

The Buddha's Words and Their Interpretations

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Preface

The fifteen papers in this volume were originally presented at the international symposium entitled “The Buddha’s Words and Their Interpretations,” which was held at Otani University in Kyoto on May 26th and 27th, 2016, under the joint sponsorship of the Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute of Otani University and the Institute for East Asian Studies (IEAS), Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). The academic relationship between these two institutions started in 2001 when Imre Hamar, one of the coeditors of this volume, spent six months as a visiting professor at Otani University, conducting research on the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* and Huayan/Kegon Buddhism. This fruitful cooperation led to the establishment of an academic exchange agreement between the two universities in 2007 which has continued successfully for more than thirteen years now. During this period, we jointly held the first international symposium at ELTE in 2013, which led to the publication of *Faith in Buddhism* (IEAS, ELTE, 2016). Our second joint symposium on Buddhism was held at Otani University in May 2016, and the present volume is the second joint publication by the two research institutes.

In addition to the scholars from ELTE and Otani University, four eminent professors from Japan and Hungary presented their papers and led the discussions during the two-day symposium. Professor Masahiro Shimoda of the University of Tokyo delivered the keynote lecture on the hermeneutic problems concerning the methodologies for the study of Mahayana sutras. We would like to thank Professor Shimoda for contributing his paper to this volume. Professor Junkichi Imanishi, professor emeritus of Hokkaido University and former president of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies (ICPBS), contributed his paper on the historical background of some of the critical terms in Buddha’s discourse on selflessness (*anātman*). Professor Florin Deleanu of ICPBS presented a paper that has been published as “Reshaping Timelessness: Paradigm Shifts in the Interpretation of Buddhist Meditation” (*Journal of ICPBS*, 2017).

Professor Gyula Wojtilla, professor emeritus of the University of Szeged, contributed his erudite paper on the interpretation of the ethical concept *appamāda* (“heedfulness, carefulness”) in early Buddhist literature. We greatly appreciate the participation and cooperation of these distinguished scholars.

“The Buddha’s Words and Their Interpretations” is a broad theme and the geographical areas and the historical periods treated in the fifteen papers vary, depending on the authors’ research fields—from India during Śākyamuni’s lifetime to Japan in the medieval period. These papers shed light on the characteristics of the Buddha’s “teaching,” which formed the foundations of the various Buddhist traditions in India, Tibet, Central Asia, China, and Japan. We would like to thank all the contributors for their stimulating presentations and for their cooperation and patience during the long editorial process.

The academic exchange between ELTE and Otani University has received strong institutional support for which we are very grateful. Professor László Borhy, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities in 2016 and now rector of ELTE, visited Kyoto and not only participated in the symposium but also delivered a special pre-symposium lecture. Professor Toshinori Ochiai, the president of ICPBS at that time, participated actively in the symposium, representing ICPBS. President Yasushi Kigoshi of Otani University has taken an active role in the exchange with ELTE since 2016. The staff of Otani University’s Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute have provided a great deal of support on a variety of levels throughout all stages, from the preparation of the symposium to the printing of this volume. Special thanks must go to Professors Robert F. Rhodes and Michael Conway, who have served as the heads of the International Buddhist Studies Research Group during the editorial process.

The international academic cooperation has benefited both Otani University and ELTE significantly. In 2017, Otani University won a competitive government grant called Private University Research Branding Project with its proposal entitled “Creation of an International Buddhist Research Network and the Promotion of ‘Human Studies’ based on Buddhism.” The success of this application owed much to the public recognition of the results of Otani’s exchange with ELTE. In 2019, the Department of Buddhology and Tibetology was finally established in ELTE’s Faculty of Humanities with the encouragement and active support from Otani University. As the driving force behind this fruitful cooperation, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Professor Masanori Yamaji, former head of Japanese Studies at ELTE and the staff of the Budapest Centre for Buddhist Studies, whose

enthusiasm has sustained the long and productive cooperation between the two institutions.

This volume was originally scheduled to be published before our third international symposium at ELTE in September 2018, but for various reasons which could not have been foreseen at the time of planning, the publication has been long delayed. The principal reason is that Takami Inoue, the coeditor from the Otani side, could not concentrate fully on the editorial work because of his unexpected administrative duties during the academic years 2018 and 2019, and the subsequent spread of COVID-19 further prevented the completion of this volume. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this delay may have caused.

During the last stages of the editorial process, Professor Elizabeth Kenney, formerly of Kansai Gaidai University, helped us greatly by taking charge of proofreading and copyediting. We are grateful for her careful work, which improved the readability of the papers written by non-native speakers of English. The references and abbreviations generally follow standard academic style, with some minor exceptions. References to the Taishō edition of the Tripiṭaka are marked by “T” followed by both Taishō number and volume number, separated by a period. The Chinese characters in the text are either traditional Chinese or the simplified Japanese form, depending on the author’s choice.

With the publication of this volume, the second phase of the academic cooperation between ELTE and Otani University has come to a conclusion. Now we have two books, *Faith in Buddhism* and *The Buddha’s Words and Their Interpretations*, next to each other on our bookshelves. The third phase of this cooperation has already been in motion since the “Buddhism in Practice” symposium at ELTE in 2018. Due to the tremendous impacts of COVID-19, our fourth international symposium is scheduled to be held at Otani University in 2023. We are greatly looking forward to our closer cooperation in the future. To conclude, we would like to thank again all the contributors and colleagues who participated in the symposium, and to express our gratitude to the Komatsu Chiko Foundation and the Private University Research Branding Project for their generous support.

*Imre Hamar
Takami Inoue*

Reconsidering the Methodologies for the Study of Mahāyāna Sūtras

MASAHIRO SHIMODA

Introduction

Thanks to the publication of a new series that covers nearly the whole range of Mahāyāna Buddhist Studies in Japan, with contributions by more than seventy scholars (*Shīrīzu Daijō Bukkyō* [Mahāyāna Buddhism Series], published in ten volumes from 2011 to 2013), the academic community in Japan now has an opportunity to reignite the discussion on “the origin(s)” of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In contrast to the wealthy discussions about “the origin(s)” of “Mahāyāna sūtras” over 20 years to date, as shown in Shimoda (2009) or Harrison (2018), an important topic has been missing, that is, the examination of the methodology of Buddhist studies scholars have adopted in their research. One of the most distinct things is the lack of discernment of two different histories. One is the internal history of a text concerned with the elucidation of the content of discourses within the text and the other is the external history referring to the milieu in which the given text emerged. Scholars have been dealing with these two histories, considerably different in terms of aim of research and the manner of approach, placing in the identical context for the simple reason that the same term “history” is applicable to both cases.

Although scholars have been, in most cases, involved in the elucidation of the internal history of a particular Mahāyāna sūtra, not a few scholars have shown strong propensities to regard their results as also referring to the external history of a given text. This confusion has been in some cases a fatal obstacle to the critical evaluation of their attainments and to the proper reconstruction of the history of Buddhism in India. I would like to review briefly some of the recent research on Mahāyāna sūtras, especially the issue of making an essential distinction between these two types of histories.

1. Overview of Recent Research on Mahāyāna Sutras and the Lack of Awareness of the Significance of the “Linguistic Turn”

Let us start by looking at a few examples among recent works. Sasaki (2002), for instance, mostly on the basis of texts in the Vinayaṭika and Sri Lankan chronicles, suggested that the existence of a difference in opinion developed within the saṅgha monastery when the definition of the destruction of the community was changed from *cakrabhedā* (schism due to doctrinal dispute) to *karmabhedā* (schism due to dispute about ritual). However, while this may explain the general background of this difference in opinion in the monastery, it does not provide an adequate account of how Mahāyāna developed its own scriptures with a unique philosophy and teachings. Aside from the questionable nature of Sasaki’s arguments for the historical transition from *cakrabhedā* to *karmabhedā* in Buddhist communities in general, it is dubious that the change in merely a single provision of their monastic code would have been a sufficient background cause for the diversity of the existing Mahāyāna scriptures.

On the one hand, in research that focuses on scrutinizing the content of the Mahāyāna sutras (e.g., Silk [1994], Karashima [2001], Nattier [2003], Boucher [2008]), in which the method is limited to tracing and analyzing the discourses within a text, the findings cannot necessarily serve to reconstruct the institutional history of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is external to the confines of these discourses. If one wants to regard a certain textual discourse as a reflection of an actual external social situation, then one should be able to verify the account as belonging to the same region and era. To confirm this assumption, the identification of a textual discourse in terms of time and space needs to be done precisely by means of a third witness standing outside of the text—for example, archeological findings. In this respect, I agree with Franco (2009) when he writes,

Mahāyāna sutras are obviously not historical narratives or reports in the sense that they provide information on the historical situation in which their teachings came into being ... The mode of presentation has more to do with religious topology and literary environments than with an actual historical situation. (Franco [2009: 112]; cf. Schmithausen [2014: 601])

On the other hand, it is true that Schopen (1989, 2004, 2005) was successful in clarifying an institutional aspect of Mahāyāna Buddhism based on the investigations of inscriptions, materials that one would reasonably regard as reflecting the institutional reality of the branch at the time given inscriptions were made. However, we must still recognize the significant fact that the “Mahāyāna sutras” existed long before such inscriptions appeared. Nor

does Schopen's result touch on the uniqueness of the content of these texts. Just as it is difficult to explain the background of a given social setting by analyzing the content of the Mahāyāna sutras, so are inscription-related documents unable to elucidate the content of the discourses of a given sutra.

While the above-mentioned studies are undoubtedly useful, they pay no attention to the methodological confusion in their application of the results of textual readings to the reconstruction of institutional and social settings outside of the text, and vice versa. Here the significance of the issue raised by the "linguistic turn" in all fields of humanities needs attention. The study of history has been placed thereby under the influence of certain ingrained aftereffects. The following account given by Stedman Jones, a leading historian on this topic, will serve as a proper introduction to the understanding of the gist of this new approach to history:

What was distinctive about the new approach was its insistence upon language as a self-contained system of signs the meanings of which were determined by their relationship with each other rather than to some primordial or transcendental extra-linguistic terrain. What was attractive in this new approach was firstly that by its refusal to derive language—or more properly discourse—from an external pre-linguistic reference point, it bypassed the idea of language as a reflection of reality. Potentially this represented a serious challenge to the core assumption of historical materialism and all the different versions of Marxist history—the determination of thought by social beings. Secondly, as a distinctive method of enquiry, it offered new ways of connecting social and intellectual history free from the problems embodied in the Marxian notion of ideology, whose effect was always to turn thought into a derivative second-order entity, the product of a set of practices belonging to a "superstructure" whose meaning was ultimately deciphered by the reference to the ("material" or "economic") "base." (Stedman Jones [2005: 63])

Two points attract our immediate attention. First, the position taken by Buddhist scholars who are interested in reconstructing the institutional history of Mahāyāna Buddhism is quite similar to that of Marxist historians in terms of their tendency to reduce the meaning of a sutra containing a variety of thoughts to the material, economic or social milieu. In Japan, except for research by Tomomatsu Entai (as discussed in Silk [2002]), this attitude began to be apparent after the emergence of Hirakawa's hypothesis (1968). This is characteristic of humanistic studies in postwar Japan, which have

been strongly influenced by the social sciences. The second point is more relevant to the gist of this paper. It is evident that Buddhist scholars have been taking an approach to Mahāyāna sutras that is opposite to the “insistence upon language as a self-contained system of signs the meanings of which were determined by their relationship with each other rather than to some primordial or transcendental extra-linguistic terrain.”

In reading a Mahāyāna sutra, a scholar as a reader will experience a variety of representations emerging and developing, transforming and disappearing, successively in his or her mind. Despite the fact that this process is operating between the discourses of the sutra and the consciousness of the reader, scholars tend to hold a notion that these representations emerged based on an object or an event that had actually existed outside the text at the time the sutra was compiled. They are most inclined to have this idea when the representations seem most realistic to them. This assumption, widespread throughout the humanities, originates in the persistent desire, as Derrida (1967a, 1967b, 1967c) points out, to make an absolute distinction between “a linguistic sign inside the text,” which consists of a bilateral connection between “signifier (*signifiant*)” made up of phonemes and “signified (*signifié*)” created by the linguistic sign’s sense content, and “its referent (*réfèrent*) outside the text.” The recurring arguments in the movement of the linguistic turn have made this distinction subject to radical criticism.

Especially noteworthy is, as semiologists in this field corroborate, that the characteristic of language as a self-contained system of signs is far more evident in written texts than in oral texts. In written texts, a linguistic sign inside the text consisting of a connection between the signifier and the signified forms linguistic space overwhelmingly independent of the referent outside the texts. This feature may be attested in oral texts as well but only in a very weak, subtle, vague manner. Ruegg (2004: 18-24), dealing with this issue, fails to be aware of this point.

It is true that Gombrich (1988) first took up the significance of the introduction of writing technology into the transmission of Buddhist knowledge as a prime candidate for the origin of Mahāyāna sutras, but his arguments are too limited to elucidate the rich complexity of these scriptures. It is true as well that many studies have shed light on the significance of the veneration of a sutra through copying, memorizing, preserving, ornamenting and the like. However, the studies have looked almost exclusively at the ritual aspects, which are irrelevant to the peculiar nature of the content of the narrative discourses. Thus, they failed to confront the question of what mechanism operates within the narratives of “early Mahāyāna sutras” that makes these texts distinctly different from sutras of “Mainstream Buddhism.”

In contrast to the approaches used in earlier research, what Cole (2005) and Shimoda (2011, 2013a, 2013b) focus on is the fact that “early Mahāyāna sutras” succeeded in creating an internal space of vocabulary that is highly independent of the external environments of the texts. Within this text-internal space, a new cognition of the legitimacy of the Buddha’s teaching emerged and evolved. The emergence of discourse on self-legislation independent of institutional settings is of significance in considering the “origin” of the characteristics of the narratives of “Mahāyāna sutras.”

Archaeological remains available to us show no essential division between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Nikāya Buddhism (Fussman [2004], von Hinüber [2012]). In addition, no substantial institutional evidence is available for the “early Mahāyāna sutras.” Furthermore, as Williams (1989) has pointed out, Mahāyāna Buddhism “is all but identical with the evolution of a new and distinctive canonical literature, the Mahāyāna sutras.” Given these facts, it is high time for us to consider more seriously the textual characteristics of the “Mahāyāna sutras” rather than the institutional environments outside their discourses. Before stepping into this issue, it would be helpful to look over recent findings in the field of archaeology.

2. New Landscapes Provided by Recent Archaeological Surveys

In considering the origin and rise of “early Mahāyāna Buddhism,” Indian archeology over the past two decades has provided valuable new insights. New findings and discussions in Indian archeology have considerably changed our picture of ancient Indian Buddhism. As Hawkes and Shimada (2009) point out in their collection of rich discoveries, as far as historical documentation goes, from the third century BCE, when we find the oldest records confirming the existence of Buddhism, stupas and monasteries are verified to have been almost always arranged according to one and the same plan.

During that time, India was experiencing rapid urbanization, with stupas and monasteries acting as network hubs, constructing and promoting interactions among various religions, industries and cultures. Seen at a macroscopic level, it is evident that many of the stupas and monasteries stood on the sacred sites of indigenous religions. This indicates that the religions that existed before Buddhism were likely to merge into this newly appearing worldview. As important points of connection between urbanized regions that had been separate, these places functioned to promote various kinds of industries represented by agriculture (Hawkes [2009: 147]).

On the other hand, seen at a microscopic level, the stupas and monasteries were geographically located outside city walls and near city gates, i.e.,

where the inside and outside of a walled city intersected. Inside the walls, according to the *Arthaśāstra*, the regulations of the *jāti-varṇa* system and the influence of Vedic rituals were in place. Outside the walls, although the city powers held authority, was outside of the *varṇa* system and Vedic rituals. The geographical situation of Buddhist monasteries and stupas would have given Buddhism a distinctive nature religiously, socially and culturally, uncommon to any other religion. Besides the stupas and the monasteries, this territory accommodated shrines, holy sites or the forests of tutelary deities that fell outside of Vedic tradition, as well as residences of people who were deemed to be outside of the *varṇa* system, such as foreign merchants, artisans, untouchables and traveling caravans (Shimada [2009: 216–234]).

It is worth noting that in this area the marketplace and burial grounds overlapped. In one form or another, Buddhists were most likely to have been involved in both burial rites and trade. It goes without saying that Brahmins were repelled by death as the most unholy of things. Additionally, for those who applied *varṇa*'s concept of discrimination between pure and impure, the act of trading—exchanging objects presumably touched by many unknown people—was ritually dangerous. If any religious person could justify this act, it would be the monks, who could remove the taboo of the *varṇa* system and transcend the notion of discrimination between purity and impurity.

The construction of stupas and monasteries on the peripheries of cities signifies the transcendence of social dichotomies between life and death, inside and outside, purity and impurity. Once a place penetrated by this sort of indiscriminative power appeared, it would have functioned to promote the exchange of technological skills and knowledge theretofore confined to different social and ethnic groups and thereby making the existing stable values more fluid. This would have become a rejuvenating force in society (Shimada [2009]).

3. Questioning the Methodology of Reconstructing the History of Buddhism Based on Textual Research

When set against the backdrop of revelations gained from archaeological surveys of ancient India, most of the assumptions of scholars about “Mahāyāna sutras” based on their reading of a specific sutra should be subject to reconsideration. If a certain textual discourse is to be taken as a reflection of the reality of an external social situation, the account should be verified as belonging to the same region and era. This is necessary in order to make a positive identification in terms of time and space of a textual discourse with a text-external event (using archeological findings, for instance). However, no scholar who is familiar with the contents of the Mahāyāna sutras would

be confident in making these associations, because the Mahāyāna sutras have almost no historical traces left within their discourses.

It is true that for manuscripts of Mahāyāna sutras discovered in Gandhāra, Central Asia, Nepal and other places the date of production can be determined with physicochemical analysis. In some fortunate cases, information given in the colophon indicates the date of completion. However, this information simply confirms the date of the texts in terms of their physicality or materiality, but it does not position the content of their discourses at a specific time. This stands as one of the fatal obstacles for those who study these texts; Mahāyāna sutras, lacking this sort of information, cannot be easily used to reconstruct Indian history, in the strict sense of the word.

With that said, one case—and perhaps the *only* one so far—deserves special mention due to the successful employment of this approach. Walters (1997) investigated the essential relationships among the sacred biographies of the Buddha—that is, the *Apadāna*, the *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Cariyāpīṭaka* (which he calls the ABCs)—and the structure of the stupas in Bhārhut, Sāñchī and Amaravati. He eventually reached the conclusion that one can reasonably regard these three sacred biographies of the Buddha and the stupas as having been produced between the Aśokan and post-Aśokan periods.

Noteworthy in Walter's argument is that the gradual extension of the construction of these stupas and the gradual development of this trilogical text show remarkable agreement with each other. This is verified by the fact that the successive changes in the type of donated gifts mentioned in each text is in astonishing accord with the changes in the motifs of donations reflected in the gradual extension of these stupas. He points out that this is a rare case where external events and internal textual discourses show exceptional congruity. Although this assertion requires further investigation to illustrate the argument, we can reasonably consider it an advance in terms of the methodological scrupulousness and richness of the conclusion.

Walters first acknowledges that the sacred biographies of the Buddha by themselves are unable to elucidate history in the strict sense of the word. He states, “[T]hey are poems about inconceivably ancient periods of time, not scientific histories.” However, this crucial point “is not always grasped in Buddhology” and there is a “tendency in Buddhological studies to weave history directly out of literary remains, as though the authors of sacred texts were trying to describe objectively the times and places in which they lived” (Walters [1997: 161]).

He warns scholars to be careful about anachronistic mistakes when they deal with the issue of stupas. They freely make use of discourses in texts such as the *Divyāvadāna*, *Lalitavistara*, *Mahāvastu*, *Jātakamālā* and

Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, presumably belonging to the periods between the first century BCE and fifth century CE, in order to explain images engraved in the third to second centuries BCE. Behind this fallacious methodology, he argues, there is either an unproven presumption that those texts precisely record discourses from oral traditions or a baseless assumption that the texts that give sumptuous details, even if constructed later, are acceptable as historical witnesses. Apart from these problematic presumptions, according to Walters, an argument for the agreement in motif between an image in a carving and the stories in the text hardly goes beyond impressionistic assumptions. If there had been direct connections between the engravings and the stories appearing years later, the engravings of the previous era would have influenced the creation of the stories that came afterward, not the other way around. This criticism by Walters of the anachronism that researchers have fallen into when dealing with the study of stupas is applicable to any studies that attempt to reconstruct the historical reality of a religious setting based on a study of textual discourses.

4. Biographies of the Buddha and their Relationship to Stupas as pre-Mahāyāna Prerequisites

There is no space to go into further detail about Walter's arguments, but the conclusion he reached is worth attention in reconsidering the relationship between the stupas and the sacred biographies of the Buddha. First, the sacred biographies are not only the life stories of the Buddha but also the stories of a community of people who lived with the Buddha. Those who serve the bodhisattva are destined to be reborn in the same world to walk the same path toward the ultimate goal together, and when the bodhisattva has completed that path and reached the supreme awakening, all those who have walked the path with him will attain salvation. In the sacred biographies, in this manner, the Buddha and those who encounter him are destined to live in the same worlds.

Stupas are nothing other than architecture that concretizes the texts of the sacred biographies of the Buddha associated with his followers. The stupas construct a grand story comprised of the many past lives of sentient beings and the Buddha as a bodhisattva. What is noteworthy here is that most of the inscribed names of donors were not individual agents but rather representatives of families, relatives, guilds, villages and communities. The construction of a stupa was initiated by a complex agency, and the activities surrounding stupas were also supported by communities of complex agencies. Those who entered the festive space of the stupa, through their active

participation, became part of the biography of the Buddha and lived out the story in the actual world outside the text.

In fact, as pertinently demonstrated by Shaw (2007, 2009), the gigantic stupas in India were not built all at once. Rather, they were gradually enlarged with new parts added over a long time. Each gift donated in each period reflects countless donors coming from different eras, regions, occupations and classes; all participated in the co-creation and unfolding of the biography of the Buddha embodied in the stupa. This performance is not something that ended at one point in the past; it is something that is evolving even today and will continue to evolve into the future. Stupas here are, as they were, living extensions of the Buddha himself and the continuing construction of stupas is nothing other than the continuation of the sacred biographies. Walters concludes that in this festive space Buddhists at the time likely recited the great verses of the three sacred biographies aloud as new Indian epic poems.

Given the examples from recent achievements in the field of archeology, it is evident that it is highly problematic to reconstruct a history of Indian Buddhism based solely on literary texts. Buddhist scholars, with some exceptions like Schopen, have actually taken it for granted that they can reconstruct a Buddhist history by analyzing textual resources, without confirming whether the textual content agrees with archaeological evidence. In addition, the textual resources used have been, in not a few cases, books of disciplinary rules that are taken by scholars to reflect monastic activities. Furthermore, in almost all cases, these texts belong to a particular tradition of the Sri Lankan Mahāvihāra School. Even though Bareau (1962) made a meticulous effort to decipher the Vinaya-piṭaka of all schools and describe the detailed functions of the stupa in the monastery, scholars have obliterated the significance of the stupa from the landscape of Indian Buddhism. Without any serious discussion, scholars have regarded stupas as later additions resulting from popularization over time or as something outside “legitimate” and “pure” monastic Buddhism.

In contrast to this presumption, archaeological surveys, as shown above, portray a different image of ancient Indian Buddhism. They show from the earliest historical documents that the stupas provided an extensive platform for both monasteries and scriptures. Stupas continued to revive as one of the nodes of the dynamic system of living Buddhism, and they occupied the center of a complex network of religion, industry and various cultural activities, as though they were a living incarnation of the Buddha himself. The reconstruction of this vast horizon of the history of ancient Indian Buddhism cannot be accomplished through the investigation of texts alone, not to speak of relying only on the Pāli canon, which has no description of stupas at all.

5. Transition from Oral to Written Media and the Emergence of Mahāyāna Sutras

It is evident that the “early Mahāyāna sutras,” such as the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutra*, *Lotus Sutra*, *Avatamsaka Sutra* and so forth, emerged against the backdrop of both the stupas and the sacred biographies of the Buddha. It is also apparent that they contain past, present and future buddhas associated with sentient beings who are on the path of the bodhisattva along with a buddha progressing toward supreme awakening. Furthermore, there are three kinds of paths to enlightenment: for those who listen to the teachings of the Buddha (*śrāvaka*); for those who proceed alone (*pratyekabuddha*); for those who are on the path of the bodhisattva. Scholars have long dealt with these characteristics as features specific to the Mahāyāna, but in fact, as we discussed above in fair detail, they are evident in the complex of the stupas and in the context of the sacred biographies of the Buddha. These characteristics are not at all of Mahāyāna origin. Recent research by Hiraoka (2012) on the constituent elements of the *Lotus Sutra* points in the same direction.

We should not overlook a very important feature of “early Mahāyāna sutras” that was first noted by Hiraoka and later stressed by Schopen: the repudiation of stupa worship. It is true that the early Mahāyāna sutras postulate the existence of the biographies of the Buddha and the cult of stupa worship, but the nature of these accounts primarily points to surpassing the values of those sacred biographies and stupas by the value of the scriptures.

What on Earth made possible the unprecedented movement that surmounted the enthusiasm of the Buddhist world, in which stupas played a predominant role as the external biography of the Buddha? No clue for answering this question is available within the archeological evidence. To seek an answer, we need to turn our attention to the content, especially the discourses, of the “early Mahāyāna sutras.” It is widely acknowledged that the devaluing of stupa worship was closely related to the rise of sutra veneration. As might be expected, the sutras that call for the veneration of the sutras have as their prerequisite the act of copying text. What should be noted in this respect is the characteristic feature seen across the “early Mahāyāna sutras” of an ardent interest in questioning the legitimacy of previous traditions, in later times by labeling them as the teaching of a *śrāvaka* (“voice-hearer”) with the intention of claiming their own tradition as the only authentic teaching of the Buddha.

As Gombrich (1988) points out, the legitimacy of these traditions could not be questioned during the phase of oral transmission, in which the text and a person who transmits the text are essentially inseparable. The act of refuting the legitimacy of the content of a sutra that is being recited by a

teacher based on his or her own memories is nothing more than a denial of the existence of the teacher in the presence of his or her disciples. This would lead immediately to the interruption of the transmission of the teaching. It is hard to imagine that those who had left home to enter the monkhood due to their reliance on the authenticity of the tradition would have taken action to destroy the very foundation they stood on. However, the “early Mahāyāna sutras” were formulated with this dangerous conception at their very core.

To make this happen, there needed to be a new platform on which Buddhist traditions could remain effective in a manner that allowed oral traditions to manifest in the appearance of a person who could be relativized and even rejected to some extent. Scripture, as written material, would probably have been the only medium that could have served this purpose independent of a human transmitter. In the transition from an oral to written format for transmitting Buddhist knowledge, some Buddhists (presumably very few) would have realized the significance of this medium’s unprecedented ability to preserve and revive knowledge independent of any physical interlocutor. What is important to note here is that the act of writing sutras in the Mahāyāna, unlike copying traditional texts in the Vinayaṭīka and the Sūtraṭīka as an ancillary means to oral transmission, was a fundamental act in establishing the veneration of the sutras.

This argumentation requires a reconsideration of the excessive evaluation of the role of the *dharmabhāṇaka*, conventionally regarded as a priest in early Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is true that the *dharmabhāṇaka* would have played a certain ritual role in the dissemination of the Mahāyāna sutras, as is shown by von Hinüber (2012), but overemphasis on this role is counterproductive to elucidating the significance of the emergence of the Mahāyāna sutras. If we are overly entranced by the existence of a physical priest, then we might fail to see the important logic that the ultimate foundation of the legitimacy of the priest’s teaching is not the priest, but the sutra in the form of scripture. The confirmation of the legitimacy of the priest should not linger on the mere existence of the priest, but it should be traced further back to the source of the authenticity of the scriptural discourses. More than anything, the priests appearing in the sutra do ascribe the legitimacy of the discourses they are uttering to the presence of the sutra in the form of scripture, not vice versa.

This is a crucial point in understanding the slightly complicated logic exercised by the compilers of the Mahāyāna sutras in their assertion of the legitimacy of the sutras. If one is blinded by the presence of the *dharmabhāṇaka*, as has often been the case in the study of the Mahāyāna sutras, one will fail to understand the meticulous structure of the discourses in the “early Mahāyāna

sutras” that differentiate the *dharmabhāṅga* manifest within the textual discourses and the compiler, who was completely invisible and outside of the discourse.

Things would have happened as follows. With the introduction of a writing system, the words of the Buddha from the oral tradition, which had been heard in the external world, became embodied in a written text. Then the compilers of the Mahāyāna sutras became aware that this silent inner textual world, shut off from the external world, was the genuine place in which the words of the Buddha could best be enshrined. What manifested before them was a new world comprised of subtle consciousness specifically concomitant with written language.

The revolutionary change brought about by the transition from oral to written language in the transmission of knowledge has long been discussed in the fields of humanities and Buddhist Studies and need not be explored here. Instead, let us now briefly examine how this change would have influenced the production of early Mahāyāna Buddhist texts.

6. The Birth of “Scriptures” in the History of Buddhism and their Institutional Settings

As far as the discourses in the “early Mahāyāna sutras” are concerned, it is evident that the sutras, in contrast to the texts of the Buddha’s biography, refuse to be involved in the external festivities of the areas surrounding the stupas. Instead, they concentrate on drawing the reader’s attention solely to the internal discourses that are irrelevant to the environments described by recent archaeological surveys. This attempt constitutes a mission to establish the genuine legitimacy of the world of the Buddha within the relevant texts. If the compilation of the sacred biographies is to be regarded as the sanctification of the external space of the stupas, the creation of the early Mahāyāna sutras may well be considered as the consecration of the internal world of the sutras by shutting out external activities.

Here emerges the awareness that the sutra is none other than the Buddha himself, thereby replacing the significance of the stupas with that of the sutras, transforming the consciousness of the bodhisattva in the biography of the Buddha into the bodhisattva responsible for transmitting sutras given by the Buddha in the discourse of a sutra. This event, unattested in the Vinayaṭīka, Abhidharmaṭīka or traditional Buddhism’s Sūtraṭīka, may well be called the birth of *scripture* in the history of Buddhism. As I have discussed in Shimoda (2015), it is evident that “early Mahāyāna sutras” have surprisingly similar features in common with the sacred scriptures of other religions, as enumerated in Smith (1993).

Scholars have failed to account properly for the origin of the book cult in Mahāyāna Buddhism by falling into a sort of tautology in their argument that the appearance of the cult of a sutra as physical object originated in the appearance of a sutra as a physical object. However, this cannot explain either the missing book cult in the case of the Vinayapīṭaka and Abhidharmapīṭaka or the peculiar motivation for Mahāyānists to overcome the existence of the stupa cult. The origin of the veneration of Mahāyāna scriptures would be the exaltation of the linguistic reasoning expertise enhanced by the appearance of written language to the extent that those who were concerned with transmitting the teaching should have been confident in resurrecting the Buddha in the inner world of the text. Book cults with magical characteristics would have been a secondary phenomenon derived from this change in consciousness.

Early Mahāyāna scriptures that discovered a deep layer of language that had not been apparent during the period of oral tradition had an ardent desire to seek the Buddha who had entered *nirvāṇa* in the scriptural dimension. As Cole (2005) has persuasively argued in dealing with the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Tathāgatagarbha Sutra*, one of the important metaphors found in early Mahāyāna texts is the reunion of the son and the Buddha as his genuine father, from whom he had been torn apart. According to the discourses of these sutras, those who are fortunate enough to obtain the sutra find themselves encountering inside the scripture the Buddha, long after the Buddha entered nirvana. It is worth noting that the encounter here is characterized as a reunion, which is indeed a new and unique experience. However, the newness and uniqueness essentially correspond to the newness and uniqueness of the emotion one experiences when long-lost memories are revived. The Mahāyāna sutras are scriptures equipped with a refined structure of discourse that enables the reader to experience a deeper dimension of consciousness concerning the issues of difference and sameness, and newness and repetition. These characteristics show a remarkable agreement with those elucidated by contemporary semiologists represented by Derrida.

There were, of course, people in ancient India who created such texts. However, as we already discussed in dealing with the disadvantage of over-emphasizing the role of the priest, *dharmabhāṇaka*, there would be almost no point in reconstructing the author(s) of the “early Mahāyāna sutras” that place an extreme emphasis on the significance of discourses concerning the ultimate value of Buddhist religious activities distinct from external environments. Among other things, given the current state of historical documents as discussed above, it is quite difficult to specify the historical characteristics

of the author(s) with any certainty. In contrast, it is quite possible to reconstruct the mechanism by which these new scriptures appeared, to analyze the characteristics of these texts in contrast to traditional ones and to elucidate the way these texts influenced the history of Buddhism.

It is important to scrutinize the details of the textuality of the Mahāyāna sutras, not their authorship. In fact, when looking over the history of studies of traditional sutras, known as Nikāya or Āgama, authorship has never been an issue, and scholarly attention has focused solely on their textuality. In contrast, when it comes to the Mahāyāna scriptures, authorship has been the main issue since the beginning of modern Buddhist Studies in Meiji-era Japan. As might be expected, these two different approaches originate in the obstinate preconception inherent to modern Buddhist scholars that the traditional Buddhist texts were the teachings of the Buddha, while the Mahāyāna sutras were not—a persistent presumption that has never been subject to an attempt at verification.

However, scholars should have questioned the authorship of the traditional Buddhist sutras rather than that of the Mahāyāna sutras. The nature of the authors of the Mahāyāna sutras, whose historical circumstances are considerably obscure, could have been made clear in such a manner as to be put in contrast to or in comparison with the authors of the traditional scriptures, which are embedded in slightly more favorable environments in terms of historical testimony.

One of the answers to this question, which has hardly ever come up in Buddhist Studies, is presented as circumstantial evidence with notable content. According to a precious account given in the Vinayaṭīka concerning the use and preservation of sutras, it is the job of the lay devotees, the *upāsaka* and/or the *upāsika*, to memorize, inscribe, preserve and manage the scriptures in order to encourage the monks to study them (Vinayaṭīka I 140–141; T. 1435: 174b-c; T. 1445: 1042c-1043a, etc.). This shows remarkable agreement with Faxian's records of the management and preservation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra* in Mahāyāna (T. 2145: 60b2–7). As clearly shown by this corroboration, the texts of the traditional Buddhist scriptures and of the Mahāyāna scriptures were transmitted in identical ways.

It is also important to remember the clarification made by Schopen regarding the property rights of monasteries. He argues that monasteries were not owned by monks. Rather, monasteries belonged to influential lay devotees who donated the property, and these people had influence over the ceremonial activities conducted by the monasteries. It would be reasonable to assume that the knowledge produced by and preserved in monasteries, probably except for that in the Vinayaṭīka covering the code of conduct of individual

monks and the management of rituals by the organization, was considered to be shared with the lay devotees. Some texts in the Sūtrapiṭaka must have been a primary example of such expectations.

7. To be Continued

The discussions I have raised here, placed against the backdrop of the vast landscape of Buddhism in ancient India drawn by recent archeological surveys, identifies what served as an influential milieu for the emergence of Mahāyāna sutras and links it with several features in the linguistic sphere brought about by the change from an oral to a written medium. This seems to provide answers to some of the questions that have arisen in research on Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Firstly, it solves with no difficulty the longstanding mystery of why Mahāyāna Buddhism, while having a host of scriptures, leaves no recognizable institutional entity from its early stage. Whereas Mahāyāna Buddhism appears for the first time in an inscription from the fifth to sixth centuries CE, Mahāyāna scriptures, as shown by the age of manuscript remains in India and records in China, were already in existence in the first century CE.

As has been reported many times, the criterion for what constitutes Mahāyāna Buddhism, according to the records of Faxian and Xuanzang, was whether the monks recited Mahāyāna sutras. There is no need to place special emphasis on the fact that Mahāyāna Buddhism does not have its own Vinayapiṭaka, documents inevitable to Buddhism as an institutional entity.

Secondly, this theory explains the continuity between early Mahāyāna Buddhism and early Buddhist traditions by suggesting that the Mahāyāna sutras were most likely composed in environments in which they were able to utilize knowledge of early Buddhist traditions or the sacred biographies of the Buddha—namely, traditional monasteries donated by lay devotees.

