hard to transmit their own teachings. However, when people came to believe in these teachings, these teachers thought this was the result of their own efforts, and that these people were their own disciples. Furthermore, when people who these teachers thought were their own disciples drifted away from them and tried to listen to the teachings of others, they tried to stop them from doing so. In contrast, Shinran said that arguments like these were outrageous, stating,

I do not have even a single disciple.³

As a result of Shinran’s efforts to transmit the teachings, many followers emerged such as Yuien 唯円, the compiler of the text from which the above quotation appears, the *Tannishō* 歎異抄 (“A Record in Lament of Divergences”). Despite this, Shinran flat out said that he did not have even one disciple. Why did he say this? It was because Shinran knew very well that people did not become *nenbutsu* practitioners as the result of his own efforts or planning. Shinran expressed this in his statement,

Faith granted by Amida.⁴

True and real faith is something granted by Amida Tathāgata. The type of faith that believes in the teachings of the *nenbutsu* and knows the important meaning of the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha arises completely from the working of Amida Buddha. It is certainly not something that arises through the power of humans. Shinran knew this well. For this reason, Shinran said that to think faith can be given to or taken back from others is an impermissible and outrageous error. In the first place, to think in this kind of way itself is completely ignorant of the fact that true and real faith arises due to the activity of Amida. Shinran made this clear.

³ 「親鸞は弟子一人ももたずそらう」 (“*Tannishō*” 歎異抄 Chapter 6, SST 628).

⁴ 「如来よりたまわりたる信心」 (“*Tannishō*” Chapter 6, SST 629).

The expression “faith granted by Amida” that Shinran uses was originally that of Hōnen. This can be seen in the *Tannishō*.

When Shinran was studying under Hōnen (from when he was twenty-nine to thirty-five years old), he got into a debate with Hōnen’s disciples regarding whether his own faith was the same as or different than that of Hōnen. Shinran argued that it was the same, while others (Seikanbō 勢觀房 and Nenbutsubō 念仏房) argued that it was not. Shinran was in a teacher and disciple relationship with Hōnen and was forty years younger, but he said that his faith and Hōnen’s faith were the same. Naturally, people strongly objected. In reply, Shinran said,

The Master possesses vast wisdom and learning, so I would be mistaken if I claimed to be the same in those respects, but in faith [that is the cause] of birth [in the Pure Land], there is no difference whatever. The Master’s faith and mine are one and the same.⁵

Certainly, if Shinran had said that his wisdom or ability was the same as the wide wisdom and ability of Hōnen, it would have been a considerable mistake. However, with regard to the faith that is the cause of birth in the Pure Land, Shinran said that his was no different, that it was completely the same. Here, Shinran is not talking about the different wisdom or abilities that each person possesses. He is talking about the “faith [that is the cause] of birth [in the Pure Land]” which makes humans, who differ in various ways, all equally achieve birth. In this way, Shinran made clear the crux of the issue at hand. Even so, the debate was not resolved, and therefore Hōnen was asked to give his opinion on the matter. He said the following:

My faith is faith granted by Amida; so is that of Zenshin-bō 善信房 [Shinran]. Therefore they are one and the same. A person with a different faith will surely not go to the Pure Land to which I will go.⁶

⁵ 「聖人の御智慧才覚ひろくおわしますに、一ならんともうさばこそ、ひがごとならめ。往生の信心においては、まったくことなることなし、ただひとつなり」(“*Tannishō*” Postscript, SST 639).

⁶ 「源空が信心も、如来よりたまわりたる信心なり。善信房の信心も如来よりたまわらせたまいたる信心なり。されば、ただひとつなり。別の信心にておわしまさんひとは、源空がまいらんずる淨土へは、よもまいらせたまいそらわじ」(“*Tannishō*” Postscript, SST 639).

Hōnen showed that his faith is “faith granted by Amida” and that it is the same as that of Shinran. He then continued by stating that if there is a person who has a different kind of faith, that person will surely not be born in the Pure Land that he himself will be born in. Here, Hōnen is saying that no matter who true and real faith arises in, it is the same. This teaching of Hōnen regarding “faith granted by Amida” gave Shinran considerable guidance in his understanding of faith.

2. The Cause of and Condition for Acquiring Faith

In the preface to the “Chapter on Faith” (Jp. *shin no maki* 信巻) from the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証 (“The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way”), Shinran writes the following:

As I reflect, I find that our attainment of faith arises from the mind with which Amida selected the Vow, and that the clarification of true mind has been taught for us through the skillful works of compassion of the Great Sage, Śākyamuni.⁷

Here, Amida Tathāgata’s mind of the Vow (Jp. *ganshin* 願心) and Śākyamuni’s teachings are presented in relation to the attainment of true and real faith. This passage shows the cause and condition for obtaining true and real faith. In other words, true and real faith takes as its cause the Primal Vow of Amida, takes as its condition true teachings, and becomes clear being obtained by people. True and real faith becomes clear through people encountering true teachings when seeking the Buddhist path. This can be clearly seen in Shinran’s life. While true and real faith is something obtained by people in this way, Shinran says that the basis or source of this true and real faith is not in humans but rather the Primal Vow of Amida.

Why does Shinran say this? As I explained previously, he certainly received guidance from Hōnen’s statement “faith granted by Amida,” however it is not that simple. He expressed the above statement based on the content of his realization of true and real faith. The content of the realization of true and real faith is belief and knowledge (Jp. *shinchi* 信知) with regard to oneself as well as the Primal Vow of Amida that works on oneself. I would like to show this through a passage by Shandao 善導 about the two aspects of deep faith that Shinran quotes in the “Chapter on Faith” from the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

⁷ 「それ以みれば、信楽を獲得することは、如来選択の願心より発起す、真心を開闡することは、大聖矜哀の善巧より顕彰せり」(“*Kyōgyōshinshō: Shin no maki*,” SST 210).

3. The Two Aspects of Deep Faith as the Content of the Realization of True and Real Faith

In Shandao's "The Meaning of Wholesome Behavior, Even in a State of Distraction" (Ch. *sanshanyi* 散善義) chapter from his *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra* (Ch. *Guanjing shu*, Jp. *Kangyōsho* 観經疏) as well as his *In Praise of Rebirth* (Ch. *Wangsheng lizan*, Jp. *Ōjōraisan* 往生礼讚), he discusses the two aspects of deep faith. In the former, he states the following:

The second [aspect] is deep mind. Deep mind is the deeply entrusting mind. There are two types. The first is to believe deeply and decidedly that you are in actuality a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, ever sinking and ever wandering in transmigration from innumerable kalpas in the past, with never a condition that would lead to emancipation. The second is to believe deeply and decidedly that Amida Buddha's Forty-eight Vows grasp sentient beings, and that allowing yourself to be carried by the power of the Vow without any doubt or apprehension, you will attain birth.⁸

This passage states that the content of faith is having deep faith with regard to oneself and Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. According to *In Praise of Rebirth*, "deep faith" is "believing and knowing."⁹ The realization of the two types of belief and knowledge (with regard to oneself and the Primal Vow) is the very content of true and real faith. This is Shandao's important teaching regarding the content of the realization of true and real faith.

⁸ 「「二者深心」。「深心」と言うは、すなわちこれ深信の心なり。また二種あり。一つには決定して深く、自身は現にこれ罪惡生死の凡夫、曠劫より已来、常に没し常に流転して、出離の縁あることなしと信ず。二つには決定して深く、かの阿弥陀仏の四十八願は衆生を攝受して、疑いなく慮りなくかの願力に乗じて、定んで往生を得と信ず」(SSZ Vol. 1, 534).

⁹ In *In Praise of Rebirth*, Shandao states the following: "Second [of the three minds] is deep mind, which is true and real faith. One truly believes and knows oneself to be a foolish being full of blind passions, with scant roots of good, transmigrating in the three realms and unable to emerge from this burning house. And further, one truly believes and knows now, without so much as a single thought of doubt, that Amida's universal Primal Vow decisively enables all to attain birth, including those who say the Name even down to ten times, or even but hear it. Hence it is called 'deep mind.'" Original: 「二には深心、即ち是真実の信心なり。自身は是煩惱を具足せる凡夫、善根薄少にして三界に流転して、火宅を出でずと信知す。今弥陀の本弘誓願は、名号を称すること下至十声・一声等に及ぶまで、定んで往生を得しむと信知して、乃し一念に至るまで疑心有ること無し、故に深心と名く」(SSZ Vol. 1, 649).

Generally, faith is understood as something that takes buddhas or gods as its object. This type of faith is directed towards buddhas or gods who are the objects of belief. It is not something directed towards oneself, and this is understandable, for it is certainly hard to have belief in oneself upon facing the limits of one's own power. Even in the case that one has faced such limits and takes as the basis of one's belief the realization of the limits of one's power and the like, in this general understanding of faith the object of faith is in every respect buddhas or gods.

In contrast, in the two aspects of deep faith that Shandao presents, deep faith is first belief and knowledge with regard to oneself. This is the essence of the faith Shandao articulates. Its gaze is directed towards oneself. Furthermore, in this belief and knowledge there is deep repentance, and on top of this belief and knowledge regarding oneself one has deep belief and knowledge with regard to the Primal Vow.

In other words, one has belief and knowledge with regard to oneself – a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death who cannot emancipate oneself from its delusion. Furthermore, in this belief and knowledge, one has belief and knowledge with regard to the Primal Vow that takes as its very object of salvation a person like oneself. The concept of the two aspects of deep faith explains this content of the realization of faith. The belief and knowledge with regard to oneself that is shown here is not something that takes belief in the Primal Vow as its premise or preliminary step. Therefore, in belief and knowledge regarding the Primal Vow, there is no belief and knowledge regarding oneself that leads to the forgetting of the self. In belief and knowledge with regard to the Primal Vow, there is belief and knowledge that gradually deepens regarding the self. In this way, Shandao makes clear true and real faith with the content of the realization of two aspects of belief and knowledge: the aspect that takes the self as its object and the aspect that takes the Primal Vow as its object.

4. Amida's Directing of Virtue and Sentient Beings' Change of Mind

The belief and knowledge regarding oneself and the Primal Vow made clear by Shandao is not a person's self-reflection, expectation for salvation, and so on. It is qualitatively different. This is made clear through the notion of sentient beings' "change of mind" (Jp. *eshin* 回心). This concept expresses most straightforwardly Amida's directing of virtue.

Regarding change of mind, Shinran writes the following:

“Change of mind” means to overturn and discard the mind of self-power.¹⁰

Regarding self-power (Jp. *jiriki* 自力), Shinran says:

Self-power characterizes those who have full confidence in themselves, trusting in their own hearts and minds, striving with their own powers, and relying on their own various roots of good.¹¹

The mind of self-power is the mind or way of being that relies on one's body, mind, power, sensations, knowledge, experience, and so on. It is a way of being that relies upon and takes as not mistaken one's judgment that is based upon these things. This is very natural for humans. Change of mind is nothing other than this kind of mind of self-power being overturned.

The *Tannishō* says the following:

For the person of wholehearted single practice of the *nembutsu*, change of mind occurs only once. People who have in ordinary life been ignorant of the true essence of the Primal Vow, which is Other Power, come to realize, through receiving Amida's wisdom, that they cannot attain birth with the thoughts and feelings they have harbored up to then, so they abandon their former heart and mind and entrust themselves to the Primal Vow. This is what is meant by “change of mind.”¹²

As can be seen in the text's use of the phrase “receiving Amida's wisdom,” (Jp. *mida no chie wo tamawarite* 弥陀の智慧をたまわりて), the working of Amida Buddha's wisdom overturns and breaks down the delusionary nature of the “thoughts and feelings ... harbored up to then” (Jp. *hi goro no kokoro* 日ごろのこころ) and the “mind of self-power.” At the basis of humans’

¹⁰ 「「回心」というは、自力の心をひるがえし、すつるをいうなり」 (“Yuishin-shō mon'i” 唯信鈔文意, SST 552).

¹¹ 「自力といふは、わがみをたのみ、わがこころをたのむ、わがちからをはげみ、わがさまざまの善根をたのむひとなり」 (“Ichinen tanen mon'i” 一念多念文意, SST 541).

¹² 「一向専修のひとにおいては、回心ということ、ただひとつあるべし。その回心は、日ごろ本願他力真宗をしらざるひと、弥陀の智慧をたまわりて、日ごろのこころにては、往生かなうべからずとおもいて、もとのこころをひきかえて、本願をたのみまいらするをこそ、回心とはもうしそうらえ」 (“Tannishō” Chapter 6, SST 637).

striving in religious training and their beliefs is the expectation and anticipation that these will bring enlightenment and salvation for oneself. However, there is no guarantee that things will work out as expected and anticipated. This is because this expectation and this anticipation are just human fantasies. The overturning of “thoughts and feelings … harbored up to then” and the “mind of self-power” is the very site of the breaking down of attachments to enlightenment and salvation. There, for the first time, a true and real faith is obtained by humans that is qualitatively different from their self-reflection, expectation, and anticipation. This true and real faith is precisely that which is given through the working of Amida Buddha. Such sentient beings’ change of mind is the thing that shows Amida’s directing of virtue most directly and clearly.

5. Amida’s Directing of Virtue

The question and answer section on “the threefold mind and the single mind” (Jp. *sanshin isshin* 三心一心) in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*’s “Chapter on Faith” makes clear the relationship between the change of mind in sentient beings and Amida’s directing of virtue. There, the relationship between the threefold mind of Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow as preached in the eighteenth vow found in the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Life* (Skt. *Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra*, Jp. *Muryōjukyō* 無量寿經)¹³ and the single mind that is discussed at the beginning of Vasubandhu’s *Treatise on the Sūtra of Immeasurable Life* (Skt. **Sukhāvatīvyūhopadeśa*, Jp. *Muryōjukyō ubadaishaganshōge* 無量寿經優婆提舍願生偈)¹⁴ is made clear. The threefold mind is sincere mind (Jp. *shishin* 至心), entrusting mind (Jp. *shingyō* 信樂), and mind aspiring for birth (Jp. *yokushō* 欲生), and the single mind refers to sentient beings’ mind that takes refuge in Amida. In this question and answer section, it is made completely clear that sentient beings

¹³ In the first scroll of the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Life*, the eighteenth vow is written as follows: “If, when I attain buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, with sincere mind entrusting themselves, aspiring to be born in my land, and saying my Name perhaps even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma” (「設我得仏十方衆生至心信樂欲生我國乃至十念若不生者不取正覺唯除五逆謗諑正法」 SSZ Chapter 1, 9).