This at the same time tells us the discontinuity between these two lines of Buddhism is found at the level of textual interest shown by the intention of the Mahāyāna scriptures to surpass the notion of the traditional legitimacy of Buddhism. They viewed scriptures as the Buddha himself and continued to pour their wisdom into deepening and refining the words of the Buddha and his teachings in the scripture. As a result, a host of scriptures eventually emerged that had established within the text an inner history of Buddhism concerned primarily with the legitimacy of Buddhist teachings. This discourse needed to be constantly reverbalized to fit the ever-changing historical situation.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate the point I mentioned at the outset, namely, the importance of the discernment of the two different histories, that

is, the internal history of a text concerned with the elucidation of the content of discourses inside the text and the external history of it referring to the environments in which the text was produced. This discrimination will make the rich research on Mahāyāna sutras that has been done in the past and that will be done in the future more critically sustainable. This topic will be made much clearer when considered in a full manner in the context given by Jacques Derrida and others.

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The Buddha's Motivations for Teaching and Their Historical Background

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Traditionally, the Buddha's teachings are considered to be unique, but historically speaking many of his teachings were formulated as a response to or criticism of other philosophical and religious ideas of his time. Modern scholarship is aware of the problem, but it has rarely tackled it in detail. We know, for instance, that the Buddha's theory of selflessness (*anātman*) was a reaction against the Upaniṣadic *ātman* philosophy, but there are no studies clarifying which particular *ātman* doctrine the Buddha had in mind. This paper attempts to address such shortcomings and shed more light on the background of the Buddha's doctrines in relation to his antecedents.

1. Uddālaka Āruṇi's Philosophy

Uddālaka Āruṇi is ranked alongside Yājñavalkya as a representative philosopher of the *Upaniṣads*. According to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (Chapter VI), Uddālaka expounded a theory that had the concept of Being (*sat*) at its center. He denied the non-being (*asat*) theory, maintaining that in the beginning there was only Being (VI, 2, 2). From Being, light (*tejas*) was born, and from light water (*ap*) came forth (VI, 2, 3). This, in its turn, produced food (*anna*) (VI, 2, 4). Next, Being (now referred to as *devatā*) thought to enter into these three principles (also called *devatā*) by means of the living self (*jīvenātmanā*) and to develop (*vyākaraṇi*) names (*nāma*) and forms (*rūpa*), i.e., the phenomenal world (VI, 3, 2).

Fire (*agni*) is not included among the three primordial principles and is described as a transformation (*vikāra*). This "transformation," Uddālaka says, "is [a modality of] grasping by means of words, a name (*vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam*)" (VI, 4, 1).¹ Human beings are also born of these three

¹ On *vācārambhaṇa*, see Nakamura 1990: 256 and passim, p. 300f.; Nakamura 1951: 187f.; Gotō 1989.

principles (VI, 5-8). And Being, which is the root of all, is now also called *ātman* (VI, 9, 4; 10, 3; 11, 3; 12, 3; 13, 3; 14, 3; 15, 3; 16, 3). By asserting that the transformations of the three principles are names, Uddālaka does not mean that they are unsubstantial, devoid of reality. The entire creation, including humans, evolves from Being according to a fixed order. And the words, which grasp phenomena, must also follow and submit to this order.

2. Sañjaya's Doctrine and Its Critique

Let us have a look now at the views of Sañjaya, one of the contemporary heretic teachers criticized by the Buddha. According to the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, Sañjaya was asked by King Ajātasattu about the fruits of the recluse life (*sāmaññaphala*). His answer touches upon four points: the existence of another world (i.e., rebirth); the existence of spontaneously arisen beings; the existence of karmic results; the existence of the Tathāgata after death. Here is how he details his stance regarding the first point:

If you ask me: “Is there another world?,” if I thought another world exists, I would answer you it does. But I don't think so, I don't think it is as such, I don't think it is different, I don't think it is not so, I don't think it is not the case that it is not so.²

Sañjaya goes on to say that he would answer the same if asked whether another world does not exist, whether another world both exists and does not exist, whether another world neither exists nor does not exist. And he replies similarly to the other three points.

The *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (DN I 59) calls Sañjaya's attitude *vikkhepa*. The *Brahmajālasutta* (DN I 24f.) likewise refers to such views as *amarāvikkhepa* and criticizes the ascetics and Brahmins who answer in such a manner (*amarāvikkhepika*) as committing the error of *vācāvikkhepa* or *amarāvikkhepa*. A similar criticism is also voiced at MN I 519.

The sixty-two wrong views set forth in the *Brahmajālasutta* are also discussed in the **Mahāvibhāṣāsāstra* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 and the *Yogācārabhūmi* 瑜伽師地論. In both treatises, the views corresponding to *amarāvikkhepa* are referred to in Chinese as four types of 不死矯亂, literally “immortal misrep-

² *Evantipi me no, tathatipi me no, aññathatipi me no, notipi me no, no notipi me no.* (DN I 58). There are differences in the wording of this sentence in the Chinese parallel *Shamenguo jing* 沙門果經: 大王。現有沙門果報。問如是。答此事如是。此事實。此事異。此事非異非不異。(T 1.01: 108c20-22). In this respect, the Chinese version is similar in wording to the *Brahmajālasutta* (DN I 25f.). See, however, the Chinese version of the **Śāriputrābhīdharmasāstra*, *Shelifu apitanlun* 舍利弗阿毘曇論: 此事如是非也。此事實非也。此事異非也。此事非異非不異非也。(T 1548.28: 658b3-4, 12-14, 20-22, 25-26).

resenting agitation.” The same line of construing the term is also found in the Theravāda exegetical tradition. The Pali commentaries take *amarā* in the sense of *na marati* (i.e., *a-mara*), “not die,” and gloss the word as follows:

What does this [“not-dying”] refer to? By unfolding an argument based on “I don’t think so,” wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) and words (*vācā*) are endless (*pariyantarāhita*). (DN-a I 115; MN-a III 233)

How is *vikkhepa* construed?

Vikkhepa means “to be scattered in all directions.” *Amarāvikkhepa* is used in the sense of scattering “never-dying” [i.e., endlessly] wrong views and words (*diṭṭhiya vācaya ca vikkhepa*). And those [who take such views] are [called] *amarāvikkhepika*. (ibid.)

The term *pariyantarāhita* clearly shows that later exegetes took *amarā* as the feminine form of the adjective *amara*, which is quite a forced interpretation.³ But the commentators also put forth another interpretation:

Amarā is a species of fish. The fish swims up and down [so it is] impossible to catch. Similarly, this talk (*vāda*) goes here and there, impossible to grasp. It is, therefore, called *amarāvikkhā*. And those who [engage in it] are [called] *amarāvikkhepika*.

Here, too, the exegetes focus on “talk,” “discourse,” “argument” (*vāda*) rather than on “word,” “language” (*vācā*), although the *Brahmajālasutta* also uses the term *vācāvikkhepa* (see above). As a “discourse” is expressed verbally, it can be said to encompass both the content, i.e., views, and the linguistic medium, i.e., words. Nonetheless, one gets the impression that the exegetes were not particularly interested in elaborating upon the nature of *vācā* itself.

Usually, when more than one gloss appears in a commentary, the authors show support for the last one they discuss. If such is the case here, then they seem to uphold the second interpretation. The species of fish referred to here is usually construed to be the eel. Nakamura explains the compound as “discourse which is difficult to catch like a slippery eel.”⁴

How is the **amarāvikṣepa* 不死矯亂 compound construed in the **Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra*?

[Concerning] those [who propound] the theory of four [kinds of] “immortal misrepresenting agitation” (**amarāvikṣepa* 不死矯)

³ See Hata 2009. Cf. also *amarā-vitakka*, in Cone 2001: 227r, which has both *amarāvitakka* and *amaravitakka*.

⁴ Nakamura 1991: 137.

亂), “immortal” [here] refers to a dweller of the heavenly worlds (**deva* 天). Due to [the fact that such] dwellers are long-lived, the heretics become attached [to the idea of becoming a *deva*] and consider [the state] eternal, immortal.⁵

It is a different line of semantic interpretation, but again, as in the Pali tradition, the emphasis is on *amarā*^o rather than on *vācā*^o.⁶

In conclusion, we can say that the exegesis is more concerned with *diṭṭhi* and *vāda*, which is used instead of *vācā*. Of course, *diṭṭhi* and *vāda* are expressed by means of *vācā*, but the validity of *diṭṭhi* and *vāda* (hence of *vācā* but only as a medium of conveying them) is judged according to their content. Nonetheless, I believe that there is a special significance in the use of *vācā* in the compound above, and it certainly deserves more attention per se.

Uddālaka, as we have seen above, held that the entire world and its evolution follow an order. Phenomena become named, and language makes it possible to grasp the world. I believe a compound like *vācāvikkhepa* can be regarded as an attempt to criticize the incoherent philosophical confusion at the level of language (*vācā*).

3. The Problem of Language

Uddālaka linked language to existence. Even if we take the world of transformation (*vikāra*) as a mere designation in relation to Being and three principles, it is not non-existence. As far as its roots go back to Being and three principles, the phenomenal world has a relative existence. Uddālaka built up his theory in order to make such a point.

⁵ 四不死矯亂論者。不死謂天。以天長壽外道執為常住不死。(T 1545.27: 998a11-12)

⁶ We should add that in Buddhist literature *vikkhepa/vikṣepa* often collocates with *citta* or *cetas*, with the meaning of “(mental) distraction/agitation.” For example:

cetaso vikkhepo, A.N. III, 448. A.N.V, 145(3), etc.

cetaso vikkhepaṃ pahatuṃ. So *vikkhittacitto*, A.N.V, 147

Tattha katamo cetaso vikkhepo? Yaṃ cittassa uddhaccaṃ avupasamo cetaso vikkhepo bhantattaṃ cittassa – ayaṃ vuccati ‘cetaso vikkhepo. Vibh. 373

The opposite of this is the state of those whose mind is not agitated (*avikkhittacitta*, A.N. III, 174) and the antidote to *vikkhepa* is mental one-pointedness (*ekagga*) achieved through meditative concentration (*samādhi*):

Cittaṃ yassa vasibhutaṃ, ekaggaṃ susamahitaṃ. A.N. I, 164. 167

samahitaṃ cittaṃ bhavaṃ, ekaggaṃ, M. N. I, 21. 117. 186. 189. S.N. IV, 125

Asubhaya cittaṃ bhavehi, ekaggaṃ susamahitaṃ;

Vikkhittacittonekaggo, samma dhammaṃ na passati;

Apassamano saddhammaṃ, dukkha na parimuccati. V. P. II, 235

Avikkhittacitto ekaggo, sammā dhammaṃ vipassati;

Sampassamāno saddhammaṃ, dukkha so parimuccati. V.P. II, 235

The Buddha, however, did not admit the real existence of language. The basic problem underlying Sañjaya's position is connected to the doctrines of eternalism (*sassatavāda*) and annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*). The admittance of the language of existence would have amounted to the acceptance of eternalism, a wrong view consistently rejected by Buddhism. In the words of the *Brahmajālasutta*, "annihilationism postulates the annihilation, destruction, and non-existence of existing beings,"⁷ while eternalism "postulates the eternity of the self and the world."⁸

The Buddha did not accept the real existence of language. He always set a great deal of importance on experience and used words from the range of experience. When he talked about daily matters, he employed such words as *diṭṭhadhamma* and *paccuppanna*, avoiding expressions that could be construed as presupposing real existence or having roots in real existence.⁹

4. The Meaning of *sakkāya/satkāya*

The compound *sakkāya* is closely related to the problem of existence. There is no clear definition of the word in the canonical texts. In Pali sources, it consistently appears as *sakkāyadīṭṭhi*. Its Sanskrit form is *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*. Phonetically speaking, Pali *sakkāya* being Sanskritized as *satkāya* does not raise any problems. The Sanskrit form *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* was translated into Chinese as 有身見, literally, "view of existent body," or simply 身見 "body view." The compound also appears phonetically transcribed as 薩迦耶見 (or rarely 薩伽耶見).

The meaning of *sat* in this compound is, however, quite difficult to understand. According to another hypothesis, *sakkāya* originally derived from *sva-kāya* "one's own body." Nakamura is one of the proponents of this theory. In his monumental dictionary,¹⁰ *satkāya*, as well as the Chinese translation based on it, is a wrong Sanskritization of *sakkāya* < *sva-kāya*. The main textual evidence that he adduces in favor of this derivation is the compound *svakāyadr̥ṣṭi* used by Nāgārjuna in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (XXIII 5).¹¹

The compound *sakkāyadīṭṭhi/satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* was not, however, part of the original teaching of selflessness (*anātman*). It was probably a later addition to

⁷ *Ucchedavāda sato sattassa ucchedaṃ vināsam vibhavaṃ paññapenti* (DN I, 32). Cf. MN I 140; II, 228, 232; *Vibhaṅga* 378.

⁸ *Sassatavāda, sassataṃ attanañca lokañca paññapenti* (DN I, 13).

⁹ The Buddha's attitude of answering only when asked (*pañhaṃ puṭṭho vyākaroti*, DN I, 175) and refusing to actively engage in debates with others is also linked to his views on language. Cf. T 99.02: 8b16-17; SN III. 138-139, etc.

¹⁰ Nakamura 2001: II, 946b.

¹¹ On Oldenberg and others, see Imanishi 1986.

the doctrinal system. Such early scriptures as the *Suttanipāta* actually contain only the word *sakkāya*, not the compound *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. Here is a relevant quotation from the *Suttanipāta* that also sheds light on the original meaning of the term:

759. Material phenomena, sounds, tastes, smells, tangibles and mental objects are desired, loved and agreeable as long as it is said, “They exist.”
 760. The world, including the gods, thinks they are pleasing, but when they stop, they think this is suffering.
 761. The Noble Ones regard the destruction of *sakkāya* as pleasing. For the [Noble Ones] who see properly, this is contrary to [what is held by] the whole world.¹²

The material phenomena (*rūpa*), etc., are objects of desire and pleasure as long as they are assumed to exist. The Noble Ones, on the other hand, take delight in the destruction of *sakkāya*. In this context, *sakkāya* no doubt refers to the material phenomena, etc., as long as they are believed to exist (*yāvataṭṭhīti vuccati*). The verbal form *atthi* is replaced in the last stanza with its present participle *sat*, “existing.” The word *kāya* should then be taken not in its meaning of “body” but rather as meaning “collection, group, totality,” a sense well attested in Buddhist literature.¹³ In the verses above, *kāya* means the entire group of material phenomena, sounds, smells, etc. It follows that *sakkāya* should be understood here as “group (or set) of phenomena [assumed to be] existent.” A similar verse can be found in the *Samyuttanikāya* (SN IV 127).

I think it is necessary here to refer to the context in the *Upaniṣads* where the philosophy of *ātman* is taught. Philosophers of the *Upaniṣads* seek after the truth of the universe. The universe or the whole world is expressed as *idaṃ sarvaṃ* or *sarvaṃ*. For instance,

oṃkāra eve 'daṃ sarvaṃ. (Chāndogya Up. II, 22, 4)
aham eve 'daṃ sarvaṃ asāni. (id. V, 1, 15)
sa ya eṣo 'ṇimā aitatadātmyam idaṃ sarvaṃ, tat satyaṃ, sa ātmā,

¹² *Rūpā saddā rasā gandhā phassā dhammā ca kevalā |*
Iṭṭhā kantā manāpā ca yāvataṭṭhīti vuccati. || 759 ||
Sadevakassa lokassa ete vo sukhasammatā |
Yattha cete nirujjhanti taṃ nesaṃ dukkhasammatāṃ. || 760 ||
Sukhanti diṭṭhamariyehi sakkāyassuparodhanaṃ |
Paccanīkamidaṃ hoti, sabbalokena passataṃ. || 761 ||

¹³ See, for instance, compounds with °*kāya* 身 (in Chinese translation), such as 六觸身, 六受身, 六想身, 六行身, 六識身, etc.

tat tvam asi. (*id.* VI, 8, 7; 9, 4; 10, 3; 11, 3; 12, 3; 13, 3; 14, 3; 15, 3; Cf. *id.* 16, 3).

The phrase *idaṃ sarvaṃ* is repeated several times in Chapter VI of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, where Uddālaka's philosophy is described.

Also in the Buddhist texts we find passages such as:

What is *sabbam*?

Eye and form, ear and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and touch, and mind and *dhammas*. This is called *sabbam*.¹⁴

Here is expressed the thought that *sabbam* is the twelve *āyatana*s. We cannot doubt this context and the rhetorical device common between the *Upaniṣads* and Buddhist texts. If we admit this coincidence, the next instance will confirm our conviction.

The dialogue between Upāsaka Visākha and Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā begins with the question about *sakkāya*.

They say *sakkāya, sakkāya*. What, says Bhagavat, is *sakkāya*?
Bhagavat says, the five *upādānakkhandhas* is *sakkāya*.¹⁵

If we add the sentence "What is *sakkāya*?" before the dialogue, then the context of this dialogue may be more easily grasped.

sabbam sakkāyo.
katamo sakkāyo.
pañca ime, upādānakkhandhā sakkāyo.

This scripture does not define the meaning of the term *sakkāya*. The *Fale biqiuni jing* 法樂比丘尼經, a Chinese text corresponding to the Pali scripture, translates *sakkāya* as "own body" (自身), i.e., *sva-kāya*.¹⁶ But the *pañcupādānakkhandhas* cannot be the same as the body (*kāya*). The concept

¹⁴ *Sabbasutta*, SN IV 15.

kiñca, bhikkhave, sabbam.

cakkhuñceva rūpā ca, sotañca saddā ca, ghāṇañca gandhā ca, jivhā ca rasā ca, kāyo ca phoṭṭhabbā ca, mano ca dhammā ca.

idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sabbam

雜阿含經 (T 99.02: 91a): 云何名一切。佛告婆羅門。一切者。謂十二入處。眼色。耳聲。鼻香。舌味。身觸。意法。是名一切。

¹⁵ *Cūlavedallasutta*, MN I 298.

sakkāyo sakkāyo ti, ayye, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, ayye, sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā' ti pañca kho ime, āvuso visākha, upādānakkhandhā sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā,

¹⁶ 中阿含經 (T 26.01: 788a): 毗舍佉優婆夷便問曰。賢聖。自身說自身。云何為自身耶。法樂比丘尼答曰。世尊說五盛陰自身。色盛陰。覺。想。行。識盛陰。是謂世尊說五盛陰。

of body (*kāya*) is narrow. The objects of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, for instance, are *kāya*, *vedanā*, *citta* and *dhammas*, and these are separated from each other; the body (*kāya*) cannot include *citta* and the others. For the same reason, the *pañcupādānakkhandhas* cannot be the same as *sakkāya*. Therefore, it cannot be correct to translate *sakkāya* as “own body.”

Theoretically speaking, it is unproblematic not to identify *sakkāya* with own body. Body is only a part of the *pañcupādānakkhandhas*. This is noticed in the Buddhist scriptures:

Rāhula asked Bhagavat.

How to recognize, how to see, in order to annihilate the *anusayas* of “I”-consciousness, “mine”-consciousness and arrogance about all the characters of the body with consciousness and external world?¹⁷

The “body with consciousness,” i.e., “consciousness and body” (此識身) and the external world are the *pañcupādānakkhandhas*. Then the scripture continues to explain *rūpa* and other *khandhas*:

rūpa: past, future and present; internal and external, etc.

Other *khandhas* are also explained in the same way. According to the scripture, the *pañcupādānakkhandhas* cover the whole world, internal and external. Therefore, it is clear that the body alone cannot include both the internal and external world.

The compound *saviññāṇaka kāya* (此識身) attracts our attention because it reminds us of *sakkāya*. This must be a trial to interpret *sakkāya* in a Buddhist way, *kāya* being understood as body and *sa-* as *saviññāṇa*. Even if this is a Buddhist interpretation of *sakkāya*, this is not correct, but it is widely accepted in the Pali *Nikāyas* and Chinese *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經, *Yogācārabhūmi* (*Yujiashidilun* 瑜伽師地論, tr. Xuanzang 玄奘) and *Benshi jing* 本事經 (T 765.17, tr. Xuanzang).

I would like to add another instance of the use of *sakkāya* from the *Theragāthā*:

For innumerable *kappas* they obtained *sakkāya*.

This is their last (one), this is (their) last accumulation (= body).

Now there is no transmigration of birth and death, no re-birth.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Rāhulasutta*, SN III, 135.

kathaṃ nu kho, bhante, jānato kathaṃ passato imasmiṅca saviññāṇake kāye bahiddhā ca sabbanimittesu ahaṅkāramamaṅkāramānānusayā na honti.

¹⁸ *Theragāthā* (202)

asaṅkheyyesu kappesu, sakkāyādhigatā ahū;

It is clear that the theme of this verse is the last body of the disciples who attained *bodhi* or of the buddhas, both referred to in the previous verse. *Samussayo* in the second line means body, *kāya* or *sarīra*. Then what does *sakkāya* mean? The commentator explains as follows:

sakkāya is the *pañcupādānakkhandhas*.

They are called *sakkāya*, because they are the accumulation of dhammas existing in the highest sense.¹⁹

According to the commentary, *sakkāya* means the *pañcupādānakkhandhas* or *paramatthato vijjamānadhammasamūha*. It is quite clear that the commentator understands *sakkāya* as *sat-kāya* and *sat* as *paramatthato vijjamāna*. *Sakkāya* is the compound of *sat* and *kāya*, and *sat* is the present participle of *as-*, meaning “existing in the highest sense,” *paramatthato vijjamāna-*, i.e., really existing.

The *pañcupādānakkhandhas* really exist. This is the concept of the *sakkāya*. This concept is identical with the *sakkāya* in the *Suttanipāta*, where it is stated that the six kinds of objects exist. This difference is out of the question. Now it has become clear that the idea of the compound *sakkāya* is an antithesis of Uddālaka's ontology. There is no reason to suspect that the Buddha criticized Uddālaka's philosophy.

Over the centuries, however, the original meaning of *sakkāya* most probably became obscure and eventually forgotten. The later attempts in scholastic treatises and commentaries to elucidate the word actually distorted its original sense. It carried a simple and clear message: one should not regard material phenomena, etc., as existing and the Noble Ones must eradicate such a view. Such a statement also constitutes a devastating criticism of the concept of existence.

In spite of the later misunderstanding of the original meaning of *sakkāya*, the basic stance of Buddhist philosophy has always been to criticize any view that takes existence as the fundamental principle. The **Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, for instance, declares that “all the sixty-two wrong views expounded in the *Brahmajālasūtra* have *satkāya* 有身見 as their root.”²⁰

*tesamayaṃ pacchimako, carimoyaṃ samussayo;
jātimaraṇasamsāro, natthi dāni punabbhavo'*

¹⁹ *Theraḡāthā Aṭṭhakathā* II, 69.

sakkāyāti pañcupādānakkhandhā.

te hi paramatthato vijjamānadhammasamūhatāya 'sakkāyā' ti vuccanti.

²⁰ 又梵網經說六十二諸惡見趣。皆有身見為本。(T 1545.27: 996b26-27)

The doctrine of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda/pratītyasamutpāda*) represents, of course, another biting criticism of the concept of “reality.” Leaving aside the controversial issue of whether the twelvefold chain of dependent arising is an early teaching or a later development, the doctrine represents the very essence of the Four Noble Truths. Sāriputta is said to have originally been Sañjaya’s disciple. (It is also said, however, that this is only a namesake.) According to the traditional accounts, Sāriputta heard a verse from Assaji, one of the Buddha’s first five disciples, and immediately decided to convert to Buddhism. The verse was none other than the famous *Dhammakāyagāthā* or *Pratītyasamutpādagāthā* 緣起法頌 (*ye dhammā hetuppabhavā [...] / ye dharmāḥ hetu- prabhavā [...]*). The episode can be said to encapsulate the symbolic moment of the Buddha’s making his appearance on the stage of Indian philosophy.

Concluding Remarks

The basis of the Buddha’s uniqueness lies in the certainty given by his inner experience attainable through spiritual cultivation. This inner experience is not immediately comprehensible to anyone. One cannot understand it without the empathy and discernment necessary to appreciate its significance. It is, therefore, said that only one who has the same experience as the Buddha, i.e., only another buddha, is able to really comprehend the Buddha.

After his awakening, the Buddha hesitated whether to preach or not. He finally decided to do so after having been entreated by Brahma to benefit all sentient beings ignorant of the Truth. The Buddha’s teachings were a turning point in the history of Indian philosophy, and the Awakened One no doubt realized its full significance.

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The Mahāyāna Scriptures as Views of Śākyamuni: Reading the Buddha's Words from the Perspective of His Being

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Introduction

The theme of this symposium, “The Buddha’s Words and Their Interpretations,” is rich in meaning. This is because the word “Buddha” is multi-layered: it means “one who has awakened” and also refers to the historical person who became awakened. A central part of Buddhist history is people trying to understand the meaning of this “awakened person.” In this context, a question arises as to the basis upon which the Mahāyāna scriptures—which clearly came into existence after the death of the historical Śākyamuni—refer to themselves as “teachings of the Buddha” (Ch. *foshuo*; Jp. *bussetsu* 仏説). Here I will argue from several perspectives that the Mahāyāna sutras tried to elucidate what could be called the supra-historical primordial Buddha or “Dharma” through the existence and words of a historical Śākyamuni who appeared within geographical and spatial time.

1. The Attitude of the Buddha’s Disciples After His Death

The historical Śākyamuni died after leaving behind the words, “Take yourself as a lamp, and take the Dharma as a lamp.” Śākyamuni himself taught that the Dharma transcends history. In the *Ekottara Āgama* (Ch. *Zengyi ahanjing*; Jp. *Zōitsu agonkyō* 增一阿含經), he says, “I have just walked the path walked by the ancient sages” and “I did not create the Dharma of Dependent Arising; this law is everlasting regardless of whether the Tathāgata appears in the world.” However, it is also a fact that the Dharma first came alive and functioned after having been realized by Śākyamuni, and it became an actual teaching of this world only after his disciples heard him preach it. Having encountered and taken refuge in the Dharma through Śākyamuni, there is no doubt that, from the perspective of his disciples, the Buddha and the Dharma were inseparable. It is said that at first the ceremony

for entering the saṅgha consisted simply of reciting the Verse of Threefold Refuge three times. However, with Śākyamuni's death, one of the important Three Jewels in which people took refuge was taken away. This must have led to the question of what was Śākyamuni Buddha's essential nature becoming a pressing issue for his disciples.

Ui Hakuju argues that in the end there were two views: one group focused on the human-ness of Śākyamuni, which Ui calls *jitsuzaishugi* 実在主義; another group focused on his teaching and edification of sentient beings (i.e., his great compassion), which Ui calls *risōshugi* 理想主義.¹ Yamada Ryūjō similarly says that there was one lineage that tried to faithfully transmit Śākyamuni's words and another lineage that exalted the Buddha as a teacher.² Basically, the group that saw Śākyamuni Buddha as a single "person" thought that his physical extinction was the extinction of Śākyamuni himself, and those people tried to find the Buddha's eternal nature within his teachings. In contrast, the other group held that the death of a buddha like Śākyamuni, who worked for sentient beings' salvation out of his great compassion, did not mean that he returned to nothingness as a regular human would upon dying. In the end, the second group came to believe that Śākyamuni had a transcendental nature, as well as thirty-two physical marks and eighteen distinctive abilities. Furthermore, they thought that he came into existence based on his own volition—that is, his vow to save sentient beings—rather than based on affliction-rooted karma, as would be the case for ordinary beings. These are not characteristics of the existence of the historical human that was Śākyamuni; they arose out of contemplations on the nature of this deceased buddha. It appears that the reason for or background to Śākyamuni's transcendent nature became a topic of discussion, and *Jātaka* tales came to be preached in a way that matched the law of cause and effect elucidated by him.

2. Śākyamuni as a Bodhisattva in Jātaka Tales

Ui and Hikata Ryūshō have pointed out that *Jātaka* tales are based on stories that existed in India before Śākyamuni.³ When incorporated into Buddhism, they were written down and also made into artistic works such as

¹ See Ui 1965 (originally 1926). While this paper has some problems when viewed today in terms of its usage of terminology and the like, its arguments based on a broad perspective still hold sway today.

² Yamada 1959: 138.

³ Ui 1965: 207; Hikata 1954.

engravings. It is thought that the twenty-eight *Jākata* tales from Bharhut, India, are the oldest extant ones.⁴ Since these tales do not include the concept of “bodhisattva,” it has been argued that *Jākata* tales were not originally stories of Śākyamuni’s past lives. Furthermore, in what appears to be the oldest part of early Buddhism’s scriptures, one finds very few examples of the word “bodhisattva”; in most cases, sentences about Śākyamuni use the term, “The World Honored-One.” Considering these points together, it appears that the concept of “bodhisattva,” which is frequently found in the *Āgama* scriptures to refer to Śākyamuni during his period of practice before enlightenment, indicates that the view of Śākyamuni had been conceptualized to some degree, such that it came to include superhuman aspects. Ui calls this development the “generalization of Śākyamuni” (*shakuson no ippanka* 釈尊の一般化). The Śākyamuni with the aforementioned thirty-two physical marks and eighteen distinctive abilities—which he is said to have acquired based upon the merit he accumulated in past lives, as described in the *Jātaka* tales—is not simply the historical Śākyamuni. In other words, the “Śākyamuni” that we can know through the *Āgama* scriptures is already not the teachings or doings of a single human who existed in history, but rather an idealized and generalized abstract buddha reconstructed in terms of a historical figure. With Śākyamuni having been generalized, it appears that then past buddhas and future buddhas began to be discussed. For the time being, I will use the phrase “previous-lives bodhisattva” to refer to Śākyamuni during his time of practice before enlightenment as discussed in the *Āgamas*, distinguishing it from the idea of “bodhisattva” subsequently found in Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁵

In this way, it appears that with the incorporation of the “previous-lives bodhisattva” into the *Āgamas*, the “generalization” of Śākyamuni progressed. As has been pointed out in previous scholarship, due to this generalization, the concepts of *arhat* (a disciple of the Buddha who has acquired wisdom) and *pratyekabuddha* (similar to the generalized Buddha but lacking great compassion) emerged.

3. From the Previous-Lives Bodhisattva to the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva

As we have seen, Śākyamuni was generalized in the *Āgamas*. This Śākyamuni is, in terms of content, basically no different from the Śākyamuni of the

⁴ Ui 1965: 208; Maeda 1998: 376.

⁵ Excluding twelve examples in later texts, the term “Śākyamuni Bodhisattva” does not appear in the *Āgama* sutras.

Mahāyāna scriptures. Since this Śākyamuni was generalized, one would not expect to find concrete physical events, such as birth and death, associated with him. The fact that these are clearly preached in the Mahāyāna scriptures seems to indicate that the problem of generalization of buddhahood began as a question of how to understand the historical Śākyamuni. Therefore, we can say that the Śākyamuni of the *Āgamas* is based on his human, historical existence while also generalizing him as a practitioner of great compassion and as one who has realized the Dharma, while also recognizing his human aspects.

The group that thought the Buddha returned to nothingness after death saw him as existing within the teachings and rules he preached. This was because they focused on him as a historical figure. This is the viewpoint that subsequently would come to hold that the Buddha exists within the “five-part Dharma body” of morality, concentration, wisdom, liberation and knowledge of liberation. On the other hand, since Śākyamuni said, “I did not create the Dharma of Dependent Arising; this law is everlasting regardless of whether the Tathāgata appears in the world,” naturally an exploration of the nature of this everlasting Dharma arose. Let us next consider early Mahāyāna Buddhism from this perspective.

The meaning of “bodhisattva” is clearly more generalized in the Mahāyāna scriptures than the “previous-lives bodhisattva” of the *Āgamas*, in that it is not limited to Śākyamuni alone. The concept, which is of course the centerpiece of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is developed in a variety of ways in the early Mahāyāna sutras. In the following, I will discuss how this concept is presented in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, *Perfection of Wisdom sutras*, the *Flower Ornament Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra*.

The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* focuses on a bodhisattva’s vows, the completion of the vows and sentient beings’ birth in a buddha land. In other words, it focuses on showing that buddhas are born from vows. The *Āgamas* describe the causes of enlightenment from the perspective of its result, describing the bodhisattva practices that led to Śākyamuni’s becoming a buddha. Thus, we can see that the relationship between buddhas and bodhisattvas in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is the opposite of the relationship found between the Śākyamuni *Āgamas* and the bodhisattva the *Jātaka* tales, in that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* begins with Dharmākara’s vows and practice, while the *Āgamas* begin with Śākyamuni.

The *Perfection of Wisdom sutras* are centered on the non-attaining of all dharmas, their ungraspable nature, as well as the bodhisattva practice of the six perfections. Kajiyoshi Kōun has pointed out that a scripture that is found in the ancient translation, *Sutra on the Collection of the Six Perfections* (*Liuduji jing* 六度集經; Wu period, tr. Kang Senghui 康僧會), which categorizes *Jātaka* tales based on the six perfections, is related to early Perfection

of Wisdom sutras.⁶ In addition, the four-stage program of bodhisattva practice found in the *Smaller Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* (initial arousal of the intention for enlightenment, sustained intention for enlightenment, non-retrogression and being bound to one more birth) is based on Śākyamuni *Jātaka* tales.⁷ Thus, Kajiyoshi argues, “The essential form of the *Perfection of Wisdom sutras* that served as their basis developed from the previous lives tales of Śākyamuni.”⁸ From this perspective, seeing the *Perfection of Wisdom sutras* as the path of practice for bodhisattvas would mean that sentient beings practice to become like the generalized Śākyamuni of the *Jātakas*. Thus, it is said that the practice of bodhisattvas requires “three incalculably long spans of one hundred eons” (*san asengqi baijie* 三阿僧祇百劫). In this way, we can clearly see that the meaning of “bodhisattva” in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* are completely different. While the former are symbolic representations of compassionate action, the latter are realistic members of the sangha.

Next, let us shift to the *Flower Ornament Sutra* (Chapter on the Ten Grounds and Chapter on Entry into the Dharma Realm) and the *Lotus Sutra*, which are part of the next generation of early Mahāyāna sutras. Since the *Record of the Search for the Profundities* (*Tanxuan ji* 探玄記) was written in seventh-century China by Fazang 法藏, the *Flower Ornament Sutra* has been seen as teaching the bodhisattva path for us human beings to practice (consisting of the ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications of merit and ten grounds). It appears, however, that this view needs to be reevaluated from the perspective of this sutra’s understanding of Śākyamuni, especially since it is preached in the midst of his attaining enlightenment. It is generally thought that the core of the *Flower Ornament Sutra* is the Chapter on the Ten Grounds (*Shidi pin* 十地品) and the Chapter on Entry into the Dharma-realm (*Rufajie pin* 入法界品), but I believe that the Chapter on the Ten Abodes (*Shizhu pin* 十住品) should also be included as central. The Chapter on the Ten Grounds (which is the equivalent of the *Sutra on the Ten Grounds*) clearly draws on the *Perfection of Wisdom sutras*, since it describes the ten grounds of attainment in relation to the ten *pāramitās*. Also, one translation of the Chapter on the Ten Abodes states that the ten abodes refer to the virtues of Śākyamuni in his previous lives.⁹ Further, I have recently discovered scriptural passages

⁶ Hikata 1954: 105.

⁷ Kajiyoshi 1956: 243; Yamada 1959: 213.

⁸ Kajiyoshi 1956: 243.

⁹ *Pusa shizhu xingdao pin* 菩薩十住行道品 (tr. Dharmarakṣa / Zhu Fahu 竺法護, T 283). Regarding this point, see Oda 2013: 39.

that indicate that the story of the youth Sudhana seeking the Buddhist path in the Chapter on Entry into the Dharma-realm is the development of a *Jātaka* tale.¹⁰ Based on these points, I believe that it is necessary to reconsider the significance of the *Flower Ornament Sutra* from the perspective of its understanding of Śākyamuni.

The *Lotus Sutra* clearly articulates a Mahāyāna view of Śākyamuni. The center of the sutra's first half (later called its “derivative aspect”; Ch. *jimen*, Jp. *Shakumon* 迹門) is the Chapter on Expedient Means. It begins with the statement, “The Buddha has closely attended innumerable hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of other buddhas. He has exhaustively carried out practices with courage and persistence under uncountable numbers of buddhas.”¹¹ This passage describes the causal stage (the period of practice before enlightenment) of the Śākyamuni who is presently preaching on Vulture Peak. The central message of the various teachings in the Chapter on Expedient Means is that the Three Vehicles are expedient means for the One Vehicle of truth. Taking into account that, as previously described, these Three Vehicles arose from the generalization of Śākyamuni, I believe we can say that the One Buddha Vehicle refers to the original generalized Śākyamuni (buddha vehicle). The centerpiece of the second half of the sutra is the Chapter on the Longevity of the Tathāgata, which describes the eternally abiding nature of Śākyamuni as the Dharma, an issue that is addressed beginning in the Chapter of the Vision of the Jeweled Pagoda. In other words, when seen in light of the development of views of Śākyamuni, the *Lotus Sutra* is a scripture that in the first half makes clear the true meaning of his teachings and the second half shows that he and the eternally abiding Dharma are one. This sutra can be read as presenting a full articulation of the nature of Śākyamuni from a Mahāyāna perspective.