¹⁴ Vasubandhu, at the beginning of his *Treatise on the Sūtra of Immeasurable Life*, states the following: “O World-honored one, with a single mind / I take refuge in the Tathāgata of unhindered light / Filling the ten quarters / And aspire to be born in the land of happiness” (「世尊、我一心に、尽十方無碍光如來に帰命したてまつりて、安樂国に生ぜんと願ず」 SSZ Chapter 1, 269).

do not possess the true and real mind (Jp. *shinjitsushin* 真実心), faith, or the mind of the directing of virtue (Jp. *ekōshin* 回向心). Furthermore, it says that in the threefold mind of Amida that works to save these sentient beings, “sincere mind” is Amida’s true and real mind, entrusting mind is Amida’s mind of great compassion (Jp. *daihishin* 大悲心), and aspiring for birth in the Pure Land is the mind of the directing of virtue. For example, Shinran writes the following regarding sincere mind:

Nevertheless, reflecting on this [threefold] mind for myself alone, I find that all beings, an ocean of multitudes, have since the beginningless past down to this day, this very moment, been evil and defiled, completely lacking the mind of purity. They have been false and deceitful, completely lacking the mind of truth and reality. Thus, when Amida, in profound compassion for the ocean of all sentient beings in pain and affliction, performed bodhisattva practices for inconceivable millions of measureless kalpas, there was not a moment, not an instant, when his practice in the three modes of action was not pure, or lacked this true mind. With this pure, true mind, Amida brought to fulfillment the perfect, unhindered, inconceivable, indescribable and inexplicable supreme virtues. The Tathāgata gives [Jp. *ese* 回施] this sincere mind to all living beings, an ocean of beings possessed of blind passions, karmic evil, and false wisdom. This mind manifests the true mind of benefiting others. For this reason, it is completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt. This sincere mind takes as its essence the reverend Name of supreme virtues.¹⁵

Sentient beings do not have a true and real mind. Thus, Shinran discusses the sincere mind of Amida Tathāgata (Hōzō 法藏 Bodhisattva) that works thoroughly as the true and real mind in order to save sentient beings. This kind of working of Amida is reiterated in Shinran’s interpretation of the entrusting mind and mind aspiring for birth. The threefold mind is entirely the functioning of Amida on sentient beings. Furthermore, Shinran sees the source of

¹⁵ 「一切の群生海、無始よりこのかた乃至今日今時に至るまで、穢惡汚染にして、清淨の心なし。虛偽詭偽にして真実の心なし。ここをもって如来、一切苦惱の衆生海を悲憫して、不可思議兆載永劫において、菩薩の行を行じたまひし時、三業の所修、一念・一刹那も清淨ならざることなし、真心ならざることなし。如来、清淨の真心をもって、円融無碍・不可思議・不可称・不可説の至徳を成就したまえり。如來の至心をもって、諸有の一切煩惱・悪業・邪智の群生海に回施したまえり。すなわちこれ利他の真心を彰す。かるがゆえに、疑蓋雜わることなし。この至心はすなわちこれ至徳の尊号をその体とせるなり」 (“Kyōgyōshinshō: Shin no maki,” SST 225).

the threefold mind as the mind aspiring for rebirth that is Amida's mind of the directing of virtue. In other words, he sees on the one hand the aspiration for birth that is the mind of the directing of virtue as the source, and on the other hand entrusting that is the mind of great compassion and the sincere mind that is the true and real mind as that which develops from it. In addition, Shinran here also shows that the most essential and concrete aspect of Amida's directing of virtue is the “giving” (Jp. *eṣe* 回施) of the “reverend Name of supreme virtues” (Jp. *shitoku no songō* 至徳の尊号), in other words the Name *namu amida butsu* 南無阿弥陀仏 (“I take refuge in Amida Buddha”). In another of his writings, Shinran says the following:

“Directing of virtue” is Amida’s giving the Name that embodies the Primal Vow to sentient beings throughout the ten quarters.¹⁶

Here, Shinran confirms that the concrete aspect of Amida's directing of virtue is the giving of the Name. This is because the aforementioned sentient beings' change of mind and acquisition of faith is essentially and concretely awakened by the Primal Vow's Name. Shinran's acquisition of faith also arose after having encountered the Primal Vow's Name through the teachings and words of Hōnen. Shinran showed both that Amida's directing of virtue is clearly sentient beings' change of mind as well as that the concrete aspect of Amida's directing of virtue is nothing but the giving of the Name.

Conclusion

In this way, Shinran shows that true and real faith is something that one acquires based on Amida's directing of virtue. Because it is this faith of Amida's directing of virtue,

Those who attain true and real faith immediately join the truly settled, thus having entered the stage of nonretrogression.¹⁷

Here, the stage of nonretrogression (Jp. *shōjōju no kurai* 正定聚のくらい) is articulated in the context of true and real faith. Furthermore:

¹⁶ 「「回向」は、本願の名号をもって十方の衆生にあたえたまう御のりなり」（“*Ichinen tanen mon'i*,” SST 535）。

¹⁷ 「真実信心の行人は、攝取不捨のゆえに、正定聚のくらいに住す」（“*Mattō-shō*” 末灯鈔, SST 600）。

The true cause of attaining nirvāṇa is faith alone.¹⁸

Here, Shinran says that true and real faith is the very thing that is the true cause of nirvāṇa. Furthermore,

In the term true disciple of Buddha, true contrasts with false and provisional. Disciple indicates a disciple of Śākyamuni and the other buddhas. This expression refers to the practitioner who has realized the diamondlike heart and mind. Through this faith and practice, one will without fail transcend and realize great nirvāṇa; hence, one is called true disciple of Buddha.¹⁹

In other words, someone who has obtained true and real faith is a true disciple of the Buddha (Jp. *shinbutsudeshi* 真仏弟子). If upon reading this passage one thinks that by obtaining true and real faith a sentient being becomes somewhat special, this would be a big mistake. The fact that one is a foolish being full of blind passions does not change at all up until and during one's last thought before death. This is the content of the realization of true and real faith, which, as discussed previously, is explained through the notion of the two aspects of deep faith. Furthermore:

Since faith arises from the Vow / We attain buddhahood through the *nenbutsu* by the [Vow's] spontaneous working. / The spontaneous working is itself the fulfilled land; / Our realization of supreme nirvāṇa is beyond doubt.²⁰

Shinran here says that one stands on the path of the realization of supreme nirvāṇa (Jp. *shōdainehan* 証大涅槃) without the fact that one is a foolish being changing at all. The basis of the establishment of this kind of Buddhist path is not in Shinran or humans, but rather faith rooted in the Primal Vow, in other words the faith of Amida's directing of virtue that is expressed by the phrase “since faith arises from the vow” (Jp. *shin ha gan yori shōzureba* 信は願より生ずれば). Shinran elucidates a Buddhist path that is established through this type of faith.

¹⁸ 「涅槃の真因はただ信心をもってす」 (“*Kyōgyōshinshō: Shin no maki*,” SST 223).

¹⁹ 「「真仏弟子」と言うは、「真」の言は偽に対し、仮に対するなり。「弟子」とは釈迦・諸仏の弟子なり、金剛心の行人なり。この信・行に由つて、必ず大涅槃を超証すべきがゆえに、「真仏弟子」と曰う」 (“*Kyōgyōshinshō: Shin no maki*,” SST 245).

²⁰ 「信は願より生ずれば 念仏成仏自然なり 自然はすなわち報土なり 証大涅槃うたがわす」 (“*Kōsō wasan*” 高僧和讃 SST 496).

Abbreviations

SSZ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書. Edited by Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensanjo. 5 vols. Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941.

SST *Jōdo shinshū seitō* 淨土真宗聖典. Edited by Shinshū Seiten Hensan Iinkai. Kyoto: Higashi Honganji Shuppanbu, 1978.

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Dharmākara as the Subject, Not Object of Faith: The Reinterpretation of Amida's Causal Phase in Modern Shin Thought

MICHAEL CONWAY

The Meiji period (1868-1912) in Japan saw rapid and drastic changes in all facets of Japanese society. The Meiji government pursued policies aimed at the restructuring and modernization of Japan, which were not only limited to the realms of institutions and economics, but extended to those of religion and ideas. Under the slogan *bunmei kaika* 文明開化 (“civilization and enlightenment,” or “transformation through civilization”), many aspects of Western thought that challenged the received wisdom of the Buddhist thought which pervaded earlier times were introduced and granted authority as expressions of a more enlightened civilization. The Buddhist view of the universe, with Mount Sumeru at its center, was, after a struggle, discarded in favor of the Copernican one.¹ The role of Śākyamuni in the preaching of the foundational sūtras of all the Japanese Buddhist schools was called into question by Western scholars and Japanese ones who had incorporated Western methods into their analysis of Buddhist history.² Further, the objective existence of Amida 阿彌陀 Buddha, the centerpiece of the soteriology of the Pure Land and True Pure Land schools, was called into question and belief in the working of that Buddha was broadly viewed as unsophisticated superstition.

Soga Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875-1971), the subject of our study here, was born into a temple belonging to the True Pure Land, or Shin, school toward the beginning of this period of modernization. He, like many other sons of clerics in his generation, sought to show that Buddhism, especially Shin Buddhism, was not an unenlightened relic of a barbaric past, but held a relevant message for the people of his day that did not necessarily conflict with the ideas introduced from the West. One of the most unique and effective elements in his

¹ Inoue 2006.

² See, for instance, Sueki 2005: 19-26, as well as the other articles in the feature on Murakami in the same issue.

reinterpretation of Shin faith was his treatment of Dharmākara Bodhisattva, the character presented in the *Larger Sūtra of Immeasurable Life* (*Wuliangshoujing* 無量壽經)³ as Amida Buddha's causal phase—Amida Buddha while he was performing the practices necessary to become a Buddha. Put simply, Soga argues that Dharmākara is a symbol of the perfect bodhisattva who is incarnated in the mind of faith, or *shinjin* 信心, of each individual practitioner. After laying out some of the background for his idea in the thought of Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1262), this paper traces the development of this idea in Soga's early works.

Faith Born of the Vow

Soga's assertion that Dharmākara liberates sentient beings by taking the form of their individual *shinjin* is not entirely without a foundation in the works of Shinran, the founder of the True Pure Land school. In his primary work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, Shinran repeatedly discusses *shinjin* in relation to the vows made by Amida in his causal phase, as well as in relation to the mind of Dharmākara as he made those vows. In this section, I will introduce a few of those passages which inform the background of Soga's stance.

First, let us take a look at a passage from Shinran's hymn in praise of Shandao 善導 (613-681) in the *Kōsō wasan* 高僧和讃 that Soga quotes often. It reads:

When faith is born from out of the vow / Then becoming a Buddha through the *nembutsu* 念仏 occurs naturally of itself.⁴

This short passage shows where the focus of Shinran's soteriology lies. The ultimate goal of buddhahood is not described as being contingent on the *nembutsu*, instead it is said to be contingent on whether the individual's faith is born of the vow. Here, "faith" refers to the mind of the practitioner while "vow" refers to the vows made by Dharmākara Bodhisattva—Amida before becoming a buddha. As is well known, the *Larger Sūtra on Immeasurable Life* tells the story of how a certain king encountered a Buddha and was moved such that he awakened an aspiration to achieve enlightenment and liberate all sentient beings. The sūtra states that after contemplating for five

³ T no. 360, 12:265c-279a.

⁴ Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 2008: v. 2, 118.

kalpas about how to realize that goal, he made forty-eight specific vows as conditions for his enlightenment, and proceeded to engage in eternal practice to fulfill those vows. For most of the history of Pure Land Buddhism in China and Japan, devotees took the eighteenth of those vows to mean that Amida would welcome any practitioner who called the *nembutsu* in all sincerity into his Pure Land. Other vows ensured that those who were born in the Pure Land would ultimately become buddhas. Thus, chanting the *nembutsu* was seen as the primary condition for birth in the Pure Land and becoming a buddha. However, in the above passage, Shinran takes a very different tack. Rather than laying emphasis on saying the *nembutsu*, he focuses on faith, saying that only when the faith of the practitioner takes Dharmākara's vow as its source does one attain the desired goal of buddhahood. *Nembutsu* and the resultant buddhahood issue forth naturally of the faith that is born of Dharmākara's vow.

Shinran devotes the majority of the chapter on faith in his *Kyōgyōshinshō* to an explication of the relationship between the vow of Dharmākara and *shinjin*, or the mind of faith. Echoing the above verse, the opening passage of the special preface to this chapter reads:

As I consider the matter, I find that our attainment of the mind of joyful entrusting [*shinjin*] arises from the mind of the vow selected by the Tathāgata [Amida].⁵

Here again, Shinran says that the foundation, the source, of a practitioner's *shinjin* is the "mind of the vow" selected by Dharmākara. In this chapter, Shinran lays out two questions and answers in order to clarify the relationship between the mind of the vow and the mind of faith within the practitioner. In the second of these questions and answers, Shinran makes extensive reference to Dharmākara Bodhisattva's endless practice. He quotes the section of the *Larger Sūtra* that describes this practice at length, and refers to it as the source of the practitioner's faith. At one of the crescendos of his long discourse, Shinran writes:

Because this mind is the mind of great compassion of the Tathāgata, it necessarily becomes the rightly settled cause of the land of recompense. The Tathāgata took pity on the ocean of suffering living beings, and endowed the pure faith, vast and unhindered, upon the ocean of all being.

⁵ Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 1989: 95.

In this passage, the mind of the vow and the “pure faith” realized by sentient beings are presented as one and the same thing. Since Shinran refers to the pure bodhisattva practices performed by Dharmākara in the sentence directly preceding this passage, from the context, “this mind” in the first line clearly refers to the mind of the vow, the mind of Dharmākara, which is then endowed upon sentient beings as their “pure faith.”

From these three passages, we can see that Shinran clearly associated *shinjin* with the mind of Dharmākara’s vows. However, for much of the history of Shin doctrinal studies, the significance of this association was not considered in detail. A full consideration of the treatment of this concept in the doctrinal studies of the Edo period (1603-1868) falls outside the scope of this paper, but a statement made by Soga toward the end of his life will provide a glimpse of how it was treated in the Meiji period. In a lecture that Soga gave in 1962, looking back on the time when he first proposed his position that Dharmākara liberates sentient beings by becoming their faith itself, he states:

Back in the Meiji period, it was thought that it was safer just not to touch on Dharmākara Bodhisattva. People only talked about Amida Tathāgata and the great compassion of the Buddha. Even the words “original vow” were generally not used by younger people in the Meiji period. Further, the word *nembutsu* was to be avoided at all costs. That’s how it was considered [back then]. People would only refer to the term Dharmākara Bodhisattva when discussing a specific academic issue in doctrinal studies, but people like Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 [1863-1903] and his followers pretty much did not even think about Dharmākara Bodhisattva and seemed to think that they were not supposed to use the term in general.⁶

This passage gives us a sense of how difficult it was to speak of issues related to Buddhism during the Meiji period. Buddhist ministers were not able to refer to the most basic terms and central concepts in their doctrinal heritage. Kiyozawa Manshi, to whom Soga refers here, is famous for his attempt to discuss Shin faith without recourse to Shin doctrinal language in order to make the Shin Buddhist truth available and palatable to a Meiji audience, which viewed much Buddhist rhetoric with suspicion. Soga revered Kiyozawa as his teacher, and ultimately joined in Kiyozawa’s project, becoming one of the driving forces behind the publication of the magazine Kiyozawa founded, *Seishinkai*

⁶ *Soga Ryōjin senshū* (hereafter, SRS): v. 12, 106.

精神界 (Spiritual World), after Kiyozawa's untimely passing. Soga's work that appears in the pages of this journal, however, represents his attempt to reclaim the traditional discourse within the new parameters of the world of Meiji thought and belief. That is, much of Soga's work is an attempt to reinterpret central concepts within Shinran's thought using terms and ideas from the contemporary discourse on philosophy and religion.

From the Object of Faith to the Subject of Faith

As vast swaths of Western tradition were introduced in translation into Japan during the Meiji period, Japanese people were not only faced with entirely new systems of thought, belief, and ways of understanding the world, they were introduced to an entirely new vocabulary specifically created to express these concepts. Terms like *shūkyō* 宗教 and *tetsugaku* 哲学 were created to express the Western categories of religion and philosophy, respectively.⁷ A great many new Japanese words were formed and found their way into general use in the Japanese language, but for our purposes in this chapter, we should note that the term for “subject” in Western epistemology was translated as *shutai* 主体 or *shukan* 主觀, while the term for “object” was translated as *kyakutai* 客体 or *kyakkan* 客觀. Soga uses these terms to redefine the concept of faith in Shin Buddhism to provide it with an immediacy and experiential relevance for the modern seeker. In doing so, he breathed new life into a figure that was in danger of being forgotten as a meaningless myth, reclaiming it as a modern doctrinal concept free of the tint of superstition. Soga argues that Dharmākara as he appears in the *Larger Sūtra* is a symbol of the most fundamental subject of each individual that opens up in the experience of faith. This interpretation represents a major shift in the understanding of faith—especially its subject and object—in the Shin tradition.

In order to get an idea of the extent of this shift in the understanding of the nature and content of *shinjin*, let us look at a passage from perhaps the most popular and widely read pastoral letters of Rennyo 蓮如 (1415-1499), who is revered as the second founder of the school and who set the tone for Shin doctrinal studies throughout the Edo period. His letters have been read ceremonially at Shin temples and in the homes of Shin followers since soon after his passing. The one that is read most often—because of its brevity and pithiness—begins as follows:

⁷ See, for instance, the recent study by Jason Ānanda Josephson (2012) for one of many treatments of the selection of the term *shūkyō* to translate the Western category of religion.

When those ignorant men and women of the last era [of the Dharma] remaining in the lay life, focus their minds and deeply ask Amida Buddha—when those sentient beings say without thinking of others, single-heartedly, with single focus, “Buddha, please save me”—even if the karmic effects of their evil deeds are profound, Amida Tathāgata will definitely save them. This is the meaning of the eighteenth vow, [the vow] for birth in the Pure Land through the *nembutsu*.⁸

Here, Rennyo instructs devotees to “ask Amida” for salvation. He even says that they should say “please save me” to the Buddha. In this sentence, clearly the subject of faith is the practitioner. The practitioner is doing the asking and the saying. The object of faith is clearly Amida. The practitioners ask with a single mind that Amida come to save them, and they are assured by Rennyo and the eighteenth vow in the *Larger Sūtra* that Amida will indeed save them. The structure of this sort of faith is intuitively easy to understand, since the practitioner asks in faith and is answered by the salvific working of the object of that faith, Amida. Rennyo’s presentation, however, does not take account of the relationship between the vow and *shinjin* that Shinran lays out in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

Soga’s stance, which he says involves a conversion of subject and object,⁹ is not so intuitive, but it does reflect the position taken by Shinran in the chapter on faith that I introduced above. Reading through the articles of Soga’s that appeared in *Seishinkai* in the last few years of the Meiji era, one finds him searching for a point of connection between the reality of suffering human beings and the transformative, salvific power of Amida in the imagery of the sūtras. In one of the earliest articles appearing there (1904), he focuses on the bodhisattvas that spew forth from the earth in the *Lotus Sūtra*.¹⁰ In later articles, he picks up imagery from the *Contemplation Sūtra* (*Guanwulian-shoujing* 觀無量壽經)¹¹ as a possible point of connection between Amida and suffering sentient beings, particularly focusing on Queen Vaidehī as a representative of all sentient beings.¹² In the last few paragraphs of an article from January of 1911, Soga first makes reference to the vow of compassion and its

⁸ *Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensanjo* 1941: v. 3, 500.

⁹ SRS: v. 3, 184.

¹⁰ SRS: v. 2, 71-82.

¹¹ T no. 365, 12:340c-346b.

¹² SRS: v. 2, 235-56, 270-77.

practice, but he does not use the word Dharmākara, instead referring to the *Contemplation Sūtra* as the clearest expression of the Tathāgata's working to liberate sentient beings.¹³ In a piece that appeared two months later,¹⁴ he looks to the following passage in the *Contemplation Sūtra* as the point of connection between the saving mind of the Buddha and the suffering mind of sentient beings.

The myriad buddhas Tathāgatas are the body of the *dharma-dhātu*. They enter into the minds and thoughts of all sentient beings. Therefore, when you think of the Buddha in your mind, that mind is the thirty-two gross features and the eighty additional fine features. That mind becomes the Buddha. That mind is the Buddha.¹⁵

According to a later piece, Soga says that he first intuited the significance of Dharmākara Bodhisattva as the key to the solution of the problem of overcoming the gap between sentient being and the Tathāgata in October of 1911,¹⁶ but in the articles from the months preceding that realization, he is clearly churning over the problem of the relationship between the mind of the Buddha and the mind of the practitioner. For instance, in September installment of his irregular column in *Seishinkai*, Soga states,

We should be amazed and surprised by the depth and severity of our founder Shinran's recognition that the single mind which Vasubandhu expresses in his statement . . . at the beginning of the *Verses Aspiring for Birth in the Pure Land* (*Yuanshengjie* 願生偈)¹⁷ is the single mind of other power. Although we tentatively might make a distinction between subject and object, saying that faith is my own self power, while other power is the object that I believe in, in reality, the very self that believes is already the great self of the Tathāgata transferred to us through other power.¹⁸

¹³ *Daiankoku no busshin o miyo* 大闇黒の仏心を観よ (SRS: v. 2, 297-318, esp. 318).

¹⁴ *Bonnōbutsu no kensetsusha* 煩惱仏の建設者 (SRS: v. 2, 325).

¹⁵ *Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho* Hensanjo 1941: v. 1, 55-56.

¹⁶ SRS: v. 2, 408.

¹⁷ More fully, *Wuliangshoujing youbotishe yuanshengji* 無量寿經優波提舍願生偈 (T no. 1524, 26:230c-233a; *Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho* Hensanjo 1941: v. 1, 269-78).

¹⁸ SRS: v. 4, 333-34.

Here we can see the shift in the subject and object of faith that proves to be the center point of Soga's soteriology. From this point on, through to August of 1912, when his column ceases to appear, Soga works through this idea based on a variety of traditional concepts from Shin doctrinal studies.

This idea of Soga's as presented above, however, has the danger of blurring the distinction between the Buddha and sentient beings. Aware of this danger, in the October issue of *Seishinkai*, Soga included the following section in his column under the title, "The Tathāgata Is Myself" (Nyorai wa ware nari 如来は我也):

I do not just address the Tathāgata as "thou," I address the Tathāgata directly as I.

Those of the teaching of self power scream out directly, "I am the Tathāgata," feeling proud of themselves.

Those of the other Pure Land schools scream out, "The Tathāgata is the Tathāgata," feeling utterly dejected about the present world.

We are surprised by the wondrous significance of "The Tathāgata is myself," while also realizing that "I am ultimately myself and not the Tathāgata." . . .

I call the Tathāgata myself and wrap this [Tathāgata] within my subject, and also call the Tathāgata "thou" and am wrapped within its light. This is the apex of joy.¹⁹

In this short piece, Soga cautions that the bold declaration, "I am the Tathāgata," is an expression of both arrogance and a self-power attitude, while at the same time criticizing a stance that completely separates sentient beings from the Tathāgata, arguing that such a position would divorce salvation from this present reality, leaving it entirely to a future birth in the Pure Land. We should note that in the last paragraph Soga distinguishes two types of Tathāgata, the one within the subject of the practitioner and the one that wraps the practitioner in light, which for Soga represent two modes of the Tathāgata's working in the world. In the next installment of his column, which appeared in November 1912, Soga clarifies that these two ways of working represent both Dharmākara, the causal phase of Amida, and Amida as the fulfilled Buddha of Infinite Light, one of the literal meanings of the term Amida.

Soga first explicitly refers to the figure of Dharmākara Bodhisattva in this November issue of *Seishinkai*, under the heading "Dharmākara Bhikṣu's Advent is the Humanization of the Tathāgata" (Hōzō biku no kōtan wa nyorai no ningenka nari 法藏比丘の降誕は如来の人間化也). There, Soga writes,

¹⁹ SRS: v. 4, 340-41.

Everything related to the faith and the doctrine of Shin Buddhism is contained within this one thing—the advent of Dharmākara.

Ah! The Tathāgata has come down and become the human cleric Dharmākara in order to liberate human beings and put them in the position of the Tathāgata. . . . Let's stop questioning the significance of Dharmākara Bhikṣu as an objectively existing entity. The Dharmākara Bhikṣu of the past, the objective Dharmākara Bhikṣu as the object of our faith, is, just as a future birth in the Pure Land or the Tathāgata of the Western Pure Land, all too alien to us. We must see the present Dharmākara Bhikṣu, the Dharmākara Bhikṣu within our very hearts, the Dharmākara Bhikṣu who is inseparably one with our very selves. We must look deep into the furthest depths of our breasts to discover the calling voice of the sincere mind of joyful entrusting [a technical doctrinal term for *shinjin*].²⁰

This passage is one of Soga's first articulations of his interpretation of the role of Dharmākara, but it would be far from his last. Although the imagery from the *Contemplation Sūtra* falls away from Soga's works, the theme of liberation through the appearance of Dharmākara as the subject of faith continues to appear in a variety of variations through to the end of Soga's long career. His exhortation in this passage to leave behind seeking an objective existence for Dharmākara reflects the needs of the time to find a new footing for the Buddhist tradition and its concepts. His call to his fellows to seek Dharmākara's working in the furthest reaches of their breasts—the depths of their beings—represents a reordering of the central concepts of Pure Land soteriology, taking salvation out of a Pure Land, a heavenly realm awaiting the practitioner after death, and into the experience of faith itself. Much of Shinran's work is also focused on such a restructuring and internalization, aimed at making the practitioner's experience of faith paramount. Soga's original contribution lies in his explicit application of the new, Western category of "subject" to the figure of Dharmākara. By employing this term, Soga moves Dharmākara from the objective realm that is the purview of scientific inquiry, where the figure is clearly nothing more than a story, and into the subjective realm of the

²⁰ SRS: v. 4, 343-44. This discussion of Dharmākara appeared three months before Soga's first article-length piece on the subject, "The Present Dharmākara Bhikṣu as the Revealer of the Eternal Mind of the Buddha" (Kuon no busshin no kaikensha to shite no genzai no Hōzō biku 久遠の仏心の開顯者としての現在の法藏比丘), and eight months prior to "A Savior on Earth" (Chijō no kyūshu 地上の救主), which is translated by Jan Van Bragt in Blum and Rhodes 2011: 107-18.

individual practitioner where the figure can take on symbolic significance on the level of an archetype, thus endowing it with a concrete reality universally applicable to all practitioners.

Conclusion

This short chapter fails to do justice to the complexity and richness of the imagery of the Shin doctrinal system and of Soga's reinterpretation of that imagery in modern terms. In the space allotted, I have only been able to paint in very broad strokes the background for his ideas in Shinran's thought, and present some of his very early formulations of the position that Dharmākara is a symbol for the *shinjin* of the practitioner, for the believing subject. Soga develops his ideas about the role of Dharmākara in Shin soteriology, contextualizing them within the doctrinal system laid out by Shinran in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, as well as in the broader realm of Buddhist thought. Over time, Soga comes to argue that Dharmākara is not just a symbol for the faith of the Shin practitioner, but also a symbol of the *ālayavijñāna*, the most fundamental level of consciousness as discussed by the Consciousness Only school of Buddhist philosophy. The image of Dharmākara Bodhisattva proved to be a veritable treasury for Soga and the rest of his work reflects his statement above that "Everything related to the faith and the doctrine of Shin Buddhism is contained within this one thing—the advent of Dharmākara."

The problem of doctrinal modernization posed by the introduction of Western modes of thought was also answered simply in the image of Dharmākara and his practice. In closing, let me conclude with one statement of Soga's that seems to sum up his position on this issue.

The description of Dharmākara's selection of his vows and adornment of his Buddha land in the *Larger Sūtra* is presented exactly in the form of a single great myth. We should not listen to it as though it were a simple myth. Through these solemn, symbolic words of the sūtra, we must get in touch with the religious spirit that is expressed there.²¹

By treating the character of Dharmākara as a symbolic expression of the deepest aspiration of sentient beings, their religious spirit, Soga brought Shinran's ideas about the relationship between the mind of the vow and the mind of faith alive for a modern audience.