The above considerations show that these early Mahāyāna scriptures resulted from the attempts of Śākyamuni's disciples to answer the questions occasioned by the death of the Buddha: “What is the Buddha?” and “What is the Dharma?”

¹⁰ In 2015, I gave a presentation on this topic entitled “*Ramagakyō kara mita Kegonkyō nyūhokkai bon no shudai nitsuite*” 『羅摩伽經』からみた『華嚴經』入法界品の主題について (On the Subject of the *Huayan jing*'s Chapter on Entry into the Dharma-Realm as Seen From the *Luomojie jing*). See Oda 2019.

¹¹ T 262.9: 5b27-29. 佛曾親近百千萬億無數諸佛 盡行諸佛無量道法 勇猛精進. Translation from Kubo and Yuyama 2007: 23 (modified).

4. The Turn in Buddhism's View of History: From Geographical-Spatial Time to Primordial-Essential Time

At first glance Mahāyāna scriptures appear to be discussing a variety of completely disparate issues. However, in fact there is a consistent concern that can be seen as centering around a more and more profound understanding of Śākyamuni. The difference between the times that the *Āgamas* and Mahāyāna sutras were created is not that great at all. The generalized Śākyamuni presented in the *Āgamas* and the Śākyamuni found in the Mahāyāna sutras are not that different in terms of content. Perhaps it would be most appropriate to say they are created of the same material. However, the former begins with the historical Śākyamuni (the result) to investigate his great merit (the cause) while not leaving behind the historical Śākyamuni. In contrast, the latter hold that a buddha comes about based on a cause (the bodhisattva) and preach about the multiple bodhisattvas and buddhas of the past, present and future. The meanings of “the stage of bodhisattva practices before the enlightenment of the Buddha” and of “the stage of bodhisattva practices before enlightenment that are still being or will be undertaken” are completely different: while the former logically has no uncertain elements, for the latter the future is undecided. Thus, for those who engage in bodhisattva practices in the present or future, what is assured? Nāgārjuna's *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* investigated this issue, making clear the path of non-retrogression and beings who are determined to attain enlightenment (Sk. *niyata-rāsi*, Ch. *zhengding ju* 正定聚). This is probably the result of Nāgārjuna's engagement with the question of the relationship between Śākyamuni's practices before enlightenment and his own practice of the bodhisattva path, but a detailed analysis of this must wait for another day.

Abbreviations

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

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- . 2019. “*Ramagakyō kara mita Kegonkyō nyūhokkai bon no shudai nitsuite*” 『羅摩伽經』 からみた『華嚴經』 入法界品の主題について (On the Subject of the *Huayan jing*'s Chapter on Entry into the Dharma-Realm as Seen from the *Luomoqie jing*), in Sakamoto Kōbaku Hakase Kiju Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai 坂本廣博博士喜寿記念論文集刊行会, ed., *Bukkyō no kokoro to bunka* 仏教の心と文化 [The Heart and Culture of Buddhism], pp. 25-43. Sankibō Busshorin.
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Sūtra and Abhidharma: Taking in the Buddha's Words

AKIO MINOURA

“A person's path is decided from the moment that
the crystallization of experience begins.”
MORI Arimasa, *On Thinking and Experience*¹

Not long after the early Buddhist scriptures were compiled, the *abhidharma* appeared. In this paper, I would like to ascertain the significance of this development from *sūtras* to the *abhidharma* in terms of intellectual history. In doing so, adopting a perspective that considers how people took in the Buddha's words, I aim to depict one aspect of the history of ideas in Indian Buddhism.

1. Narratives of Experience that Precede Methodolaty

Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) criticizes excessive concern with establishing a proper methodology for academic work in his “The Essay as Form.”

For it is mere superstition on the part of a science that operates by processing raw materials to think that concepts as such are unspecified and become determinate only when defined. Science needs the notion of the concept as a *tabula rasa* to consolidate its claim to authority, its claim to be the sole power to occupy the head of the table. In actuality, all concepts are already implicitly concretized through the language in which they stand. (“The Essay as Form,” *Notes to Literature* 1)²

¹ MORI 1976: 209.

² ADORNO 1991: 12.

The *raison d'être* of Buddhist *sūtras* is in their form itself: narratives that are not excessively caught up in methodology.³ In the *sūtras'* narrative worlds, many suffering people are depicted. They begin walking the Buddhist path through the experience of reconsidering themselves in a fundamental way. The main characters of the *sūtras'* narratives encounter the Buddha's words, and the Buddha's teachings are spun from their suffering. We who read *sūtras* are also given the chance to encounter the Buddha's words at any time through these texts. The *raison d'être* of the *sūtras* lies in both their providing opportunities to discover existential and religious issues through the characters' experiences that are presented in narrative form and in their unlimited opening of the Buddha's words to readers.⁴ From the early *sūtras*, we can find multiple narratives of experiences of people who came into contact with the Buddha's words and would come to encounter the Buddha. In such cases, the words the Buddha speaks are not always defined one by one, and explanations are not necessarily provided for how to understand related doctrines.

It appears that the intellectual desire to put in place norms regarding understanding the words of the Buddha in the *sūtras* arose at an early stage in Buddhist history, though we cannot pinpoint the exact time. As is well known, the *abhidharma* project—in other words, the organization, categorization and analysis of doctrine—can already be seen in the early *sūtras* (*āgama*).⁵ Furthermore, one finds “Sarvastivata” (Sarvāstivāda 說一切有部) inscribed on a lion capital from Mathurā.⁶ From this, it can be inferred that the *abhidharma* project had already begun. The *Nettipakaraṇa*—which is estimated to have come into existence in the Pāli tradition between the

³ MINOURA 2015. In writing this paper, I have drawn considerably from WASHIDA 2007.

⁴ Hermann Oldenberg, basing his understanding of the Buddha's doctrines on early scriptures, states that early Buddhism rejected both views that doubt the basis of morality as well as all theories that are for the sake of theory. See OLDENBERG 1915: 292. In the field of *abhidharma* research, SAKURABE 1969 provides a good overview of the development from the *āgamas* to the *abhidharma*. Based on recent research, SHIMODA Masahiro has made the interesting point that “there is a division of roles in which the *abhidharma* opens that which was closed off by *sūtras*.” See SHIMODA 1997: 34. All of these are excellent perspectives. However, they do not make clear the significance of the *sūtras* in terms of intellectual history.

⁵ Regarding the research on scriptural hermeneutics, see SAKAMOTO 1937. Though one finds the hallmark of the *abhidharma* exegesis (at a very early stage) in early *sūtras*, this does not diminish the significance of the emergence of the *abhidharma* texts in Buddhist history. See WILLEMEN et al. 1998: 177-181; AO HAR A 2007.

⁶ Regarding this inscription, see Mathurā 84 (Lion Capital, held by the British Museum), TSUKAMOTO 1996: 668ff.

beginning of the first century BCE and the first century CE—presents analytical norms for properly understanding scripture.

As Furuyama Ken'ichi has pointed out, it is inappropriate to see the *Nettipakarāṇa* as just instructions for interpreting scripture or a guide for those writing commentaries.⁷ *Nettī-aṭṭhakathā*, a commentary on the *Nettipakarāṇa*, classifies doctrine (*sāsana*) under teachings (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*) and realization (*paṭivedha*). Then, the *Nettī-aṭṭhakathā* says that teachings (*pariyatti*) are a means (*upāya*) for acquiring practice (*paṭipatti*) and realization (*paṭivedha*).⁸ In light of the commentary in the *Nettī-aṭṭhakathā*, it is clear that the *Nettipakarāṇa* does not adopt an intellectual model that establishes a distinction between “theory” and “practice” and does not present itself as a strictly theoretical text in the sense that it has no relation to the act of practice and has only reference to theory itself. This is because the purpose of its analytical discussion of interpretive norms for acquiring a correct understanding of the teachings is to direct readers toward *nirvāṇa*. The objective of the *Nettipakarāṇa* cannot be discussed without including this point.

Even if we see the *Nettipakarāṇa* as not being a theoretical work that presents just interpretive norms, following Adorno, we must say that it is methodolatry in the sense that even empirical theories investigate some conditions of perception and aspire to systematization.⁹ Therefore, it must be understood that a sort of methodolatry regarding the words of the Buddha was already behind the appearance of a work like *Nettipakarāṇa*. Furthermore,

⁷ See MIZUNO 1997; FURUYAMA 1999. As is well known, there is a tradition that holds that the method of exploring doctrine called *netti* was taught by Mahākaccāyana. This tradition suggests the relation between *netti* and Mathurā and is very interesting. See FURUYAMA 2005.

⁸ See *Nettī-aṭṭhakathā*: [1] sutamayañāṅgocaro ca yo “pariyattisaddhammo” ti vuccati. [2] cintāmayañāṅgocaro ca yo ākārāparivittakkadiṭṭhinijjhānakkhantīhi gahetabbākāro vimuttāyatanaviseso “paṭipattisaddhammo” ti vuccati. [3] vipassanāñāṅdisahagato bhāvanāmayañāṅgocaro ca yo “paṭivedhasaddhammo” ti vuccati.

evaṃ tividhampi sāsanaṃ sāsanavaranti padena saṅgaṇhitvā tattha yaṃ paṭhamam, taṃ itaresaṃ adhigamūpāyoti sabbasāsanaṃ mūlabhūtaṃ attano pakaraṇassa ca visayabhūtaṃ pariyattisāsanaṃ eva tāva saṅkhepato vibhajanto “dvādasa padāni” ti gāthamāha. (Myanmar Version, Buddhasāsana Society, 1960, p. 10).

⁹ “In relation to scientific procedure and its philosophical grounding as method, the essay, in accordance with its idea, draws the fullest conclusions from the critique of system. Even empiricist theories, which give priority to experience that is open-ended and cannot be anticipated, as opposed to fixed conceptual ordering, remain systematic in that they deal with preconditions for knowledge that are conceived as more or less constant and develop them in as homogeneous a context as possible” (ADORNO 1991: 9).

the process of compilation of *sūtras* also aimed at systematization in itself. It must be noted that *sūtras* themselves have been passed on by the approach of methodolatry. However, in principle *sūtras* are very narrative and the representation of events, which give us an opportunity to share experiences, that is, an opportunity to take in the Buddha's words. The traditional expression "teachings appropriate to the audience" (對機說法) to describe the Buddha's teachings has the significance of narrative, an encounter with others, and knowledge as dialogue in itself.

Regardless, what kind of attitude should one adopt when taking in the words of the Buddha? The Buddha's words are open in every way to people who encounter the *sūtras*. Furthermore, such people themselves are rather unfixed: they can change their thoughts at any time. To what extent can a form endure that is a narrative of an always unstable and accidental experience when trying to pass on the words of the Buddha?

2. The Possibility of Sharing Experience

No matter how important experience is, why were the people who appear in the *sūtras* able to change their path after encountering the Buddha? Furthermore, how can we share the experiences depicted in the *sūtras* as narrative? In them, the Buddha frequently remarks how difficult it is to share the experience of suffering. Furthermore, this sense that it is difficult to hold a common understanding of a problem has been viewed by Buddhist thinkers as an intellectual issue that arose within Gotama's own life. Of course, in the context of the life of the Buddha, it has been seen as the difficulty of becoming aware that one is a suffering being. For example, as is well known, one finds the following narrative in the scene as depicted in the *Vinaya-piṭaka*'s "Mahāvagga" of Brahman's encouraging the Buddha to preach after reaching enlightenment:

These people take delight in objects of sense-based pleasure, enjoy objects of sense-based pleasure, and rejoice in objects of sense-based pleasure. It is difficult for these people who take delight in objects of sense-based pleasure, enjoy objects of sense-based pleasure, and rejoice in objects of sense-based pleasure to understand this, that is, the law of dependent origination that based on this there is that. Furthermore, this—in other words, the subsiding of all life activities, the discarding of all attachment, the exhausting of all desire, the leaving behind of greed, the extinguishing of affliction, and seeing *nirvāṇa*—is very difficult. (*Mahāvagga, Vinaya-piṭakam* vol. I, PTS, pp. 4-5)

Brahman asks the Buddha to teach. However, the Buddha is reluctant to do so because his teachings are hard to understand for those who enjoy pleasure. The *Samyutta-nikāya*'s *Brahma-samyutta* also says that it is hard for those who enjoy *ālaya* to understand the Buddha's teachings.¹⁰ Regarding this part of the *Samyutta-nikāya*'s *Brahma-samyutta*, Buddhaghosa says, "The very reason [these teachings] are hard to understand is that they are profound. They should be seen based on suffering, and cannot be seen based on pleasure."¹¹ We should note that he says that truth can be seen based on the experience of suffering. The **Abhiññakramaṇa-sūtra* (Ch. *Fo benxingji jing* 佛本行集經), a considerably more developed biography of the Buddha that appears to be from a later period and includes various plots, inherits the same expressions: "Sentient beings are attached to *ālaya*, enjoy *ālaya*, and take delight in perceptual fields [*jakusho* 著處]," and "It is hard for those who take pleasure in desire and are attached to craving to personally know. This is because they are covered in the darkness of ignorance."¹² The same expressions about the reason that the Buddha's teachings are difficult to understand can be seen in many sources about Brahma's entreating the Buddha to preach after his enlightenment.¹³

¹⁰ *Brahma-samyutta*, *Samyutta-nikāya* vol. VI, PTS, p. 136: *ālayarāmā kho panāyaṃ pajā ālayaratā ālayasamuditā. ālayarāmāya kho pana pajāya ālayaratāya ālayasamuditāya duddasaṃ idaṃ thānam.*

¹¹ *Sārattha-ppakāsini: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Samyutta-nikāya* vol. I, PTS, p. 195.

¹² *Fo benxingji jing* 佛本行集經 (T 190.3: 805c18-19: 但衆生輩, 著阿羅耶 (隋言所著處), 樂阿羅耶, 住阿羅耶, 喜樂著處. 心多貪. 此處難見.)

¹³ *Buddhacarita*, Peking nge 66b8-67a2, Derge ge 55a1-2:

lta ba dan pas chud zos 'bad la 'khrugs pa yi // 'gro ba rdul ni rgya chen dang ldan gzigs nas dang //

rnam thar chos ni mchog tu phra pa nyid gzigs nas // g-yo ba med pa nyid phyir thugs ni mdzad par gyur // (14.96)

Lalitavistara, VAIDYA ed., p. 290:

pratisrotagāmi mārgo gambhīro durdṛśo mama.

na taṃ drakṣyanti ragāndhā alaṃ tasmāt prakāśitum. (25.19)

Foshuo taizi ruiying benqi jing 佛說太子瑞應本起經 (T 185.3: 479c24-29): 至于三界欲色無色九神所止, 皆繫於識不得免苦. 昧昧然不自覺. 故謂之癡莫知要道. 夫得至妙虛寂無念, 不可以凡世間意知. 世間道術九十六種. 各信所事孰知其惑. 皆樂生求安, 貪欲嗜味, 好於聲色故不能樂佛道.

Foshuo puyao jing 仏說普曜經 (T 186.3: 527b5-10): 至于三界欲色無色九神所止, 皆係於識不得免苦. 昧昧暗冥然不自覺. 故謂之癡莫知要道. 夫道至妙虛寂無念, 不可以凡世間意知. 世間道術九十六種. 各信所事孰知其惑. 皆樂生求安, 貪欲嗜味, 好於聲色故不能樂佛道. Cf. 佛說太子瑞應本起.

The core of the episode about Brahman's encouragement is not the bestowal of authority on the Buddha *via* Brahman's appearance. While even if it actually functioned this way in India, this episode focuses on the importance of perceiving the reason that the Buddha's teachings are difficult to understand. Furthermore, even if the significance of the Buddha's beginning to teach thanks to Brahman's encouragement is the verbalization of truth or that truth was revealed by the specific individual Śākyamuni, it must be said that it is an intellectual problem that cannot be articulated if one leaves out the issue of the reason why truth is difficult to share.¹⁴ In other words, this episode is rooted in the experiential issue of why some humans begin to walk the Buddhist path. It brings up the philosophical problem of whether or not one can find reality in the words of the Buddha and, for us reading these ancient scriptures, the problem of whether or not it is possible to have the same way of viewing ourselves and the world that ancient people had. Not only do early-period scriptures touch upon this problem here and there, but the same kind of question has from the beginning been embedded in the textual narratives of Gotama's four excursions out of the palace and the

Fanguang da zhuangyan jing 方廣大莊嚴經 (T 187.3: 604a27-b1):

我證逆流道 甚深難可見
 盲者莫能觀 故默而不說
 世間諸衆生 著彼五塵境
 不能解我法 是故今默然

Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing 過去現在因果經 (T 189.3: 642c12-14, 642c21-23): 一切衆生, 於五濁世, 爲貪欲瞋恚愚癡邪見憍慢諂曲之所覆障, 薄福鈍根, 無有智慧. 云何能解我所得法. . .

衆生諸根鈍 著樂癡所盲
 順於生死流 不能反其源
 如斯之等類 云何而可度

¹⁴ Nakamura Hajime understands Brahman's role to be the bestowal of authority on Śākyamuni's preaching. See NAKAMURA 1992: 449.

Shimoda Masahiro sees it as an issue of whether or not the "deep meditative experience acquired by the Buddha can be entrusted to words that are communicable to a third person," describing it as a shift from a "silent truth" to an "articulated truth." Furthermore, he says, "One special characteristic of Buddhism as a founded religion is that it lays total responsibility for that founding on the shoulders of a specific individual, Śākyamuni." See SHIMODA 1999. While I agree that the focus of this episode is the "reluctance and decision to preach the Dharma" (SHIMODA 1999: 72), surely it should be seen as being about why people begin or do not begin to walk the Buddhist path—which is almost without fail touched upon in stories of Brahman encouraged the Buddha to preach—rather than regarding the verbalization of truth.

Regarding the texts in which the "encouragement from Brahman" narrative appears, see SAKAMOTO 1992; and MORI 2000: 107-110.

This paper's stance regarding this episode is based on MIYASHITA 2011: 201-202.

encouragement from Brahman, which both pass down a view of the Buddha from a comparatively early period.¹⁵

It goes without saying that, regardless of how hard it is to share experiences, the narrative world of the *sūtras* depicts people who encounter the Buddha and begin to walk the Buddhist path. There is a need for an adequately careful discussion of the structure of the thought regarding this change in people. Having recognized this, I would next like to consider the issue of sharing experiences from the perspective of the development from the *āgamas* to the *abhidharma*.

3. From the Sharing of Experience to the Sharing of Dharmas

As I have stated, while the importance of experience is emphasized, it is not easy to share the experience of understanding the meaning of suffering. To share experiences is rather difficult, very unstable and perilous. With this in mind, there is a need to consider the significance of the development from the *sūtras* to the *abhidharma*.

The **Mahāvibhāṣā* discusses the relationship between *sūtras*, the *vinaya* and the *abhidharma*¹⁶ after stating, “All Buddhas have appeared in the world and preached the *tripitaka*.”¹⁷ It presents the understanding that there are distinctions among the three, as well as the understanding that there are not. The reason that one can say the former is clear is: first, it is because all three come from the same ocean of wisdom, the same pond of realization and are accepted equally by the Buddha’s power and fearlessness. Second, it is because all discuss the path that is based on superior morality and superior insight. Then, in contrast, the reasons are explained why there are differences among the three. The differences can be summarized as follows:¹⁸

1. *Sūtras* are discussions of the Way based on a superior mental state. The *vinaya* is a discussion of the Way based on superior morality. The *abhidharma* is a discussion of the Way based on superior insight.

¹⁵ As Miyashita Seiki points out, the story of Upaka that appears in biographies of the Buddha has the same issue in the background. See MIYASHITA 2003: 220.

¹⁶ Honjō Yoshifumi briefly touches upon this point, stating the text’s explanation positions *sūtras*, the *vinaya*, and the *abhidharma* in order of increasing importance. See HONJŌ 2010: 111-112.

¹⁷ *Da piposha lun* 大毘婆沙論 (T 1545.27: 1b25).

¹⁸ See *Da piposha lun* (T 1545.27: 1b25-2a11). The corresponding old and alternate translations are, respectively, *Apitan piposha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論 (T 1546.28: 1c25-24) and *Piposha lun* 鞞婆沙論 (T 1547.28: 416b24-c9).

2. *Sūtras* show the situations in which Śākyamuni taught. The *vinaya* shows the circumstances surrounding Śākyamuni's establishment of the code of moral discipline. The *abhidharma* shows the essential nature and characteristics of truth.
3. *Sūtras* are the result of outflow from [the Buddha's] power. The *vinaya* is the result of great compassion. The *abhidharma* is the result of fearlessness.
4. *Sūtras* are various teachings. The *vinaya* discusses rules of moral discipline. The *abhidharma* analyzes both intrinsic and common characteristics (Skt. *sva-sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*; Ch. *zixiang gongxiang* 自相共相).
5. *Sūtras* make those who do not have the seeds of virtuous roots have the seeds of virtuous roots. The *vinaya* makes those with seeds of virtuous roots continually ripen these seeds. The *abhidharma* makes those with ripened seeds acquire true liberation.
6. *Sūtras* are preached to those who have just begun engaging in Buddhist cultivation. The *vinaya* is preached to those who have already repeatedly engaged in Buddhist cultivation. The *abhidharma* is preached to those who have transcended the practice of contemplation.
7. *Sūtras* make those who have not entered the true Dharma enter the true Dharma. The *vinaya* makes those who have entered the true Dharma uphold the code of moral discipline. The *abhidharma* makes those who have upheld the code of moral discipline penetrate the true characteristics of the dharmas.

The **Mahāvibhāṣā* positions the *sūtras* as opportunities to realize and accept that existence is suffering and the *abhidharma* as something through which those who have already begun to walk the Buddhist path can penetrate the characteristics of truth. In other words, the significance of the *abhidharma* lies in its presentation through discourses regarding the dharmas of a place in which knowledge forms a basis upon which experience can be shared.

If a place for the formation of knowledge is opened, the knowledge obtained through experience can be clearly shared and confirmed again.¹⁹ In response to the question, “Why was the *abhidharma* preached?,” the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* states, “Besides proper analysis of the dharmas (*dharma-pravicaya*), there is no excellent method for quieting afflictions.”²⁰

¹⁹ *Da piposha lun* 大毘婆沙論 (**Mahāvibhāṣā*) says the following regarding the title of *Fa chih lun* 發智論 (**Jñānaprasthāna*): “Various true wisdoms arise from here. Since they take this as the basis, it is ‘the arising of wisdom.’ This *abhidharma* is the 安足處 of wisdom. Various true wisdoms take this as the root, and theorize based on it. Therefore, it is the 安足處 of wisdom” (T 1545:27: 4c4-7). Emphasis added.

²⁰ AKBh EJIMA ed., 3.

The *abhidharma*, when pursuing the Buddhist path by sharing the narratives of experience that have been passed down as *sūtras*, presents a basis upon which experience can be shared and overcomes suffering by analysis of the dharmas. Therefore, it tries to structurally break through the precariousness of sharing experience.

4. Aspiring to Identity: Making *Suttas* the *Pamāṇa* (Standard)

At any rate, the *abhidharma* stands in contrast to the *sūtras* as narrative that we have touched upon above: the *abhidharma* adopts a very careful approach to the definition and systematization of dharmas.

In the *Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī*, a commentary on the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the following interesting passage appears:

From showing (*sūcana*) the good, from having been well spoken (*suvutta*),
from begetting (*savana*), and from giving out (*sūdana*),
from being an excellent shelter (*suttāṇa*), and from being like thread (*sutta-sabhāga*),
it is called “*sutta*.”

For it shows the good consisting of the good of self and others, and so on. And meaning has been well spoken in this respect through being spoken in conformity with the dispositions of those ready for the teaching. And it begets the good, like crops produce fruit, so it is said that it brings forth. And it gives it (the good) out, like a cow yields milk, so it is said that it flows out. And it excellently shelters and protects it (the good). And it is similar to thread, for as the carpenter’s thread (*sutta*) is a standard (*pamāṇa*), so it (*sutta*) is too for the wise, and as flowers tied together with thread are not scattered nor damaged, so by it (*sutta*) good things are tied together. (*The Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī, Buddhaghosa’s Commentary on the Dīghanikāya*, Part I, PTS, pp. 17-18)²¹

Various people encountered the Buddha through their experiences and then embarked upon the Buddhist path. Thus, the teachings were “spoken in conformity with the dispositions of those ready” for them. This gave rise to the good. However, active discussions then came to be carried out regarding the

²¹ See *The Expositor (Aṭṭhasālinī), Buddhaghosa’s Commentary on the Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, vol. I, ed. Maung Tin and Caroline A.F. Rhys Davids, PTS, 1920, p. 24; Dhivan Thomas JONES “The Meaning of the Pāli Word ‘Sutta’” (<https://dhivanthomasjones.wordpress.com/2015/09/08/the-meaning-of-the-pali-word-sutta/>), last modified September 8, 2015.

promotion of analytical thought, giving rise to various interpretations that do not match the true intentions of the *sūtras*. These can be found in the *abhidharma* literature. The well-known passage in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* about the term *sautrāntika* is as follows: “We are those who take the *sūtra*, not the *śāstra*, as the valid standard of authority.” (AKBh Chapter 3: *Lokanirdeśa*: *sūtrapramāṇakā vyaṃ na śāstrapramāṇakāḥ*.)²² Moreover, Yaśomitra states in the commentary on the first chapter *Dhātunirdeśa* of the *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*: “What is the meaning of *Sautrāntika*? Those who take the *sūtra* as the valid standard of authority, not the *śāstra*, they are *Sautrāntikas*.” (SA: *kaḥ sautrāntikārthaḥ. ye sūtrapramāṇikā na śāstrapramāṇikāḥ te sautrāntikāḥ*.)²³ Buddhaghosa’s explanation cited above is evidence to affirm that in the background of the discussion in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* about the so-called *Sautrāntika* theories regarding scripture, namely, the proper attitude to take regarding the Buddha’s words, are at issue.²⁴ In other words, when various interpretations arose due to the analytical approach of the *abhidharma*, the need arose to again re-emphasize an approach that seeks to return to the Buddha’s teachings. For this very reason, there was a need to reconfirm that the *sūtras* are the valid “standard” of teachings, as Buddhaghosa states in a commentary on the *Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī*.

People must have begun walking the Buddhist path and understanding Buddhism by taking in the Buddha’s words. Despite this, a need emerged to confirm that the *sūtras* are the standard for taking in the Buddha’s teachings. If this is the case, it could be said that at the root of the assertion that the *sūtras* are this standard, there is a desire to maintain unchanged the identity of those words over time. It was said that “flowers tied together with thread will not be scattered and damaged” in the *Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī*. This kind of statement was rooted in a sense of crisis about the diffusion of the Buddha’s words, that is, that the thought expressed by the Buddha’s words had become vague and not the clear object of focus.

Above, I have discussed the contrast between the *sūtras*’ approach of “against methodolaty” and the *abhidharma*’s approach of “methodolaty.” This is the significance in Buddhist intellectual history of the *sūtras* as narrative, which precede the *abhidharma*. The knowledge base to share the experiences relayed in the *sūtras* was prepared by the arising of the *abhidharma*. Both the *sūtras* and the *abhidharma* can be said to have made possible the

²²AKBh PRADHAN ed., 146.3-4.

²³SA WOGIHARA ed., 11.29-30.

²⁴See MINOURA 2007; HONJŌ 1992; HONJŌ 1993.

persistence of Siddhārtha Gotama’s major questions—that is, fundamental issues surrounding aging, illness and death.

Abbreviations

AKBh	<i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i>
Derge	Derge Edition of Tibetan Tripiṭaka
Peking	Peking Edition of Tibetan Tripiṭaka
PTS	The Pāli Text Society
SA	<i>Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā</i>
T	大正新脩大藏經 <i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i>

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Pali *Appamāda*: the Meaning and Evolution of a Buddhist Ethical Concept

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In a dialogue of the *Samyuttanikāya* III, 2, 7, the Buddha puts his soteriology very concisely. It reads as follows:

Sāvattḥiyam.

. . . ekamantaṃ nisinno kho rājā Pasenadi-Kosalo Bhagavatam etad avoca: atthi nu kho bhante eko dhammo yo ubho atthe samadhiggayha tiṭṭhati diṭṭhadhammikaṃ c' eva atthaṃ samparāyikaṃ cā ti . . .

katamo pana bhante eko dhammo . . .

appamādo kho mahārāja . . . seyyathā pi mahārāja yāni kānīci jaṅgamānaṃ pāṇānaṃ padajātāni sabbāni tāni hatthipade samodhānaṃ gacchanti . . . evam kho mahārāja eko dhammo atthe smadhiggayha tiṭṭhati diṭṭhadhammikaṃ c' eva atthaṃ samparāyikaṃ cā ti.

āyum ārogiyaṃ vaṇṇaṃ saggam uccākulīnataṃ

ratiyo patthayantenau ārā aparāparā

appamādaṃ pasaṃsanti puññakiriyāsu paṇḍitā.

apamatto ubho atthe adhigaṇhāti paṇḍito

diṭṭhe dhamme ca yo attho yo c' attho samparāyiko

atthābhisamayā dhīto paṇḍito ti pavuccatī ti.¹

At Savatthi.

As he was sitting to one side, King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One:

“Is there, lord, any one quality that keeps both kinds of benefits secure—benefits in this life and benefits in lives to come?”

¹ Feer 2006, I: 86-87.

“There is one quality, great king, that keeps both kinds of benefits secure—benefits in this life and benefits in lives to come.”

“But what, lord, is that one quality . . . ?”

“Heedfulness, great king. Just as the footprints of all living beings with legs can be encompassed by the footprint of the elephant, and the elephant’s footprint is declared to be supreme among them in terms of its great size, in the same way, heedfulness is the one quality that keeps both kinds of benefits secure—benefits in this life and benefits in lives to come.”

[That is what the Blessed One said. Having said that, the Well-Gone, the Teacher, said further:]

“For one who desires
 long life, health,
 beauty, heaven, and noble birth,
 —lavish delights, one after another—
 the wise praise heedfulness
 in performing deeds of merit.
 When heedful, wise,
 you achieve both kinds of benefits:
 benefits in this life,
 and benefits in lives to come.
 By breaking through to your benefit,
 you’re called enlightened, wise.”²

The key word in this passage is *appamāda*, i.e., heedfulness or carefulness, an ethical concept in the Buddha’s teaching. This is one thing that can accomplish the ends of both this world and the next. It is no accident that these verses, with a minor difference, occur also in a sermon on economic success addressed to the rich householder (*gahapati*) Anāthapiṇḍika, the saṅgha’s greatest patron.³

For a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the word *appamāda*, we must start with a perusal of Chapter Two of the *Dhammapada*, entitled Appamādavagga. For this purpose, I rely on the text established by Hinüber and Norman⁴ and the English translation by Norman.⁵ At places, I propose my own readings of crucial terms.

² Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1998. The last sentence in my reading: “By the grasp of the proficient, you are called a wise learned man.”

³ Hardy 2012, III: 48-49.

⁴ Hinüber and Norman 2003.

⁵ Norman 2000.

21. *appamādo amatapadaṃ pamādo maccuno padaṃ,
appamattā na mīyanti ye pamattā yathā matā.*

Carefulness is the place of the death-free [in my reading: a footstep towards *nibbāna*]; carelessness is the place of death. The careful do not die; the careless are as though (already) dead.

According to the commentary, *amata* is equal to *nibbāna*. Norman has *amatapadam* as “the place of death,” which is not really the best translation. Contrary to Norman, I believe that *appamāda* contains a kind of inherent dynamic force. This assumption may have some reinforcement from verses 24 and 25, where the term figures together with *utthāna*, “effort” or “making exertion.” It is perhaps not without interest that a very similar concept appears in non-Buddhist texts, for example the Besnagar Garuḍa Pillar inscription put up around 111 BCE by a certain Heliodorus, a Greek who had converted to Vaiṣṇavism. The text reads thus: *trini amuta-padāni [ia*] [su]-anuḥitāni / neyaṃti [svagaṃ] dama cāga apramāda*,⁶ “three footsteps toward death-free well done lead to heaven: self-control, renunciation and carefulness.” A similar concept occurs in the *Mahābhārata* 5, 43, 14a: *damatyāgo 'pramādaśca eteṣvamarṣtamāhitam*,⁷ “self-control, renunciation and carefulness—in these immortality is deposited.”

22. *etaṃ viśesato ñatvā appamādamhi paṇḍitā
appamāde pamodanti ariyānaṃ gocare ratā.*

Learned men [in my reading: the wise], knowing this especially [in my reading: distinctively] in respect of carefulness, rejoice in carefulness, delighting in the realm of the noble ones.

Instead of “learned men” (*paṇḍita*), I opt for “wise” because wisdom is of a higher order of appreciation of right understanding of things in Hindu and also in Buddhist traditions than simple learning. I prefer “distinctively” to Norman’s “especially” because here the point is just making the distinction between *appamāda* and *pamāda*.

23. *te jhāyino sātatikā niccaṃ daḥaparakkamā
phusanti dhūrā nibbānaṃ yogakkhemaṃ anuttaraṃ.*

Meditating, persevering, constantly making a firm effort, those wise ones attain *nibbāna*, supreme rest from exertion (lit. “peace from bondage,” i.e., *nibbāna*).

⁶ Sircar 1965: 88-89.

⁷ *The Mahābhārata* 1971-1975.

Dhīra can be taken as “wise” as far as it qualifies a man whose firm decision determines his behavior, who never gives up on his ends, does not give in to temptation and is firmly persistent. These traits are shared by the wise man and the hero.⁸

24. *uṭṭhānavato satīmato
sucikammaṣa nisammakārino
saññatassa ca dhammajīvino
appamattassa yaso’bhivaḍḍhati.*

Of one who exerts himself, is mindful, does pure deeds, acts considerately, is restrained, lives according to the law, is careful, the fame increases.

25. *uṭṭhānen’appamādena saññamena damena ca
dīpaṃ kayirātha medhāvī yaṃ ogho nābhikīrati.*

By exertion, by carefulness, by restraint and self-control, a wise man (*medhāvī*) would make an island, which a flood does not overwhelm.

An island is a place of refuge that cannot be inundated by floods, i.e., sensual pleasures, false beliefs, becoming and ignorance. One who has not an island for shelter is utterly miserable as the sick man who appeared before the eyes of the Bodhisattva in Kapilavastu. *Medhāvī* is one who possesses *medhā*, an idea that comprises creative intelligence, the faculty of recollection and the faculty of concentration.⁹

26. *pamādam anuyuñjanti
bālā dummedhino janā
appamādañ ca medhāvī
dhanam seṭṭham va rakkhati.*

Fools, stupid people, apply themselves to carelessness; but a wise man guards his carefulness as his best treasure.

27. *mā pamādam anuyuñjetha mā kāmaratisanthavaṃ,
appatto hi jhāyanto pappoti vipulaṃ sukhaṃ.*

You should not apply yourselves to carelessness, nor to acquaintance with delight in sensual pleasures. For being careful (and) meditating, one obtains great happiness.

⁸ Stietencron 1991: 278.

⁹ Stietencron 1991: 277.

28. *pamādaṃ appamādena yadā nudati paṇḍito
paññāpāsādaṃ āruyha asoko sokiniṃ pajam
pabbataṭṭhova bhummaṭṭhe, dhīro bāle avekkhati.*

When the learned man [in my reading: the wise man] thrusts away carelessness by carefulness, climbing on to the palace of knowledge,¹⁰ he gazes griefless on the grieving people. The wise man gazes down on fools as one standing on a mountain gazes down on those standing on the ground (below).

29. *appamatto pamattesu suttesu bahujāgaro
abalassaṃva sīghasso hitvā yāti sumedhaso.*

Careful among the careless, wide awake among those asleep, the wise man goes, leaving (them) behind as a swift horse leaves behind a weak horse.

30. *appamādena Maghavā devānaṃ seṭṭhataṃ gato
appadānaṃ pasamsanti pamādo garahito sadā.*

By carefulness Maghavā (Indra) went to supremacy among the gods. They praise carefulness. Carelessness is always blamed.

Hence, we may infer that in early Buddhism Indra was highly esteemed by the followers of the Buddha. It is noteworthy that according to the *Jātakas* the Bodhisattva himself was Indra in some of his births.¹¹

31. *appamādarato bhikkhu pamāde bhayadassivā
saññojanaṃ anuṃthūlaṃ ḍahaṃ aggī va gacchati.*

A *bhikkhu* who delights in carefulness, who sees danger in carelessness, goes about like a fire consuming his fetters, small or large.