²¹ SRS: v. 4, 195.

Abbreviations

- T Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭, eds. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issai-kyō Kankōkai, 1924-1932.
- SRS *Soga Ryōjin senshū* 曽我量深選集. 12 vols. Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 2009. (Orig. pub. Tokyo: Yayoi Shobō, 1972.)

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The Objectification of Faith and Rational Choice: The Role of Sacred Images in Mongolian Buddhist Folk Religion

ÁGNES BIRTALAN

This article is on the definition of Buddhist¹ folk religion and the aspects of it that are connected to faith and rational choice. I will analyze ways of sacred communication found in historical sources and research results from my fieldwork among Mongolian ethnic groups using a philological approach and rational choice theory that has been adapted for religions.²

Mongolian Buddhist Folk Religion:³ Sources, Origin and Characteristics

Beyond the walls of monasteries, there exists folk religion, a considerably different religious practice. Folk religion is carried out parallel to practices based on scriptural traditions, called “official religion.” Folk religious practice is an essential part of all major world religions, including Buddhism.

Defining Buddhism as a religion is controversial⁴ primarily because it is difficult to establish the existence and extent of aspects that would make it such. While I cannot go into these issues in detail, I would like to begin this article by offering some remarks on the religious nature of Northern (Vajrayāna stream) of Buddhism that spread amongst nomadic people in Tibet, Central and Inner Asia, as well as some parts of Southern Siberia. It successfully did

¹ I use the term *Buddhicized* to refer to the process of the formation of any phenomena in Mongolian folk religion, and *Buddhist* folk religion to refer to the religion itself.

² Cf. e.g. Iannaccone 1997, Bankston 2003.

³ The author’s research concerning the contemporary folk religion is supported by the Hungarian Scientific Fund (OTKA 100613). For a more comprehensive discussion of folk religion see Birtalan (forthcoming).

⁴ See Porció 2012.

so due to its receptive character,⁵ in other words, its ability to incorporate local religious phenomena. This resulted in three important developments:

- The creation of a new apocryphal text tradition. Indigenous texts that had been primarily transmitted orally were written down using a Buddhist structural framework and terminology.⁶
- The integration of originally unknown sacred objects into local religious practice.⁷
- The incorporation of spirits and deities from local pantheons into Northern Buddhism, and vice versa.⁸

This mutual process between the Buddhist and local religious practices allowed Buddhism to become a religion that was compatible with the world view, state ideology and so forth of the converted population.

Consequently, as Buddhism spread northwards into the territories where Mongols live, it underwent a considerable transformation. As more and more elements from local religions and belief systems were adopted, Buddhism became a religion that could be practiced at all levels of society – from the ruling elite (i. e. in the form a state religion),⁹ through the monastic practice (i. e. maintaining Buddhist philosophy and offering religious services in parallel with),¹⁰ to its everyday and festive manifestations among the large lower groups of society; and this later aspect of Buddhism is the Buddhist folk religious practice. At this level of Mongolian society, i. e. among the nomadic shepherds (shepherd-warriors) the original Buddhist philosophical teachings e. g. doctrine of the Four Noble Truths (Skr. *catvāri āryasatyāni*, Mong. *qutuytu dörben iinen*), etc. are less relevant. The folk comprehension of the nomads was less or not concerned with the original philosophical thoughts of Buddhism, instead they were merely concerned with worshipping deities (and deified spirits) believed to be influential in their everyday activities via the sending of blessings for the individual or his/her family and community, so as to avert bad luck or misfortunes such as personal loss etc. In addition to the material self-interest which underpins these practices, this social group was

⁵ See Heissig 1953.

⁶ E.g., Heissig 1966.

⁷ An exemplary comprehensive survey of the world of objects in the Chinese material culture related to Buddhism can be found in Kieschnick 2003.

⁸ On the syncretic pantheon, see Birtalan 2013a, 2013b.

⁹ On the problem of convergence of pre-Buddhist and Buddhist components of the state ideology in the imperial period, cf. Kollmar-Paulenz 2002b.

¹⁰ One of the first detailed surveys of the phenomenon: Pozdneev 1887.

also concerned with the otherworldly matters; namely seeking a proper rebirth in the human world or in one of the Buddhist paradises called Diwājin¹¹ – as a desired realm for a fitting reincarnation.¹² These are the major religious involvements this social group is concerned with and are factors which motivate them to visit the monasteries and invest material goods and spiritual matter (as praying to deities and organising events for the deities' "amusement", as ritual games, competitions) into this relationship (cf. below). The above described religious dimensions of Buddhism form the context of the Mongolian Buddhist folk religion that is practiced among the Mongols living in various territories of Inner-Asia, Siberia and also in Europe.



*Illustration 1. Map showing the current spread of Mongolian ethnicities
(on the basis of Dörrbecker, Maximilian)*

In this article, I will also briefly describe the main characteristics of the Mongolian Buddhist folk religion based on Mongolian and foreign sources from the 13th century onwards, such as fragments from chronicles, travelogues, envoy's accounts, and sacred written and oral texts,¹³ as well as on my fieldwork experience among Mongolian-speaking ethnic groups since the late 1980s.¹⁴

¹¹ The Mong. Diwājing, Khalkha Dewājin/Diwājin from Tib. Bde-ba-can, cf. Skt. Sukhāvatī “the Land of Bliss; Western Paradise of Amitābha” is the most widespread term in the folk comprehension from the Buddhist paradises.

¹² On this comprehension, cf. Kollmar-Paulenz, 1994 and Schwieger 1978.

¹³ Cf. Roux 1984, Sagaster 2007.

¹⁴ See Birtalan 2010.

Below I have listed dimensions of the Buddhist folk religion that come from pre-Buddhist religious views and belief systems.

- Very close mutual coexistence with economic, social and cultural spheres.
- Non-institutionalized practices occasionally attended by religious specialists.
- The observance of taboo-based behavioral codes.
- *Rational choice*. People engage in exchanges with the supernatural by worshipping deities through sacrifices, offerings, and so on, and in return they receive benefits and are protected.
- The belief that deities are able to set in operation mutually advantageous interactions between the human world and the realm of the supernatural.

Below, I have listed dimensions of the Buddhist folk religion related to Buddhism. They were new, syncretic phenomena that arose due to the influence of Buddhism, complementing pre-existing elements.

- New deities and new attributes attached to pre-existing spirits appear. The process of “conversion” of some members of the spirit realm begins.
- Transformation of the original oral tradition, the emergence of written forms of ritual texts that incorporated new terminology, new deity names, and mythological notions, and the emergence of new ritual genres written either in Mongolian or Tibetan, the sacred language of Mongolian Buddhism.
- The adaptation of new sacred objects, such as ritual paraphernalia, that are similar to ones used in monasteries.
- Mediation by new types of religious specialists for specific spheres of life. For example, monastery-based or itinerant monks have been invited to conduct ceremonies, primarily for *rites de passages* in human life.

In another study, I have discussed in detail all of the above aspects.¹⁵ Here, I will explicate only some of these components: 1) syncretism between Buddhism and native religious belief systems, 2) rational choice in the form of trading with the supernatural, which comes from pre-Buddhist structures, and 3) faith and behavioral regulations. I will especially focus on their connection with faith in Buddhism.¹⁶

¹⁵ Birtalan (forthcoming).

¹⁶ For a treatment of the topic of faith in Buddhism, see Gómez 2003.

The syncretic character of Mongolian folk religion is emphasized in academic literature.¹⁷ This syncretism is the result of a unique synthesis¹⁸ of a plethora of religious phenomena that originate from different religions and belief systems. This synthesis plays a decisive role in the formation of folk variants of Buddhism.

There are a variety of sources that offer information on Mongols' pre-Buddhist religious views, its mythological background,¹⁹ and the activity of religious specialists. There are also some sporadic data on types of sacred texts.²⁰ The so-called "second Buddhist conversion" of the Mongols in the 16th century is considerably better documented than the first conversion in the 13th century,²¹ and the sources from this period reflect clearly key elements of the strategy of Buddhist missionaries.²² With them, we can see the main features adopted from pre-Buddhist religious systems and integrated into the emerging folk religious practice, which was shaped by two factors:

1. The lay and ecclesiastical ruling elite had to increase the number of Buddhist believers in order to develop a strong and wide social base for the conversion of the people.
2. The religious needs of the soon to be converted masses had to be met within the new Buddhist framework.

Consequently, although the Buddhist missionaries supervised the process, much of the new framework was dictated by the socio-cultural needs of believers. Due to the conflicting nature of these two factors, Mongolian Buddhist folk religion took shape gradually. However, one of the decisive features of the new system, the rational choice dimension, was retained from the pre-Buddhist religious and belief systems. The native pantheon of the Mongols (as well as the nomadic population in Inner Asia) consists of various spirits and deities mostly with ambivalent natures:²³ they support believers if they have faith and conduct themselves properly. While the interaction between people and supernatural forces is regulated by a complex network of taboos and

¹⁷ Heissig 1966, 1980 *passim*.

¹⁸ On the process of religious synthesis, see Kósa 2001.

¹⁹ Birtalan 2001 *passim*.

²⁰ This data can be found in Turfan-fragments. See Taube and Cerensodnom 1993.

²¹ Sagaster 2007.

²² Heissig 1953, 1980; Sagaster 2007.

²³ On the Inner Asian precursors to the Mongolian phenomena, see Roux 1984.

behavioral prescriptions,²⁴ it is based on a very reasonable trading-based idea: if the believer and his/her community act properly, offer the necessary material and spiritual goods to the spirit realm, and do not break any taboos, the spirits will bestow wealth on the believer, provide blessings, and prevent misfortune. This structure of the pre-Buddhist system was combined with new elements that reflected the new needs of Buddhism that was the state religion of the ruling elite.

Objectification of Faith and Rational Choice in Mongolian Buddhist Folk Religion: A Case Study

Below, I attempt to analyze the role of faith in Mongolian folk religion using the frame of rational choice theory. After introducing and clarifying the main components of my topic, I will turn to some examples of faith and rational choice in the practices of the Mongolian Buddhist folk religion.

Though faith in the Mongolian Buddhist folk religion originates in the local tradition, its terminology can be traced primarily back to Buddhist scriptures translated from a variety of Buddhist sacred languages into Mongolian. The Buddhist notion of *śraddhā* (*süzük* in Uygur and *dam-pa* in Tibetan) has several equivalents in written Mongolian.²⁵ The translation projects during the 13th/14th and 16th/18th centuries used pre-existing Mongolian expressions and also early loan words.²⁶ Terms related to faith in the folk religion are: Mong. (Written Mongolian) *bisirel*, Khalkha (official language of the Republic of Mongolia) *bišrel* “faith, belief, trust, reverence, respect, worship,” Mong. *bi-sire-*, Khalkha *bišre-* “to believe in, to revere, to worship, to adore, to admire, to respect”; Mong. *süsiig* (from Uygur *süzük*), Khalkha *süseg*, *sijig* “religious worship, faith, belief, piety, reverence,” Mong. *süsiigle-*, Khalkha *süsegle-* “to believe, to have faith, to revere, to worship”; further lexemes: Mong. *nayidaburi*, *nayida-*, *itegel*, *itge-*, Khalkha *naidwar*, *naida-*, *itgel*, *itge-* “id.”

²⁴ There are many corpuses of contemporary Mongolian taboos and behavioural prescriptions (e.g. Nyambü and Nacagdorj 1993), studies on taboos of particular ethnic groups (e.g. Birtalan 1996) and in particular activities (e.g. Hamayon 1971), and on particular taboo text corpuses (e.g. Sárközi 1995b). However, there is no comprehensive study on the behavioural prescriptions of the Mongols.

²⁵ In the aforementioned detailed study on folk religion (Birtalan forthcoming), I discuss this vocabulary in detail from a philological viewpoint. A helpful methodological kit for understanding the semantics of “faith” is offered in the comprehensive study on the terminology of “belief” and “faith” in contemporary English: Frank et al 1980.

²⁶ This survey is based for example, the Mongolian translation of the *Subhāṣitaratnamīḍhi* (see Kara 2009) and later the terminological dictionary of *Mahāvyutpatti* (see Sárközi 1995a).

Furthermore, I will provide an overview of how believers' faith (the key element in the transformation of Buddhism into a "mass religion") appears in the context of local (native) folk religious practice. When components of the pre-Buddhist religious systems connected to faith were integrated into Buddhism, they externally changed e.g. the places of reverence and of sacred communication, such as altars at home²⁷ and in natural settings (the latter are called *owō-s* / Mong. *oboy-a*).²⁸ The majority of local spirits who had been previously worshipped gradually disappeared from the altars or were "converted," in other words, accepted into Buddhism. In the process, they changed their nature, becoming strongly Buddhist.²⁹

After Buddhist deities appeared on home altars and *owō-s*, the nature of communication with the sacred changed (see below) as well. In the majority of cases deities took anthropomorphic (sometimes anthropo-zoomorphic) forms and were usually referred to using Mongolized forms of their Sanskrit, Tibetan or even Chinese names, even though they had been translated into Mongolian in the Buddhist scriptures.³⁰ As European envoys sent to the Great Mongolian Empire reported, only some of the idols of veneration took anthropomorphic forms, while others were represented by symbols and seen as abstract phenomena. In the 13th century, Plano Carpini described Mongolian home altars as follows:

The Tatars believe in one God whom they think is the creator of all things visible and invisible, and they believe he gives rewards and punishments in this world. Even so, they do not worship him with praises or ritual. Nevertheless they do have idols of felt made in the image of men and they place these on both sides of the doorway of a tent and underneath it they put a thing of felt made in the shape of an udder and they believe that these protect their flocks and are responsible for milk and offspring. In fact the Tatars make other idols of silk rags and honor these greatly.³¹

²⁷ On the current morphology of the home altar and places of veneration at home, cf. Empson 2011.

²⁸ On the transformation of the *owō*-worship, see Birtalan 1998.

²⁹ Heissig 1953, *passim*

³⁰ As part of the project on the objects in the Hans Leder Collections of European Museums (led by the Maria-Katharina Lang, Austrian Academy of Sciences), Béla Kelényi, Krisztina Teleki, Maria-Katharina Lang, Ákos Avar, and I prepared a concordance of the names of deities in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Mongolian when available. The results will be released on the project website: *Mongolian Ethnographica of the Austrian Collector Hans Leder at Museums across Europe*.