The ten fetters are meant here. Their most common list is as follows: self-illusion (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), the contagion of mere rule and ritual (*sīlabbataparāmāso*), excitement of sensual pleasure (*kāmacchando*), malevolence (*vyāpādo*), lust after form (*rūparāgo*), lust after formlessness (*arūparāgo*), conceit (*māno*), agitation (*uddhaccaṃ*) and ignorance (*avijjā*).¹²

32. *appamādarato bhikkhu pamāde bhayadassivā
abhabbo parihāṇāya nibbānass' eva santike.*

¹⁰ The word *pāsāda* can also mean tower; see Mylius 1997: 255.

¹¹ Monier-Williams 1890: 207.

¹² Narada Maha Thera 1971: 323, fn. 9.

A *bhikkhu* who delights in carefulness, who sees danger in carelessness, cannot fall away but is indeed near to *nibbāna*.

There is a single verse (no. 57), which is not appropriate to the respective group of verses (*varga*), because it has no connection with flowers. However, it is well in line with the point we are going to make.

*tesaṃ sampannasīlānaṃ appamādavihāriṇaṃ
sammadaññāvimuttānaṃ Māro maggaṃ na vindati.*

Of those who are possessed of virtue, live without carelessness, and are freed by proper knowledge, Māra does not find the way.

Since Māra is the Buddhist devil, the Principle of Destruction, the representative of worldly existence as opposed to *nirvāṇa*, it is essential for men to escape him. The verse describes the means of escape.¹³

Another single verse where *appamāda* occurs is no. 327.

*appamādaratā hotha, sacittam anurakkhathā,
duggā uddharat' attānaṃ paṃke sannova kuñjaro.*

Be rejoicing in carefulness; protect your own mind; save yourselves from the difficult way like the *kuñjara* elephant [in my reading: elephant] sunk in mud.¹⁴

This verse seems to offer very practical advice on how to live. Narada Maha Thera takes the compound *dugga* as “evil way,”¹⁵ however this interpretation lacks any support from Pali or Sanskrit lexicography. The phrase “*kuñjara* elephant” is a pleonasm because *kuñjara* simply means “elephant” and not a special kind of elephant.¹⁶

Following Hajime Nakamura’s fine analysis of the Indian ways of thinking, *appamāda* appears as a striking example of what he calls the preference for the negative.¹⁷ Being so, it cannot be isolated from its antonym, *paṃāda*. By means of this opposition in the respective verses, the basic meaning as well as the positive content of *appamāda* becomes stronger. No less interesting are the passages in which the term stands in context with other virtues

¹³ Rhys Davids and Stede 1968: 530.

¹⁴ The ancient motif of the elephant sunk in mud has come down to us in the 8th fable of Book One in the *Hitopadeśa* of Nārāyaṇa. Cf. Kāle 1980.

¹⁵ Narada Maha Thera 1970: 245.

¹⁶ Rhys Davids and Stede 1968: 219. Cf. Monier-Williams 1960: 288.

¹⁷ Nakamura 1968: 52.

that further highlight its rich content. In verse 24 it is connected with effort, mindfulness, pure deeds, acting considerately, restraint and life according to the law, while in verse 25 with effort, restraint and self-control.

Other Buddhist texts reveal other aspects of the meaning of this complex term. Verse 184 in the *Ālavakasutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta* reads thus:

*saddhāya taratī ogham / appamādena aṇṇavam
viriyena dukkham acceti / paññāya parisujjhatīti.*

The Surge is crossed by faith; the Flood by zeal; Effort sheds Ills; and Insight cleanses hearts.¹⁸

The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit equivalent of Pali *appamāda* is *apramādyā*. A passage in the *Divyāvadāna*, a rich collection of Buddhist legends, reads thus:

*apramādyena sampādya rājyaiśvaryaṃpravartatām
durlabhā trīni ratnāni nityaṃ pūjaya pāṛthiva.*¹⁹

Having caused to succeed with non-heedlessness, royal supremacy should proceed. O king, worship always the three rare jewels.

Here, *apramādyā* figures as an essential virtue of a Buddhist king who is successful in exercising his royal authority.

Adhering to a recent trend in current studies of Theravāda Buddhism, I am inclined to approach Buddhist thought or its elements in a pan-Indian context. The Sanskrit *apramāda*, the Pali equivalent of *appamāda*, can first be attested in a certainly pre-Buddhist text. The *Atharvaveda* 12, 1, 7 reads thus:

*yāṃ rakṣanty asvapnā viśvadānīm devā bhūmiṃ pṛthivīm
apramādam/
sā no madhu priyaṃ duhām atho ukṣatu varcasā //*²⁰

She, the earth, whom the gods sleeplessly defend all the time without failure [in my reading: carefully, *rakṣanti apramādam*—let her yield to us honey, what is dear; then let her sprinkle us with splendor.”²¹

¹⁸ Chalmers 1997: 44-45.

¹⁹ Cowell and Neil 1886.

²⁰ Roth and Whitney 1966.

²¹ Whitney 1971: 662.

Some passages of the *Mahābhārata*²² also throw light on the semantic content of *apramāda*. Verse 5, 39, 54 reads thus:

*utthānaṃ saṃyamo dākṣyamapramādo dhṛtiḥ smṛtiḥ
samīkṣya ca samārambho viddhi mūlaṃ bhavasya tat*

Effort, self-control, skill, carefulness (*pramāda*), steadiness, memory and commencement of acts after deliberation—know, that is the root of prosperity.

Verse 12, 92, 42 reads thus:

*apramādena śikṣeṭhāḥ kṣamāṃ buddhiṃ dhṛtiṃ matim
bhūtānāṃ sattvajijñāsāṃ sādhasādhu ca sarvadā*

You should carefully (*apramādena*) learn forgiveness, understanding, steadiness, intention and good and bad acts of beings who have desire to know the quality of purity at all times.

Verse 12, 208, 6 reads thus:

*ahiṃsā satyavacanāṃ sravabhūteṣu cārjavam
kṣamā caivāpramādaśca yasyaite sa sukhī bhavet*

Who has no-hurting, the speaking of the truth and honesty toward all beings, patience and even carefulness, he may be joyful.

To be *sukhī* is not simply to be joyful or happy in the everyday sense of the term. In Buddhist terms *sukhī* can be interpreted as somebody who possesses *sukha* “well-being,” the opposite of *duḥkha*, which must be eliminated as an obligatory step toward enlightenment.²³

The modern English equivalents of Pali *appamāda*, such as “heedfulness,” “carefulness” and “awareness” used by different translators, are synonyms in English and all derive from the literary meaning “non-carelessness.” Gombrich translates it as “diligence” or “attentiveness,” or in psychological terms as “awareness.” He rightly says that “in economic terms it is realized as thrift, a thoroughly bourgeois value,” and he notes that “the tone and content of the Buddha’s moral teaching were equally of a kind to appeal to businessmen.”²⁴ The period in which the Buddha taught witnessed a rise of towns in which trade revived on a considerable scale, and trade was greatly

²² *The Mahābhārata* 1971-1975.

²³ Cf. Gombrich 1994: 62.

²⁴ Gombrich 1994: 78.

facilitated by the appearance of a monetary economy.²⁵ New professions such as that of the financier, who made investments, and the usurer, who provided loans with interest, were practiced by urban-based people who were generally the supporters of the heterodox sects. The Buddha is said to have endorsed investment, presumably with interest, when he is reported to have said:

*upakāro ca yo mitto,
yo ca mitto sikkhe dukkhe,
atth 'akkhāyī ca yo mitto
yo ca mittānukampako,
ete pi mitte cattāro
iti viññāya paṇḍito
sakkaccaṃ payirupāseya,
mātā puttāṃ va orasaṃ.
paṇḍito sīla-sampanno
jalaṃ aggīva bhāsati.
bhoge saṃharamānassa
bhamarass' eva iriyato,
bhigā sannicayaṃ yanti,
vammiko v' upacīyati.
evaṃ bhoge samāhantvā,
alam-attho kule gihi.
catudhā vibhaje bhoge,
sa ve mittāni ganthati,
ekenabhoge bhuñjeyya,
dv ihi kammaṃ payojaye,
catutthañ ca nidhāpeyya,
āpadāsu bvavissatī ti.²⁶*

The Friend who is a helpmate, and the friend
Of bright days and of dark, and he who shows
What you need, and he who throbs for you
With sympathy—these four the wise should know
As friends, and should devote himself to them
As mother to her own, her bosom's child.
Whosoever is virtuous and intelligent
Shines like a fire that blazes on the hill.

²⁵ Sharma 1983: 126.

²⁶ Carpenter 2006, III: 188.

To him amassing wealth like a roving bee
 Its honey gathering [and hurting naught],
 Riches mount up as ant-heaps growing high.
 When the good layman's wealth has so amassed,
 Able is he to benefit his clan.
 In portions four let him divide that wealth,
 So binds he to himself life's friendly things.
 One portion let him spend and taste the fruit.
 His business to conduct let him take two.
 And portion four let him reserve and hoard;
 So there'll be wherewithal in times of need.²⁷

Conclusion

The general meaning of the Pali *appamāda* is “carefulness.” Due to the growth of economy and the emergence of towns in northern India, both of which were closely connected with the birth of Buddhism, the term has gained a broader semantic field. In Indian Theravāda Buddhism especially, it denotes a particular moral excellence, a virtue intended for the socially most mobile people of the Buddha's times. After all this, the meaning of *appamāda* still has a strong appeal to progressive people around the world. As we have seen, it was propounded to two very illustrious persons of the Buddha's time, King Pasenadi and the great patron Anāthapiṇḍika.

It is also striking that before the Buddha passed into *parinibbāna*, according to the *Parinibbānasutta* as his last advice, he said these words to the order of monks:

*hand 'dāni bhikkhave āmantayāṃ vo
 vayadhammā saṅkhārāṇ appamādena sampādettha*

Indeed monks, I declare to you: decay is inherent in all compounded things: strive on with vigilance.²⁸

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²⁷ Rhys Davids 1921, III: 179-180.

²⁸ Buswell and Lopez 2014: 59.

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The Buddha's Words as Other Power:
Focusing on the Idiomatic Expressive Phrase
saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃprahaṣayati

TAKAMI INOUE

Introduction

Although it has not been thoroughly recognized by scholars of Buddhism, the idea of “faith awakened through the power of the Buddha” has authentic roots in Śākyamuni Buddha and his words. The Japanese Buddhist thinkers Hōnen (1133-1212) and Shinran (1173-1262) called it “the entrusting heart granted by the Tathāgata” (Jp. *nyorai yori tamawaritaru shinjin* 如来よりたまわりたる信心) or “Other-Power faith” (*tarikī no shin* 他力の信). Such a faith-centered path flourished during the lifetime of the historical Buddha, as recorded in the oldest stratum of the *Nikāyas* (Pāli “Collections” of the Buddha’s words). In my presentation at the ELTE-Otani symposium, entitled “Faith in Buddhism,” held in Budapest in October 2013, I introduced some of the notable cases of such “faith-followers” (Pāli. *saddhānusarin*; Ch. [隨] 信行者 [*sui*] *xinxingzhe*; Jp. [*zui*] *shingyōja*), beginning with Piṅgiya, an old Brahman who appears toward the end of the final chapter of the *Sutta Nipāta*.¹ He heard the Buddha’s words in what appears to be a prototype of the “recollection of the Buddha” (Pāli. *buddhānussati*; Ch. 念仏 *nianfo*; Jp. *nenbutsu*), which led naturally to the deepening and confirming of his faith:

I become more confident, as I hear the words of the Sage.

(Sn 1147)

(*esa bhiyyo pasīdāmi, sutvāna munino vaco*)

A similar experience is expressed in the words of Vaṅgīsa, the most prominent poet in early Buddhist history:

¹ Inoue 2016.

The Sage gone to the far shore beyond suffering taught me the Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma, we gained confidence in him; faith arose in us. (Th 1254)

(*so me dhammam adesesi muni dukkhassa pāragū dhammaṃ sutvā pasīdimha saddhā no udapajjatha*)

John D. Ireland, who has studied and translated Vaṅgīsa's poems, presents the following analysis of the power of the Buddha presupposed in Vaṅgīsa's poetic expressions:

An underlying idea is that the Buddha alone, when proclaiming the Dhamma, is capable of producing a profound effect upon his hearers (the literal meaning of *sāvaka*). He is able to establish them on the noble path of the *sotāpanna*, etc., at least those who are ready to receive it, by the Dhamma-words issuing forth through his speech and apparently without any prior practice on the part of the recipients. This is a special gift exercised by the Buddha alone and not by his disciples. Although this idea is not taken up to any extent by the Theravāda, which stresses the human side of the Buddha, it was a factor affecting other Indian schools of Buddhism and the so-called Mahāyāna, which tended to emphasize the Buddha's transcendental nature.²

In this article, I would like to take up the reception of this special power of the Buddha's "Dhamma-talk" (*dhammī kathā*), focusing on the following idiomatic phrase that represents this idea: "He instructed, inspired, encouraged and delighted [the person, ready to listen] with a talk on the Dhamma (*dhammiyā kathāya sandassesī samādapesī samuttejesī sampahaṃsesī*)." This is a stock phrase found in the *Nikāyas*, such as the *Udāna*. First, I will survey some of its usages in early Pāli suttas in order to understand the relevance of this expressive phrase to the centrality of listening "with an ear" (Pāli. *sotavant*) by one who is on the Buddhist path to Awakening. In the second section, I will discuss the significance of the fact that the Sanskrit form of the same series of causative verbs (*saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃpraharṣayati*) was adopted in a very important context in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, one of the early Mahāyāna sutras, where the term "Mahāyāna" (Great Vehicle) was introduced as *avinivartanīyayāna* (Vehicle of Non-Retrogression), indicating that the motive power that sustains the long voyage to Perfect, Full Awakening was none other than the

² Ireland 2013, Introduction.

Buddha's words as Other Power. In the third section, I will take a look at Vasubandhu's interpretation of this phrase in his *Vyākhyāyukti*, "Principles of Exegesis." In the first part of this influential work, Vasubandhu took note of the idiomatic phrase of these four causative verbs in early Buddhist scriptures and demonstrated its significance for all Buddhists. In the concluding section, I will compare the use of this phrase in the *Nikāyas* with Shinran's idiosyncratic usage of the causative auxiliary verbs *shimu* and *seshimu* in his reading of important passages in the Pure Land sutras,³ both indicating the power of the Buddha's words to awaken the listener's heart, so making them embark on the Vehicle of Non-Retrogression.

1. Dhamma Words to Lay Followers: Suppabuddha the Leper and Others

In the discourses of the Buddha preserved in Pāli, the four-verb phrase "instructed, inspired, encouraged and delighted" (*sandassesi samādapesi samuttejesi sampaham̐sesi*) typically appears when the Buddha is speaking to a lay follower who is ready to listen to the Dhamma. The most telling usage that indicates the significance of this phrase can be found in the *Kuṭṭhi Sutta* in the Soṇa chapter of the *Udāna*.⁴ According to this, there was a *kuṭṭhi* ("leper") whose name was Suppabuddha (Skt. Suprabuddha, Ch. 善覺 *shan-jue*; "Wide-Awake" or "Well-Awakened") in Rājagaha. He was "the poorest of men, one who suffered the greatest human hardship, the most miserable of men." One day, he saw from afar a large crowd of people and thought that tasty food might be distributed there. Hoping to receive some alms, he approached this great assembly and realized that it was not food but the Dhamma delivered there by the Buddha. At that point, Suppabuddha sat down and joined the people surrounding the Buddha, thinking "I, too, will listen to the Dhamma." Recognizing his readiness, the Buddha delivered a Dhamma-talk especially for Suppabuddha. While listening to the Buddha's words, he was infused with serene faith and decided to take refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. Thus, just by listening to the Dhamma with enthusiasm for a short time, Suppabuddha became an "ear-gainer" and "stream-enterer" (*sotāpanna*). Soon afterward, however, he was killed in an accident with a cow.

In this short sutta, the series of four causative verbs (in passive past participle form) is used twice to describe how Suppabuddha received the Buddha's words:

³ Concerning Shinran's usage of the causative auxiliary verb *shimu*, see Terai 2007.

⁴ *Udāna* 5.3, PTS: Ud 48-51. For an English translation, see Masefield 2007: 88-92; see also Thanissaro Bhikkhu 2012a.

By the Dhamma-talk, (he was) instructed, inspired, encouraged and delighted.

(*sandassito samādapito samuttejito sampahamsito*)⁵

The nuances of these four Pāli verbs are difficult to render into English,⁶ but they clearly indicate the underlying notion that the Buddha's Dhamma-talk had an intrinsic power to inspire receptive listeners and induce their radical transformation.

In response to the inquisitive monks' question concerning Suppabuddha after his death, the Buddha confirmed Suppabuddha's attainment of *sotāpanna*, with its characteristic state of non-retrogression, leading to Buddhahood:

Monks, Suppabuddha the leper was a wise man. He practiced the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma and did not pester me with issues related to the Dhamma. With the destruction of the first three fetters, he is a stream-winner (*sotāpanno*), not subject to the states of woes (*avinipātadhammo*), assured of arriving at Full Awakening (*niyato sambodhiparāyano*).

This is quite an amazing and encouraging statement, considering that Suppabuddha originally was "the most miserable of men" in great distress. Just by listening to the Buddha's discourse one day, he was transformed by its power into a *sotāpanna*, and was guaranteed by the Buddha to be fully awakened and become a buddha in the future. The story of the leper named Wonderfully-Awakened in the *Kuṭṭhi Sutta* itself has the power to "instruct, inspire, rouse and encourage" attentive listeners to enter and stay on the Buddhist path toward awakening.

More often than not, this four-verb phrase seems to have been used in the Buddha's discourses that tended to be more sympathetic toward lay followers (rather than to monks), especially when the Buddha empathized with those who were socially discriminated against, as in the *Kuṭṭhi Sutta*. In the *Udāna*, the four-verb phrase is also used in the *Gopāla Sutta* for a cowherd in Kosala,⁷ and in the *Cunda Sutta* for Cunda, the silversmith, who offered the Buddha his last meal.⁸ In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, we find the phrase used when the Buddha delivered the Dhamma to Ambapāli, the courtesan, in her mango grove, before he consented to receiving her meal

⁵ PTS: Ud 49, 50.

⁶ For a semantic analysis of "the four verbs," see Masfield 1986: 102-03.

⁷ *Udāna* 4.3, PTS: Ud 38-39. English translation in Thanis-saro Bhikkhu 2012b.

⁸ *Udāna* 8.5, PTS: Ud 81-85. English translation in Thanis-saro Bhikkhu 2012c.

offering.⁹ Another significant usage in his discourse to a woman is found in the Theravāda Vinaya-piṭaka, when the Buddha gave a Dhamma-talk to his aunt and foster-mother, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, after which he accepted her request for the first female ordination:

[Mahāpajāpati Gotamī asked,] “Now, what line of conduct, Lord, should I follow in regard to these Sakyan women?” Then the Blessed One instructed, inspired, encouraged and delighted (*sandassesī samādapesī samuttejesī sampahāmsesī*) Mahāpajāpati Gotamī with a talk on the Dhamma. Having been instructed, inspired, encouraged and delighted (*sandassitā samādapitā samuttejitā sampahāmsitā*) by his Dhamma-talk, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī bowed down to the Blessed One and left, keeping her right side toward him. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, on account of this occasion, saying: “Monks, I allow nuns (*bhikkhūnī*) to be ordained by monks.”¹⁰

The usage of the four-verb phrase in this context seems to signify the Buddha's empathy for and encouragement toward the weak and disadvantaged in society. From this viewpoint, it resonates with another idiomatic phrase in the *Nikāyas* that expresses the Buddha's great compassion: “for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, benefit and happiness of devas and humans” (*bahujaṇahitāya bahujaṇa sukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ*).¹¹ This all-inclusive, universal aspect of the Buddha's guidance is emphasized in the Mahāyāna, but the conservative schools such as Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda also value it. Though I cannot discuss this in detail here, the Sanskrit form of the four-verb phrase appears repeatedly in the literature affiliated with the Mūlasarvāstivāda such as *Avadānaśataka* and *Divyāvadāna*. Naomi Appleton, who specializes in the *Avadānaśataka*, comments on its repetitive usage as follows: “[The Buddha] never simply taught, but ‘taught, inspired, incited and pleased’ (*saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃprahaṛṣayati*).”¹² In the *Śūkapotaka-avadāna* of the *Divyāvadāna*, the Buddha “instructed, inspired, encouraged, and delighted” (*saṃdarśya samādāpya samuttejya saṃprahaṛṣya*) the two faithful parrot

⁹ *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, PTS: D II 95. English translation in Sister Vajira and Francis Story 2013.

¹⁰ *Cūlavagga*, Bhikkhu-nikkhandhaka. English translation in Horner 1952: 357 (modified). For Pāli text and English translations, see also SuttaCentral, <https://suttacentral.net/pi-tv-kd20>.

¹¹ For example, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, PTS: DN II 119-120, AN I 22.

¹² Appleton 2014: 3.

chicks in Anāthapiṇḍada's household with a talk on the Dharma.¹³ The fact that the series of four causative verbs became an idiomatic phrase in *Avadāna* literature indicates the significance of the underlying notion that the Buddha's words had an intrinsic power to encourage all living beings to embark on the great journey toward Full Awakening (*sambodhi*).

2. The Causative Verb Phrase in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*

The importance of the four-verb phrase in Mahāyāna Buddhism can be seen from the fact that its Sanskrit form was adopted in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* in the context where the term "Mahāyāna" was introduced as *avinivartanīyayāna* (Vehicle of Non-Retrogression). Here, the term "Perfection of Wisdom" (*prajñāpāramitā*) replaces and stands for the Buddha's "Dhamma-talk" (Pāli. *dhammī kathā*) in early suttas:

[The Buddha said,] "Therefore then, Subhūti, the Tathāgata, seeing this advantage in the Perfection of Wisdom, by manifold methods, makes the Bodhisattvas gain insight in it, makes them inspired in it, fills them with enthusiasm in it, makes them rejoice in it, makes them enter and stand fast on it (*asyāṃ prajñāpāramitāyāṃ samdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati sampraharsayati samniveśayati pratiṣṭhāpayati*), in the hope that the Bodhisattvas thus may become irreversible to Full Awakening (*avinivartanīyā bhaveyur anuttarāyāḥ samyaksambodher*). Subhūti, do those Bodhisattvas appear to be very intelligent who, having obtained and met with the Irreversible Vehicle, the Great Vehicle (*avinivartanīyayānaṃ mahāyānam*), will again abandon it, turn away from it, and prefer an inferior vehicle?"

[Subhūti replied,] "No, Lord!"¹⁴

The adoption of the idiomatic causative verb phrase indicates the continuity of the notion of the "power of the Buddha's words" from early scriptures. In Pāli, the subject of the four-verb phrase was the Buddha ("Lord," Pāli. *bhagavā* [nominative case]) and his Dhamma-talk was the tool or device to be employed in the causative action, therefore it was in the instrumental

¹³ Rotman 2008: 334. The story of the two parrot chicks highlights the Buddha's power to instill faith (*prasāda*) in his followers and emphasizes the importance of listening to the Dharma. See Rotman 2009: 67.

¹⁴ Vaidya 1960: 118. English translation can be found in Conze 1973: 165. I modified Conze's translation significantly, especially the underlined part. See also Japanese translation in Kajiyama 1980: 293.

(locative) case (*dhammiyā kathāya*). In the passage of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* above, the subject is the Buddha as Tathāgata, and the Perfection of Wisdom is the “vehicle” in which the wonderful causation occurs, hence it is in the locative case (*prajñāpāramitāyām*). The two verbs added to the original four-verb phrase, “makes [someone] enter and stand fast” (*saṃniveśayati pratiṣṭhāpayati*), also signify that this Perfection of Wisdom is a state or stage, which is characterized by insight, inspiration, enthusiasm, rejoicing, non-retrogression and great capacity. These characteristics accord with the description of a bodhisattva’s first stage, found in Nāgārjuna’s *Discourse on the Ten Stages (Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā-śāstra)*. In the second chapter, “Entry into the First Stage,” Nāgārjuna explains why this stage is called “Joy” by comparing it to the state of *sotāpanna*:

Just as those who have reached the first fruit ultimately realize Nirvana, the Bodhisattvas who have reached this first stage are always full of joy in their hearts. For in them the seeds of Buddhas and Tathāgatas can grow naturally. For this reason, they are called wise and good people.¹⁵

According to Chapter 17 of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, entitled “Attributes, Tokens and Signs of Irreversibility,” once a bodhisattva embarks on the Vehicle of Non-Retrogression and enters that state, he or she naturally takes part in the Tathāgata’s work. Here again, the causative verb phrase is used:

It is quite certain that an irreversible Bodhisattva observes the ten ways of wholesome action, and instigates others to observe them, incites and encourages them to do so, establishes others in them (*saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃpraharṣayati pratiṣṭhāpayati*).

Furthermore, when an irreversible Bodhisattva masters a text of Dharma, and offers it to others, he has in mind that “I master the text of Dharma and offer it to others for the welfare, benefit and happiness of all beings” (*sarvasattvānām arthāya, hitāya sukhāya ca*), . . . and he offers that gift of Dharma universally to all beings without discrimination.¹⁶

¹⁵ T 1521.26: 25c20-23. 如得於初果，究竟至涅槃，菩薩得是地，心常多歡喜，自然得增長，諸佛如來種，是故如此人，得名賢善者。 English translation in Inagaki 1998: 20. This passage is cited in Shinran’s *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in the volume on the True Practice. See Hirota et al. 1997: 20-21.

¹⁶ Vaidya 1960: 162. Conze 1973: 200-201. Kajiyama and Tanji 1980: 109-110.

In this manner, the spontaneous actions of bodhisattvas for the well-being of others are to be understood as natural reactions to the Buddha's Dharma-words, which have "entered their ears" (*sotāpanna*) through attentive listening, and the flow of the Dharma (Pāli. *dharmasota*; Skt. *dharmasrota*) continues to develop and spread out, watering and nourishing the seeds in dry land. In this natural circulation of the Dharma, being attentive and receptive to the causative power of the Buddha's words is critically important, as Vasubandhu expounds in his *Vyākhyāyukti*, "Principles of Exegesis."¹⁷

3. The "Four Verbs" in Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*

At the beginning of Chapter 1 of this influential work, Vasubandhu lists three prerequisites for the interpreters of the Buddha's words, all related to "listening" (*śruta*):

Those who wish to elucidate the *sūtras* should first (1) be erudite (**bahuśruta*), (2) hold fast (retain in their minds) the sacred word (*thos pa'i gzhi can*, **śrutādhāra*), and (3) accumulate hearing (**śrutasamnicaya*). (VyY, Lee 2.3-4)¹⁸

The primacy of listening is further elaborated in Chapter 5, where the subject is changed to the "preacher":

Furthermore, the preacher of the teaching (*chos smra ba po*, **dharma-bhāṇaka/ kathika*) first ought to cite (write down, *bkod*) the *sūtra* and then (*nas*) [ought to] inquire [into the meaning of the *sūtra*]. However, in order to establish an attentive ear (**avahitaśrota*), I shall explain [a story] about hearing the teaching (**dharma*) with respect (*gus par mnyan pa dang ldan pa*). [Question:] What is this "[story] about hearing the teaching with respect"? [Answer:] [This means] to teach and hear with respect based on a story (**kathā*). If [the hearer] is attentive of ear, one should explain the *sūtra* in order of purpose (**prayojana*), etc. (VyY, Lee 250.4-13)¹⁹

¹⁷ I would like to thank Dr. Makio Ueno for informing me that Vasubandhu discusses the significance of the "four verbs" in this important work and also for allowing me to read part of his unpublished dissertation (Ueno 2009a).

¹⁸ Yamaguchi 1959: 41. Ueno 2009b: 133 (2). This English translation from the Tibetan text is found in Horiuchi 2008: 1126 (90). See also Nance 2011: 183, Skilling 2000: 319.

¹⁹ Yamaguchi 1959: 67. Ueno 2009b: 131(4)-129(6). English translation from Horiuchi 2008: 1127 (91). See also Skilling 2000: 325.

According to Vasubandhu, the purpose of the Buddha's words as recorded in the sutras has four aspects, which are listed in Chapter 1, citing the Buddha's words in the *Nikāyas*, and they are none other than the four causative verbs, *saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃprahaṣayati*:

1. For those who are confused, a sutra gives instruction (**saṃdarśayati*).
2. For those who are slothful, a sutra gives inspiration (**samādāpayati*).
3. For those who are dispirited, a sutra gives encouragement (**samuttejayati*).
4. For those who are set on the path, a sutra gives joy (**saṃprahaṣayati*).²⁰

It seems these four categories correspond to all people in every condition in progressive order. Being erudite with an attentive ear, Vasubandhu took note of the idiomatic four-verb phrase in the Buddhist scriptures and perceived its significance “for the welfare, benefit and happiness of all beings.”

Concluding Remarks

In this short article, I have interpreted the Buddha's words as Other Power, focusing on the idiomatic expressive phrase commonly found in the Pāli *Nikāyas*, early Mahāyāna sutras and śāstras. As Vasubandhu's “Principles of Exegesis” demonstrates clearly, the causative verb phrase in Buddhist literature is a significant indicator of the power of the Buddha's words to awaken all people without discrimination. In this respect, Shinran's reading of Mahāyāna sutras and śāstras is in accord with tradition. It was his insight, attained through attentive listening and deep reflection (*monshi* 聞思), that inspired his irregular addition of the causative auxiliary verb *shimu* しむ to verbs such as “to realize, understand” (*shō* 証, *shōchi* 証知) in Chinese Buddhist texts.

I would like to conclude with Shinran's words recorded at the beginning of the *Tannishō* 歎異抄, which demonstrates his reception of the causative power of the Buddha's message to all people:

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 unfathomable working of Amida's Original Vow, we are enabled to share in its benefits that embrace all and forsake none.²¹

²⁰ Yamaguchi 1959: 46-47. Honjō 2001: 113-117. Ueno 2017: (46)95-(49)92. Ueno 2020: 103-104. English translation here is based on Nance 2011: 134.

²¹ English translation by Bandō and Stewart 1996.

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A Treasure Text on the Age of Decline: Authorship and Authenticity in Tibetan Prophetic Literature

ZSÓKA GELLE

According to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the origin of *terma* or treasure literature is closely tied to Padmasambhava, an Indian Tantric master, who was invited to Tibet in the eighth century by King Trisong Detsen¹ to support the dissemination of Buddhism. Early sources give little evidence of his visit to Tibet.² Nonetheless, by the thirteenth century Padmasambhava—often called affectionately Guru Rinpoche, or “Precious Teacher”—is seen not only as a Tantric master who defeated the indigenous gods and demons and then incorporated them into the Buddhist practice, but also as a fully enlightened buddha,³ who as a teacher of numberless esoteric practices is the founder of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet. Treasure teachings maintain that they were initially preached by the Buddha in India and later taught by Guru Rinpoche in Tibet. Tradition holds that in order to secure these spiritual treasures for future generations, especially for times when the Dharma is in decline, Guru Rinpoche concealed them in various parts of Tibet and prophesized that future reincarnations of his twenty-five disciples⁴ would discover them at various times in history. These future reincarnations who revealed Guru Rinpoche’s hidden teachings are known as *tertöns* (treasure

¹ Khri srong lDe btsan (742-c. 800/755-797).

² *dBa’ bzhed*, see Diemberger and Pasang Wangdu 2000: 52-55; PT44: Padmasambhava’s bringing the Vajrakīlaya tradition to Tibet, see Cantwell and Mayer 2013: 20, Kapstein 2000: 159; and PT307: Dalton 2004: 764.

³ Especially treasure texts revealed by Nyang ral Nyi ma ’od zer (1124-1192) and Guru Chos dbang (1212-1270). See Cantwell and Mayer 2013: 20.

⁴ *rJe ’bangs nyer lnga*. There are several lists of the twenty-five disciples who all attained supreme accomplishment. Some lists include Khri srong lDe btsan, while others add him as the twenty-sixth disciple. Dudjom Rinpoche includes him in his list of twenty-five; see Dudjom 1991: 535-536.

revealers or treasure masters) and, due to their activities especially from the thirteenth century onward,⁵ treasure revealing became one of the three modes of transmission practiced by followers of the Nyingma school.⁶ These treasures were (and still are being) revealed sometimes in the form of texts, ritual objects and relics. They can be concealed in lakes, trees, rocks, caves or even in space, but the true place of concealment is the *tertön*, the treasure revealer's mindstream. Spiritual treasures found in a material form or experienced in a dream or vision work as a trigger in the *tertön*'s mind and help him to recall Guru Rinpoche's teachings. Then the treasure-master composes and writes down the teaching. The words "author" and "writer" are natural parts of our modern lexicon, but it is worth considering the meaning of these words in a Tibetan cultural context: what does it really mean when we say that *tertön* so-and-so revealed a scripture?

The revealer of a treasure text is the person who breaks the code and codifies the scripture and may be considered its author in the sense of a "composer." However, authorship of the teaching transmitted through the text is attributed to the Buddha. In spite of the fact that historical evidence is lacking to prove that these texts come from the historical Buddha or even that they existed during the time of Guru Rinpoche, they often contain authentically ancient material.⁷ Robert Mayer quite recently has even found an early treasure text that was simply a reproduction of a much older manuscript.⁸ Still, as with most products of Tibetan literature, treasure texts are also usually compilations and produced from blocks of teachings quoted from earlier works, and their aim is to pass on an existing spiritual truth. It is acceptable to add changes to the texts over the centuries and keep the original attribution, which makes the question of authorship even more complex.

⁵ Tibetan sources mostly agree that the first *tertön* was Sangs rgyas bLa ma, who lived in the eleventh century. According to Dudjom, he was a contemporary of Rin chen bZang po and may have lived between 990 and 1070 (Dudjom 1991: 751 and Index 432). O rgyan gLing pa (1323–c.1360) also mentions Sangs rgyas bLa ma as the first *gter ston* in his *Padma bka' thang shel brag ma* f. 197a. Secondary sources also follow this tradition; see Doctor 2005: 198. fn. 5; Dudjom 1991: 751–752; Tulku Thondup 1990: 154; Gyatso 1993: 99, fn. 5. However, treasure revelation became widespread and popular only in the thirteenth century.

⁶ The three modes of transmission: *bka'ma* (master-disciple), *gter ma* (treasure), *dag snang* (pure vision).

⁷ Gyatso 1993: 103, fn. 14.

⁸ In 2010 he found that one of Nyang ral Nyi ma'i 'od zer's (twelfth century) treasure works is a republication of an old physical manuscript that has a copy in the Dunhuang collection, IOL TibJ 331 III (c. tenth century). Mayer 2015: 229.

1. The Author and his Work

The text that will be our point of departure is attributed to Rigzin Gödem (1337-1408)⁹ a famous treasure revealer who lived in the fourteenth century and was affiliated with the Nyingma School. He was the spiritual teacher of the Gungthang royal family, and at the age of 52 he was appointed as personal preceptor to King Chogdrubde (mChog sgrub lde, 1370-1396).¹⁰ Rigzin Gödem established the lineage of Northern Treasure (*byang gter*) in Tibet. He is credited not only with the discovery of several *terma* cycles but also with a list of seven Hidden Lands or *beyüls* (*sbas yul*). It is known from one of his biographies that he spent eleven years (1373-84) in Sikkim (*'Bras mo gzhong*), in one of the Hidden Lands. According to Tibetan sources, he held the key to other lists of hidden places (*kha byang*, *them byang*), and even the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century refers to the seven Hidden Lands as a list attributed to Rigzin Gödem.

From the fourteenth century onward, several Tibetan Buddhist works—especially ones written by lamas associated with the Nyingma tradition—are concerned with Hidden Lands, where Tibetans can migrate when attacks by foreign armies and violence endanger human life and the preservation of the Buddhist teaching. Several different genres of literature developed to describe the Hidden Land, the ways to get there, and the external and internal signs showing the time to leave Tibet. One of these texts is the *sBas yul spyi'i them byang* or *The General Description of Hidden Lands*,¹¹ which gives a very detailed account of the age of decline and places Hidden Lands in Tibet and on its borderlands, where the Dharma can be preserved during the Age of Decline. Although several scholars have mentioned this text as an important source for learning about Hidden Lands,¹² it has not yet been published in English. The Tibetan original is part of a collection of biographies and prophecies called *Byang gter lugs kyi rnam thar dang ma 'ongs lung bstan*, one of the major collections of the Northern Treasure tradition. I first came across this remarkable collection of texts in Dharamsala at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in 2010 while searching for material on Yolmo history.¹³ Later, I acquired a copy of the same collection from the

⁹ He was born dNgos grub rgyal mtshan (1337-1408) and later called rGod kyi ldem 'phru can, “the one with vulture feathers,” because a feathery growth appeared on the top of his head. His most commonly used name is Rig 'dzin rGod ldem.

¹⁰ The rulers of Gungthang during Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's time: bKra shis lde (1352-1365), his son Phun tshogs lde (1365-1370) and mChog sgrub lde (1370-1396).

¹¹ I will refer to it in footnotes as KNYD.

¹² Orofino 1991: 240; Ehrhard 1997: 361, fn. 22; Childs 1999: 137.

¹³ LTWA Acc. no. Ka. 3:77-2221.

Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre.¹⁴ The importance of this text is shown also by the fact that it was published in two smaller collections, one containing prophetic texts related to Yolmo, and the other presenting textual sources concerning the hidden land of Demoshong.¹⁵

2. The Main Topics in *The General Description of Hidden Lands*

2.1. The Age of Decline

The General Description of Hidden Lands is written in the form of a dialogue between King Trisong Detsen and Guru Rinpoche, and the king's main concern is the Age of Decline, the last five-hundred-year period when the Dharma is about to disappear, human lifespan decreases, and people are poisoned by desire and deceit. Guru Rinpoche's prophecy in the text perfectly reflects the teachings of Buddhist temporal cosmology and the view that cosmogenic processes are shaped by karmic forces and the actions of sentient beings shape society through the ordered law of causation:

That time when [the chief] Māra, the Lord of Pleasure,¹⁶ looks in the four directions from the top of Mount Meru [and sees] the dark side conquered, he will rejoice. Seeing that the teaching of Śākyā degenerates in Southern Jambudvīpa, Māra will be cheerful. At that time, when Vajrāsana¹⁷ in India is captured by the Turks,¹⁸ Māra will shoot his flower-weapons.¹⁹ In Tibet, the Land of Snow, the time will not be ripe to spread the teaching further. The king of Māras will fire seven arrows to Tibet from the top of Mount Meru. As a result, there will be no Sun and Moon, resulting in no year and month in Jambudvīpa. As an external sign, dazzling fire will blaze in the sky. As an internal sign, district chiefs, army commanders, local lords, the ones with greater karmic power, will be shot by Māra's poison of killing.²⁰ Instantaneously, burning hatred and wild jealousy will arise. As a result, they will kill

¹⁴ TBRC LC Classification: BQ7920.C64.

¹⁵ See bibliography.

¹⁶ dGa' rab dbang phyug. The chief Māra, the Love God, Kāma.

¹⁷ rDo rje gdan. The place where Gautama Siddhārtha attained enlightenment. It is identified with Bodh Gayā today.

¹⁸ *Du ru kha*. This event, when Du ru kha rgyal po destroyed the shrine of rDo rje gdan is part of the mythic history of the black flying *bse* mask of the *Sa skya pa*. See Sørensen and Hazod 2005: 284 and Vitali 2001: 26-27.

¹⁹ *mTshon cha'i me tog*.

²⁰ *gSod byed kyi dug*.

each other. Completely annihilate each other . . . Then the poison of craving for food will be shot at men. Tibetan religious men, and those not at all religious, and the ones in between, will all barely be able to handle the pain. Suddenly, steaming hot food would appear [in their minds], and the lust for eating will arise in everyone. They will hunt for deer²¹ in high remote places. They will catch fish with arrows. They will slaughter their own cattle. They will eat red meat. They will drink red blood. They will spread animal skins on the ground. And in the final times,²² they will eat the flesh of [their own] fathers . . . This is how the seven poisonous arrows of Māra will be shot to Tibet. Similar to a small bird carried away by a hawk, Tibetans will not be able to focus their thoughts on one thing but constantly argue with each other.²³

The main catalysts of the age of decline are the *kleśas*, afflictive emotions, often personified in scriptures by Māra, the Buddhist Evil. The Buddha said at the end of the *Cakkavatti-sihanāda-sutta*, “Monks, I do not consider any power so hard to conquer as the power of Māra.”²⁴

The Māra we encounter in our text is Devaputramāra, a god of the Desire Realm, the lord of the Heaven of Controlling Others’ Emanations (Sk. *paranirmitavaśavartina*). He sees with his clairvoyance the disciples who are seeking liberation and shoots them with his arrows: the arrows of attachment, aversion, ignorance, jealousy and pride. Māra is often mentioned as

²¹ *Ri dvags*. Herbivores such as deer for instance.

²² *Dus tha ma*. The “final period,” referring to the final five hundred years.

²³ KNYD: 3-4. *de’i tshe bdud dga’ rab dbang phyug gis/ ri rab kyi rtse nas phyogs bzhir bltas pas/ phyir nag po’i phyogs kha rgyal²³ nas bdud brod pa skyed lho phyogs ’dzam bu gling pa shākya’i bstan pa nyams pa mthong pas/ bdud snying dga’/ de’i dus na rgya gar rdo rje gdan du ru khas ’dzin pas bdud mtshon cha’i me tog ’thor/ bod kha ba can gyi yul du bstan pa’i lhag ma dar la ma smin ba’i dus ’ongs te/ bdud kyi rgyal po des ri rab kyi steng nas dug mda’ bdun bod la ’phen te/ de la lo zad zla zad nyi zla’i mdangs ’dzam bu’i gling la med pa’i tshe ’phangs pas/ phyi rtags su ni nam mkha’ la me ’od lam lam pa ’ong/ nang rtags su sde dpon dang/ dmag dpon dang/ gtso bo dang/ ’jig rten gyi las stobs che ba rnams la gsod byed kyi dug ’phangs pas/ glo bur du zhe sdang tsha lam lam pa dang phrag dog ’khrug ram ram pa skye/ de’i rje su gcig gis gcig gsod/ gcig gis gcig brlag par ’joms so/. . . / rngam char lto ba’i dug shar po la phog ste/ bod kyi chos pa dang mi chos pa ’bring po thams cad la kha ngal khyog khyog pa/ lto ba tsha chil chil ba glo bur du ’byung/ de’i dus su thams cad la zas skom gyi ’du shes ’dod sred langs ste phu’i ri dwags rngon/ mda’²³ nya ’dzin/ rang gi phyugs ’og tu bcug ste gsod nus/ sha dmar po za/ khrag dmar po ’thung/ pags pa dmar po ’ding/ dus tha mar pha sha za ba ’byung ngo/. . . / de liar bdud kyi dug mda’ bdun bod la phog pa dang/ bya phran khras khyer ba ltar/ bod kyi bsam pa phyogs gcig tu mi ’dril bar gcig la gcig rtsod/ gcig la gcig rgol zhing ’khrugs pas/*

²⁴ *Dīghanikāya*, Sutta 26, Section 28 (Walshe 1987: 405).

the flower-armed god, because his bow and arrows are made of sugarcane with the buds of the Amra tree. When his flower arrows strike, they feel delightful, but they are deeply piercing. The *kleśas* symbolized by Māra²⁵ and their result, the karma created by them, are the causes for the repeated creation, endurance and destruction of the universe. As a result of negative actions, the lifespan of humans is decreasing.

Guru Rinpoche's prophetic teachings also mention Tibetan historical events as signs of the advent of the final period of decline. At different points in the text, he suggests that the final period starts in Tibet when the empire falls into small principalities (ninth century) and worship stops in the royal temples, or when the Mongolian Black Dorta invades Tibet (1240, Iron Male Mouse year),²⁶ or when the royal lineage of Gungthang "is cut by a knife."²⁷

2.2. Protection from Negative Effects

Another question asked by King Trisong Detsen is how to stay protected from the poisonous arrows of Māra during the last five hundred years. Guru Rinpoche predicts that three external things, three internal substances, three secret *samādhis*, three wrathful mantras and three protecting postures can protect practitioners from the negative effects of the Declining Age:

First, the three external things are three temples founded by the ones with an awakened mind²⁸ in places blessed earlier by realization . . . If you never part from the *samādhi* of your own tutelary deity,²⁹ the *bodhicitta* and the *samādhi* without concepts, any of these three, you won't be hit by the poisonous arrows of the demon. If you get the inner substances—the medicine of realization, the Tathāgatha's pearl-like relics and substance from a *maṇḍala* made by someone who had earlier

²⁵ *Kleśa* refers here to the aforementioned five negative mental states.

²⁶ It was the time when the Mongolians defeated China and established the Yuan dynasty with its new seat in Beijing. The main political center of Tibet became Sa skya, the seat of the Sa skya School, who were spiritual advisors to the Yuan emperors. According to Rig 'dzin rGod lde m's *terma* teachings, it was the time to leave Tibet, but very few people had the courage to do so. Tibet was under Mongolian rule until 1368, the year that marks the end of the Yuan dynasty.

²⁷ The same event is mentioned in a text concerning the Hidden Land of Khembalung; see Reinhard 1978: 17. As there were twenty-one generations of kings in the Gungthang Kingdom in Southern Tibet, it is uncertain what events the text refers to. The final demise of the royal house occurred in 1620, when Gungthang was defeated by Tsang.

²⁸ The three bodhisattva kings: Srong btsan sGam po, Krhi srong lDe btsan and Ral pa can.

²⁹ *Yi dam*. Sk. *iṣṭadevatā*.

attained perfection³⁰—the poisonous arrows won't hit you. The three wrathful mantras: the mantra of Vajra Claw³¹; the transforming mantra of Uṣṇīṣa's cycle; and the mantra of Vajra Armor.³² If you recite any of them from the evening when shadows turn into darkness until the light of the stars and planets fades,³³ you will not be hit by poisonous arrows. The three protecting postures are the Vajra posture³⁴ wrathful dancing posture³⁵ and circumambulation with prostrations. When you do these, the essential points of the body cannot be hit by poisonous arrows.³⁶

2.3. Hidden Lands

A Hidden Land (*sbas yul*) is a place of refuge, a destination to settle during the last phase of the Declining Age for meritorious individuals from all strata of Tibetan society, lamas and laymen alike. It is a place where an idealized version of Tibetan society can be sustained far from all the political trouble in Tibet. It is also a safe haven for those who want to spend extended time in retreat. It is a sacred land, a multi-layered *maṇḍala*, where practitioners can achieve a higher realization. It is a stepping stone for being reborn in Sukhāvātī.³⁷ As many spiritual treasures are hidden in a Hidden Land, it is a place for yogis and treasure revealers as well, because the teachings concealed there provide further chances for spiritual development. The outer aspect of the Hidden Land is a geographical place, where a

³⁰ *Grub thob*. Sk. *siddha*. Tantric adept who attained a certain level of realization or perfection.

³¹ *rDo rje sder mo*. Sk. Vajranakhā. Wrathful female deity.

³² *rDo rje go khrab*.

³³ From dusk until dawn.

³⁴ *rDo rje dkyil krung*. Crossed-legged position.

³⁵ *Khro bo'i stang stabs*. The one like Vajrapāni's.

³⁶ KNYD: 7. *phyi'i yul gsum ni/ byang chub kyi sems dang ldan pas bzhengs pa'i lha khang gsum dang/ sngon byin gyis brlabs pa'i sgrub gnas su/. . . / ting nge 'dzin rang gi yi dam gyi lha dang/ byang chub kyi sems dang/ mi dmigs pa'i ting nge 'dzin gsum gang rung re dang ma bral na bdud kyi dug mda' mi 'phog/ nang gi rdzas ni/ sgrub pa'i sman/ de bzhin gshegs pa'i ring bsrel/ sngon grub pa thob pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi rdzas bcangs pas dug mda' mi 'phog/ drag po'i sngags gsum ni/ rdo rje rder mo'i sngags/ gtsug gtor 'khor los bsgyur ba'i sngags/ rdo rje go khrab kyi sngags/ dgongs kha grib so nag song nas gza' skar gyi bkrag ma thon gyi bar bzlas pas dug mda' mi 'phog/ bca' ba'i 'khor lo gsum ni/ rdo rje dkyil krung/ khro bo'i stang stabs/ phyag dang bskor ba byed pa'i lus gnad la dug mda' mi 'phog go/*

³⁷ *bDe ba can*. The Pure Land of Amitābha. The Khembalung text says if you stay in a Hidden Land for at least three years you will be reborn in Sukhāvātī. Reinhard 1978: 20.

sizeable population can engage in agro-pastoral work. The inhabitants are often unaware of the special qualities of the place, but practitioners can feel its sanctity, and they are deeply affected by it. Only those who can access the inner level of the Hidden Land attain higher realizations. The inner level can lie in the same place as the outer, or it can be deeper in the mountains. The practitioner can feel a greater space and freedom and obtain food and shelter without effort and find spiritual treasures. A truly accomplished yogi can even go deeper and experience the secret level of the Hidden Land. On the secret level, there are even more profound *termas* and enlightenment can be achieved at higher speed. This level of a Hidden Land no longer exists in the outside, but within the yogi's mind. On this level, distinction between self and the world blends.³⁸

The main aim of *The General Description* is to urge its readers to leave their place and go to Hidden Lands. The prophecy lists many power-places and hidden valleys that can provide a safe refuge, describes how to get there, how to overcome obstacles on the way, which Hidden Land is easy to find, etc. Many scholars consider the Hidden Land to be a unique Tibetan concept, but I see it as being deeply rooted in the earliest Buddhist tradition. A part of the Pali Canon,³⁹ the twenty-sixth *sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, a teaching attributed to Buddha Śākyamuni himself, the *Cakkavatti-sīhanāda-sutta* (*Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel*)⁴⁰ gives an elaborate description of the reasons why the human lifespan is decreasing and what happens at the end of the Age of Decline. Richard Gombrich suggests that the main narrative inserted as the teaching of the Buddha was present even before the Buddha's time in India.⁴¹ In the text, the historical Buddha gives a long teaching to his Magadhan monks in Mātulā⁴² concerning karmic events that resulted in the decrease in lifespan until his own lifetime, when people lived only for one hundred years, and continues his teaching with a prophecy. He says that a time will come when the lifespan will be only ten years. Girls will get married when they are five. There will be no word for morals, no respect for anyone; promiscuity and fierce hatred will characterize that final

³⁸ Bernbaum 1980: 62.

³⁹ Based on oral tradition and an earlier version composed in north India, the Pali Canon was first put into writing around 29 BCE, at the fourth Buddhist council in Sri Lanka.

⁴⁰ *Cakkavatti-sīhanāda-sutta*. It is slightly mentioned by Nattier 1991: 13-15. She mentions it to prove that cosmic evolution and devolution were assumed by Buddhists from early on. The English translation of the title is by Walshe 1987: 395. Another interpretation of the title: "Die stolze Rede über einen Weltherrscher der Vorzeit" (Franke 1913: 260).

⁴¹ Gombrich 1997.

⁴² A village in Magadha.

age. Then there will be a seven-day “sword-interval”⁴³ when swords appear in peoples’ hands and they hunt and kill each other. The Burmese edition of the same text is a bit more interpretative, saying: “. . . world-wide armed conflicts will rage only for seven days, during which they will look upon one another as prey.”⁴⁴ And during this time of war and violence, some of them will think: “Let us not kill or be killed by anyone! Let us make for some grassy thickets or jungle-recesses or clumps of trees. For rivers hard to ford or inaccessible mountains, and live on roots and fruits of the forest.”⁴⁵ The Burmese edition is again a bit more to the point, saying that some would hide in thickets of tall grass, dense jungles, forested woodlands, inaccessible mid-river islands and mountain valleys.⁴⁶

These teachings were incorporated into the Abhidharma cosmology, and centuries later they found their way to Tibet. The teachings on the Age of Decline found fertile ground in Tibet, where especially from the thirteenth century on not only was the Dharma degenerating but the country was also being torn apart by internal conflicts, foreign attacks and chaos. As a result, many lamas thought that the final battle mentioned in the sutra was drawing close and that it was urgent to look for a hiding place.

A Hidden Land is seen as a place where an ideal society can be established, as in the Golden Age of Tibet, and people can live again in a socially and politically stable environment in complete harmony. Beyond the fertility of the place and the abundance of food supply, another reason to consider could have been the fact that, according to the treasure teachings, Guru Rinpoche blessed these lands, and people could live there under his protection. He also subjugated the local mountain gods and turned them into protectors of the Dharma, so migrants didn’t have to be afraid of hostile

⁴³ The meaning of this expression (*satthantarakappa*) is not clear for the translators of the text (Walshe, Rhys Davids), but it seems to mark a turning point between two *antarakalpas*. Walshe 1987: 602, fn. 798.

⁴⁴ *Ten Suttas* 1984: 363. This Burmese edition was also published in Sarnath and used by the Tibetan Institute of Higher Studies. It is a popular text among Tibetans. Most monks and lay practitioners I talked to were aware of this teaching. At the same time, I discovered from *khenpos* I met from schools other than Nyingma and who were not from Nepal that, even though they did have some knowledge of this teaching, they were not aware of the concept of Hidden Land.

⁴⁵ *Dīghanikāya* 26.21; Walshe 1987: 402.

⁴⁶ *Ten Suttas* 1984: 363. See also Franke 1913: 268, “. . . wird es das beste sein, wir ziehen uns in das Gras-Jungle oder in das Wald-Jungle oder unter das Luftwurzeln(und Lianen-) Geflecht großer Waldbäume oder auf eine schwer zugängliche Flußinsel oder in die Unebenheiten des Gebirges zurück . . .” See the original Pali text in *Dīghanikāya* 26.21. PTS 2006: 73.

elemental forces turning against them. And because these local gods were bound under oath to protect Buddhist practitioners who keep their vows, they would also save them from wild animals. Guru Rinpoche's blessing ensures health, long life and prosperity in this life, and it is also the precondition for attaining liberation, the freedom from migratory existence.

2.4. Creating Networks

Our Tibetan text also advises its reader to build good relationships with locals on the way, build resting places on the routes to the Hidden Lands, set up small monastic or yogi communities and temples, and in case the traveller has a poor livelihood it even offers ideas about where material treasures (gold, turquoise, *gzi* stones) are hidden. These treasures can be used partly to support him and partly to erect buildings for people following behind:

Those going to Lapchi and Snowy Yolmo! On the east of Sangsang Lhadrak,⁴⁷ there is a trench filled with gold and *gzi* stones, each piece is the size of a goat's liver. Take them, and erect a resthouse in the Gyalthang⁴⁸ valley. On the pass of Nanam,⁴⁹ create a monastic community.⁵⁰

The text recounts a long list of material treasures hidden en route to the seven Hidden Lands, which makes it look as if it were a conscious scheme to set up infrastructures and “weak ties” networks in order to facilitate migration. The treasure revealer yogis wandering in the Himalayas in search of Hidden Lands created “weak ties” networks not only with locals but also with other high lamas, political luminaries and Nepali rulers. As they had good resources to facilitate their movements, they could travel a lot and had access to a greater volume of information, not only by communicating with others but also by getting access to texts or even circulating them or their messages.

⁴⁷ Zang zang lha brag. THL Place ID: F8193. According to the Northern Treasure tradition, Padmasambhava concealed various texts and sacred objects in a maroon casket here, which were revealed by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem in 1366. These were the Northern Treasures.

⁴⁸ rGyal thang.

⁴⁹ sNa nam. Name of a great mountain range in Tibet.

⁵⁰ KNYD: 12. *la phyi dang yol mo gangs la 'gro ba rnams/ zang zang lha brag gi shar na gser gzi'i dong pa gang dang thig po ra'i mchin pa tsam zhig yod pa thon/ rgyal thang gi rong la lam khang tshugs/ sna nam gyi la la dge 'dun gyi sde thob/*

2.5. Preserving the Royal Line

Another important reason to leave Tibet was to preserve Tibetan culture outside Tibet. It is quite obvious from our treasure texts that the idea of living in a Hidden Land was driven by sentiments about the Golden Age of the imperial era of Tibet (seventh to tenth century), the ideal society. As Childs tried to prove, the reason to reach a Hidden Land could have been to preserve the imperial lineage.⁵¹ Nevertheless, I think it was not (only) the bloodline they wished to preserve but maybe more what the institution of kingship meant to them. Let me again refer to the *Cakkavatti-sihanāda-sutta*, which shows that there is a human need to institute kingship to regulate human affairs according to the Dharma because of changing environmental and human conditions. As a result of kingship, a stratified society develops, and the presence of the Cakravartin or Universal Monarch guarantees righteous rule and morality in accord with the Dharma. Kingship is the basis of order in society; royal power and the power of the Buddha's Dharma together consolidate socio-political stability. Since the Buddha has transcended this world through achieving nirvana, the king becomes the sovereign, the "sovereign-regulator" as Tambiah calls him,⁵² a link between the cosmic Dharma and the dharma of human affairs. The ideals of social order and righteous kingship are intertwined. The moment a newly installed king does not follow the Dharma, human conditions degenerate, morals decline, and social order disintegrates. As a karmic result, the human lifespan decreases rapidly.

After the Tibetan empire fell apart, an era of foreign invasions and internal conflicts followed, and by the thirteenth or fourteenth century the memory of the Imperial Era of Tibet turned into a massive narrative of the Golden Age, with Trisong Detsen being the Cakravartin and Guru Rinpoche the second Buddha. The power of the king supported by the Buddhist order is manifested in the system of royal temples built in concentric circles from Lhasa to the borderland in order to control negative energies and maintain order. And the fate of these royal temples symbolizes the fate of Tibet. Our text mentions that the sign of the last five-hundred-year period is when worship stops in these temples. But by protecting and renovating these sacred places, especially Samye, the first monastery in Tibet, which was founded by Trisong Detsen and Guru Rinpoche, the effects of the Declining Age can be reduced:

⁵¹ Childs 1999.

⁵² Tambiah 1976: 52.

At the time when all Tibetans go to the southern valleys, put an amulet box with poisonous gas under the gate of Samye! If Samye falls completely in ruins, there will be civil war in Tibet. If the three-storied central temple⁵³ is torn down, foreign armies will invade Tibet. If the three-storied Samye and the Magical Apparition [temple] of Lhasa⁵⁴ are not in ruins and the enemy doesn't cause [much] damage, Tibet will not be completely destroyed. Therefore, put sandalwood ointment in the nostril of a man who was born in the year of the monkey, smear his head and body completely with goat fat, and [he] should put the tanned leather amulet box⁵⁵ covered with butter under the threshold of Samye, then open it and run away. As a result, army troops won't be able to come close to Samye.⁵⁶

2.6. Quoting the Buddha

Guru Rinpoche quotes two texts, the *Seven Sutras of the Victorious Śākyamuni's Prophecy*⁵⁷ and the *Sutra of the King of Prophecies*,⁵⁸ to prove that the historical Buddha had already predicted the time when Jambudvīpa would be surrounded by foreign armies and his followers had to flee. By the blessing of the Great Compassionate One, now Guru Rinpoche received the task of predicting the time of escape:

In the last five hundred years of the Degenerate Times, it will be ten times worse than now. There will be no king, which is like having limbs without a head. Each land will be a [separate] principality. Each principality will have its ox-hearted butcher. Servants will quarrel and prattle. In each holy place and monastery, there will be a preceptor and master.

⁵³ dBu rtse rigs gsum. Another name for Samye monastery.

⁵⁴ Lha sa 'phrul snang. Another name for Jokhang temple, the main temple of Lhasa.

⁵⁵ bSe'i ga'u. It can mean an amulet box made of tanned leather or of rhinoceros hide or an amulet of Se, the guardian demon of the Kīlaya teaching.

⁵⁶ KNYD: 13. *bod thams cad lho rong la 'gro ba'i dus na/ rdzi dug gi ga'u bsam yas kyi sgo la zhog cig/ de'ang bsam yas kyi mtha' gogs pa dang bod la nang 'khrug yong/ dbu rtse ri gsum zhig ral 'byung ba dang bod mtha' dmag gis khyab yong/ bsam yas dbu rtse ri gsum dang lha sa 'phrul snang la zhig ral dang dgra'i gnod pa ma byung na bod gting nasbrlag par mi 'gyur/ de'i phyir mi sprel lo pa gcig gi sna bug tu tsan dan gyi lde gu blugs/ ra tshil gyis mgo lus med par byugs/ bsam yas kyi them pa'i 'og na mar brkos bse'i ga'u de'i nang du zhog la kha phye ste rang bros shig/ des bsam yas kyi phyogs su dmag ra 'cha' mi nus so/*

⁵⁷ rGyal ba Shākya thub pa'i lung bstan gyi mdo bdun.

⁵⁸ Lung bstan rgyal po'i mdo.

Preceptor, master and ordinary people will [all] wear yellow robes.
 Disciples will quarrel and [dissent will] spread.
 People will control their neighbors like thugs.
 Practitioners will abuse their friends.
 Kind and gentle people will have perverted views.
 They will abandon practicing the holy Dharma.⁵⁹

And finally Guru Rinpoche ends his prophecies with an oral instruction:

When the last five hundred years of the teaching come to an end
 All sentient beings of Jambudvīpa
 If there is no peace and happiness, flee to a safe place!
 Without listening to the teaching of sinners,
 Virtuous ones, concentrate your thoughts one-pointedly.
 Although in the revelations on Hidden Lands,
 Safe forests and valleys are described,
 Abandon your desire for vast plains of bliss.
 On the narrow borderlands of Mon
 Imbalance of elements causes illness.
 There is need for medical expertise in certain circumstances.

.....

Maintain good conduct for three years,
 Then the body will be fit for the land.⁶⁰
 Even if you fear the forests and valleys, they are safe lands,
 Because I, the king of Urgyen,
 Made the lands and valleys safe, tamed and
 Blessed the smaller lands, and concealed Dharma treasures there.
 The gatekeepers and guardians
 Obey the teaching and are entrusted [with treasures]
 For that reason, all the Hidden Lands
 Each place of realization and each sacred place
 Has the seal of [my] command, so settle there!
 The place of realization blessed by me
 Is like a father's land inherited by his son.

⁵⁹ KNYD: 16. *da lta bas lnga brgya snyigs ma'i dus na bcu 'gyur bas ngan du 'gro/ rgyal po med pas mgo med kyi yan lag 'dra/ yul re na rgyal phran re/ rgyal phran shan pa glang snying re/ gros 'go kha 'chal g.yog pos byed/ gnas dgon re na mkhan slob re/ mkhan slob skye bo gos ser gyon/ gros 'go nye gnas skyes 'gos byed/ jag pas nye bas khyim mtshes 'joms/ bshe skur chos byed grogs la gtong/ log lta byams sems can la byed/ spang bya dam pa'i chos la byed/*

⁶⁰ The physical body will adjust to the environment.

Go there and seize it without hesitation.
 In the life after this
 No doubt, [you] will meet me.⁶¹

Both of these quotations are in verse and seem to have been inserted from other texts, but I have not yet been able to identify their origin.

3. Conclusion

Despite their long cultural legacy and popularity, *terma* teachings have not been immune to strong criticism, and a number of famous Tibetan scholars, such as Sakya Pandita (1182-1251) and Jigten Gönpö (1143-1217), expressed their disapproval of the practice of *terma* revelation. Pawo Tsuglag Thenga (1504-1566), a great historian of the sixteenth century, refutes the idea that only Nyingma practitioners had the privilege to discover *termas*, since other schools also have a few treasure teachings. He explains that the reason why mainly Nyingma masters discovered these treasure teachings was that treasure inventories (*kha byang*) were inserted in the kings' treasuries (*dkor mdzod*) hidden with the condition to benefit future royal dynasties and restore temples.⁶² The fact that all treasure teachings and their narratives are associated with Guru Rinpoche⁶³ and his activities in Tibet also gives a certain amount of legitimacy to the *terma* tradition. It is interesting to see the shift in criticism: in the distant past *sarma* scholars⁶⁴ questioned the authenticity of the *terma* tradition itself, and *terma* teachings were not included in the Tibetan Buddhist canon, but during the course of history they accepted the phenomenon of treasure revelation, and instead of the authen-

⁶¹ KNYD: 17-18. *bstan pa'i snyigs ma lnga brgya'i mthar/ 'dzam gling sems can thams cad la/ bde skyid med pas bstan sar bros/ sdig can bka' las mi nyan pas/ dge byed bsam pa phyogs gcig dril/ lung bstan sbas pa'i yul rnams kyang/ nags rong bstan sa'i yul yin pas/ bde zhing yangs pa'i 'dod pa skyungs/ rmu 'thom mon gyi yul mtshams na/ 'byung ba mi snyoms nad gzhi'i (18) rgyu/ thabs mkhas rten 'brel sman dpyad dgos/ nags rong 'dzin pa'i g.yang sa la/ drod dngangs ma byed sgo ba chos/ char rmugs thib dang sa dug la/ 'jigs par mi bya pho nya bcos/ lo gsum spyod pa legs par bsdams/ de nas yul dang lus 'phrod 'gyur/ nags rong dogs kyang sa bstan pas/ U rgyan rgyal po padma ngas/ sa rong bstan pas yul phran rnams/ sa 'dul byin rlabs gter chos sbas/ sgo ba sgo srung bka' nyan bskos/ de phyir sbas pa'i yul kun nang/ sgrub gnas re dang gnas chen re/ bka' rtags yin pas bzhag par bya/ nga yi byin brlabs sgrub gnas su/ pha yul bu yis 'dzin pa ltar/ the tshom med par 'dzin du bzhud/ skye ba 'di yi phyi ma la/ nga dang 'phrad par the tshom med/*

⁶² Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston 1959: 255.

⁶³ He is considered to be the second Buddha by Tibetans, because he brought the Tantric teachings to Tibet in the eighth century.

⁶⁴ New schools of Tibet: Kagyüpa, Sakyapa, Gelukpa.

ticity of the tradition they questioned the authenticity of certain treasure revealers (*gter ston*). Two of the most significant discussions on the authenticity of *tertöns* appear during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by the Nyingma polymath Ju Mipham (1846-1912) and Dondrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima (1865-1926). They conclude that false treasure revealers inflicted great damage with their misleading activities on the treasure tradition, and only powerful, authoritative leaders could validate treasure revealers. The latter scholar suggests that, by analyzing the treasure scriptures, an experienced master can evaluate their content and validity.⁶⁵



⁶⁵ Terrone 2010: 60-61.

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The Buddha's Words and Their Interpretations in Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*

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Introduction

The *Vyākhyāyukti* (VyY) is a work by Vasubandhu that deals with the method for commenting on the Sarvāstivāda Āgamas for future Dharma-preachers (*dhārmakathika*). This work is not found either in the original Sanskrit or a Chinese translation but is preserved only in a Tibetan translation.

The VyY has five chapters. Chapters 1 to 4 consist of a five-point method, i.e., *prayojana*, *piṇḍārtha*, *padārtha*, *anusandhi* and *codyaparihāra*.¹ The principle of commentary is composed in the *saṃgrahaśloka* 1 of the VyY and is quoted in the Sanskrit text of Abhayākara Gupta's *Āmnāyamañjarī*.²

prayojanaṃ sapīṇḍārthaṃ sapadārthānusandhikam |
*sacodyaparihāraṇ ca vācyam sūtrārthavācibhiḥ ||*³ (ĀM ms 3v2-3)

¹ Skilling (2000: 318) has wrongly stated that *codyaparihāra* is located only in Chapter 3, but Chapter 4 of the VyY is the 15th *parihāra* by Vasubandhu, aiming toward the proof of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna. See note 6.

² The verse was transcribed by Tomabechei Tōru. See Tomabechei (2017: 105, 125). The Sanskrit text of Abhayākara Gupta's ĀM is based on the *Rare and Ancient Tibetan Texts collected in the Tibetan Regions Series*, compiled by the Institute of the Collection and Preservation of Ancient Tibetan Texts of Sichuan Province 藏区民間所藏藏文珍稀文獻叢刊, 2015, Beijing: Sichuan Nationality Publishing House 四川民族出版社.

³ Skilling (2000: 318), Verhagen (2005: 574) and Nance (2012: 250, n. 8) discuss the VyY's *saṃgrahaśloka* 1 quoted in Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālamkāraśloka*, which belongs to a different tradition from the ĀM:

prayojanaṃ sapīṇḍārthaṃ padārthaḥ sānusandhikah |*
sacodyaparihāraś ca vācyah sūtrārthavādibhiḥ ||
(AAĀ, Wogihara 15.24-27; Vaidya 277.16-19; Tucci 18.21-22)
*Tucci: *padartham ānusandhikah*

The verse is also quoted in Haribhadra's *Ratnagūṇasañcayagāthavyākhyā*. See *Dhīḥ, Rare Buddhist Texts Research Unit* 47, 2009: 122.11-12.

The purpose, together with the meaning of [the sutra's] summary, the meaning of the [Buddha's] words, the connection [between the previous sentence and the following one, as well as the word order], the objections and responses [on canonical interpretations] should be explained by those who preach the contents/meaning of the sutras.

In comparison with the *Nettipakaraṇa* in Pāli, the VyY's methodology is simplified in various ways, resembling the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*, **Vyākhyāsamgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi* and the *Abhidharma-samuccayabhāṣya*.⁴

1. Is it possible to define the Buddha's words?

In Chapter 4 of his VyY, Vasubandhu opens with a discussion about "What is the definition of the Buddha's word (*buddhavacana*)?" He writes, "And again, [if a Śrāvakayānist states that] Mahāyāna is not the Buddha's word, [we] should discuss and investigate 'What is the definition of the Buddha's word?'"⁵ After the investigation into the definition,⁶ Vasubandhu concludes, "Therefore, there is no definition that proves that the Mahāyāna is not the Buddha's word."⁷

Regarding the question of doctrinal authenticity, Vasubandhu answers that "there is no definition" that excludes the Mahāyāna. The answer, at least, means that he admits to the traditional Sarvāstivāda definition of the Buddha's words, i.e., the Great Instruction (*mahāpadeśa*), which is, for example, in his *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* described as follows:

The Buddha's words have a definition: [If a teaching or text] (1) accords with the sutras, (2) agrees with the rules of the Vinayas, and (3) is not against the law (*dharmatā*) [then it can be accepted as authoritative].⁸

⁴ Except for the method of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* (VinSg, D zhi 281a5ff.); see Nance 2012.

⁵ VyY IV 226.8-9: *gzhan yang theg pa chen po sangs rgyas kyi gsung ma yin no zhes zer na sangs rgyas kyi gsung gi mtshan nyid ci yin zhes brgal zhing brtag par bya 'o ||*

⁶ On Vasubandhu's proof of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna and his views on the definition of the Buddha's word, see Horiuchi 2009, which contains the Tibetan text of Chapter 4 of Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti* and Guṇamati's *Vyākhyāyuktiṭīkā*.

⁷ VyY IV 227.15-16: *de lta bas na gang gis na theg pa chen po sangs rgyas kyi gsung ma yin par 'grub par 'gyur ba'i mtshan nyid de med do ||*

⁸ MSABh 4.25-26: *buddhavacanasyedaṃ lakṣaṇaṃ, yat sūtre 'vatarati vinaye samdṛśyate, dharmatām ca na vilomayati.*

Based on this third condition, ultimately, the decision whether or not a discourse is not against the law (*dharmatā*)⁹—in other words, the decision whether a certain word is the Buddha's or not—depends on the value judgment of each individual Buddhist. This stance demands that Buddhists individually determine the [real] intention (*abhiprāya*) of the Buddha's words. The VyY method of exegesis systematically focuses on this point.

2. How should one interpret the Buddha's words? A single word with multiple meanings

When dealing with the *padārtha*, i.e., the meaning of the [Buddha's] word, in Chapter 1 of the VyY, Vasubandhu divides it into two categories: first, a single word with multiple meanings; second, multiple words with a single meaning. As for the first, he gives fourteen examples,¹⁰ each of which is illustrated by a brief citation from scripture. For example, the treatment of the term *dharma* is as follows. This example of the term *dharma* is well known for being quoted by Bu ston rin chen grub in his *Chos 'byung*, The Chronicle of the Buddhisms in India and Tibet.¹¹ This section of the VyY has been translated by Richard Nance, but I want to point out that all the citations from scripture are intentionally limited to the Sarvāstivāda Āgama and Vinaya.

⁹ As is pointed out by Honjō 1989, the proofs of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna that are described in the MSABh, the VyY and Bavya's *Tarkajvālā* are common to the proofs of the authenticity of the Abhidharma (a theory that the Abhidharma is the word of the Buddha) described in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and Saṅghabhadra's **Nyāyānusāriṇī*, based on three arguments: 1. the *dharmatā*; 2. a theory of the "hidden" sutra (*bahulāni sūtrāny antarhitāni*); 3. the *abhiprāya*.

1. The addition of the third condition to the Great Instruction. 2. A theory of the "hidden" (*antarhita*) sutra. 3. A theory to distinguish between *nūārtha* and *neyārtha*, based on the *abhiprāya* submitted by Vasubandhu in Chapter 4 of the VyY is originally the argument that the Vaibhāṣikas used for the proof that the Abhidharmas were the Buddha's words as opposed to the Sautrāntika theory. In this way, the Vaibhāṣikas created a theory regarding the Abhidharma as the word of the Buddha against an attitude regarding only the Āgamas as being such. This can be confirmed from the *Mahāvibhāṣā* to the **Nyāyānusāriṇī*. Honjō 1989 pointed out that Vasubandhu diverted it to the proofs of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna.