³¹ Source: Friar Giovanni Di Plano Carpini 1996: 42. Latin text can be found on the website "The Long and Wonderful Voyage of Frier Iohn de Plano Carpini."

Later 19th and 20th century records on Mongolian shamanism confirm this observation: supernatural forces and spirits did not necessarily have any representations and were not always seen as human-like beings.³² The advent of Buddhism changed this, with clearly anthropomorphic deities such as the historical Buddha, bodhisattvas, goddesses, dharma protectors, and Buddhist local protectors taking their place. While Mongolian Buddhist monasteries definitely had their own main deities of veneration, unfortunately due to a shortage of sufficient sources it cannot be determined with certainty what kind of images appeared on the altars of the shepherds that comprised lower social classes. However, the process by which images were accepted and changed can be reconstructed to some extent.³³ In folk religions, the main supernatural powers that are necessary for a believer are an (almighty) protector and numerous beings with specialized functions³⁴ (cf. the saints in Christianity). Below I have listed the main types of Buddhist deities that have been adopted to fulfill these needs and are now primarily venerated in an objectified form³⁵ on altars. I have also summarized some main points regarding the transformation and morphology of images at the main place of individual veneration, the home altar.

I. The following can be seen in Mongolian texts devoted to various deities (prayers, eulogies, invocations, etc.) that appeared after the advent of Buddhism (in the 13th century and again in the 17th century).³⁶

- The historical Buddha – appears as the almighty supreme deity and was probably seen as the abstract representation of the sky [god].³⁷ (In my experience in the field, I rarely saw the historical Buddha in home altars.³⁸)

³² E.g., the morphology of *ongons* (Birtalan et al 2004) and the morphology of the Mongolian spirit pantheon (Birtalan 2001, 2006).

³³ For similar trends see Tambiah 1984.

³⁴ Regarding this process in general, see Williams 2008.

³⁵ I would like to express my gratitude to Vilmos Voigt, who offered useful advice concerning the objectification of sacred phenomena and let me read his manuscript on the topic (Voigt 2013).

³⁶ This list is based on the Turfan-corpus (Taube and Cerensodnom 1993) and a considerably later but larger corpus of 17th century texts written on birch bark (Chiodo 2000, 2009).

³⁷ For details, see Birtalan 2001: 956.

³⁸ Here and below, data recorded during my field research (1991–2000) and my fellows' fieldwork (2000–) are presented in brackets.

- Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva – while this bodhisattva has several appellations in the Mongolian languages,³⁹ he is mainly referred with the spoken Mongolian form of his Tibetan name: Jānraiseg (Tib. Spyān-ras-gzigs) in a number of texts.⁴⁰ (He still often appears on home altars.)
- Goddess Tārā – the Mongolian *eke* (“mother”) is sometimes added to her name and she is called *Dara eke* (Khalkha *Dar’ex*, cf. Tib. *Sgrö-ma*). She is venerated as the universal female principle.⁴¹ (She still often appears in home altars.)
- *Dharmapālas*, or protectors of the Buddhist teachings. For example, there is Mahākāla, a supreme guardian who protects individuals from evil influences and harm.⁴² (He still often appears in home altars.)
- Buddhicized local protector deities of mountains, passes, rivers, etc.⁴³ (Still appear in altars) and locally respected important spirits.⁴⁴ (Still important today.)
- Buddhist holy books in Mongolian or Tibetan. (Still widely used.)
- Objects of offerings such as candles, small prayer wheels, incense burners, and small containers for offering food.

II. Below I have listed developments in home “altars” and “pseudo-altars” that came about during the socialist era (1930s to 1990s).⁴⁵

- A mirror is placed in the most honored place in people’s dwellings (yurt or flat) to form the background for images of veneration.
- Family photos. This can be seen as a new type of ancestor worship.
- Photos of political leaders, mainly those who helped establish the Mongolian socialist state, as Sükhbaatar (Khalkha Süxbātar) or local revolutionary heroes, as Khatanbaatar, Ard Ayush (Khalkha Xatanbātar, Ard Ayūš) appeared in the “altars.” In addition, images of new types of heroes also appeared in place of supernatural beings, such as photos of famous wrestlers.⁴⁶

³⁹ See *Mongolian Ethnographica of the Austrian Collector Hans Leder at Museums across Europe*.

⁴⁰ For details, see Kollmar-Paulenz 2002a: 1224–1226.

⁴¹ For details, see Birtalan 2001: 967 and Kollmar-Paulenz 2002a: 1186–1188.

⁴² For details, see Kollmar-Paulenz 2002a: 1208–1209.

⁴³ For details, see Birtalan 2001: 949, 2013a.

⁴⁴ For details, see Birtalan 2013a, 2013b.

⁴⁵ Birtalan 2003, Iván 2004 and photo documentations of travellers and specialists who worked in Mongolia during this period (some are available in the archive of the Hungarian-Mongolian Joint Expedition).

⁴⁶ Birtalan 2003: 17.

- Objects important for the family such as various kinds of souvenirs from the capital city (Ulaanbaatar) and from abroad (Soviet Union and other countries). They serve to preserve memories of family events.

III. Below I have listed developments in home altars that took place after the political changes in the country (1990s onwards).⁴⁷

- In the first years after the political changes (during the euphoria of the religious revival), various Buddhist images reappeared on altars, which people chose based on their availability or the advice of Buddhist monks.
- Images and books – that were kept secretly during the oppressive policy of the socialist regime – were put on the honored place of the dwelling (altar).
- Portraits of the Dalai Lama appeared on many home altars, replacing photos of the political leaders respected earlier.
- Photos of family can still be found on the altars as a sort of ancestor worship (see above).⁴⁸
- Offered objects, such as candles, incense burners, and containers for food offerings compose part of the altars.
- A great variety of objects important for the family (radio, sugar bowl, toys, etc.) can also be found.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to discuss the connection between faith and objects of veneration.

First, faith was the key factor that brought Buddhicized folk religious practice into existence. Notions found in the indigenous religion, such as mighty protecting forces embodied in various spirits and deities, were transformed into Buddhist supernatural beings. Their worship includes daily and festive offerings, and people keep in continuous communication with them through images and other related objects (books, blue *khadag*-scarves, prayer wheel, candles, etc.). The main sphere of worship and sacred communication is the home altar (and, although less frequently, altars in natural places called *owō-s*), which is connected to an entire network of behavioral taboos and prohibitions.

⁴⁷ Based on the fieldwork of the author and her fellows (see above).

⁴⁸ Empson 2011: 331–364.

Second, faith in Northern Buddhism – also a key element of the Mongolian Buddhist folk religious practice – is characterized by a psychological motivation on the part of believers with regard to the phenomena venerated by them. This attitude also contains the principle of rational choice. This rational factor of the aboriginal religion became a decisive element in the new, Buddhicized folk religious practice. Faith is also motivated by the belief in the idea that offerings and good conduct will be rewarded. Again, the interaction between humans and deities is mutual, continuous, and requires a balance between offered goods (food, incense, and light/fire) and various actions (observing taboos and prescriptions, and organizing events such as ritual games in order to amuse the deities). In exchange, believers are ensured well-being and good luck.

Third, believers' attitudes towards the abstract and supernatural forces are embodied in the particular groups of animistic and shamanistic objects they venerate. The latter Buddhist sacred objects act as substitutions for the former objects. All the psychological aspects of an individual's faith and their economic expectations are embodied in the objects. Even just possessing these images and related objects can manipulate spirits. Worship and other aspects of veneration are related to the aforementioned human expectations regarding the supernatural realm, and also shape Buddhist faith in the idea that one will obtain a favorable rebirth through proper behavior in accordance with the law of karma. However, they are not connected to faith in enlightenment, which is irrelevant for the majority of believers (although certainly not including the Buddhist monks).

In conclusion, the primary motivation of people's faith is to attain worldly benefits, receive support in everyday problems, and achieve a favorable rebirth, and these motivations are embodied in sacred images regarded as mighty protectors.

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Illustration 1.

This is a home altar characteristic of the post-socialist period in a yurt. The painted chest serves as the base for important family paraphernalia. The mirror forms the background for a Buddha statuette adorned with Buddhist prayer beads. On the left side, there is a drawing of an “ancestor” (the father of the yurt owner honored with state decorations). In the picture-frame, there is a *cakli* depicting Tsong-kha-pa (?) and a banknote with portrait of Sükhbaatar (the leader of the 1921 revolution). A book (in this case a contemporary one, not a manuscript or block print) and an incense-burner are present. (photo: Zsuzsa Majer 2006)



Illustration 2.

Home altar of a shepherd family living in the central part of Mongolia. It contains images of a White and Green Tārās, a local protector deity, and Mahākāla on *caklis*. A blue *khadag*-scarf surrounds the wooden picture box. Paraphernalia for offerings include a butter candle, an incense burner, a prayer mill, a cup with cookies, and a small bottle of brandy. The background of the altar is a mirror. The other objects are a clock, some food, and what are probably souvenirs.

(Archive of the Expedition 2012, photo: Albert Kónya)

Some Reflections on the Use of the Concepts of “Religious Consciousness,” “Faith,” and “Religion” in the Cultural Context of Japan

MELINDA PAPP

In this paper I will consider the use of terms such as “faith,” “religion,” as well as the word religion’s various derivations: “religious feelings,” religious consciousness,” and “religious behavior.” I find this terminological question important, as it is the use of these terms that often leads scholarly discussions on religion-related issues in Japan. The lack of definitions and contextualization of these terms represent an enduring theoretical and methodological obstacle to the understanding of the religious world of the Japanese. Although the problem has been addressed by generations of both Japanese and foreign scholars of Japan, many academic writings continue to uncritically use these terms. I would like to emphasize that my aim is not to present reflections regarding any concrete and specific tradition. Rather, I wish to make some observations regarding the criteria for assessing so-called religious consciousness in Japan today, drawing mainly from current debates in the fields of sociology and anthropology of religion.

“Faith,” “religion,” and “religious” are subjects or concepts difficult to define and interpret. Scholars and disciplines use different definitions depending on their angle of observation and analysis. Since their definition is subjective and unstable, the study of these concepts is a problematic issue. Moreover, their definitions not only depend on the perspective of the given scholarly discipline but also are culturally bound. Every culture has its own perception of faith, religious feelings, and religious consciousness. What is considered religious in a Western cultural context is not necessarily considered religious in the Japanese context and vice versa. Japanese scholars themselves struggle to define what religion exactly means for the Japanese people and in what manner religious consciousness can be assessed in contemporary Japan.

In a famous and heated dispute among two scholars of religion and culture in Japan, Timothy Fitzgerald and Ian Reader, Fitzgerald points to the vague-

ness that one can often find in the use and interpretation of terminology, such as religious, ritual, secular (Fitzgerald 2003, 2004) (Reader 2004a, 2004b). He argues that authors use these terms without providing further clarification, relying mostly on conventions. In the literature on Japan one can find plenty of cases in which the use of these terms is highly problematic. Fitzgerald gives examples of ceremonial occasions, for instance weddings. They are described in anthropological works as having a “religious” and a “secular” part, the former referring clearly to the Shinto rite performed in a Shinto shrine, and the latter referring to the subsequent reception or banquet.¹ The question Fitzgerald asks is: on what basis do the authors assume that the Shinto part of the ceremony is “religious,” and the rest is “secular”? Is it only because, in general, Shinto is regarded to be a religion where gods are “present”? And why are the other parts of the ceremony called “secular” (Fitzgerald 2003)? Fitzgerald also brings into the discussion other theoreticians of ritual, primarily Victor Turner, who uses the terms secular and sacred but at the same time underlines that all statuses of the ritual process can have sacred components (Turner 1969:81-82 in Fitzgerald 2003). Consequently, it can be affirmed that it is not possible to view these categories as absolute ones. Moreover, it becomes questionable whether the use of the “religious-secular dichotomy” is at all useful in this kind of analysis. Fitzgerald himself argues that this dichotomy does not apply to the Japanese context.

Here we face a terminological as well as interpretative problem that has to do with the history of the applied terms. As we all know, the term “religion” is a relatively new concept to Japan.² It is a term of western origin and as such it entered the Japanese language during the Meiji period, in the 19th century, a time during which Japan adopted, or had to interpret and translate, numerous western terms, categories and ideas. Similarly, since the dichotomy of religion-secular and the term “religion” were imported into Japan, they are not rooted in the Japanese way of thinking.

The word that was chosen to translate “religion” into the Japanese language at the time of its adoption was “*shūkyō*” (宗教), which was thought to cover more closely the concept that was widely used in Europe during the 19th century within Christian theology. It is easily overlooked by analysts of Japanese culture that the interpretation of “religion” as a “belief-framed entity”

¹ For works on contemporary wedding practices in Japan and on the use of the distinction between their “secular” and “sacred” parts, see in particular Smith 1994 and Edwards 1989.

² In Europe, too, it started to be used in a way similar to today only in the 16th and 17th centuries.

(Reader 1991:13 in Fitzgerald 2003), which includes a presumed commitment to a religious institution or order, is a foreign concept to Japanese thought and views. Also, as it has been noted, in pre-war Japan the division between the concepts of “religion” and “culture” was not clear and the scope of the two often overlapped.³ In brief, every time that “religion” is used as an analytical category or as a subject of analysis in the case of Japan, attention should be paid to the results that this kind of analysis might produce.

The wide usage of the term religion, *shūkyō*, in Japanese texts often brings more confusion than clarification also because there is an important difference between the usage of this term in scholarly and in popular texts (Baffelli, Reader and Staemmler 2011: 9). A closely related problem is the measurement or assessment of the religious consciousness, or religiosity, of the Japanese people. Numerous surveys conducted in the postwar decades illustrate this problem. Most surveys in Japan are made following models used in western countries, and thus include questions about belief, faith, religious feelings, and commitment to religious groups and institutions. These surveys usually produce data that is hard to interpret. The Japanese appear in these surveys as people claiming to have no particular faith – at least in western sense of the word.⁴ Moreover, an overwhelming number of Japanese respondents claim to not commit to any particular religious group. On the other hand, when asking about their participation in rites and activities that are deemed related to religion in some way, the Japanese usually score high, significantly higher than the Westerners. Rituals or observances, such as the New Year’s shrine visit, Obon, Yakudoshi, and the purchase of amulets sold in Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, are all frequently carried out in Japan. This seems to contradict the assumption that the Japanese are “non-religious” people.