¹⁰ Skilling (2000: 338, Appendix 3), Verhagen (2005: 582, n. 82) and Nance (2012: 138ff.) wrongly state that the number of examples is thirteen, but Vasubandhu deals with fourteen. These terminological examples are *vigata*, *rūpa*, *anta*, *agra*, *loka*, *āmiṣa*, *bhūta*, *pada*, *dharma*, *prahāṇa*, *nyāya*, *karmānta*, *skandha* and *saṃgraha*. These reconstructed Sanskrit words are presumed, each of which is illustrated by a brief citation from scripture. See Ueno 2010, 2012.

¹¹ See Obermiller 1931: 18-19.

[VyY][D shi 36a4-b2; P si 40b2-41a2; L 21, 5-22, 3]¹²

The term *dharma* [pertaining to the Āgama and the Vinaya is] 1. that which is knowable, 2. path, 3. nirvāṇa, 4. an object of mind, 5. merit, 6. [present] life, 7. scriptural teaching, 8. occurrence, 9. admonition, 10. custom. (*saṃgrahaśloka* 12)

1. The word *dharma* pertains to that which is knowable (**jñeya*) in phrases such as “dharma may be either conditioned or unconditioned, freedom from afflictions is said to be the best among them.” (*ye kecid dharmāḥ saṃskṛtā vāsaṃskṛtā vā virāgas teṣāṃ agra ākhyāyate*)¹³

2. It pertains to path (**mārga*) in phrases of explication such as “Monks! Wrong view is not the path (*adharmā*). Correct view is the path (*dharma*).”¹⁴

3. It pertains to nirvāṇa in phrases such as “[I] take refuge in the dharma.” (**dharmaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi*)¹⁵

¹² The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 1. This section of the VyY is translated into English in Nance (2012: 143-44). In Nance (2012: 138-48) the note number in the text and the notes themselves do not correspond. Note 41 on p. 147 corresponds to note 42 at the annotation on p. 252, because there are two notes 25 on p. 138, but the gap strangely disappears with the absence of note 47 on p. 148. Moreover, Nance 2012 contains some misunderstandings. For example, in the fourth example of the term *pada*, Vasubandhu quotes a brief scriptural passage: *yud tsaṃ la ni sems yud tsaṃ yud tsaṃ la ni yi chad cing rnam par rtog pa rnam kyī dbang du song zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o* || (VyY, L 20.21-22). This passage corresponds to the older version of the *Udānavarga* = Uv(N) 128:

kathañ careya śrāmaṇye cittañ ca na nivārayet |

pade pade viśīdantaḥ saṃkalpānaṃ vaśaṃ gatāḥ ||

As is evident from Uv(N) 128, the Tibetan translation *yud tsaṃ yud tsaṃ la* corresponds to *pade pade* (step-by-step), but Nance (2012: 143) presumes that **muhūrtamuhūrtam* was probably the basis for Mvy(IF) 8174 or J.S. Negi's *Tibetan Sanskrit Dictionary*. Nance's assumption of the original Sanskrit shows that he did not comprehend the intention of Vasubandhu, because this section of the VyY intends to prove that the canonical word *pada* had multiple meanings, and **muhūrtamuhūrtam* was not combined with any examples.

¹³ This phrase is a quotation from the *Samyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, sutra no. 903, T 99.02: 225c27-28: 如是一切法有爲無爲, 離貪欲法最爲第一. It is also quoted in the *dhātunirdeśa* of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh 93.4-5). See Chung 2008: 154-155.

¹⁴ *Samyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, sutra no. 782, T 99.02.02: 202c4-6: 爾時, 世尊告諸比丘: 有非法、是法。諦聽, 善思, 當為汝說。何等為非法、是法? 謂邪見非法、正見是法, 乃至邪定非法、正定是法。

¹⁵ In his *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā* (PSVy), Vasubandhu categorizes dharmas into three types: dharma as result (*phaladharmā*); dharma as practice (*pratīpattidharma*); dharma as teaching (*deśanādharmā*). The first category is glossed as *nirvāṇa* by Vasubandhu himself (PSVy, D chi 57b3; P chi 67a1: *chos la bstod pa 'dir rnam pa gsum ste | 'bras bu'i chos 'di mya ngan las 'das pa'o | sgrub pa'i chos 'di lam mo | bshad pa'i chos ni de 'chad pa'o* ||). Yaśomitra's *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* and Vīryaśrīdatta's *Arthavinīścayasūtranibandhana*

4. It pertains to an object of mind (**manogocara*)¹⁶ in phrases such as “the activity fields of ideas” (**dharmāyatana*), those things that are precisely objects—and objects solely of the mind—but are not supported.

5. It pertains to merit (**puṇya*) in phrases of explication such as “[King!] Practice the merit (*dharmā*), together with the queens and princes of [your] family and the retinue of young women.”¹⁷

6. It pertains to present life¹⁸ (**aihika*) in phrases such as “in the present life, there is experienceable [karma] (**dṛṣṭadharmavedanīya*)”¹⁹ and “the foolish dearly stick to the present life (**dṛṣṭadharmā*).”

7. It pertains to scriptural teaching²⁰ (**pravacana*) in phrases such as “in this [life], a monk who knows the teaching (*dharmā*), i.e., the sutra, the geyā,” (**iha bhikṣur dharmam jānātīti tadyathā sūtram geyam . . .*).²¹

8. It pertains to occurring (**bhāvin*) in phrases such as “substance of formations has this nature (*dharmā*)” and “this body has the nature (*dharmā*) of growing old.”²²

follow these usages, and they cite respectively a passage or passages to illustrate the first category. Cf. AKVy 652.19: *tathā dharmam śaraṇam gacchetety atra phaladharmo nirvāṇam ityādi*; AVSN 277.1-2: *tathā dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmīty phaladharmo nirvāṇam*.

¹⁶ Nance (2012: 143) assumes that the original Sanskrit of *yid kyi yul* is *manovīśaya* (sic!).

¹⁷ This phrase is a quotation from the **Udayanasūtra* and is also quoted in the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*. Cf. VinSg, D zhi 162b2-3; P zi 170a5-7: *rgyal po chos dang ldan zhing chos la dga' chos la gnas la bisun mo'i 'khor dang gzhon nu rnams dang gros grogs rnams dang khrom gyi ru sna dang grong rdal gyi mi rnams dang yul gyi mi rnams dang lhan cig tu sbyin pa dag sbyin pa dang bsod nams dag byed pa dang bsnyen gnas la gnas pa dang tshul khriṃs yang dag par blangs nas 'dug pa gang yin pa de ni de'i bsod nams phun sum tshogs pa zhes bya'o*; 『撰決撰分中有尋有伺等三地』(T 1579.31: 642c21-24: 若諸國王任持正法名爲法王。安住正法名爲大王。與內宮王子群臣英傑豪貴國人共修惠施。樹福受齋堅持禁戒。是王名爲功德圓滿。(= *Wangfa zengli lun* 王法正理論 (T 1615.31: 859c26-29).

¹⁸ Nance (2012: 144) mistakes “present life” (*tshe 'di*) for “admonition” (*nges pa*).

¹⁹ Cf. SWTF s.v. *dṛṣṭadharmā-vedanīya*.

²⁰ Nance (2012: 144) is inconsistent with the translation of *gsung rab* (**pravacana*). In the *Uddāna*, he translates it as “scriptural texts,” but in the prose he translates it as “instruction.”

²¹ This phrase is a quotation from the *Madhyamāgama* 中阿含經, sutra no. 1, *Shanfa jing* 善法經 (T 26.01: 421a17-18: 云何比丘爲知法耶。謂比丘知正經。歌詠。); AN IV 113.14-15: *idha bhikkhave bhikkhu dhammam jānāti suttaṃ geyyam . . .* This phrase is also quoted in the last part of Chapters 2 (VyY, L 158.12-159.1) and 5 (VyY, L 269.17-270.2) of the VyY. See Horiuchi 2016: 197-204.

²² *Samyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, sutra no. 1240, T 99.02: 340a5-6: 此身亦復然 遷移會歸老 唯如來正法 無有衰老相。

9. It pertains to admonition (**niyama*) in phrases such as “the four rules of śramaṇas” (*catvāraḥ śramaṇakārikā dharmāḥ*)²³ and “Monks! Killing is an injustice (*adharmā*), and the abandonment of killing is justice (*dharmā*).”²⁴

10. It pertains to custom (**nīti*) in phrases such as “the law (*dharmā*) of a locale, the law of a tribe . . .”²⁵

Here, Vasubandhu has enumerated ten meanings of the term *dharmā*, and in Chapter 5 of the VyY, another two examples are added. One is the same as number 7, scriptural teaching, while the other (making the eleventh example) is *dharmā* as meaning “reason”:

[VyY][D shi 120a7-b2; P si 140a3-5; L 269.16-270.6]²⁶

Furthermore, 7. scriptural teaching (**pravacana*) is also called *dharmā* in phrases such as “in this [life], a monk who knows the teaching (*dharmā*), i.e., the sutra, the geḥya,”

11. Reason (**yukti*) is also [called the *dharmā*] in phrases such as “a robe is required by reason, is not required by unreason.” (**dharmeṇa cīvaraṃ paryeṣate nādharmeṇa*)²⁷

In this discussion, Vasubandhu focuses on collectively collating all-inclusive examples and indicating the proper meaning of the canonical words that conform to each context, so that future Dharma-preachers might determine the meaning of important canonical usages of words such as *dharmā*. From a different point of view, this method shows that canonical words are polysemic and the correct meaning is left to the individual interpreter. We should also note that the scope of the brief citations from scriptures is limited to the Sarvāstivāda Āgama and Vinaya. That is, Vasubandhu is working on the assumption that one should interpret the Buddha’s words by the Buddha’s words. For him, the proper meaning of the canonical words is determined by the canonical sentences and their contexts.

²³ *Madhyamāgama* 中阿含經, sutra no. 130, *Jiao tan mi jing* 教曇彌經, T 26.01: 619b24-25; Mvy(1F) 8648-8652. See Horiuchi 2016: 145, n. 983.

²⁴ *Samyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, sutra no. 1060, T 99.02: 275c17-20: 爾時世尊告: 諸比丘、有非法、有正法。諦聽善思、當爲汝說、何等爲非法、謂殺生、乃至邪見、是名非法。何等正法、謂不殺生、乃至正見、是名正法。 Cf. Mv II 99.5-6: *prāṇātipāto adharmo prāṇātipātavairamaṇo dharmo*.

²⁵ Cf. Divy 625.13-15: *tadyathā deśadharme vā nagaradharme vā grāmadharme vā nigamadharme vā sūkadharme vāvāhadharme vā vivāhadharme vā pūrvakarmasu vā*.

²⁶ The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 2.

²⁷ *Madhyamāgama* 中阿含經, sutra no. 31, *Fenbie shengdi jing* 分別聖諦經, T 26.01: 469b11-13: 但以法求衣、不以非法。亦以法求食床座、不以非法。是名正命。 Cf. ŚrBh I, 38*.27-39*.2.

3. What is the purpose contained in the Buddha's words? Multiple words with a single meaning

3.1. The purposes of "the meaning of synonyms"

As for multiple words with a single meaning, Vasubandhu deals with three types:

- Meaning to be expressed in each individual [term] (*so so re re la brjod par bya ba'i don*)
- Summarized meaning (*bsdus pa'i don*)
- **Meaning of the purpose** (*dgos pa'i don*)

Regarding the third type, Vasubandhu divides "the purpose" that is contained in the Buddha's words into two groups: the purposes of "the meaning of synonyms" and of "the meaning of numerical discourses." First of all, in Chapter 1 of his VyY, in the section on *prayojana* (purpose), he enumerates eight purposes of "the meaning of synonyms" as follows (the running numbers are given by the author):

[VyY][D shi 31b7-32a3; P si 35a7-b3; L 10.3-19]²⁸

There are said to be eight purposes [that the Bhagavat] has used synonyms, due to the diversity of the trainees (**vineya*).

1. In order to cause a person to grasp [the Bhagavat's statement] at that time or at a subsequent time,
2. In order to teach the [same] meaning (**artha*) of that [statement] using synonyms, by [repeating] the same statement to those who are distracted at that time, since others [who are concentrating] might disparage [the Bhagavat for repeating the same statement in vain],²⁹
3. In order that inattentive persons will not forget [the Bhagavat's statement] by setting forth the [same] meaning over and over again,
4. In order to eliminate ideas that bear on alternative meanings, or in cases in which a single phrase may possess multiple meanings,
5. In order to rightly comprehend the meaning [of the Bhagavat's statement] with other nouns, as in the *Nighaṅṭu*,
6. In order that Dharma-preachers use skillful means in expounding the meaning [of the statement] and causing [its] comprehension,

²⁸ The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 3. In his PSVy, Vasubandhu repeats the same statement that there are eight purposes of "the meaning of synonyms." See Appendix 4.

²⁹ Cf. AVSN 110.10-11: *tatkālavikṣiptānām paryāyeṇa tadarthaśravaṇārtham. tenaivābhīdhānenānyeṣām avagataṃ syād ityevamādīni bahūni prayojanāni granthabhārabhayāt nocyante.*

7. In order to demonstrate that [the Bhagavat him]self possesses the discrimination of the Dharma (**dharmapratisamvid*),
 8. In order to arouse those seeds [for the discrimination of the Dharma] in others.³⁰

Moreover, in the section on *padārtha*, another five purposes are documented.

[VyY][D shi 38b6-39a1; P si 43b6-44a1; L 28.21-29.3]³¹

Regarding these, the rest [of the purposes] should be expounded over and above what has been previously stated.³²

9. Firstly, as in the case of summary words (**uddeśavacana*), which cause one to memorize the meaning explained by the sutras, [synonyms are used] in order that the meaning of a full explanation can be memorized through a detailed exposition alone (*samāsenā vistarārthādvadhāraṇārtham sūtreṇa vṛttyarthādvadhāraṇavat*³³),

10. In order to benefit those trainees who understand (by) a condensed statement / highly intelligent persons (*udghaṭitajñānām vineyānām anugrahārtham*³⁴),

11. In order to build up the capacity to understand (by) a condensed statement in others [who can only understand based on a full explanation (**vipaṅcitajña*) and who can only memorize the words of a teaching

³⁰ Interestingly, these eight purposes are quoted in the *Nettipakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā* by Dhammapāla, and these eight purposes are translated into Pali. Nett-a 10.37: *kasmā pana bhagavā ekaṃ dhammaṃ anekapariyāyehi niddisatīti. vuccate -*

1. *desanākaḷe āyatiṃ ca kassaci kathaṅci tadatthapaṭibodho siyāti pariyāyavacanam,*
2. *tasmim̐ khaṇe vikkhittacittānaṃ aññavihitānaṃ aññena pariyāyena tadatthāva-bodhanattham̐ pariyāyavacanam.*
3. *teneva padena puna vacane tadaññesaṃ tattha adhigatatā siyāti mandabuddhīnaṃ punappunam̐ tadatthasallakkhaṇe asammosanattham̐ pariyāyavacanam.*
4. *anekepi athā samānabyañjanā hontīti yā athantaraparikkappanā siyā,*
5. *tassā parivajjanattham̐ pi pariyāyavacanam̐ seyyatthāpi nighaṇṭu satthe.*
6. *dhammakathikānaṃ tanti athhupanibandhanaparāvabodhanānaṃ sukhasiddhiyāpi pariyāyavacanam.*
7. *attano dhammaniruttipaṭisambhidāppattiyā vibhāvanattham̐.*
8. *veneyyānaṃ tattha bñāvāpanattham̐ vā pariyāyavacanam̐ bhagavā niddisati.*

³¹ The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 5.

³² Vasubandhu's statements are quoted in Haribhadra's AAĀ. Haribhadra testifies that the quotation comes from *ācāryavasubandhu*. See note 37.

³³ AAĀ, W 202.24-26; V 359.30-31: *uddeśavacanānām nirdeśāt pṛthag abhidheyārtho nāstīti kimartham̐ uddeśavacanam̐ iti cet. ucyate. samāsenā vistarārthādvadhāraṇārtham̐ sūtreṇa vṛttyarthādvadhāraṇavat.*

³⁴ AAĀ, W 203.1; V 359.31-32: *udghaṭitajñānām vineyānām anugrahārtham.*

(**padaparama*), as well as] for future generations (*anyeṣāṃ āyatyām udghaṭitajñātāhetūpacayārtham*³⁵),

12. In order to indicate [the meaning of the Bhagavat's statement] to those who have the ability to understand (by) a condensed statement and to understand (through) a full explanation (*samāsavyāsanirdeśavaśītāsaṃdarśanārtham*³⁶),

13. In order to plant the seeds [of understanding (by) a condensed statement] to others by repeatedly acting in the same way as [described] above (*anyeṣāṃ tathābhyāsenā tadbījāvaropaṇārtham*³⁷).

According to Vasubandhu's methodology, each of the Buddha's words has a particular purpose. The Buddha's preaching is directed toward different kinds of trainees (*vineya*). He uses many synonyms, hoping that one of them will make the trainee understand what he wants to say, and as a result the trainee will have the courage (*vīrya*) to start walking the path to become a buddha. In the academic field of Buddhist Studies in Japan, this feature of the Buddha's preaching is called *taiki-seppō* 対機説法 (preaching the Dharma in accordance with the [trainee's] abilities). The Buddha has preached the discourse most suitable for each individual in response to the ability (*indriya*), the time (*kāla*), and the personality (*pudgala*) of the trainee. In the *dhātunirdeśa* of his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Vasubandhu stated that there are 80,000 groups of dharma-discourses (*dharmaskandha*) to counteract (*vipakṣa*) the [trainee's] acts (*carita*³⁸), such as attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*māna*) and so on.³⁹

Also in Chapter 1 of the VyY, Vasubandhu states that the purpose (*prayojana*), one of the principles of the commentary, refers to the Buddha's preaching the Dharma in accordance with the [trainee's] abilities. For example, he says that in the phrase *bhagavān anekaparyāyeṇa dhārmīyā kathayā saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃharṣayati* ("In manifold ways,

³⁵ AAĀ, W 203.1-2; V 359.32: *anyeṣāṃ āyatyām udghaṭitajñātāhetūpacayārtham*.

³⁶ AAĀ, W 203.2-3; V 359.32-360.1: *ātmanaḥ samāsavyāsanirdeśavaśītāsaṃdarśanārtham*.

³⁷ AAĀ, W 203.3-4; V 360.1: *anyeṣāṃ tathābhyāsenā tadbījāvaropaṇārtham cety ācāryavasubandhuḥ*. Also AAĀ, W 203.5-8; V 360.2-4 is a quotation from VyY, D shi 38b7-39a2; P si 43b7-44a3; L 28.23-29, 8.

³⁸ The *carita* in this context means the tendency of the dominant desires and so on in each sentient being.

³⁹ AKBh 17.17-19 ad AK 1.26cd:

*caritapratipakṣas tu dharmaskandho 'nuvarṇitaḥ ||AK 1.26cd||
evaṃ tu varṇayanty aśītiś caritasahasrāṇi satvānāṃ rāgadveṣamohamānādicaritabhedena.
teṣāṃ pratipakṣeṇa bhagavatā 'śītir dharmaskandhasahasrāṇy uktāni.*

does the Blessed One with the Discourse, expound, motivate, inspire, delight”).⁴⁰ The four verbs *saṃdarśayati*, *samādāpayati*, *samuttejayati* and *saṃharṣayati* are aimed at trainees who are ignorant (**saṃmūḍha*), who are lazy (**pramatta*), who are dispirited (**samlīna*) and who practice properly (**samyakpratipanna*), respectively. In other words, (1) the Buddha expounds [the Dharma] for trainees who are ignorant, (2) motivates trainees who are lazy, (3) inspires trainees who are dispirited, (4) delights trainees who practice properly. To repeat, Vasubandhu considered that synonyms appear frequently in the sutras because there are many kinds of trainees. These thirteen purposes focus on the trainees’ diversity.⁴¹

3.2. The purposes of “the meaning of numerical discourses”

The above thirteen points are the purposes for which synonyms are used in the sutras. Furthermore, Vasubandhu expounds that the numbers, such as the five aggregates or the six sense-fields and so forth, have definite purposes:

[If the dharma-numbers used in] the five aggregates and the six internal sense-fields and so on [can] also be comprehended [by the trainee], [we] must expound the significance of [the Bhagavat’s] purposes for mentioning numbers [in the sutras].⁴²

Although eight purposes “for mentioning numbers in the sutras” are expounded in the VyY, they are not enumerated collectively but instead interspersed with many scriptural examples. Therefore, below I have selected Vasubandhu’s descriptions of the eight purposes of “numerical discourse” (*grangs gsungs pa*) from the VyY and enumerated them as follows:

Numbers are stated so:

1. A certain [statement] is in order to limit [the dharma-number] that is countable. (*saṃkhyeyāvadhāraṇārtham*⁴³)

⁴⁰ As for this stock phrase 示教利喜, see *Mochizuki bukkyō daijiten* 望月佛教大辭典, p. 1753. SWTF s.v. *saṃ-drś* (*caus.*), *sam-ā-dā* (*b*), *samu-ut-tij*, and BHSD 568.

⁴¹ On this point, see Ueno 2017.

⁴² VyY, D shi 38b3-4; P si 43b2-3; L 28.8-11: *ji skad du phung po lnga rnams dang nang gi skye mched drug rnams zhes bya ba de lta bu la sogs pa grangs gsungs pa lta bu dag kyang de dag gi brjod par bya ba’i don mi go ba ni ma yin na ci’i phyir grangs gsungs pa’i dgos pa’i don yang brjod dgos so ||*

⁴³ AAĀ, W 9.4; V 273.1: *saṃkhyeyāvadhāraṇārtham*; VyY, D shi 39a2-3; P si 44a3; L 29.9-10: *grangs gsungs pa ni kha cig ni bgrang bar bya ba nges par gzung ba’i phyir te |*

2. A certain [statement] is in order to make it easy to grasp [the Bhagavat's discourses] (*sukhāvabodhārtham*⁴⁴), since one will not forget by referring to the numbers.
3. A certain [statement] is in order that people who do not try to listen to [the sutras], which ought to be expounded in detail, [and those who] are afraid that there is much to be listened to and memorized will hear [the teaching] attentively. (*bahuśravaṇagrahaṇabhīrūṇām śrotrāvadhānārtham*⁴⁵)
4. A certain [statement] is in order to arouse the fortitude (**utsāha*) of the people who fear that they will have many duties. (*kha cig ni bya ba mang pos 'jigs pa dag spro ba bskyed pa'i phyir te*⁴⁶)
5. A certain [statement] is in order to expound a single summary with one [phrase]. (*kha cig ni gcig gis gcig bsdu ba bstan pa'i phyir te*⁴⁷)
6. A certain [statement] is in order to inform about the quantity. (*parimāṇajñāpanārtham*⁴⁸)
7. A certain [statement] is in order to inform that [two affairs are] one affair [since] two dharmas are related in terms of action (**kṛtya*), sustenance (**āhāra*) or counteraction (**vipakṣa*). (*kha cig ni dngos po gcig tu shes par bya ba'i phyir chos gnyis kyi bya ba dang zas dang gnyen po mtshungs pa'i phyir*⁴⁹)
8. A certain [statement] is in order to indicate that [the Bhagavat him] self possesses in advance the discrimination [of the Dharma]. (**[dharma-] pratisamvid*) (*kha cig ni nyid la snga nas so so yang dag par rig par gyur pa'i don gsung ba nyid du yang dag par bstan pa'i phyir te*⁵⁰)

From Vasubandhu's perspective, a characteristic feature of a sutra discourse is that it uses many synonyms and numerical categories. From another point of view, a sutra that uses both types of discourses is recognized as *nītārtha* (definitive teachings or doctrines that can be taken literally), and a sutra that

⁴⁴ AAĀ, W 9.5; V 273.1: *pūrvam prabhūtārthasya samāsasaṃkhyāgrahaṇāvismaraṇāt sukhāvabodhārtham*; VyY, D shi 39a3; P si 44a3-4; L 29.12-13: *grangs smos pas mi brjed pa'i phyir kha cig ni bde blag tu gzung ba'i phyir te |*

⁴⁵ AAĀ, W 9.5-6; V 273.1-2: *bahuśravaṇagrahaṇabhīrūṇām śrotrāvadhānārtham*; VyY, D shi 39a4-5; P si 44a5-6; L 29.18-19: *kha cig ni gang dag rgyas par bshad par dgos pas nyan par mi byed pa mang du mnyan pa dang gzung bas 'jigs pa nyan du gzhug pa'i phyir te |*

⁴⁶ VyY, D shi 39a5; P si 44a6-7; L 29.23.

⁴⁷ VyY, D shi 39a6; P si 44a7-8; L 30.1.

⁴⁸ AAĀ, W 9.6-7; V 273.3: *atha vā parimāṇajñāpanārtham upāttam*; VyY, D shi 39a6-7; P si 44a8; L 30.5: *kha cig ni tshad shes par bya ba'i phyir te |*

⁴⁹ VyY, D shi 39a7; P si 44b1-2; L 30.8-11. Cf. AKBh 318.7-319.4.

⁵⁰ VyY, D shi 39a7-39b1; P si 44b2; L 30.12-13.

does not is *neyārtha* (non-definitive teachings or doctrines that cannot be taken literally).⁵¹

Conclusion

As shown in Sections 2 and 3, Vasubandhu's methodology from scripture finds that one should interpret the Buddha's word by the Buddha's word. When we consider that the range of collation of examples is intentionally limited in the Sarvāstivāda Āgama and Vinaya, it is clear that Vasubandhu intended that the meaning of the Buddha's word should be extracted from within these scriptures. The Buddha's words contain not just one single meaning but multiple ones. The answers to questions of how one should extract the single, correct meaning from the Buddha's words, possessing multiple meanings, or how one should interpret the Buddha's words that are intended to maintain polysemy, are left up to each Dharma-preacher. From Vasubandhu's perspective, the reason that the Buddha's words possess multiple meanings is that he was preaching to a variety of trainees with a variety of capacities.

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Abbreviations

AAĀ	<i>Abhisamayālamkāralokā</i> (Haribhadra): W = U. Wogihara, ed., Tokyo 1932-1935; V = P. L. Vaidya, ed., Darbhanga 1960; G. Tucci, ed., Baroda 1932.
AK	<i>Abhidharmakośakārikā</i> (Vasubandhu): See AKBh.
AKBh	<i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i> (Vasubandhu): P. Pradhan, ed., Patna 1967.
AKVy	<i>Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā</i> (Yaśomitra): U. Wogihara, ed., Tokyo 1932-1936.
AVSN	<i>Arthaviniścayasūtranibandhana</i> (Vīryasrīdatta): N.H. Samtani, ed., Patna 1971.
BHSD	F. Edgerton, <i>Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary</i> , vol. II: Dictionary. New Haven 1953.
D	Derge(sDe dge) blockprint edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka.
Divy	<i>Divyāvadāna</i> . E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil, eds., Cambridge 1886.
MSABh	<i>Mahāyānasūtrālamkārabhāṣya</i> (Vasubandhu): S. Lévi, ed., Paris 1907.
Mv	<i>Mahāvastu</i> . E. Senart, ed., Paris 1882-1887.
Mvy(IF)	<i>Mahāvvyūtpatti</i> . Y. Ishihama and Y. Fukuda, eds., Tokyo 1989.
Nett-a	<i>Nettipakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā</i> (Dhammapāla): Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana (Ed.).

⁵¹ See Muroji 2006. Muroji has shown that in five instances the term *utsūtra* refers to a deviation from the sutra (mainly from the *Samyuktāgama*), as used in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. From these five instances, Muroji extracted the requirements that the sutra should have.

- P Peking (Kangxi 1717/20) edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka held at Otani University, Kyoto.
- PSVy *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā* (Vasubandhu): D no. 3995; P no. 5496.
- ŚrBh I The *prathamam yogasthānam* of the *Śrāvakabhūmi*. Śrāvakabhūmi Study Group, ed., Tokyo 1998.
- SWTF Heinz Bechert et al., *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden und der kanonischen Literatur der Sarvāstivāda-Schule*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973-2018.
- T *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*.
- Uv(N) *Udānavarga* (Subasi). H. Nakatani, ed., Paris 1987.
- VinSg *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*. D no. 4038; P no. 5539.
- VyY *Vyākhyāyukti* (Vasubandhu): D no. 4061; P no. 5562; L = Lee 2001.
- VyY IV Chapter 4 of the VyY: See Horiuchi 2009.
- VyYT *Vyākhyāyuktīṭikā* (Guṇamati): D no. 4069; P no. 5570.

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Appendix 1. Tibetan text of the *padārtha* section of the term *dharma* in the VyY

[VyY][D shi 36a4-b2; P si 40b2-41a2; L 21.5-22, 3]

- chos ni (1) shes bya (2) lam dang ni ||
 (3) mya ngan ’das dang (4) yid kyi yul ||
 (5) bsod noms (6) tshe dang (7) gsung rab dang ||
 (8) ’byung ’gyur (9) nges dang (10) chos lugs la’o ||

chos kyi sgra (1) shes bya⁵² la ni chos gang la la ’dus byas sam ’dus ma byas sam de rnam kyi mchog ni ’dod chags dang bral ba yin par bshad do zhes ’byung ba lta bu’o ||

(2) lam la ni dge slong dag log pa’i lta ba ni chos ma yin la yang dag pa’i lta ba ni chos yin no zhes rgyas par ’byung ba lta bu’o ||

(3) mya ngan las ’das pa la ni chos la skyabs su song ba zhes ’byung ba lta bu’o ||

(4) yid kyi yul la ni chos kyi skye mched ces ’byung ba lta bu ste | de ni yid kho na’i yul yin zhing yul kho na yin gyi rten ni ma yin no ||

(5) bsod noms la ni btsun mo’i ’khor dang gzhon nu⁵³ rnam dang lhan cig tu chos spyod ces rgyas par ’byung ba lta bu’o ||

(6) tshe ’di la ni mthong ba’i chos la myong bar ’gyur ba dang | byis pa ni mthong ba’i chos gces par ’dzin pa yin zhes ’byung ba lta bu’o ||

(7) gsung rab la ni ’di la dge slong chos shes pa ni ’di lta ste | mdo’i sde dang | dbyangs kyis bsnyad pa’i sde dang zhes rgya cher ’byung ba lta bu’o ||

⁵² shes bya] VyY(L); zhes bya ba VyY(DP)

⁵³ nu] VyY(P); nu ma VyY(DL). Cf. VinSg, D zhi 162b2: btsun mo’i ’khor dang gzhon nu rnam dang.

(8) 'byung bar 'gyur ba la ni 'du byed kyi rdzas rnams ni de'i chos so zhes 'byung ba dang de ltar 'di lta ste lus 'di ni rga ba'i chos yin no zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(9) nges pa la ni dge sbyong⁵⁴ gi chos bzhi rnams zhes⁵⁵ 'byung ba lta bu⁵⁶ dang de bzhin du dge slong dag srog gcod pa ni chos ma yin la srog gcod pa spangs pa⁵⁷ ni chos yin no zhes rgya cher 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(10) chos⁵⁸ lugs la ni yul chos dang rigs chos zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

Appendix 2. Tibetan text of the meanings of the term *dharma* in Chapter 5 of the VyY

[VyY][D shi 120a7-b2; P si 140a3-5; L 269.16-270, 6]

gzhan yang (7) bstan pa yang chos zhes bya ste | ji skad du | ji ltar na dge slong chos shes pa yang yin zhe na | 'di la dge slong chos shes pa ni 'di lta ste mdo sde dang | dbyangs kyis bsnyad pa'i sde dang zhes rgya cher gsungs pa lta bu'o ||

(11) rigs pa yang yin te | ji skad du chos kyis gos⁵⁹ tshol bar byed de | chos ma yin pas ma yin no zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

Appendix 3. Tibetan text of the eight purposes of the synonyms contained in the Āgamas in the VyY

[VyY][D shi 31b7-32a3; P si 35a7-b3; L 10.3-19]

dgos pa dag ni brgyad de | nram grangs gsungs pa ni 'dul ba tha dad pa'i phyir te |

1. de'i tshe dang phyir dang | phyi ma'i tshe kha cig la la⁶⁰ las khong du chud par bya ba'i phyir dang |

2. de'i tshe nram par g-yengs pa rnams la brjod pa de nyid kyis⁶¹ ni gzhan dag gis⁶² smad par 'gyur bas⁶³ nram grangs kyis de'i don bstan par bya ba'i phyir dang |

3. yid mi gzhungs pa rnams la yang dang yang du de'i don yang dag par mtshon pas mi brjed par bya ba'i phyir dang |

⁵⁴ sbyong] em.; slong VyY(DPL). This emendation is indicated by Horiuchi (2016: 145, n. 983).

⁵⁵ rnams zhes] VyY(DL); nram shes VyY(P)

⁵⁶ lta bu] VyY(DL); om. VyY(P)

⁵⁷ spangs pa] VyY (DL); spang ba VyY(P)

⁵⁸ chos] VyY(DP); 'chos VyY(L). Cf. Mvy(IF) 4959: nīti = chos lugs.

⁵⁹ kyis gos] em.; kyis chos VyY(DL); kyi gos VyY(P)

⁶⁰ la la] VyY(DL); la VyY(P)

⁶¹ kyis] VyY(PL); kyi VyY(D)

⁶² gis] VyY(DL); gi VyY(P)

⁶³ bas] VyY(DP); pas VyY(L)

4. tshig gcig la don du ma byung bas don gzhan du rtog pa bsal ba'i phyir dang |
5. gzhan du ming de rnams kyis de'i don yang dag par bsgrub pa'i phyir sgranges par sbyor ba lta bu dang |
6. chos sgrogs pa rnams don gyi bshad sbyar dang go bar byed pa gnyis la thabs mkhas pa nyid du bsgrub pa'i phyir dang |
7. nyid⁶⁴ la chos so sor⁶⁵ yang dag par rig pa mnga' bar bstan pa'i phyir dang |
8. gzhan dag la de'i sa bon bskyed pa'i phyir te |

Appendix 4. Tibetan text of the eight purposes of the synonyms contained in the Āgamas in the PSVy

[PSVy][D chi 10a3-6; P chi 10b8-11a4]

rnam grangs kyi bye brag brjod pa yang ci'i phyir zhe na |

1. 'ga' zhig ji ltar yang de'i don khong du chud par bya ba'i phyir dang |
2. de'i tshe rnam par g-yengs pa rnams de'i don thos par bya ba'i phyir ro || de nyid brjod na ni gzhan dag gis dpyad⁶⁶ par 'gyur ro ||
3. yid rtul po dag kyang yang nas yang du de'i don rtogs pas mi brjed par bya ba'i phyir dang |
4. sgra gcig la don du ma yod pas don tha dad par rtogs pa bsal ba'i phyir dang |
5. ming de dag gis gsung rab las byung⁶⁷ ba'i don de rtogs par bya ba'i phyir te | sman gyi rnam grangs kyi ming bzhin no ||
6. chos smra ba rnams kyis de'i don thob par bya ba dang tshig nye bar sbyar ba gnyis dang rjes su mthun par bya ba'i phyir dang |
7. bdag nyid chos so so yang dag par rig pa yin par brjod par bya ba'i phyir dang |
8. gzhan dag la de'i sa bon gzhas⁶⁸ par bya ba'i phyir ro ||

Appendix 5. Tibetan text of the purposes of the numerical discourses contained in the Āgamas in the VyY

[VyY][D shi 38b6-39a1; P si 43b6-44a1; L 28.21-29, 3]

de la rnam grangs gsungs pa dag gi dgos pa'i don ni sngar bshad par zad kyil lhag ma rnams brjod par bya ste | re zhig

⁶⁴ nyid] VyY(DP); nying VyY(L)

⁶⁵ so sor] VyY(DL); so so VyY(P)

⁶⁶ dpyad] D; dpyas P

⁶⁷ byung] D; 'byung P

⁶⁸ gzhas] D; bzhag P

9. bstan pa'i tshig ni mdos 'grel pa'i don 'dzin par byed pa bzhin du bstan pa tsam gyis de bshad pa'i don 'dzin par bya ba'i phyir dang |
10. gdul bya⁶⁹ mgo smos pas go ba rnams rjes su gzung⁷⁰ ba'i phyir dang |
11. de las gzhan pa rnams la tse⁷¹ phyi ma la mgo smos pas go ba nyid kyi rgyu⁷² bsags pa'i phyir dang |
12. bsdu ba dang rgyas par bshad pa la mnga' ba dang ldan pa yang dag par bstan pa'i phyir dang |
13. gzhan rnams de lta bu la goms pa las de'i sa bon bskyed pa'i phyir ro ||

⁶⁹ bya] VyY(DL); ba VyY(P)

⁷⁰ gzung] VyY(D); bzung VyY(PL)

⁷¹ tse] VyY(PL); om. VyY(D)

⁷² kyi rgyu] VyYṬ(DP); kyis VyY(DLP). Cf. AAĀ, W 203.2: udghatitajñātāhetu.

“I Have Accorded with the Buddha’s Teaching”: The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and *Upadeśa*

TAKESHI KAKU

Introduction

How can we confused ordinary beings—who cannot help but discriminate between self and other—be confident that we are correctly listening to, that is, interpreting, the Buddha’s words? Additionally, what kind of scriptures and traditions take this question as their main topic?¹ In this paper, I will consider the significance of the second line of Vasubandhu’s *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (Skt. *Sukhāvātīvyūhōpadeśa*; Ch. *Wuliangshoujing youbotishe yuansheng jie* 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈; Jp. *Muryō jukyō ubadaisha ganshōge*; lit. *Verses of Aspiration for Rebirth in the Pure Land as an Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*) in the intellectual history of Pure Land Buddhism. I will consider the role that Tanluan’s (476?–542?) original interpretation of this second line in his *Pure Land Treatise Commentary* (Ch. *Wuliangshoujing youpotishe yuanshengjie zhu* 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈註; Jp. *Muryō jukyō ubadaisha ganshōge chū*) played in the history of the reception of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (*Foshuo wuliangshoujing* 仏説無量壽經 [Jp. *Bussetsu muryōju kyō*] translated in the Wei 魏 period) in the Pure Land tradition after him. In particular, I will focus on the influence it had on Shinran (1173–1262), who clarified the absolutely Other Power nature of the power of the original vow that is expounded in that sutra.

¹ Odani Nobuchiyo states, “Sarvāstivāda, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Consciousness-Only took properly listening to the Buddha’s teachings as a fundamental issue” (Odani 2000). I basically agree with this view, but I also think that Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* can be seen as another such tradition. The Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition that is based on the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures and *yoga* scriptures of the Madhyamaka, Yogācāra and other schools takes cutting off affliction based on religious training as a premise. In contrast, Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* are a Mahāyāna tradition of thought that tries to get ordinary individuals—just as they are—to properly listen to the Buddha’s words.

1. Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*

The only extant version of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is the translation by Bodhiruci (Putiliuzhi Sanzang 菩提流支三藏) who came to the Wei state in 508.² Bodhiruci translated many of Vasubandhu's works and claimed to be part of his direct lineage.³ This treatise is comprised of twenty-four lines of verse, with prose interpreting these verses. In the verses, Vasubandhu expresses, based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, his aspiration to be born in Amida Buddha's Pure Land, and in prose he makes clear the meaning of this aspiration. While it is not a long work, the *Treatise* has an important position in the history of Pure Land teachings as the only Pure Land treatise based upon the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* written by an Indian master. The Kamakura-period Buddhist Hōnen 法然 (Genkū 源空; 1133–1212) saw it as the only treatise that determined that the Buddha's doctrines in the three Pure Land sutras should be understood as teachings for us to be born in the Pure Land. Regarding its historical significance, Hōnen states, "First, the three [Pure Land] sutras and this single treatise are the teachings that properly made clear Birth in the Pure Land."⁴ As he points out here, if this treatise had not determined that the main topic of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is leading sentient beings to aspire to be born in the Pure Land, then the sutra would have probably just continued to be a scripture about the origins of a buddha named Amida.

This *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* has a unique form among Vasubandhu's works that were translated by Bodhiruci. Throughout the verses (in the introduction, main section and dissemination section), Vasubandhu uses the word "I" (Ch. *wo* 我; Jp. *ware*) five times, something that is not seen in his other works.

² The woodblock versions of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and the quotations found in Tanluan's *Pure Land Treatise Commentary* sometimes differ. Incidentally, Ōtake Susumu 大竹晋 has doubts regarding the main text of the *Treatise of the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* that Tanluan quotes (Ōtake 2011: 314). In this paper, I have chosen to trust Tanluan's quotations of the main text because he directly met its translator Bodhiruci, and he adopted the sincere approach of interpreting the translation based on a critical analysis.

³ Bodhiruci was not only from Northern India like Vasubandhu, he also said that he was part of Vasubandhu's lineage (*Jingang xian lun* 金剛仙論; Ōtake 2011). If so, it is hard to think that Tanluan, who was directly taught by Bodhiruci, completely misunderstood the main thrust of Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. We should respect Tanluan's understanding of it; it was directly inherited from the text's translator.

⁴ *Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選撰本願念仏集 (Collection of Passages on the *Nenbutsu* of the Chosen Primal Vow), in SSZ 1: 931.

Line 1: O World-honored Ones, with the mind that is single, I take refuge in the Tathāgata of unhindered light, Filling the ten quarters, And aspire to be born in the land of happiness.

Line 2: Relying on the sutras, In which the manifestation of true and real virtues is taught, I compose a gāthā of aspiration, a condensation, and accord with the Buddha's teachings.

Line 15: For this reason I aspire to be born, In the Buddha land of Amida.

Line 23: May I be born there, And deliver the Buddha-Dharma like the Buddha.

Line 24: On writing this treatise, I have composed these verses, In aspiration for seeing Amida Buddha, And, together with all other sentient beings, For being born in the land of peace and happiness.

After the verses end, Vasubandhu summarizes their meaning as follows: "Concerning the words and passages of the sutras on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life, I have expounded a summary of them in verse."⁵

Bodhiruci's other translations do not adopt this form. While we cannot know if "I" appeared in the original text, at the very least we can see that Bodhiruci thought that Vasubandhu was making an expression of his own personal faith. Tanluan, accurately understanding the special nature of this work, said that this treatise consisted of Vasubandhu's most central, foundational teachings (Ch. *zong* 宗; Jp. *shū*).⁶ The first line is the treatise's dedication (Ch. *guijing xu* 歸敬序; Jp. *kikyōjo*), and the second line is the reason it was written (Ch. *faqi xu* 發起序; Jp. *hokkijo*). In the latter, Vasubandhu states that his aim in writing the treatise is to "accord with the Buddha's teachings."

⁵ SSZ 1: 277-278. Translations, with modifications, are from CWS.

⁶ Yasuda Rijin (1900-1982) has discussed the meaning of "I" being found at major points in the verses. Based on the fact that this treatise includes Vasubandhu's dedication, Jinrei 深励 (1749-1817) described it as a "treatise on Śākyamuni's definitive doctrines" (*shakushūron* 釈宗論; in *Jōdoronchū kōen* 淨土論註講苑, vols. 2 and 7 [Kōgatsuin Jinrei 1973: 105, 375]), and Yamaguchi Susumu (1895-1976) refers to it as a "fundamental treatise" (*konponron* 根本論; Yamaguchi 1966: 47). However, considering that "I" appears throughout the verses, surely it is best to see it as an expression of Vasubandhu's belief. Incidentally, while Ōtake (2011) criticizes Yamaguchi's view based on the fact that dedications are found in Vasubandhu's other works, it appears that he does not touch upon the significance of Bodhiruci's using "I" in his translation.

2. Tanluan's View of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*

The oldest commentary on the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is Tanluan's *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*. According to Daoxuan's 道宣 (596-667) *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* (Ch. *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳; Jp. *Zoku kōsō den*), Tanluan became confused regarding the Buddha Way and then ultimately took refuge in Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, after being encouraged to do so by Bodhiruci. While there is debate as to what text Bodhiruci gave Tanluan, judging from Tanluan's interest in pursuing the Buddha Way, there is no doubt that with its declaration, "I have accorded with the Buddha's teachings," Vasubandhu's treatise was decisively significant in effecting Tanluan's turn toward Pure Land devotion.⁷

Tanluan saw the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as the scripture that gives birth to an "I" that can proclaim to "have accorded with the Buddha's teachings," and he took refuge in its tradition. Regarding his reason for doing so, Tanluan wrote about the religious way of living realized by the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* in his concluding verses—based on that sutra's passage on the fulfillment of the primal vow—to *Verses in Praise of Amida Buddha* (Ch. *Zan Amituo fo jie* 讚阿彌陀仏偈; Jp. *San Amida butsu ge*):

I have been wandering in the three realms since the beginningless past,
Turning on the wheel of falsity.
The karma I commit every moment, every instant,
Is a step bound to the six courses, so that I stay in the three paths.
May the compassionate light protect me
And keep me from losing the mind aspiring for enlightenment.
...
My taking refuge in Amida Buddha's Pure Land
Is taking refuge in all the buddhas' lands;
Single-heartedly I extol one Buddha; May it extend to the unhindered

⁷ Incidentally, Shinran says in the *Shōshin nenbutsu ge* 正信念仏偈 (Hymn of True Faith and the Nenbutsu) and *Kōsō wasan* 高僧和讚 (Hymns of the Pure Land Masters) that Bodhiruci gave Tanluan not a specific text but the "Pure [Land] teachings." This is different from the account in *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks*, which says that Tanluan received the *Contemplation Sutra*. At the very least, that Tanluan's understanding of the Pure Land teachings has the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as its basis is also clear from the fact that Tanluan's works *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*, *Verses in Praise of Amida Buddha* and *Abbreviated Treatise on the Meaning of the Pure Land of Bliss* (Ch. *Lüelun anle jingtu yi*; Jp. *Ryakuron anraku jōdogi* 略論安樂淨土義) take the sutra's vows and vow fulfillment passages as their basis.

ones throughout the ten quarters.

To each of the innumerable buddhas of the ten quarters,
With all my heart, I bow in homage.⁸

Here, Tanluan's aim in taking refuge in Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is very clear. At the end of these verses, he declares that only by taking refuge in Amida Buddha's Pure Land was he able to take refuge in the myriad buddhas' lands and "single-heartedly" praise them. In other words, by taking refuge in Amida Buddha's Pure Land, one can correctly listen to, believe and realize the words of Śākyamuni Buddha as one of the myriad buddhas.⁹ Tanluan positioned these teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as the Buddha Way leading to non-retrogression that is based on properly understanding the power of the Buddha, that is, the Buddhism of the path of Other Power and easy practice.¹⁰

3. Tanluan's Understanding of *Upadeśa*

Based on the teachings found in the *Commentary on the Ten Grounds* (Skt. *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*; Ch. *Shizhu piposha lun* 十住毘婆沙論; Jp. *Jūjū bibasharon*)—written by Nāgārjuna, whom Tanluan called a "great master"¹¹ (Ch. *benshi* 本師; Jp. *honji*)—Tanluan wrote a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* entitled *Pure Land Treatise Commentary* that saw the *Treatise* as being Other Power teachings for the path of easy practice that seeks non-retrogression as a bodhisattva.¹²

⁸ SSZ 1: 363. Translation from CWS. Shinran quotes this verse of Tanluan in the True Buddha and Land Chapter of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* and turns it into a hymn in the *Japanese Hymns Praising Amida Buddha in Verse* (*San amida butsu ge wasan* 讚阿弥陀仏偈和讚: no. 45, 46).

⁹ Tanluan interprets the term *shizun* 世尊 (Jp. *seson*) that appears at the beginning of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as meaning not "world-honored one" but "world-honored ones," in other words, both Śākyamuni Tathāgata who preaches the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and the multitudes of buddhas (SSZ 1: 281-282).

¹⁰ Tanluan defines the Buddha Way of Other Power as follows: "In the path of easy practice, one aspires to be both in the Pure Land with solely one's entrusting oneself to the Buddha as the cause, and allowing oneself to be carried by the power of the Buddha's vow, quickly attains Birth in the land of purity. Supported by the Buddha's power, one immediately enters the group of the truly settled of the Mahāyāna. The stage of the truly settled is none other than the stage of non-retrogression. Thus the path of easy practice may be compared in its comfort to being carried over waterways in a ship" (SSZ 1: 279; Practice Chapter of Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*, translation from CWS).

¹¹ *San amida butsu ge* 讚阿弥陀仏偈 (Verses in Praise of Amida Buddha), SSZ 1: 365; True Buddha and Land Chapter of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*; translation from CWS.

¹² Ōtake and Odani criticize Tanluan as writing his commentary based on the different tradition of Nāgārjuna without having understood Vasubandhu's Yogācāra teachings (for example,

Tanluan highlights the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, saying the following regarding Vasubandhu's intention in writing it:

In the second line, the writer says that he will create a treatise based on the Buddha's sutras and in accord with the Buddha's teachings. This is his expression that what he has taken from the sutra is of essential significance. He says this to establish the reason for naming it an *upadeśa*. It follows the above three gates [of five gates of mindfulness discussed in the first line] and gives rise to the below two gates [from the third line onwards].¹³

In this way, Tanluan finds two meanings in the second line.

First, Tanluan argues that the basis for the inclusion of the word *upadeśa* in the treatise's title lies in its second line, and he defines *upadeśa* as follows:

Within the twelve divisions of the Buddhist canon, there are treatises called *upadeśa*. If the Buddha's disciples understand the meaning of the scripture's teaching and are in accord with the Buddha's meaning, the Buddha allows [what they write] to be called an *upadeśa*. This is because [these writings] match the characteristics of the Buddha Dharma.¹⁴

While this interpretation is held to be based on the *Great Liberating Wisdom Treatise (Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*; Ch. *Dazhidulun* 大智度論; Jp. *Daichidoron*),¹⁵ the word "accord" (Ch. *xiangying*; Jp. *sōō* 相應) cannot be

Ōtake 2011: 200). In contrast, I believe that we can see Tanluan's sincere approach to doctrinal studies in the fact that, while understanding the Yogācāra tradition that Bodhiruci represented, he states at the beginning of his commentary that he is interpreting the treatise through the lens of the "path of easy practice" that he acquired from Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Ten Grounds*. Through Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Ten Grounds*, Tanluan showed that there are two paths for a bodhisattva seeking the state of non-retrogression: the path of self power and difficult practice, and the path of Other Power and easy practice. In this way, Tanluan shifted the paradigm of Buddhism. Tanluan held that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* did not preach the self-power path of difficult practice but the path of easy practice in which we walk the Mahāyāna Buddhist path based on the Other Power of the Tathāgata's primal vow. He then interpreted the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* from this perspective.

¹³ SSZ 1: 281.

¹⁴ SSZ 1: 280.

¹⁵ "The treatises spoken of by the Buddha, the sutras made clear by the Mahāyāna, all the way up to and including the teachings that are like the Dharma of ordinary beings of the semblance Dharma [age]: they are also called *upadeśa*" (*Dazhidulun* 大智度論 33, *Kokuyaku issaikyō* 国訳一切経 [Japanese Translation of the Buddhist Canon], Shakyōronbu 釈経論部 [Treatises] 3: 41).

found in this text. Thus, it is actually based on the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*.

Tanluan also states the following:

The verse says, "Relying on the sutras I accord with the Buddha's teachings." "Sutras" are the Buddha's scriptures. Because [I, Vasubandhu, discuss the meaning of the Buddha's scriptures, accord with them, and match the characteristics of the Buddha's Dharma,] it can be named an *upadeśa*.¹⁶

In this way, Tanluan held that Vasubandhu called his work an *upadeśa* in order to show that it was his attempt as a disciple of the Buddha to accord with the meaning of the Buddha's teachings and conform to the characteristics of the Buddha Dharma. Next, Tanluan addresses why Vasubandhu aspired to be born in the Pure Land.

Vasubandhu Bodhisattva lived during the age of Śākyamuni Tathāgata's semblance Dharma and followed the scriptural teachings of Śākyamuni Tathāgata. Thus, he aspired for Birth [in Amida's Pure Land]. This aspiration for Birth is of central purport.¹⁷

In other words, Tanluan did not understand Vasubandhu's *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as simply an interpretation of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. Rather, he emphasized that Vasubandhu's endeavor to accord with the Buddha's teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* was itself his aspiration to be born in the Pure Land in an age of the semblance Dharma in which one cannot encounter Śākyamuni. Tanluan states that this aspiration is Vasubandhu's most central concern (Ch. *zong* 宗; Jp. *shū*). Even if one cannot meet Śākyamuni in the flesh, one can be in accord with the Buddha's teachings by aspiring to be born in the Pure Land. Thus, Tanluan adopts the radical interpretation that the *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is an endeavor to reach non-retrogression, a fundamental part of the Mahāyāna Buddhist Way:

This treatise, the *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, indeed holds the consummation of the Mahāyāna; it is a sail with which to catch the favorable wind toward non-retrogression.¹⁸

¹⁶ SSZ 1: 283.

¹⁷ SSZ 1: 282.

¹⁸ SSZ 1: 279. Translation from CWS. I am of the opinion that since the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* positions the Tathāgata's primal vow as the background to the buddhas' preaching of the Dharma (such as that of the founder Śākyamuni), the sutra is a Mahāyāna *jātaka*

Recent philologically focused scholarship argues, based on Vasubandhu's other works (*Principles of Exegesis* [*Vyākhyāyukti*], *Treatise on the Scripture of Adorning the Great Vehicle* [*Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra*], etc.), that the word *upadeśa* in the title of *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* refers to Vasubandhu's "explaining the meaning of the scriptures in an easy-to-understand way"¹⁹ for other sentient beings. However, I think that Tanluan's interpretive method of seeking a definition for Vasubandhu's use of *upadeśa* within the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* itself is more appropriate.

4. *Upadeśa* and the Five Gates of Mindfulness

Furthermore, based on Vasubandhu's statement at the end of his prose commentary, "I have finished briefly explaining the significance of the verses of aspiration for Birth in the Pure Land as an *upadeśa* on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*" (SSZ 1: 277; CWS), Tanluan divides up the verses that follow "O World-honored Ones, with the mind that is single, I . . ." into the five gates of mindfulness that Vasubandhu sets forth in the treatise's prose explanatory section (the five gates are: worshipping Amida's image, invoking Amida's name, vowing to be born in the Pure Land, meditating on the glories of the Pure Land, and transferring one's accumulated merit to sentient beings²⁰). Furthermore, he sees this second line as completing the first three gates and giving rise to the last two gates. By doing this, Tanluan shows that the verses, which are the expression of the content of the single mind that calls out to the World-honored Ones, are themselves the practice of the five gates of mindfulness. That is to say, in his commentary, Tanluan holds that the second line of the verses points to the fact that the verse portion as a whole describes the five gates of mindfulness as the development or playing out of the inner reality of Vasubandhu's single mind. The second line is the pivot where the subject (the three activities of body, speech and mind) that appears in the first line is completed by according with the Buddha's teachings, and

discussing the Tathāgata's past life (Yasuda 2015) that provides the grounds for other Mahāyāna teachings to be the teaching of the Buddha (Ch. *foshuo* 仏説; Jp. *bussetsu*). In other words, it is an *upadeśa* that brings to completion the Mahāyāna scriptures. Tanluan saw the *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as not simply an *upadeśa* that interprets a specific sutra (the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*) but as an *upadeśa* that allows one to match the characteristics of the Buddha Dharma based on the Mahāyāna scriptures.

¹⁹ In addition to the works by Yamaguchi Susumu, Ōtake Susumu and Odani Nobuchiyo, see also Ishikawa Takudō's work in Ishikawa 2009: 77.

²⁰ Translations based on "五念門," *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, last updated 2007/06/02, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=五念門>.

the two gates arise based on the Tathāgata's wisdom (the activity of cognition and the activity of expedient cognition) that is called forth by according with the Buddha's teachings. The center point for this completion and arising is this according with the Buddha's teachings.

If we were to see the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as a *yoga* treatise, then, based on the cessation and observation meditations, the practice of vowing to be born in the Pure Land and meditating on the glories of the Pure Land (*yoga* in a narrow sense) would be seen as central. However, Tanluan describes the intention behind creating the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as follows: “[Vasubandhu Bodhisattva] preached the verses on aspiration for rebirth, a condensation, and has accorded with the Buddha's teaching” (SSZ 1: 285). In other words, if we see the aim of the verses on aspiring for Birth in the Pure Land as being to “accord with the Buddha's teachings,” then of the five gates of mindfulness, invoking Amida's name would become the fundamental one. This is because Vasubandhu interprets this second gate in the explanatory section in the following way:

How is praise accomplished? Praise is performed as a verbal act. Saying the name, in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light that is the embodiment of wisdom, for one wants to practice in accord with the name's significance, and with reality.²¹

According to Tanluan's interpretation, the first half (称彼如来名如彼如来光明智相, “Saying the name, in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light that is the embodiment of wisdom”) refers to the practice of praising Amida,²² and the second half (如彼名義欲如実修行相応故, “for one wants to practice in accord with the name's significance, and with reality”) shows the aim one seeks to realize through this praise. In other words, the invoking of Amida's name brings about within us the desire to practice in accord with the name's significance and reality.

²¹ SSZ 1: 314. Translation based on CWS, modified. Ōtake interprets this passage as follows: “How is praise accomplished? Praise is performed as a verbal act. By saying the name in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light, the embodiment of wisdom. This is because in correspondence with the name's significance, [based on their] desire beings accord with the practice that corresponds to reality.” / 云何が讃嘆する。／口業をもて讃歎するなり。彼の如来の名を、彼の如来の光明智相の如く称うるなり。彼の名義の如く、欲〔に依りて〕如実修行に相応するが故に (Ōtake 2011: 324).

²² In the first volume of *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*, Tanluan states, “Vasubandhu Bodhisattva says, ‘now the Tathāgata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters.’ In other words, he is invoking the Tathāgata's name in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light that is the embodiment of wisdom. Therefore know that this line is the invocation of Amida's name” (SSZ 1: 283).

5. Accordance

What does “accord” (Ch. *xiangying* 相應; Jp. *sōō*) mean in the sentence “accord with the Buddha’s teachings”? Multiple possibilities (including *anuloma*, *yoga*, etc.) have been suggested as the original Sanskrit word.²³ However, Tanluan says, “[To] accord is like a box and a top fitting together.”²⁴ This metaphor is from Nāgārjuna’s *Great Liberating Wisdom Treatise* (36).²⁵ Therein, he uses the metaphor of a box and its top perfectly fitting together to express that a bodhisattva, following the characteristics of *prajñā pāramitā*, observes with wisdom, acquires well, fulfills well, and falls into neither substantialism nor nihilism regarding phenomena. Immediately before this statement, he says, “For example, the likes of a disciple following a teacher’s teachings and not differing from the teacher’s intention is called ‘accordance.’”²⁶

In this way, Tanluan differentiates a relationship of “accordance” from one of object-oriented awareness based on subject and object. In other words, to “accord with the Buddha’s teachings” is to neither bring Buddhism into one’s own awareness nor place it on the outside of one’s awareness as an object to be cognized. It is also neither a mystical experience of unity with truth nor a dialectic in which two different things are sublated (*aufheben*). The metaphor of accordance between a box and a lid expresses a relationship in which the Dharma and one’s spiritual capacity—which are different in nature—remain un-separated while maintaining their difference. Tanluan adopted this metaphor as a concept that expresses the relationship between the Tathāgata and sentient beings within Other Power, that is, finding the self within the Tathāgata’s functioning.

²³ Based on *Principles of Exegesis* (*Vyākhyāyukti*), Yamaguchi Susumu argues that it comes from the word *anuloma* and means “direct the Buddha’s teachings in the proper direction.” Ōtake Susumu, on the other hand, sees it as a translation of *prayoga* based on the *Treatise on the Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva’s Question on Bodhi* (T 1531.26. Skt. *Gāyaśīrṣa sūtra ṭīkā*; Ch. *Wenshushiri pusa wen puti jing lun* 文殊師利菩薩問菩提經論; Jp. *Manjushiri bosatsu mon bodai kyōron*; Ōtake 2011: 324, note). Yasuda Rijin argues based on the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (Ch. *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論; Jp. *Yuga shiji ron*; Discourse on the Stages of Concentration Practice) that *xiangying* probably comes from *yoga* in a wider sense: while it has a narrow meaning of cessation and observation (Jp. *shikan* 止觀), it also has a wider meaning of “objects, practices and realization” (Jp. *kyōgyōka* 境行果). Following Tanluan’s box-lid metaphor, one might also be able to argue that it came from *samprayukta*.

²⁴ SSZ 1: 285. 相應者 譬如函蓋相稱也。

²⁵ *Dazhidulun* vol. 36, ch. 3, “Shixi xiangying pin” 釋習相應品. T 1509.25: 327a16. 如般若波羅蜜相 菩薩亦隨是相 以智慧觀能得能成就不增不減 是名相應 譬如函蓋大小相稱。

²⁶ T 1509.25: 327a13-14. 譬如弟子隨順師教不違師意是名相應。

6. Faith and True Practice in the Line Invoking Amida's Name

Tanluan states the following regarding the “accordance” realized by the practice of praise that is invoking Amida's name:

“To want to practice in accord with the name's significance, and with reality”: the name of the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light dispels all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations.h)²⁷

The name of Amida that is invoked in the practice of praise is not simply a name as signifier but expresses the Tathāgata's true practice that corresponds with reality. The Tathāgata's name makes ordinary beings realize their ignorance that loses sight of reality as it is and calls forth in them a desire to awaken to that reality. Why is it that, despite the fact that foolish beings are called to accord with the name, an expression of true practice, they are unable to do so? Tanluan asks the following question:

But if you ask why ignorance still remains and your aspirations are not fulfilled even though you say the name and are mindful of Amida, it is because you do not practice in accord with reality, because you are not in correspondence with the significance of the name. Why is your practice not in accord with reality and not in correspondence with the significance of the name?²⁸

In response to this question, he presents three types of non-belief, and he answers that it is because one has not realized the faith that is expressed in Vasubandhu's statement at the beginning of his treatise, “I, with the mind that is single.” Here, to be in “accordance” is ultimately an issue of faith, whether or not one believes in the calling (the name of) the Tathāgata.

The *Collection on Peace and Bliss* (Ch. *Anleji* 安樂集; Jp. *Anrakushū*)²⁹ by Daochuo 道綽 (562–645), as well as Shinran's works, highlight this issue as well. Shinran praises the work of Tanluan, stating, “Whether practice is fully in accord with reality is determined solely by faith” (*Kōsō wasan*),³⁰

²⁷ SSZ 1: 314; quoted in *Kyōgyōshinshō* Chapter on Faith. Translation from CWS, modified.

²⁸ SSZ 1: 314; quoted in *Kyōgyōshinshō* Chapter on Faith. Translation from CWS.

²⁹ At the end of the *Anleji*'s second section, Daochuo quotes Tanluan's three kinds of non-faith and states, “It is completely unthinkable that one would not be born if they have these three minds” (SSZ 1: 403). Shinran praises Daochuo's work, stating, “With kind concern he teaches the three characteristics of entrusting and nonentrusting” (“Shōshinge” 正信偈, Chapter on Practice, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, SSZ 2: 63).

³⁰ Translation from CWS. Shinran, “Donran san” 曇鸞讚 [Tanluan Hymn], *Kōsō wasan* (SSZ 2: 430). Incidentally, in the Bunmei version (*bunmei bon* 文明本) of the *Kōsō wasan* (TSSZ 2 wasan hen: 102), one finds the following reading above “accord with reality”: *oshie no*

and he quotes this passage in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* Chapter on Faith as one of the foundational scriptural sources of the Pure Land tradition.³¹

7. Shinran and the Second Line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*

Based on Tanluan's interpretation, Shinran held that the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* was one of Vasubandhu's important contributions to Pure Land thought. Shinran quotes this line in the Chapter on Practice in his magnum opus, *Kyōgyōshinshō*:

Relying on the sutras
In which the manifestation of true and real virtues is taught,
I compose a gātha of aspiration, a condensation,
and have accorded with the Buddha's teaching.³²

Here, Shinran indicates the Chinese characters for "accord" should be read as *sōō seri* 相応せり, meaning "have accorded." Furthermore, in *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls* (*Songō shinzō meimom* 尊号真像銘文) he states the following regarding this line:

Compose a gātha of aspiration, a condensation: Gātha here refers to words that express the essence of the primal vow. A condensation is wisdom, the wisdom of unhindered light. *have accorded with the Buddha's teaching* [*yo bukkūō sōō* 与仏教相応; Shinran does not provide the Japanese reading of these characters here]: the *Treatise on the Pure Land* says that this is to conform with the World Honored Ones' [*shakuson* 釈尊] teaching and Amida's vow.³³

He says that to "have accorded with the Buddha's teachings" is, according to the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, being in accordance with the encouragement (*hakken* 発遣) of the external teachings of the World Honored Ones and the internal truth of the calling of Amida's vow (*shōkan* 招喚).³⁴

gotoku shinzuru kokoro nari 教えの如く信ずる心なり ("the mind that believes corresponding to the teachings").

³¹ Shinran understands the True Pure Land Teaching (Jōdo Shinshū) elucidated by his teacher Hōnen to be the "ultimate within the Mahāyāna" (*Mattōshō* 末灯鈔 [Lamp for the Latter Dharma Age], SSZ 2: 779; original translation) that realizes as the "faith given by Amida" (*Tannishō*, SSZ 2: 1073) a subject that properly interprets the Buddha's words.

³² Chapter on Practice, SSZ 2: 25. 淨土論曰 我依修多羅真實功德相 說願偈總持 與佛教相應. Translation from CWS, modified.

³³ SSZ 2: 620. Translation from CWS.

³⁴ Shinran understands true faith as arising from the functioning of Amida and Śākyamuni. He also holds that buddhas arise from hearing the praise of Amida Buddha's merit.

Incidentally, on the inscription found with the portrait of Shinran at age eighty-three that is thought to have been made when Shinran gave the *Kyōgyōshinshō* to one of his disciples (the portrait is called the *Anjō no goei* 安城の御影), one finds part of the *Shōshinge* and text from the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, which includes this second line. From this as well, one can see that Shinran attached importance to this line.³⁵

Conclusion

From the perspective of the tradition of Vasubandhu, Tanluan and Shinran, the strand of Pure Land teachings that might be characterized as performing *upadeśa* on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is not a Buddhism that aims to be reborn after death in the world of Amida Buddha. The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is a Mahāyāna scripture that describes the fundamental vows by which buddhas such as Śākyamuni appear in this world (the Tathāgata's primal vow or fundamental desire) and the fulfillment of these vows (in the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* they are discussed within the framework of the "purity of the world and its inhabitants" [Ch. *erzhong shijian qingjing* 二種世間清淨; Jp. *nishu seken shōjō*] and the "the fulfillment of twenty-nine kinds of adorned merit" [Ch. *ershijiu zhong zhuangyan gongde chengjiu* 二十九種莊嚴功德成就; Jp. *nijūku shu shōgon kudoku jōju*]). The Pure Land of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (in more exact terms, the buddha-body and buddha-land) is a primal world that gives birth to buddhas and discourses about them. Our wishing to be born in the world of Amida Buddha's primal vow via the teachings of Śākyamuni is in order to discover ourselves in a land where the myriad buddhas are present, so that we will then be able to properly hear the teachings of the buddhas, including those of Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism.

How is it possible for ordinary beings living in an era without Śākyamuni to correctly listen to the buddhas' words and live based upon their wisdom? The second line of Vasubandhu's treatise points to the historical significance of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as a discourse that answers this question. In this sense, the second line also shows not only Vasubandhu's intention in creating his treatise but also the historical significance of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* in Buddhist intellectual history, having been created in a tradition

³⁵ Incidentally, in the inscription of the Name that is the primary object of worship on which the ten characters "taking refuge in the Tathāgata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters" (*kimyō jinjippō mugekō nyorai* 歸命盡十方無碍光如来) is written, one finds both part of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and a text that includes this second line. Furthermore, while not a direct quotation of this line, Shinran also draws from it in the *Shōshinge*, *Nyūshutsu nimonge* 入出二門偈 (Gāthā on the Two Gates of Entering and Leaving), and elsewhere.

where it is possible to firmly believe that “I have accorded with the Buddha’s teachings.”³⁶

Abbreviations

- CWS *The Collected Works of Shinran. Vol. 1. The Writings*, translated by Dennis Hirota, et al. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997.
- SSZ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書, ed. Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensansho 真宗聖教全書編纂所. 5 vols. Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, eds. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932.
- TSSZ *Teihon Shinran shōnin zenshū* 定本親鸞聖人全集, ed. Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 親鸞聖人全集刊行会. [Waidoban ワイド版] 9 vols. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2008.

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³⁶ If Vasubandhu’s *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* had not been written, it would not have become clear that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is a set of teachings that leads to the realization that, based on the aspiration for Birth, one has “accorded with the Buddha’s teaching.” If Tanluan’s commentary on the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* had not been written, the understanding that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is about the power of the Buddha’s primal vow (the easy practice path of Other Power) would not have appeared. Furthermore, it would have not become clear that within the Buddha Way of Other Power the invocation of the Name that is the Tathāgata’s calling is the practice that realizes for us faith, which is nothing other than the essence of “accordance.” If Shinran had not highlighted the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and Tanluan’s commentary on it in *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*, people would probably not have been able to see the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as the true teaching for ordinary beings to properly hear and believe the buddhas’ words and walk the Mahāyāna Buddha Way.

the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and Others], *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* 新国訳大蔵経 (New Japanese Translation of the Tripiṭaka) 14, Shakkyōronbu 釈経論部 (Treatises) 18. Tokyo: Daizō.

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Khotan and the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*

IMRE HAMAR

The Silk Road is primarily regarded as the principal route along which precious Chinese goods were transported to the West. However, foreign ideas came to China along the Silk Road, and the arrival of these foreign concepts changed the philosophical and religious orientation of this great empire. The greatest challenge, undoubtedly, was the appearance of Buddhism within the boundaries of China in the first century. The arrival of this new religion in China started a long process of mutual adaptation of Buddhist and Chinese cultures. It has been emphasized with relation to Buddhism how this Indian religion took a different shape in China. This side of the adaptation, which is usually called Sinification, resulted in the formation of particular Chinese schools of Buddhism (Huayan, Tiantai, Chan, Pure Land) that later spread in East Asia. However, the other side of the influence, that of Buddhism on Chinese culture, was also very significant. Buddhist concepts and religious practices that had been unknown in China became deeply rooted in Chinese soil and exercised an enormous influence on the development of Chinese thought and society.

Discussions on the introduction of Buddhism into China focus on the difficult process of adapting several new concepts (karma, rebirth, etc.) and the translation of Indian Buddhist scriptures. However, we should bear in mind that in the early period most of the translators of Buddhist texts came from Central Asia. The Silk Road in Central Asia served as a bridge between India and China, making it possible for China to interact with this foreign religion and thought. The original language of the Buddhist scriptures could be used for religious purposes in Central Asia because it was closely related to the language of the people inhabiting the region.¹ Yet these cultures must have

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¹ Nattier 1990.

adopted and interpreted the original teachings of Buddhism or simply, intentionally or unintentionally, had a predilection for certain teachings of Buddhism. In terms of the transmission of Indian Buddhism by Central Asian monks, the background of the transmitters also should be taken into consideration when reconstructing the process of the spread of Buddhism into China. To understand the doctrinal innovations of Chinese Buddhism, it is necessary to study the indigenous Chinese thought and religions that predated the arrival of Buddhism. In terms of the development of Chinese Buddhism, these two aspects are usually emphasized, but the third aspect, the role of the Central Asian scholar-monks who acted as transmitters, is often neglected. It is well known that most of the Mahāyāna sutras, such as the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*, *Lotus Sutra*, *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, etc., were very influential in East Asian Buddhism but less important in the history of Indian Buddhism.² What is the reason for this? Should we seek the explanation for the popularity of these scriptures in the Chinese predilection for certain questions that these works address, or rather in the deliberate propagation of these sutras by the monks who brought them from their homeland and translated them into Chinese in collaboration with Chinese assistants? In order to answer this question, the characteristic features of Central Asian Buddhism and the interaction between Central Asian and Chinese Buddhism should be studied. In reconstructing the history and doctrines of Central Asian Buddhism, we can rely on the scriptures that were translated into Central Asian languages, the Buddhist works that were originally composed in these languages, the images that were preserved on the walls of caves or as paintings and finally on the activities of the Central Asian monks in China, which are well recorded in Buddhist histories.

In this paper, I have chosen Khotan, a small oasis-state on the southern edge of the Taklamakan Desert, as the subject for the investigation of this question. The waters of two rivers, the Yurungkash or Baiyu he 白玉河 (White Jade River) and the Karakash or Heiyu he 黑玉河 (Black Jade River), were indispensable for establishing human culture in Khotan. These two rivers unite near Koxlax (about 200 km north of Khotan) and together form the Khotan River. As the names of the rivers suggest, they not only provided water for the inhabitants of Khotan but also brought the precious jade that was highly valued in China and the main export of Khotan. Khotan is famous in China for the jade that was taken to China as a precious commercial item or as a tribute offered by the Khotanese kings to the Chinese emperor.³

² Nattier 2003.