Numerous authors have made attempts to explain this phenomenon. It is argued, among others, that Shinto is first and foremost a ritual tradition, where practice is valued more than theory, faith, or doctrine.⁵ Others have argued that the Meiji politics deprived Shinto of its religious character, since Shinto was used for political aims and transformed into the ethical and moral code of the Japanese nation (Kimura 2001). For this reason, the Japanese are uncomfortable considering Shinto as a subject of belief/faith. Similarly, Kimura argues that Buddhism also underwent a change during the Edo period when it

³ See also Baffelli, Reader and Staemmler 2011.

⁴ It has been also argued that the Japanese have the tendency to have feelings of unease and distrust about religion, due to complex historical and cultural factors (Tamura and Tamura 2011: 174).

⁵ See, for example, the theories expounded in Reader and Tanabe 1998.

become intertwined with the ideology of the *ie* (家), the Japanese family system, and started to be viewed first as a religion of the family. In brief, Kimura concludes that both Jinja Shinto and Buddhism suffered the intervention of the state, became formalized and ideologized by political authorities, and as a result Japanese people ceased to see these two religions as subjects of faith (*shinkō* 信仰) (Kimura 2001: 148-150).

On the other hand, depending on the formulation of the questions in the surveys, the Japanese choose “not believing” (信仰していない) but at the same declare that they have a “family religion” (家の宗教はある).⁶ By “family religion” they mean - it is assumed - Buddhism, which is defined as such due to the historical processes that took place during the Tokugawa period. In this case, family religion is not necessarily seen as subject of faith but rather as family tradition. The surveys issued by various organizations, such as major daily newspapers (Yomiuri, Asahi), government agencies, universities and other research groups, formulate questions concerning issues connected to religion in many different ways. Apart from those mentioned above, we find questions such as:

Do you think it is important to have religious mind? (宗教的な心というものを大切だと思いますか)

Is there any religion in which you believe? (あなたは、信仰している宗教はありますか)

Do you believe in something / Are you a believer? (何か信仰とか信心とかをもっているか)

Questions like these can be interpreted in many different ways by the respondent and consequently they produce ambiguous and subjective answers.

In the past 10-15 years, the central Association of Shinto Shrines, Jinja Honchō, and Kokugakuin University in Tokyo have carried out extensive surveys on the changes of the religiosity of the Japanese (Jinja Honchō 2007, 2008, Kokugakuin 2006). The main aim of these surveys was to understand the nature of modern Japanese people’s religiosity and to find the rates of participation and modes of involvement of them in religious activities. The authors of the Kokugakuin survey were aware of the difficulties that the use of indicators of religiosity adopted from foreign surveys present within the Japanese context. Claims to belong to a given religious group, which in western countries, for example, can be an indicator of religious commitment, is not typical in the Japanese case. The authors thus defined the religiosity of

⁶ 特に信仰していないが、家の宗教はある。

the Japanese as “a set of beliefs of religious character that, rather than having to do with the individual’s consciously-chosen religion, they come to be affirmed within the sphere of everyday life” (Kokugakuin 2006: 20). For this reason, the Kokugakuin scholars designed questions to examine the participation of the Japanese in religious activities (rituals, festivities, purchase of amulets, etc.) and investigate value judgments concerning the sphere of religion. The problem with this approach is that participation in practices such as shrine visits, the purchase of amulets, and shrine and temple festivals is not always clearly associated with religion by Japanese people. They are often seen as cultural practices belonging to cultural traditions rather than related to a given religion. Moreover, the Kokugakuin surveys still include questions addressing faith among the principal questions of the survey. The decision to include such questions is justified by the authors by pointing to the important place that such questions occupy in religion-related surveys worldwide. However, the results of the two opinion polls show a very low rate of affirmative responses to the questions about faith. In both surveys, less than 30% of respondents claim to have a faith. The Kokugakuin scholars compared the data with surveys from the immediate post-war years, carried out more or less regularly by the NHK⁷ Research Institute, and newspaper companies such as the Jiji Press, the Asahi Shinbun, and the Yomiuri Shinbun. According to the results of these surveys, until the 1950s the rate of those who answered affirmatively to the question “Do you believe in something / Are you a believer?”⁸ wavered between 60% and 78% (Kokugakuin 2006: 9). Since then the rate of faith has decreased and the most recent results show that the numbers are sinking below thirty percent.

However, the interpretation of this data presents numerous problems. First of all, postwar surveys typically do not specify the type of “faith” respondents claimed to have. The NHK surveys between 1952 and 1979, for example, contain a series of questions regarding the religiosity of the Japanese (NHK Hōsō Seron 1982). These include questions such as:

“Do you think religion is important in your life?”⁹ “Do you believe in gods or Buddha?”¹⁰ “Do you believe in the other world?”¹¹ “Do you have a faith or do you believe in something?”¹²

⁷ NHK: Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

⁸ 何か信仰とか信心とかをもっているか。

⁹ 日常生活の上で宗教は必要か、必要でないか。

¹⁰ 神や仏を信じるか。

¹¹ あの世を信じるか。

¹² 何か信仰とか信心とかをもっているか。

The rate of affirmative answers to the first rather general question on the importance of religion in everyday life clearly declined between 1952 and 1979. Nevertheless, questions on faith in Shinto gods and Buddhist deities, along with question on faith in the other world, do not follow the same trend. The rate of affirmative responses is quite constant and remained around 50% and 35%, respectively (ibid., 102-106). Even more surprising are the results of questions inquiring specifically about religious behavior, such as shrine or temple visits or the purchase of amulets.¹³ Data from 1973 and 1978 show an increase in the percent of people, from 20% to 30%, who turn to a religious institution (Shinto or Buddhist) for such practical benefits.

The problem of interpretation becomes even more acute when a series of other factors are considered. It is necessary to take into account that when answering questions about faith, respondents often refer to an affiliation based on household rather than to individual faith.¹⁴ In surveys, questions inquiring about individual religious attitudes are often formed as following: “Is there a religion in which you believe? Select from the following list: (...).” The three possible answers that surveys commonly provide are: Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity. For this type of question, usually the percent of people who select Buddhism is significantly higher than those who choose Shinto or other religions.¹⁵ The explanations offered regarding this phenomenon by researchers usually point to the historical evolution of the religions in question, discussed already above. In case of Buddhism, its history as the “religion of the family” (*ie no shūkyō* 家の宗教) means that respondents, when answering these questions, do normally not refer to an individual kind of religious affiliation or consciousness. Also in the case of Shinto it can be underlined that traditionally its focus was on the local community and the *ujigami* cult.¹⁶ However, with the decline of traditional lifestyles, this cult and the role of the tutelary deity in the life of the community gradually lost their legitimacy. When evaluating the results of the surveys, researchers thus need to take into account that the historical background of the concrete religious tradition can greatly influence the way questions are interpreted and answered by respondents.

¹³ This type of question was included in the questionnaire only after 1973.

¹⁴ On this theme, see also Ishii 2008.

¹⁵ In the 1950s, more than 50% selected Buddhism, and less than 10% selected Shinto (Ishii 2008: 22, Table 11). In 2004, it was 20% and 5% respectively (Kokugakuin 2006: 11, Table 2).

¹⁶ *Ujigami* 氏神, or patron / tutelary Shinto deity, is in the centre of Shinto folk tradition and local communities' religious cults.

Another important factor mentioned above relates to the issue of religious belief and participation in particular religious activities. The answers to this kind of question highlight the specificity of the Japanese religiosity, as well as its complexity. In order to overcome the highly problematic character of the concept of religious affiliation within the Japanese religious context, the authors of the Kokugakuin survey decided to add questions about specific religious behavior. More precisely, they included inquiries about the practice of customs and/or participation in events associated with religion. So, for example, respondents could choose among the following answers to the question about occasions when they visit the two principal religious institutions (shrines and temples):¹⁷

“daily,” “when happening to pass one,” “New Year’s prayer,” “critical ages (*yakuyoke*),” “Shichigosan,” “*obon*, *ohigan* and *omatsuri*,”¹⁸ “to make a request,” “never”

The New Year’s prayer (*hatsumōde* 初詣) was the most popular observance, with 70% of respondents claiming that they visit a shrine on this occasion, and 15% saying they visit a temple. The numbers are interesting in particular with regard to Shinto, considering the fact that, in the same survey, only 35% of respondents affirmed a belief in the existence of *kami* and around 5,6% of respondents claimed to have faith in Shinto (Kokugakuin 2006, 11, Table 2). The category that sees the second highest percent (30%) of shrine visitors is that of “*obon*, *ohigan* and *omatsuri*”. *Shichigosan* 七五三, a traditional children’s rite of passage celebrated at three, five and seven years of age, is the third most popular, with 25% of people responding affirmatively.¹⁹ The surveys (1999 and 2004) also included questions about traditional folk religious concerns, called by the authors *ki ni naru mono* (“things that matter”). Surprisingly, many people practiced precautions during years thought to be critical (so called *yakudoshi*

¹⁷ The question says, “When do you visit shrines or temples for worship? Mark those that apply:” (Kokugakuin 2006: 13, Figure 5).

¹⁸ *Obon* お盆 is a Buddhist festival during which Japanese families honor the spirits of their ancestors. *Ohigan* お彼岸 is the equinoctial observance, and *omatsuri* お祭り means shrine or temple festivals.

¹⁹ In case of temple visits, the occasion with the highest rate of observers was *obon* and *ohigan* (55%), followed by New Year’s (15%).

厄年).²⁰ Also, 44% of people stated that they avoid holding auspicious events on unfortunate days (*butsumetsu* 仏滅), and around 40% of respondents said they avoid planning a funeral on the days traditionally believed to be unlucky for this occasion (such as the *tomobiki* 友引|day).²¹

The reports of the Association of Shintō Shrines (Jinja Honchō) confirm the findings of the Kokugakuin research group (Jinja Honchō 2006, 2007). In 1996, 50% of respondents responded negatively to the question about faith. This number rose to 68% in 2006 (Jinja Honchō 2007). The number of persons who declared to “believe in Shintō” was extremely low (3-4%). Buddhism had the highest rate of believers, but on the other hand, this, too, saw a decline between 1996 and 2006 (from 38% in 1996 to 27% in 2006). The New Year’s visit emerges as the most observed practice, followed by the category that comprises three rituals of childhood: *shichigosan*, *meimeい* (name-giving ceremony) and *miyamairi* (first shrine visit of the baby). On the other hand, while most of the traditional observances declined in the period between 1996 and 2006, the only two observances that rose in their practice rates were the *seijinshiki* 成人式 (coming-of-age rite,²² from 12.7% in 1996 to 15.3% in 2006), and the above-mentioned category of childhood rites (from 52.2 to 53.1%).

²⁰ *Yakudoshi* 厄年 literally means “unfortunate years.” Belief linked to “unfortunate years” appears in the classic literature of the Heian period (for example, the *Genji Monogatari*). However, the ages believed to be unlucky have differed considerably depending on the historical period. Even today, there is no clear consensus over the ages, but usually it is thought that they are 25 and 42 for men, and 19 and 33 for women. It is believed that at these ages there is a high probability that the person will encounter difficulty in his/her life or become ill. In order to avoid this, the person can observe specific purification rituals (*yakuburai* 厄祓い) and pray for divine protection. The rituals, for which one can apply, are sometimes accompanied with trips to distant and famous shrines that are believed have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of prayers. The observance has become more popular in recent decades, and most religious institutions provide information on these ages visibly in displays for visitors.

²¹ *Taiān* and *butsumetsu* days are calculated using the traditional lunar calendar, in which each day in the six day week is defined as fortunate or unlucky for a given activity or event. This system is known also as *rokuyō* 六曜. *Butsumetsu* days are believed to be unlucky and they were normally avoided for holding auspicious events. On the contrary, *taian* (大安) days were thought to be fortunate and therefore preferred for auspicious events. The system became widely popular in the mid-Tokugawa era. In certain cases, it still influences considerably people’s selection of days for weddings and so on. This belief was also influenced by yin and yang philosophy, also called *On’yōdō* 陰陽道, in the early phase of its history. Today, many shrines indicate the *taian* and *butsumetsu* days in their calendars of festivities, however, they also encourage observers, at least in case of some rituals such as the *shichigosan*, to give priority to their own convenience when considering the date of the shrine visit, and only take into account lucky and unlucky days secondarily (on the modern pattern of *shichigosan*, see also Papp 2013).

²² The shrine visit was originally not seen as an element of the *seijinshiki*, which was introduced in 1946 as a formal municipality event. Today, all residents who have reached the age of maturity (twenty years) over the past year are invited to the ceremony. Recently, a growing number of persons decide to visit a shrine on the occasion.

From these figures at least two things can be concluded. One is that rites of passage such as childhood rituals and the coming of age rite enjoy a stable if not increasing popularity in contemporary Japan.²³ The second is that the shrine visit continues to be viewed by the Japanese as an integral element of the celebration of these rituals. The popularity of childhood rituals and other life-cycle rituals closely linked to family life is a result of social changes, the transformation Japanese people’s hierarchy of values in the past few decades, the decline in the number of children since the 1970s, and the privatization and greater valorization of family life (Papp 2013: 73–75).²⁴ The low birth rate that produces a high number of families with only one child has had the effect of directing family members’ attention entirely to this child. Another consequence of these developments is the increased importance of occasions celebrating family life. With the emergence of restricted kinship networks caused by the nuclearization of the Japanese family, a growing need for occasions to symbolically construct and reconfirm the unity and the harmony of the family has emerged.

Interestingly, together with the above-described phenomena, in the last few years the observance of rituals such as the *shichigosan*, together with the shrine worship that is part of it, has started to appear among the indicators of religiosity in related surveys and studies. The above-analyzed two surveys of the Kokugakuin research group are one such example. *Shichigosan* and other rites of passage as well as seasonal festivities, such as the New Year shrine visit, are utilized by researchers to elucidate and define the character of religious attitudes and the degree of religious commitment in contemporary Japan. The questions that comprise similar surveys speak to the prevalence of the view among the researchers that Japanese religiosity can be grasped from practice, i.e. the observance of rituals, rather than from feelings or from consciousness connected to faith. This conclusion is close to the theory developed by Reader and Tanabe, who argue that Japanese religiosity is practically oriented rather than based on dogmas and faith (Reader and Tanabe 1998: 257–260). The two authors argue that the concept of “this worldly benefits,” or *genze riyaku* 現世利益, has been always an inherent part of the Japanese religious world.²⁵ However, this theory still does not bring us closer to answering the question

²³ I discuss the social and historical background of the popularity of *shichigosan* in my doctoral thesis (Papp 2012a) and two other publications, Papp 2012b and 2013.

²⁴ See also a recent study by Yūko Taguchi on childhood rites of passage (Taguchi 2011).

²⁵ With regard to Buddhism, in a recent study Galen Amstutz argues that materialism and commerce have been part of Shin Buddhism at least since the early 18th century (Amstutz 2012).

of whether shrine visits or shrine rituals in the New Year or on *shichigosan* occur out of faith or simply out of custom/tradition. In the Japanese cultural context this is certainly not a problem that can be resolved in a simple way. Nelson notes with regard to this that shrine visits in Japan are multifunctional: they encompass worship in religious terms as well as recreation or sightseeing (Nelson 1996: 147, 5). Also Kenji Ishii argues that nowadays shrines and temples as a physical space are becoming spots for urbanites' entertainment and recreation (2000). While underlining the entertaining aspects of the religious institutions, the author also notes that the green realm surrounding major shrines and temples represents a symbolic sacred space in the eyes of the visitors. Apart from the fact that these green environments are today often the only peaceful spots in the busy metropolitan areas in Japan, the time spent here is experienced by visitors as one set apart. This lends a sacred dimension to the spaces which can complement or even entirely replace the sacredness that used to be provided solely by ritual action. Using the example of New Year's festivities, Ishii argues that contemporary urban Japanese "seek for a sacred area in which to pursue life's renewal" (Ishii 2000: 10). Indeed, the natural ambience and geographical setting of religious institutions figure among the criteria that can majorly influence visitors' perception or their evaluation of a concrete institution. The presence of a park or zoological garden in the vicinity of the shrine, or simply a central and easily accessible location can enhance its appeal in a significant way. Recent trends detected in observance patterns of the *shichigosan* ritual also show that families more and more prefer to combine entertainment with the fulfillment of spiritual and/or social needs (Papp 2013: 75-76).

Furthermore, with regard to the use of amulets and talismans in contemporary Japan, Reader and Tanabe note that their use occurs on an affective basis rather than a cognitive one (1998). The authors point out that by purchasing an amulet or by visiting a shrine people are not always asserting personal faith or religious affiliation, or at least not only doing so. Nelson explains the act of buying amulets and observing rituals in terms of the need of modern people to acquire insurance in an uncertain world (Nelson 1996: 41). Uncertainty has been, however, always part of the human life, although in the modern world the emphasis placed on the rational has diminished the space that was, in the past, allowed for the irrational. I would argue, however, that acts such as the observance of rituals, visits to religious institutions, or the purchase of amulets are practiced out of rational as well as of irrational motivations that normally complement one another. The rational motivations can include the desire to create a memorable occasion for the family during which its unity can be celebrated. The importance of this kind of occasion is often enhanced

by the taking of photos for creating memories. It can also involve entertainment elements such as the family picnic in the shrine or temple’s park, or even acts of lavish consumption (purchasing an expensive festive cloth, ordering a lavish banquet, etc.). The so-called irrational motivations can vary anywhere between the two poles of faith and feelings, such as nostalgia for tradition. Regardless of whether these feelings are related to cultural traditions or a specific family tradition, they can be experienced and lived out in shrines and temples that figure among the few places in the urban areas of Japan associated with history and cultural traditions. These places also have the power to vest the rituals observed on their premises with authenticity. Regarding the nature of faith, it can be difficult to assess its content. By appealing to Shinto and/or Buddhist deities, the need of the modern individual to rely on some kind of help and spiritual surveillance for his well-being or that of his beloved is acknowledged. Ritual in general and shrine (or temple) worship in particular, is an instrument to petition for this help. It is one that is traditionally regarded and perceived by most Japanese, more or less consciously, as sufficiently effective or at least acceptable.

It should also be taken into account that the quality of “sacredness” as well as the nature of “faith” can be constituted and created in multiple ways, depending not only on the socio-cultural and historical context of the given society, but also on the individual’s value orientation and needs (the latter has grown in importance in recent years). Individual actors may attribute very personalized meanings and significance to rituals and to single elements of observances. So for example, the photo of one’s child in the family album may bear an elevated symbolic meaning, or in other words, may reveal the sacred dimension of human life for someone, more than, for example, the purification rite celebrated by the Shinto priest, and vice versa. It can be said that the final aim of the modern individual when performing a shrine visit, a ritual, is to create meaningful occasions by combining diverse elements which have the potential to fulfill diverse needs.

The question arises, however, whether these acts, such as a shrine visit or the observance of a childhood ritual, are performed solely out of religious faith. Reader and Tanabe define the contemporary form of shrine and temple worship in Japan as a valid “spiritual care system” (Reader and Tanabe 1998: 259). Nelson underlines the capability of Japanese religious institutions to embrace change and to remain close to the needs of the modern individual (Nelson 1997: 704-5).²⁶ I would argue that while all these approaches have

²⁶ Nelson also sees this particular capability as the reason why “stagnation and decay” have been avoided by Japanese religious traditions (Nelson 1997: 704).

their place in the interpretation of the customs observed by modern Japanese, it must not be overlooked that they always play various roles in actors' lives and thus are pursued out of multiple motivations. In the contemporary Japanese cultural context, it seems that it is hardly useful and almost impossible to try to delineate in an exact way the significance and nature of religious faith. Moreover, to make a clear-cut distinction between categories such as the religious and secular might prove less useful analytically than is commonly thought. After all, from the actors' perspective, it is of little importance whether the ritual in question is religious or secular according to the conventional interpretative categories of religious studies or of a particular religious tradition. The effort to apply these categories can narrow the sphere of interpretation from which the meaning of various practices connected to religion can be understood.

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Buddhist Ancestor Worship at Home through the Sacred Place of the *Butsudan*

~ *Faith at Home* ~

MÓNIKA KISS

In the post war era,¹ an increase of inquiries into the concept of ancestor worship can be observed among Japanese and foreign scholars as well, who specialized in Japanese culture or religion.² The belief of ancestors, and the idea of worshipping them, can be viewed as a development of the incorporation of authentic – shintō – Japanese, and initially foreign – mostly Confucian and some Buddhist – thoughts, since in the original Buddhist teachings³ this subject did not exist. The absence of ancestors in these teachings can be somewhat reasonably explained with one of the most basic concept of Buddhism: karmic rebirth (Skt. *karma*, Jp. *inga* 因果 or *inga ōhō* 因果応報 – 'karmic retribution'). Taking this into consideration, there are two ways for us after we leave behind our worldly vessel: according to S’ākyamuni Buddha’s words, one is entering nirvāna (Jp. *nehan* or *nibbana* 涅槃), if, during our lifetime, enlightenment (Skt. *bodhi*, Jp. *satori* 悟り) was attained, when all attachments and desires of this worldly life, the endless cycles of death and rebirth (Skt. *samsāra*, Jp. *rinne* 輪廻) are extinguished; or, as later appears in Mahāyāna teachings, to be reborn in one of the six realms of Buddhism (Jp. *rokudō* 六道

¹ In Japan they refer to the period after the Second World War as the *sengo* 戦後, distinguishing this period from that of what happened before and during the war, giving a special emphasis that something different started in the country and its people.

² See Yanagita. 1946; Takeda 1957; Smith 1974.

³ The author referring here to the historical Buddha, S’ākyamuni’s (Jp. Shakamuni 釈迦牟尼 or shortly Shaka 釈迦) original teachings. For further reading See Budda no koto-ba ブッダのことば ; in Japanese in Nakamura 1958; and in English Gethin 2008.

or *rokushu* 六趣)⁴, continuing the life-journey (Skt. *gati*, Jp. *michi* 道), if one has failed to end the sufferings during their existence.

One essentially important question remains nonetheless. Do we need faith to attain enlightenment in Buddhism? Among the original traditions of Buddhist schools there are the ascetic practices, meditation practices and the practice of chanting a *sūtra*. Everyone who wanted to be enlightened and become a buddha needed to exercise at least one of the above mentioned practices. But in the 10th century the Pure Land Buddhist wandering priest, Kūya 空也 started preaching and offering a shorter and, moreover easier way to all people in all classes. He promoted that by practicing the *nembutsu* 念仏 (saying Amida Buddha's name) anyone can be reborn in the Western Pure Land (Jp. *Jōdo* 浄土) of Amida Buddha 阿弥陀如来. By making enlightenment so effortlessly reachable for everyone, it can be argued that a somewhat Christian-like idea of faith was also introduced. For one has to believe that by the power of chanting Namu Amida Butsu 南無阿弥陀仏 over and over again, and at the moment of their death, it will result in their entering Amida's Paradise. So the sometime lifelong practices and efforts of the Buddhist priests, the countless hours spent by understanding and finding the wisdom to get closer to the buddhas can be exchanged with a few words and faith in the idea of rebirth in the Pure Land. This line of thoughts may imply that the priests does not need faith but practice. It is not so, for someone has to believe he or she can find the Buddha-nature (Skt. *buddhadhātu*, Jp. *busshō* 仮性) inside themselves, they have to believe they can attain enlightenment and enter the *nirvāṇa*. It may seem that enlightenment is reached through practices, but faith is necessary to be able to believe that it can be attained.

The faith of the Buddhist priests and monks is one thing, for they choose a kind of life where it is apparent, but how about the ordinary people and their life? Is faith present in the Japanese homes? Pursuing religious life, it implicates the upholding of the main principles and practices of that particular religion. In Buddhism, not like in Christianity or Islamic religions, common people do not have strict rules and regulations about how to show their devout religiousness – like going to church on a given day, not drinking alcohol or eating specific food. Could it be, that maintaining a Buddhist house altar also

⁴ The six realms are represented in the wheel of cyclic existence (Skt. *bhavacakra*). These six paths are, as follows, the realm of animals (Skt. *tiryasyoni*, Jp. *chikushou* 畜生), hungry ghosts (Skt. *preta*, Jp. *gaki* 餓鬼), hell (Skt. *naraka*, Jp. *jigoku* 地獄), bellicose demons (Skt. *asura*, Jp. *ashura* 阿修羅), humans (Skt. *manusya*, Jp. *jin* 人), and heavenly beings (Skt. *deva*, Jp. *ten* 天). Being reborn either as a human, a deva, or an asura is considered a good life-journey, contrarily the other three are considered to be bad life-journeys.

implicates that someone is devout and have faith in the buddhas and ancestors?⁵ Having memorial services, making offerings in front of the altar can show the religious fervour of a person, but as always, it can also be a mere family tradition which Japanese people have strong inclination to uphold. In Japan the upbringing of children is stricter and more traditional still, comparing to, for example, Hungary, where currently the number of children who preserve traditional customs (such as the Easter traditions, or folk customs like embroidery or folk dance) is rapidly declining. Since the Japanese children, most of the times, have no saying in the continuation of traditions, in some cases it cannot be omitted that probably several *butsudan*-owners only uphold the tradition, without having any faith in either the buddhas and ancestors, or the rituals themselves.

There are some interesting arguments and questions that need answering on the subject of Japanese ancestor worship at home, the function of the *butsudan* and the meaning of sacred places. This study has two goals: one is to show how the *butsudan* became such an important part of ancestor worship at home, and, on the other hand, to answer whether we can look at it as a form of sacred space. It is not my intention to examine the rituals of ancestor worship in detail, but to prove that by having a special spiritual place in one's home there is a reason for them, and by having these rituals there, there are also grounds for the *butsudan* to be considered as a sacred place. In order to achieve this goal we first have to take a brief look at the history and development of the Buddhist house altar, to see how it became to be the place where the ancestors are worshipped. It is still hard to say, though, when this worship shifted to the ancestors, who, as I will discuss in the next paragraphs, can also be regarded as buddhas in the eyes of the Japanese people.

The Brief History of the *Butsudan*

There have been many scholars before me, to write about the history of the *butsudan*, a history so full of white spots that it is almost impossible to talk about it in proper length. In Japanese society religious worship at home is one

5 Furthermore, there is also the question of the shintō deities, the *kami*, for it is still common to uphold a *kamidana*, a shintō altar at home. Most cases the *kamidana* and the *butsudan* are in the same room, having one does not exclude having the other as well. It can be considered the still remaining result of the syncretism between Buddhism and shintō (Jp. *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合) that was maintained for several centuries in Japan. The two were separated right after the Meiji Restoration (Jp. *Meiji ishin* 明治維新) by the '*Distinguishing the shintō faith and Buddhism*' (Jp. *shinbutsu hanzen-rei* 神仏判然令) act of March 1868, in order to help to make the 'original' Japanese faith, the shintō become the official state religion.

of the oldest customs, if we take into consideration – as this passage have been quoted in so many studies as the beginning of the history of the *butsudan* – the second oldest written record, the *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀, where the following appears as Tenmu tennō's 天武天皇 direct order of 685 (Tenmu 4):⁶

三月壬申 壬申。詔。諸国每家、作仏舍。
乃置仏像。及經。以礼拝供養。⁷

Some researchers, such as Sudō Hiroto 須藤寛人 or John Nelson, suggest that the *bussha* 仏舍 with a *butsuzō* 仏像 inside is some kind of prototype of what later became the Buddhist worship hall (Jp. *butsuma* 仏間).⁸ This *butsuma* is the place of worship of the buddhas, bodhisattvas inside one's home and so it can probably be regarded as the archetype for the Buddhist house altar, the *butsudan* 仏壇 for the original function of the two is the same.

After the first mention of the home-worship of the buddhas in the *Nihonshoki*, we can only estimate what kind of changes did it undergo in the next couple of centuries. As suggested by Nelson, Rennyo was contributing tremendously for the *butsudan* to spread amongst the common people.⁹ But, I have to highlight the fact that, still as a place to worship Buddhist deities. Rennyo was a priest of the Jōdo shin Buddhist school, which put ‘emphasis on having an altar that resembles the central place and image of worship in the main temple in Kyoto (Nelson, 2008).’ This similarity can be assumed, let us just take a look at the house altar of a family associated to the shin school, it is the one that reminds us most to a real temple altar with the much use of gold and decorative parts (Fig. 1). In the *Gobunshō* 御文章, Rennyo’s letters and the *Goichidaikikikigaki* 御一代記聞書, which is his compiled teachings by his *deshi*, we can read more than one mention on the importance of the *nembutsu* and having it placed on display in one’s home.

⁶ *Nihonshoki*, Volume 29, Tenmu tennō 14th year, 3rd month. The full text is available online: <http://www.j-texts.com/jodai/shoki29.html>

⁷ „3rd month 27th day (the day of the *mizunoesaru* 壬申 – the ninth of the Chinese sexagenary cycle, the *eto* 干支). Imperial decree. All the ‘ie’ in the many provinces [have to] make a place for the worship of the buddhas (*bussha* 仏舍). In that they [have to] put a representations of the buddhas (*butsuzō* 仏像) and sūtras (*kyō* 経). With that they [have to] do worship (*reihai* 礼拝) and religious services (*kuyō* 供養).”

⁸ See Sudō 1998: 329-345.
Nelson 2008: 305-330.

⁹ Nelson 2008: 310.

We do not know exactly when the *butsudan* was introduced into the homes in the form of a box, as it is today, but it can be estimated with the help of Japanese historical events when the tradition of ancestor worship spread amongst the Japanese people. Just like in the case of Buddhism, the home-worship of buddhas was first the prerogative of the wealthy, who had the means to have a separate room in their home for this kind of worship alone. Between the first mention of such places and the introduction of the temple-parishioner system (Jp. *danka seido* 檀家制度) in the Edo period we do not know much about the *butsudan*, and how it evolved. Several researches were conducted about Japanese household religious activities deriving from the *danka* system of the Edo period which give us the sense that the *butsudan* was an important part of homes, not only, but mostly because of ancestor worship.¹⁰

Originally the main purpose of the *butsudan* was the place to worship Buddhist deities, but as the history of Japanese Buddhism evolved, from a religion of the privileged aristocrat class it gradually became the common people's faith for everyday usage. Nevertheless, Buddhism and Buddhist faith underwent such big changes during the three centuries of the Tokugawa ruled Edo period that, at one point, it was threatened by total elimination. Under the Tokugawa bakufu's immense pressure and strict control Buddhism was on the one hand turned into a so called funeral Buddhism (*sōshiki bukkyō* 葬式仏教)¹¹ since every funeral was conducted with Buddhist services. On the other hand, the unfortunate events of the haibutsu kishaku 廃仏毀釈 or anti-buddhist movements were the direct results of the strong linkage between the shōgunate and the temple parishioner system, and while the Buddhist temples and priests were used and controlled, it still became the main target of the new government's nationalist people.

Despite of the many unfortunate events in the history of Japanese Buddhism following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, even today it is fairly common among the people to uphold the Buddhist traditions of ancestor worship, which consists of mainly memorial services for the deceased loved ones (after a while becoming part of the group of ancestors) of a family. This happens mainly in front of the *butsudan*, where, in accordance with the sects' rules and regulations, the statue or painting of a buddha or bodhisattva, the photo of the

¹⁰ During the Edo period after Christianity was banned and the country closed its borders (1638), the Japanese people were forced to prove their Buddhist religious beliefs. Maintaining a Buddhist house altar and worshipping the buddhas was one way to prove this. This can be one of the chief reasons why the *butsudan* later became – and in a way still is – a common part of Japanese homes.

¹¹ The definition derives from Tamamuro Taijō's significant work on Tokugawa era Buddhism. See Tamamuro 1963.

not long ago departed family member, a sūtra or inscription, candles, incense, flowers, food and water is placed. The oldest living female member of the family (the head's mother or wife) is responsible for the everyday veneration and offerings for the dead, so that they can rest in peace in the afterlife and help the family acquire worldly benefits in our realm.

Buddhist Ancestor Worship in Japan

First of all, we should think about what 'ancestor worship' means, and then what it means for the Japanese people. Morioka Kiyomi gives us this explanation in his paper about ancestor worship:¹² "*Ancestor worship* refers to the totality of the belief in the superhuman power of the dead who are recognized as ancestors, and the rituals based on this belief". The 'superhuman power' probably refers to the contemporary belief about how the ancestors can bring fortune to the family if they are worshipped properly. But here again the Buddhist worship interferes, since for centuries the people worshipped only the buddhas, bodhisattvas (and not to mention the shintō *kami*) for the same reason.¹³ Furthermore, we have to take into account the fact that the ancestors in Japan are also considered as *hotoke*, for the Japanese people believe they become buddhas after death, hence the superhuman power. I will discuss this buddha-ancestor twofold nature further in the next chapter about the sacred places.

The notion of ancestor worship came from China with the Buddhist thoughts, where after the criticism of lack of filial piety, the Confucian thought fused with Buddhism. Dickson Kazuo Yagi briefly examines this fusion (Yagi 1995).¹⁴ Buddhist priests first argued in China that "*why they should give special attention only to the parents of this life when surely all living beings have been their parents at one time or another in the countless cycles of reincarnation.*"¹⁵ Here we come back to the basic Buddhist notion of rebirth which fundamentally dismisses the thought of worshipping our ancestors, although it is only from the point of view of monastic life of the Buddhist clergy. This lack of filial piety did not sit well with the Confucian Chinese way of life.

¹² Morioka 1984. Morioka examines the changes in the ancestor worship after the war, from the point of view of the change in the Japanese *ie* system.

¹³ Here the author refers to the popular saying of the Japanese people, '*Kami sama, Hotoke sama*', used when they want or wish for something, as a kind of prayer for the *kamis* and buddhas to listen to them.

¹⁴ Yagi 1995: 43.

¹⁵ Yagi 1995: 43.

This is the reason why, after a while, Buddhist priests had to accommodate the notion of Confucian filial piety, therefore the concept of ancestors and the rituals concerning them became part of the Buddhist ways. In China, the first recorded imperial ancestor worship ritual took place in the beginning of the 8th century, when after the funeral of Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 in 706, the Buddhist priests had a feast and burned incense.¹⁶ By this time Buddhism already started to spread in Japan, so it probably did not arrive in the middle of the 6th century with the Buddhist religion from the Korean-peninsula, rather the Japanese travelling monks of the Chinese envoys to the continent between 603 and 903 introduced this custom to the islands.

In contemporary Japan, Buddhist ancestor worship is identified by the Japanese people as doing some special activities for the well-being of the spirits of their late relatives: going to the cemetery (Jp. *ohaka mairi* お墓参り) on special occasions, such as the festival of the departed souls (Jp. *obon* お盆 or *urabon* 孟蘭盆¹⁷) or the spring and autumn equinoxes (Jp. *higan* 彼岸¹⁸), and also decorating the Buddhist house altar, the *butsudan* 仏壇, making offerings for the Buddhas and ancestors (Jp. *hotoke* 仏), and having rituals

¹⁶ Yagi, *ibid.* p. 43.

¹⁷ The *urabon* 孟蘭盆 (Skt. *ullambana*) ceremony today derives from the Urabon-kyō (Skt. *Ullambana-sūtra*), translated by Dharmaraksha (239-316, Jp. *Jikuhōgo* 竹法護). It is happening since Shōmu tennō 聖武天皇 ordered it to be an annual ceremony in 733. (*Nihon Bukkyō Daijiten* 日本佛教大辞典, Vol.1. 244-245.)

¹⁸ The term *higan* 彼岸, meaning the “other side”, refers to the *nehan* 涅槃, the Buddhist nirvāṇa, opposed to “this side” (Jp. *shigan* 此岸), our world. The first mention of this ritual was recorded in the 13th chapter of the *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀 (the sixth book of the *Zoku nihongi* 続日本着). In the first year of Daidō, 806, it is written that Sudō tennō 崇道天皇 (750-785) ordered the priests of the provincial temples (Jp. *kokubunji* 国分寺) to conduct ceremonies in spring and autumn for seven days each, to remonstrate the *Diamond Sūtra* (Jp. *Kongō Hannya-kyō* 金剛般若經). The first *Higan-e* 彼岸会 happened in this year (806) to console the spirit of Sudō tennō. The connection of the ceremony with Buddhism starts here, but also, with the spread of the *nembutsu* 念仏 and Amida’s Pure Land thought, the *higan* started to be referred to as Amida’s Pure Land, or its kind of equivalent. An explanation is given by Chinese Pure land priest Zendō 善導 in his explanations to the *Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* (Jp. *Kanmuryō jukyō* 觀無量壽經), the sūtra of Amida Buddha. He says the day starts on the East and heads to the West, where there is Amida’s Western Pure Land. The *Higan-e* ceremony also marks the beginning of the *Hō-e* 法会 (or *Hōji* 法事), the Buddhist memorial service on an anniversary of someone’s death. (*Nihon Bukkyō Daijiten* 日本佛教大辞典, Vol.5.4286-4287)

in front of it.¹⁹ There are specific rules of how to decorate the altar, and how to do the offerings. These rules and ways are described in the special books that were written for the people. We can find some of these books from the pre-war era as well. Sometimes they give us a short explanation of the *butsudan* and rituals, but there are whole books explaining these in details, such as the *Butsudan no hon* 仏壇の本, the ‘book of the house altar’, which was republished many times since 1979.²⁰ Since the *butsudan* can differ according to the many Buddhist schools, the manuals also give the types of altars too. Fabio Rambelli gives us a short introduction to the different types in his study, where he also uses many insights from Taniguchi Kōji’s most recent book about the principals of the house altar.²¹

The *Butsudan* and the Definition of Sacred Space

The sacred space, or *sei naru kūkan* 聖なる空間, as the Japanese say it, is not an unfamiliar definition for western scholars who do research into religions either, since it is part of the religions almost anywhere in the world. So the question is: how can we interpret it to the Japanese house altar?

In Europe there were many who gave their view on the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane of this world, such influential scholars as for example Emile Durkheim, Mircea Eliade or Roger Callois.²² They all agree on the dichotomy of the world, where there is sacred and there is profane. Durkheim’s view on the ‘sacred’ is that it is far from being synonymous with anything called divine. It does correlate with Japanese religious view for not only may gods and spirits be sacred, but also things like rocks, trees, pieces of wood, in fact anything.²³ For what makes something sacred is not that it is somehow connected to the divine but that it is the subject of a prohibition that sets it radically apart from something else, which is itself thereby made profane. So,

¹⁹ These rituals consists of the 49-day (or seven week) mourning period after one dies, when the spirit of the dead needs to be depolluted, or the memorial ceremonies on the anniversaries of the deaths, etc. Most of these rituals take place in front of the *butsudan*, conducted by either the head of the family (the oldest living male), or by a priest from the temple the family is affiliated with. Putting offerings and chanting a *sūtra* are the main parts of such ceremonies.

²⁰ See Hasegawa 1979. Jōdo shinshū no obutusudan 淨土真宗のお仏壇, Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūkai 仏教文化研究会, Kyoto, 1995 , Taniguchi Kōji 谷口幸璽: *Butsudan no hanashi* 仏壇のはなし, Kyoto, Hōzōkan, 2002

²¹ Rambelli 2010.

²² See Durkheim 1915, Emile 1959, Callois 1960.

²³ Durkheim 1915: 37.

he says “*a rite can have this character; in fact, the rite does not exist which does not have it [a sacred character] to a certain degree.*”²⁴ We can agree to a certain degree with Durkheim but he also says that these sacred rites can only be performed by a consecrated person, which is only partially true to the memorial rites conducted at Japanese homes.²⁵ Only partially, for a Buddhist priest is usually present at important memorial services or Buddhist ceremonies on special occasions. Sacredness requires special locations be set aside for religious rituals; for Japanese these may be the butsudan and the kamidana which are associated with either ancestors or buddhas and gods.

Japanese researchers look at the sacred from a different angle regarding Buddhism. It is widely accepted that the Buddhist temples and the places of pilgrimages are sacred from their primordial function as the place where the Buddhist deities are represented on this earth.²⁶ Also, there is the question of sacredness in Buddhist images, such as the mandalas in esoteric Buddhism, which are the pictorial representations of the Buddhist cosmology, the worlds of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and other Buddhist heavenly beings. Considered as ‘worlds’, many scholars argue in their favour as sacred spaces, or the depictions of those.²⁷

In Japanese studies about the sacred space the *butsudan* is almost never mentioned. There is only one foreign scholar who took a brief look at the altar from a different point of view, emphasizing how the sacred nature is represented in it. Fabio Rambelli states that the ‘*butsudan, funerary tablets (ihai), and the kamidana are not just symbolic objects and catalysts for religious activities. As veritable sacred objects, they are infused with the “spirits” of, respectively, the buddhas, the ancestors, and the kami.*’²⁸ The proof, he says, is in the inauguration ritual of the new altar, which is similar to the eye-opening ceremony of the new statues in Buddhist temples. These ceremonies represent the ‘consecration’ of the objects, when through the priest’s sayings and acts the above mentioned ‘spirit’ takes its place in the now sacred religious object. After the ceremony, then, it is the abode of the Buddhist deities, making it a sacred object placed inside the home.

²⁴ Durkheim 1915: 37.

²⁵ Durkheim 1915: 37.

²⁶ Mori 1994.

²⁷ See Manabe 1994.

²⁸ Rambelli 2010: 69.

Conclusion

The role of the *butsudan* changed over the centuries, but it has never ceased to be the place of some kind of worship. It seems, then, it does not matter whether this worship is to the buddhas or the ancestors, the most important thing is that the rituals carried out in front of it are religious acts. The fact that the original purpose of the *butsudan* was to have a place in one's home where they could pray to the Buddhist heavenly beings also highlights the apparentness of the sacred character. This is an essential criterion in the West and the East as well for something to be sacred. Even after the *butsudan* gradually became the place of worshipping one's ancestors, it does not contradict with the previous concept, when we take into consideration that even today the Japanese people commonly refer to their dead family members and ancestors as *hotoke* or buddhas.²⁹ This is the point where the dichotomy of the function of the *butsudan* becomes one, for the purpose of the worship of either the buddhas or the ancestors cannot be completely separated, somewhere in the course of history these two merged in one notion and one place.

²⁹ The evidences that made it easier to adopt the notion of ancestors as *hotoke* are nevertheless coinciding with the Japanese people's belief of nirvāṇa and the means to enter it. For details see Arai 2005.

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