³ The library cave of Dunhuang (Cave 17) has preserved several Chinese and Khotanese documents related to tribute-bearing missions from Khotan. Hansen (2005) studied the purpose and nature of these tribute missions.

According to the chronicle of Khotan that has survived in a Tibetan translation, people who inhabited Khotan came from India, but the recent archaeological discovery of a cemetery in Shanpula (30 km east of Khotan) shows that nomads from the Eurasian steppe lived here.⁴ The Chinese sources from the Han dynasty recorded that only 19,300 people and 3,300 households lived in Khotan.⁵ The language of the people living in Khotan was an Iranian variety contemporary with Middle Persian and Sogdian but with many words borrowed from Sanskrit.

Prods Oktor Skjærvø distinguishes three stages in the development of the Khotanese language, each of which is related to a site of discovered texts: 1. Old Khotanese (5th-6th c.) translations of Buddhist texts from Dandan Uiliq, Khadaliq; 2. Middle Khotanese (7th-8th c.) texts from Dandan Uiliq, Khadaliq; 3. Late Khotanese (9th-10th c.) texts from Cave 17 at Dunhuang.⁶

In order to reconstruct Khotanese Buddhist culture, which was brutally destroyed a thousand years ago during the Muslim invasion, we can rely on literary sources, Khotanese documents, Chinese dynastic histories, records of Chinese Buddhist travellers, Tibetan documents, non-religious items (coins, cloth, etc.) and Buddhist artifacts. Sir Aurel Stein played an enormous role in mapping out this ancient civilization during his expeditions in Central Asia.⁷ There are nine sites for Khotanese documents and artifacts: Shanpula, Niya, Rawak, Endere, Melikawat, Yotkan, Dandan Uiliq, Domoko and Dunhuang.⁸ Most of the Khotanese written sources are translations of Buddhist scriptures or loosely paraphrased versions of original works and Buddhist texts composed in Khotanese. Besides these Buddhist texts, various medical, legal and commercial documents have been found.⁹ Since the discovery of these sources, a few dedicated scholars of Khotanology have done invaluable work in making these texts accessible by editing and translating them.¹⁰ Thanks to their efforts, we have some idea of life in this oasis-state and how Buddhism was adopted into their culture. However, as most Khotanologists are

⁴ Hansen 2012: 200-201.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁶ Skjærvø 2012: 115-116.

⁷ Stein published a popular account of the first expedition entitled *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan* (1903) and later a detailed archaeological report, *Ancient Khotan* (2 volumes, 1907).

⁸ Hansen 2012: 199.

⁹ For a study of Khotanese official documents, see Kumamoto 1982.

¹⁰ Bailey made a great contribution by publishing a series of Khotanese texts. See Bailey 1951, 1963, 1969, 1979. Skjærvø (2002) has published the texts of Khotanese manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in the British Library with an English translation that helps to identify these texts even for those who cannot read Khotanese. A good example of the identification of texts using this catalogue is Chen 2012.

philologists and not specialists in Buddhist Studies, these texts need to be studied by Buddhologists as well in order to shed light on the characteristics of Khotanese Buddhism in terms of the development of Buddhism.¹¹

Since the Tibetan kingdom conquered Khotan several times, some important historical works were translated into Tibetan, and other Tibetan documents related to the history of Khotan have survived.¹² *The Enquiry of Vimalaprabhā* (*Dri ma med pa'i 'od kyi zhus pa*) is a prophecy that predicts the birth of the goddess Vimalaprabhā as the Khotanese princess Prāniyata in order to protect Buddhism in Khotan against the barbaric Tibetan nomads, who are called the Red-Faced Ones. *The Prophecy of Khotan* (*Li yul lung bstan pa*) includes the text of *The Prophecy of the Khotanese Arhat* and *The Annals of Khotan*. *The Prophecy of the Khotanese Arhat*, unlike *The Enquiry of Vimalaprabhā*, draws a favorable picture of the Red-Faced Ones as a group of Khotanese monks who had to flee from Khotan to Tibet, where they were patronized by the king Tri Detsugtsen (r. 712–c.754) and his Chinese wife, who can be identified as Jincheng Gongzhu 金城公主. *The Prophecy of the Arhat Saṃghavardana* (*Dgra bcom pa dge 'dun 'phel gyis lung bstan pa*) must have been written during the Tibetan occupation of Khotan in the 660s.¹³

There are also numerous Chinese sources on Khotanese history and Buddhism. First of all, dynastic histories give an account of the relationship between the Western region and China, and they record some important historical events related to Khotan and the names of Khotanese rulers.¹⁴ Unfortunately, these Chinese names are not easy to match with the names in the Tibetan sources.¹⁵ Chinese pilgrims who travelled to Central Asia or India often passed through Khotan, and their travel diaries provide important information on Khotanese culture and Buddhism. The first Chinese monk who went to the West in order to bring Buddhist scriptures back to China was Zhu Shixing 朱士行, who travelled to Khotan in 260 in order to find the original text of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. He died in Khotan and never returned to China, but his disciple took the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* to China in 282. This text was translated into Chinese by the Khotanese monk Mokṣala (Wuchaluo 無叉羅) in 291 as the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra that Emits Light* (*Fangguang bore*

¹¹ Skjærvø 2012.

¹² For a translation of the Tibetan sources on Khotan, see Thomas 1935-1963 and Emmerick 1967. For a good overview of them, see van Schaik's 2016.

¹³ Van Schaik, 2016.

¹⁴ See Yu 2004, 2006; Hulsewé 1979.

¹⁵ Hill (1988) tried to match the Tibetan names with the Chinese names of the Khotanese kings of the seventh and eighth centuries.

jing 放光般若經).¹⁶ In 399, the famous pilgrim Faxian 法顯 (337-422) reached Khotan and reported on the flourishing of Mahāyāna Buddhism there. This portrait of Khotan was later confirmed by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664), who stayed in Khotan for seven months and described its Buddhism in detail.

The political power of Khotan significantly increased when Khotan defeated Yarkand in 61, and subsequently thirteen kingdoms submitted to Khotan. However, the Chinese general Ban Chao 班超 (32-102) subdued Khotan in 78. Although Khotan was able to regain its independence in 105, it was defeated by the Chinese general Ban Yong 班勇 (d. 128), the youngest son of Ban Gu, in 127. In the early 600s, Khotan became a vassal state of the Western Turks, but in 648 the Khotanese king visited the Tang capital and, as a token of his acceptance of Tang hegemony, left his son there as a hostage. Khotan became one of the Four Garrisons (Khotan, Kucha, Kashgar, Yanqi). The early Tibetan influence is explained by the Tibetan occupation between 670 and 692, but the Chinese regained control over Khotan between 692 and 755. After the An Lushan rebellion, Chinese influence decreased in the Western Regions, and the Tibetan Kingdom was able to occupy Dunhuang in 786 and Khotan in 796. The relationship between Khotan and Dunhuang became closer through marriages between the Khotanese royal family and the Cao family that ruled Dunhuang. Visa Sambhava (Li Shengtian 李聖天), king of Khotan (r. 912-966), married the daughter of Cao Yijin 曹議金 (?-935), the ruler of Dunhuang. The name of the prince is Zongchang 宗嘗 in the Chinese sources and Zongchang 宗常 in a manuscript from Dunhuang. This close affiliation is substantiated by the copious written Khotanese documents found in Cave 17 of Dunhuang and by paintings of the Khotanese king, princess and patrons on the walls of Dunhuang caves. The history of Buddhist Khotan ended when the leader of the Karakhanids, Yusuf Qadir Khan, conquered Khotan in 1006.

The importance and the appreciation of Buddhism in Khotan is attested by the Tibetan work, *The Prophecy of the Li Country*, which says that Buddha himself used to visit Khotan to preach. Xuanzang claims that it was Arhat Vairocana from Kashmir who introduced Buddhism into Khotan. All historical sources and diaries of Buddhist travellers confirm that the people of Khotan were sincere followers of the Buddha and that the monks practiced Mahāyāna Buddhism. Faxian was accommodated in the Gomati (Jumodi 瞿摩帝) monastery, where three thousand monks lived.

The preference for Mahāyāna Buddhism in Khotan is attested by the Khotanese translations of Buddhist scriptures. Almost all the texts from the Old

¹⁶ Zürcher 1959: 61-63.

Khotanese period are seminal Mahāyāna works, and many of these have new versions from the Middle Khotanese period. It is interesting that in the Late Khotanese period, the sutras popular in earlier periods are not well represented, but *Prajñāpāramitā* texts and texts on confession, *avadāna* and *jātaka* appear more often.

Mahāyāna Buddhism is emphasized in those works, which are not translations but rather original texts composed in Khotanese. One of them, the *Bodhisattva Compendium*, is a very long Old Khotanese text describing the duties of the bodhisattva. The other text, written at the request of an official called Ysambasta (i.e., Zambasta), probably in the fifth century, and thus called the *Book of Zambasta*, must have been written in the Middle Khotanese period. It is the longest extant original Khotanese text, with 207 out of 298 leaves having survived.¹⁷ It is useful to examine the contents of the *Book of Zambasta* in order to reconstruct the main features of Khotanese Buddhism.¹⁸

Here, we find topics related to the Buddha's activities, the suffering of living beings, the early Buddhist practice of meditating in cemeteries to curb desire and Mahāyāna concepts such as *śūnyatā*, *bodhicitta*, *bhūmi* and *upāya*. This book reveals that even if the presence of Mahāyāna is unquestionable among the teachings in the *Book of Zambasta*, early teachings about eliminating desires and meditation in cemeteries were important elements of Khotanese Buddhism. These aspects were less emphasized in China, and due to Chinese culture the meditation in cemeteries was not practiced.

It is well known that one of the scriptural proofs for the identification of Wutaishan as the abode of Mañjuśrī bodhisattva is the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. The origin or the compilation of this voluminous Mahāyāna sutra might be closely associated with Central Asia, as Indian śāstra literature refers to some chapters of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* as independent sutras but never as part of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. Although the Sanskrit title *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* was preserved in the colophon of a Sanskrit sutra, the content of this sutra is not certain, but it probably also included a collection of sutras different from the extant version of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*.

If we consider the Central Asian origin or edition of this scripture, Khotan (Yutian 于闐, Hetian xian 和田縣 today) is a possible candidate, as this scripture seems to have been very important in this Central Asian oasis-state. This sutra was held in high esteem by the Khotanese king. At the time when Zhi Faling 支法領 went to Khotan to receive this scripture, the sacred

¹⁷ For an English translation of the *Book of Zambasta*, see Emmerick 1968.

¹⁸ For an outline of the text, see Skjærvø 2012: 122-123.

scriptures were jealously guarded and foreigners were not allowed to take them out of the country. Ultimately, Zhi Faling succeeded in persuading the king to present him with the first part of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, which consisted of 36,000 *ślokas* (*jie* 偈). Zhi Faling asked Buddhābhadrā to translate the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, which he had brought with him from Khotan. On the tenth day of the third month of 418, Buddhābhadrā began the work and completed it in the sixth month of 420. This became the first Chinese version of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, which was later called the 60-fascicle *Huayan jing*.

Probably, it was a Khotanese monk called Ti Yunbore 提云般若, whose original name can be reconstructed as Devendraprajñā,¹⁹ who told Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (623/625-705) that a more complete version of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* was to be found in Khotan. He probably arrived in Luoyang around 688, as Dīvākara, the famous translator monk died in that year, and Devendraprajñā could be invited to take over his leading role in the translation office at Weiguo dongsi 魏國東寺.²⁰ Wu Zetian must have been very interested in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* as she ordered him to translate sutras related to this scripture first. The Khotanese master supposedly did not bring the Sanskrit manuscript of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* with him to China, but he had two shorter texts. Thus, he first translated the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing bu siyi fo jingjie fen* 大方廣佛華嚴經不思議佛境界分 (T 300.10: Section on the Inconceivable Buddha-realm of the *Buddhāvataṃsakamahāvaiṣṭya-sūtra*) and the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing xiuci fen* 大方廣佛華嚴經修慈分 (T 306.10: Section on the Cultivation of Loving Kindness of the *Buddhāvataṃsakamahāvaiṣṭya-sūtra*).

These two sutras do not correspond to any of the chapters of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, but Chinese catalogues classify them as works related to the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* (*juanshu jing* 眷屬經).²¹ This might mean that the genesis of these texts must be linked to the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* or even that they might have been included in some editions. The importance of these two scriptures in Khotan is attested by their Khotanese translations, which have been discovered recently.

¹⁹ Forte 1979: 285.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 290. 《大乘法界無差別論疏》「有于闐國三藏法師提雲般若。此云天慧。其人慧悟超倫。備窮三藏。在於本國。獨步一人。後為觀化上京。遂齋梵本百有餘部。於垂拱年內屆至神都。有勅慰喻。入內供養。安置魏國東寺。令共大德十人翻譯經論。仍令先譯華嚴。余以不敏。猥蒙徵召。既預翻譯。得觀寶聚。遂翻得華嚴不思議境界分。華嚴修慈分。大乘智炬陀羅尼經。諸佛集會陀羅尼經。已上各一卷成。造像功德經二卷。法界無差別論一卷。」 T 1838: 63c22-64a2.

²¹ Hamar 2007: 139.

The longest extant Buddhist work that was originally composed in Khotanese is the *Book of Zambasta*, dating from the fifth century. It has emerged that the third chapter of this book is a parallel text of the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing xiuci fen* 大方廣佛華嚴經修慈分.²² This is a meditation text that explains how to use loving kindness in Buddhist practice.²³ This is not the only chapter of the book that can be related to the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. The first chapter, which is unfortunately not complete, contains a teaching of Samantabhadra referring to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* chapter of the sutra. This could be a good beginning for a manual on the Mahāyāna teachings.²⁴ The description of bodhisattva practice is an essential part of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*: the fifty-two stages of the bodhisattva path were formulated on the basis of this scripture. Bodhisattva practice plays an important role in the *Book of Zambasta*, which refers to the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, a chapter of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. In the Khotanese manuscript collection of the British Library, a fragment from a Khotanese text, IOL Khot 147/5 (H. 147 NS 106), was identified as the Khotanese version of the other sutra, the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing bu siyi fo jingjie fen* 大方廣佛華嚴經不思議佛境界分.²⁵

Devendraprajñā, who seems to have been a master of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, was a scholar-monk who was highly respected not only in Wu Zetian's court but also by the Khotanese royal family. The Khotanese prince Viśya Vākraṃ (Tib. Bidzaya Bikrama, Ch. Fudu Jing 伏闍璣) followed his father Viśya Saṃgrāmā (Tib. Bidzaya Sangrama, Ch. Fudu Xiong 伏闍雄) to China in 674, after they had fought against the Tibetans. His father probably died in China, and the Chinese placed the prince on the Khotanese throne in 692. The prince must have known his famous compatriot Devendraprajñā, who died a few years after his arrival in China after translating only six scriptures. *The Prophecy of the Li Country* records that Viśya Vākraṃ after his return to Khotan built a vihāra for his “pious friend” Ārya Arhat Devendra the Great (dgra bcom pa de ben dra chen gyi). This friend can be none other than Devendraprajñā, and the monastery must have been dedicated to his memory.²⁶

²² For the edition of the Khotanese text with English translation, Chinese parallel text and vocabulary, see Duan 2013: 57-108, 285-334.

²³ For a detailed study of this work, see Martini 2011.

²⁴ Maggi 2009: 351.

²⁵ Chen Huaiyu was able to make this identification on the basis of Prof. Skjærvø's *Catalogue*, which includes the English translation of Khotanese fragments. See Chen 2012.

²⁶ Hill 1988: 102; Duan 2013: 48. I adopted the Khotanese names from Duan.

The Sanskrit original manuscript of the second version of the *Huayan jing* was also brought from Khotan under the command of Empress Wu Zetian, who gave lavish support to Fazang 法藏 (643-712), who could be regarded as the founder of the Huayan school in China.²⁷ Probably, due to the imperial mission on this occasion, the Khotanese royal family did not seem to be reluctant to provide the manuscript. A Khotanese monk, Śikṣānanda, brought the work to China and later settled at the Dabian 大遍 monastery in the eastern capital, where he began translating it. This Sanskrit manuscript was longer than the sixty-fascicle *Huayan jing* by 9,000 *ślokas*, consisting of 45,000 *ślokas*. The work commenced on the fourteenth day of the third month of 695 and was completed in the Foshouji 佛授記 monastery on the eighth day of the tenth month of 699, with a foreword written by the empress herself. This version of the *Huayan jing* is called the 80-fascicle *Huayan jing*. It is important to note that Bodhiruci joined Śikṣānanda to translate the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* in 694. Later, he translated the *Wenshushili baocang tuoluoni jing* 文殊師利寶藏陀羅尼經 in 710, which has the reference to Wutai shan as an abode of Mañjuśrī.

It is interesting to note that Wu Zetian seems to have shown more favor to the Khotanese Śikṣānanda than to the Chinese pilgrim monk Yijing 義淨 (635–713), who went to India to study at Nālanda, the most important center of Buddhist knowledge, and returned with scriptures that represented the most important works of Indian Buddhism. Even so, Wu Zetian had more respect for the Central Asian monk, which indicates her personal interest in Central Asian Buddhism.²⁸

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²⁸ Duan, 2013: 175.

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Tiantai Hermeneutics:
Zhiyi's Interpretation of the *Lotus Sutra*
Presented in the *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi*

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Why did the Buddha preach so many different and often wildly contradictory sutras? And what is the underlying message that the Buddha wished to present through these sutras? These are the basic issues of Chinese Buddhist hermeneutics. The aim of this paper is to consider the answers to these questions set forth by Zhiyi 智顓 (538-597), the founder of the Tiantai 天台 school of Chinese Buddhism.

Zhiyi is one of the most important figures in the development of Chinese Buddhist hermeneutics. He is noted for his complex and highly sophisticated hermeneutic system that he developed for interpreting Buddhist sutras. In the following pages, I will argue that Zhiyi uses the *Lotus Sutra's* concept of expedient means (*upāya*) as the key to explaining the relationship between the various different and often contradictory Buddhist teachings. To make this point, I will first consider the hermeneutics that he develops in his *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義 (T 1716.33) or *Profound Meaning of the Sutra of the Lotus Blossom of the Sublime Dharma*, his most important work on the philosophy of the *Lotus Sutra*. (I will refer to this work below as the *Xuanyi*.)

1. Preliminary Remarks

Hermeneutics, according to Donald S. Lopez, is “concerned with establishing principles for the retrieval of meaning, especially from a text” (Lopez 1988: 1). Although this term originally referred to the principles for interpreting the Christian Bible, it is now used in a more general sense to refer to the rules, methods or theories governing the exegesis of any text.¹ When hermeneutics is defined in this way, we can recognize that Zhiyi is unquestionably one of

¹ The classic study on modern hermeneutic theories is Palmer 1969.

the most important figures in the development of Buddhist hermeneutics in China. Throughout his writings, Zhiyi self-consciously formulates principles for interpreting Buddhist canonical works and uses them methodically in order to explicate the meaning of the texts he confronts.

As Lopez notes, in the hands of Buddhist scholar-monks, hermeneutics often served as a “hermeneutic of control,” i.e., as a method to establish one’s own vision of the Buddhist truth as normative for the Buddhist tradition as a whole and to subsume all other interpretations under one’s own. There is no denying that Zhiyi frequently engages in such a hermeneutic. However (and this is a point that Lopez also makes), Buddhists were not motivated to develop hermeneutic strategies solely to assert the dominance of their own vision of Buddhism over that of others. Their overriding concern was to discover the contents of the Buddha’s enlightenment by discerning the true meaning of the Buddha’s words. This was especially urgent in China, which saw the continuous importation of a vast array of different, and often contradictory, sutras from India, all claiming to be authentic records the Buddha’s sermons. Zhiyi’s interest in hermeneutics derives from his desire to establish systematic principles for understanding the Buddha’s words as a whole.

2. The Fivefold Profound Meanings in the *Xuanyi*

With these remarks, let me turn to Zhiyi’s hermeneutics as found in the *Xuanyi*.² The *Xuanyi* is a detailed exposition of Tiantai philosophy presented in the form of an analysis of the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*. It was originally delivered as a lecture during the summer retreat (*xiaanju* 夏安居) in 593 and was later edited into its present form by Zhiyi’s disciple, Guanding 灌頂 (561-632). Since the time of Zhanran 湛然 (711-782), the sixth Tiantai patriarch, the *Xuanyi* has been counted among the “Three Major Works” (*sandabu* 三大部) of the Tiantai school, the two other texts being the *Miaofa lienhua jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文句 (*Words and Phrases of the Sutra of the Lotus Blossom of the Sublime Dharma*) and the *Mohezhi guan* 摩訶止觀 (*Great Calming and Insight*), a comprehensive guide to meditation.

The hermeneutic system that Zhiyi develops in the *Xuanyi* is extremely complex and multifaceted, inasmuch as it tries to explain the significance of the *Lotus Sutra* from multiple perspectives. First, it is important to note that he employs the scheme of the fivefold profound meanings to explicate a sutra’s message from five perspectives. The five profound meanings are as follows:

² For an insightful analysis of the Tiantai approach to the *Lotus Sutra*, see Andō 1968: 36-53. Hurvitz has also discussed the Tiantai tenet classification in detail (see Hurvitz 1960-62: 229-271).

1. explication of the title of the sutra (*shiming* 釋名)
2. discussion of the substance of the sutra (*bianti* 辨體)
3. clarification of the essential point of the sutra (*mingzong* 明宗)
4. discussion of the function of the sutra (*lunyong* 論用)
5. classification of the tenets (*panjiao* 判教)

Zhiyi uses this fivefold scheme in a number of his commentaries, such as those on the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sutra*, *Benevolent Kings Sutra*, *Guanyin Invitation Sutra*, *Vimalakīrti Sutra* and *Diamond Sutra*.³ However, in the pages below, I will limit myself to the exposition found in the *Xuanyi*.

The analysis of the sutra from the standpoint of the first perspective—the explication of the title of the sutra—takes up the bulk of the *Xuanyi*, approximately two-thirds of the entire text. Zhiyi begins his analysis of the sutra's title by arguing that the title serves to reveal the Buddha's insight underlying the sutra. The title, as it were, symbolizes the sutra's teaching as a whole. Next, he focuses on the term “sublime” (*miao* 妙) in the phrase “sublime Dharma” in the sutra's title (the full title of the sutra is, as noted above, *Sutra of the Lotus Blossom of the Sublime Dharma*) and argues that the term “sublime Dharma” refers to absolute reality (*shixiang* 實相), which, in the philosophical vocabulary of Tiantai Buddhism, can be expressed as the perfect interfusion of the three truths (*yuanrong sandi* 圓融三諦), i.e., the fact that all dharmas are immediately empty, provisionally real and the middle way between them (*jikong jijia jizhong* 卽空卽假卽中). This is a significant point. Earlier commentaries on the *Lotus Sutra* had understood the basic message of this sutra to be found in its teaching of the One Vehicle (preached in the Expedient Means Chapter) or in the teaching that the lifespan of Śākyamuni Buddha is immensely long (expounded in the Lifespan of the Tathāgata Chapter). However, Zhiyi maintains that the sutra's message concerns the ultimate nature of reality itself.

Next, turning to the second perspective, Zhiyi argues that the substance of the *Lotus Sutra* is absolute reality itself. As noted above, absolute reality here refers to the true nature of all dharmas, which, in Tiantai philosophy, is expressed as their being immediately empty, provisionally real and the middle.

Third, the essential point of the *Lotus Sutra* is defined as “the cause and fruit of the Buddha's own practice” (*fō zixing yinguo* 佛自行因果) or, more briefly, buddhahood and the practices leading to it. According to Zhiyi, the practices and the resulting buddhahood recounted in sutras preached before

³ Satō has suggested the possibility that this commentary on the *Diamond Sutra* may not be by Zhiyi. See Satō 1964: 411-412. In addition, it may be noted that the five profound meanings also appear in Zhiyi's commentary on the *Contemplation Sutra*. However, this commentary is a Tang-period work forged under Zhiyi's name. See Satō 1964: 567-601.

the *Lotus* are still mixed with expedient teachings and therefore those sutras do not reveal the Buddha's unadulterated insight into absolute reality. However, this is not the case with the *Lotus Sutra*. According to Zhiyi, the practices for attaining buddhahood taught in the *Lotus Sutra* are practices based on absolute reality and the buddhahood attained through these practices is also none other than absolute reality itself.

Concerning the fourth point, the function of the *Lotus Sutra*, Zhiyi states that it can be encapsulated in two types of knowledge, the provisional and the true (*quanshi erzhi* 權實二智). True knowledge (*shizhi* 實智) refers to insight into absolute reality: the insight that all dharmas are immediately empty, provisionally real and the middle. This is only natural, because the substance of the *Lotus Sutra* is, as we saw above, absolute reality. However, at the same time, this knowledge of absolute reality is coupled with provisional knowledge (*quanzhi* 權智), which refers to the ability to expound provisional teachings as expedient means for leading sentient beings to true insight into absolute reality. In Zhiyi's view, the *Lotus Sutra* teaches that the Buddha not only expounded his insight into absolute reality but also his skill at using expedient means to lead sentient beings to this insight.

Let me interrupt my analysis of the five profound meanings to make the following point. From the above, it is clear that Zhiyi understood that the basic message of the *Lotus Sutra* concerns the nature of absolute reality itself, which, in the philosophical vocabulary of Tiantai Buddhism, can be expressed as the perfect interfusion of the three truths, i.e., the fact that all dharmas are immediately empty, provisionally real and the middle. This is a significant point, because earlier commentaries on the *Lotus* had understood its basic message as being contained in its teaching of the One Vehicle or in its teaching of the Buddha's immensely long lifespan. However, Zhiyi maintains that the sutra's message concerns the nature of ultimate reality itself.

As is well known, the One Vehicle doctrine holds that all beings can, and indeed must, ultimately attain buddhahood. This doctrine presupposes the doctrine of the Three Vehicles, which holds that Buddhist practitioners can be distinguished into three types—*śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and bodhisattvas—culminating in different attainments—those of arhat, *pratyekabuddha* and perfect buddhahood, respectively. In the *Lotus Sutra*, however, this three-fold distinction among Buddhist practitioners is revealed to be an expedient device, i.e., a provisional teaching preached by the Buddha. From the Buddha's perspective, the true teaching is that there is only one path of spiritual practice in Buddhism, the bodhisattva path culminating in the attainment of perfect buddhahood, and even those practitioners who consider themselves to be *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* must eventually convert to the bodhisattva

path and strive to attain perfect buddhahood. The Buddha preached the Three Vehicles because he realized that Buddhist practitioners are of diverse abilities and inclinations and not all of them are capable of undertaking the arduous bodhisattva practices from the start. Thus he accommodated his teaching to the levels of understanding of his audience and first taught that there are three different paths of Buddhist practice. But, once the spiritual capacities of his audience had matured, he preached the *Lotus Sutra* in which he revealed the doctrine of the Three Vehicles to be an expedient teaching (*upāya*) and set forth the doctrine of the One Vehicle that he wanted to teach all long.

As this shows, the doctrine of expedient means is used in the *Lotus Sutra* to make a soteriological point: the teaching of the Three Vehicles is simply a provisional teaching used by the Buddha to lead his audience to his true teaching. There is no question that Zhiyi recognized the importance of the *Lotus Sutra*'s One Vehicle doctrine and its message of universal buddhahood. However, it is also important to note that he discovered in the concept of expedient means the master key to explain not only the relationship between the Three Vehicles and One Vehicle doctrines in the *Lotus Sutra* but also the reason why there exist all sorts of diverse, and often contradictory, positions concerning a variety of doctrines within the Buddhist scriptures. In other words, Zhiyi saw the many different teachings found in the Buddhist scriptures to be provisional teachings preached by the Buddha as expedient means for leading sentient beings to his final true teaching.

3. Zhiyi's Tenet Classification

The last of the five profound meanings is called the classification of the tenets. It is here that Zhiyi develops his well-known tenet classification.⁴ Tenet classification, which holds an important place in the doctrinal systems of Chinese Buddhist schools, refers to schemes for systematically classifying and arranging Buddhist sutras in order to bring out the Buddha's true intention underlying the entire corpus of Buddhist scriptures.⁵ The need to develop

⁴ The classic outline of the Tiantai tenet classification system is set forth in the *Tiantai sijiaoyi* 天台四教儀, written in the late tenth century by the Korean monk Cheguan 諦觀 (?-971). For an English translation of this text, see The Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii 1983. The *Tiantai sijiaoyi* subsequently became the standard introduction to Tiantai Buddhism, but the tenet classification presented in this text is somewhat different from the one developed by Zhiyi himself. On this point, see The Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii 1983: 36-39.

⁵ For a thorough study of tenet classifications, see Petzold 1995. An insightful analysis of early Chinese tenet classifications is Ōchō 1981.

such systems arose in the early 400s when the authoritative translations of a number of important sutras, including the *Prajñāpāramitā*, *Vimalakīrti*, *Lotus*, *Huayan* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtras*, appeared. Many of these sutras contained teachings that differed from, and frequently grossly contradicted, each other. Tenet classification schemes were devised as a means to reconcile the discrepancies and contradictions found in these sutras.

Zhiyi presents a brief summary of his tenet classification at the beginning of the *Xuanyi* (T 1716.33: 682a-b) and develops it at greater length in the tenth and final fascicle (T 1716.33: 800a-814a). For the sake of convenience, I will refer to these two sections as the Summary and the Extended Analysis, respectively. Unfortunately, these sections are not easy to follow. The Summary is extremely terse and hard to understand, while the Extended Analysis is somewhat rambling and unfocused, also making it difficult to grasp. However, the general points are clear.

Zhiyi begins by dividing the Buddhist sutras chronologically into five stages. The first period is associated with the *Huayan Sūtra*. This is in keeping with the words of the sūtra itself, which holds that it was preached immediately after the Buddha's enlightenment. In both the Summary and the Extended Analysis, this period is likened to the time when the sun first appears at dawn. At this point, the sun illuminates only the mountain peaks and the rest of the land is still dark. This image is used to underscore the point that the teaching of the *Huayan Sūtra* represents the highest pinnacle of the Buddha's insight.

The second period is the period of the Tripiṭaka teachings.⁶ At this stage, the Buddha expounded the teachings of the so-called Lesser Vehicle, specifically the teachings of the four *Agama* sutras, such as the doctrines of impermanence and the Four Noble Truths. In the Summary (but not in the Extended Analysis), this period is likened to the stage where the sun shines down into the deep valleys.

During the third period, the Buddha taught the various *Vaipulya* sutras, such as the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. In these sutras, the Buddha criticized the teachings of the Lesser Vehicle that he had preached earlier and praised the Mahāyāna teachings. In the Summary (but again not in the Extended Analysis), this period is likened to the time when the sun shines down on the plains and all things cast their shadows in accordance with their shapes.

The fourth period is the period of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*. During this period, the Buddha taught the doctrine of emptiness to all practitioners of the Three Vehicles: *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and bodhisattvas. However, when

⁶ It may be noted that the *Tiantai sijiaoyi* calls this the Deer Park period, but in the *Xuanyi* this period is generally called the period of the Tripiṭaka.

śrāvakas and *pratyekabuddhas* gain insight into emptiness, they straightaways enter nirvana, but, when bodhisattvas gain the same insight, they remain in the world out of compassion to work for the liberation of all beings. This period is likened to the situation where an adult can bear to stay in the sun but young children lose their sight when they look at the sun.

The fifth period is that of the *Lotus Sutra*. The significance of this sutra lies not in the fact that it taught any particular doctrine but in the fact that it presents the “grand design” (so to speak) behind the Buddha’s preaching career, i.e., his plan to preach various expedient teachings with the ultimate aim of leading everyone to his highest insight. In the Summary (but not in the Extended Analysis), this period is likened to the time when the sun is at its zenith and objects cast no shadow. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra*, which the Buddha is said to have preached at the time of his entry into *parinirvāṇa*, is also included in this period.

It may be noted that Zhiyi also correlates these five periods with the teaching of the five flavors found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra* (T 375.12: 690c-691a; The Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii 1983: 72, note 8). The five flavors refer to the five stages in which milk is transformed into ghee: milk, cream, curd, butter and ghee. Just as milk is refined into ghee in this way, the sutra continues, the essence of the Buddhist teaching is gradually distilled and refined in the following five steps: 1. twelvefold scriptures, 2. ninefold sutras, 3. *Vaipulya* sutras, 4. *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras, 5. *Mahāparinirvāṇa*. Correlating the five flavors with the five periods, Zhiyi states that the *Huayan* period corresponds to the flavor of milk, the Tripiṭaka period to cream, the *Vaipulya* period to curd, the *Prajñāpāramitā* period to butter and the period of the *Lotus* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutras* to ghee.

This, in a nutshell, is Zhiyi’s five-stage chronological classification of Buddhist sutras. However, Zhiyi further overlays this chronological classification with another hermeneutical system based on the three teaching methods employed by the Buddha: the sudden method, the gradual method and the indeterminate method. The sudden method refers to the way in which the Buddha expressed his insight into absolute reality in a straightforward manner, without taking into consideration the ability of the audience to understand it. Zhiyi identified this method with the Buddha’s exposition in the *Huayan Sutra*, where the Buddha preached the content of his enlightenment just as he himself experienced it. However, the sutra claims that the Buddha’s teaching was so profound that it could not be understood by those who had not sufficiently progressed along the path of spiritual cultivation.

It was for this reason that the Buddha was compelled to resort to the gradual teaching. This is the method whereby he first preached simple doctrines and proceeded gradually to more profound teachings until he was ultimately

able to express his most profound insight, which was what he wanted to preach all along. This method of progressing step by step to deeper levels is what is called the gradual teaching. It corresponds to the teachings of the Tripiṭaka, *Vaipulya* and *Prajñāpāramitā* periods. Finally, when the Buddha realized that the spiritual capacities of his disciples had deepened to the point that they could understand his deepest insight, he preached the *Lotus Sutra*, the perfect and sudden teaching, in which he expressed (to use a phrase from the *Lotus Sutra*) the “Buddha’s wisdom and insight” (*fozijian* 佛知見). As an aside, it may be noted that in the later Tiantai exegetical tradition the *Lotus Sutra* is classified as being neither sudden nor gradual.

Finally, the indeterminate teaching refers to the case where one hears a teaching corresponding to the level of the Tripiṭaka, *Vaipulya* and *Prajñāpāramitā* periods but gains, not the insight associated with the respective teaching, but the insight associated with some other teaching, either of a higher or lower level.⁷

It may be added here that Zhiyi correlates these three teaching methods with the three methods of Tiantai meditative contemplation: the perfect and sudden contemplation (*yuantunguan* 圓頓觀), the gradual contemplation (*jianguan* 漸觀) and the indeterminate contemplation (*budingguan* 不定觀). The first refers to the meditative practice in which the practitioner contemplates absolute reality from the moment he or she arouses the aspiration for enlightenment and embarks on the path of spiritual contemplation. According to the Tiantai meditation system, this is the highest form of contemplation and corresponds to the method outlined in the *Mohezhi guan*. The gradual contemplation refers to the practitioner’s beginning from a relatively simple form of meditation and gradually progressing to deeper and more difficult forms of meditation. This form of meditation is taught in the *Shi chan boluomi zidi famen* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門 (*Graduated Dharma-gates Explicating the Perfection of Meditation*, T 1916.46). In the indeterminate contemplation, the practitioner practices a particular kind of meditation and gains insight that does not correspond to that level of meditation. An example would be the case of a practitioner who undertakes a relatively simple form of meditation and gains insight into absolute reality, the deepest insight according to Tiantai Buddhism.

⁷ In the *Tiantai sijaoyi*, the “secret” teaching is added to the sudden, gradual and indeterminate teachings, and they are collectively called the “four modes of conversion” (*huafa sijiao* 化法四教). However, the secret teaching does not represent a special teaching method in the *Xuanyi*. See The Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii 1983: 37-38.

4. The Four Teachings from the Perspective of Doctrinal Content in the *Xuanyi*

As described above, Zhiyi proposed two ways of classifying the sutras, chronologically and in terms of the method of teaching employed. But this is not all. He presents a third classification scheme, which distinguishes the teachings found in the sutras on the basis of their doctrinal content.⁸ Although Zhiyi does not give any name to this classification scheme, I refer to it below as the “four teachings.” These four teachings are as follows:

1. Tripitaka teaching (*zangjiao* 藏教), which teaches that all dharmas are in constant flux, continually arising and passing away.

2. Shared teaching (*tongjiao* 通教), which teaches that all dharmas are empty and devoid of self-nature.

3. Distinct teaching (*biejiao* 別教), which teaches the provisional existence of dharmas.

4. Perfect teaching (*yuanjiao* 圓教), which teaches the highest Tiantai insight of the perfect interfusion of the three truths: the realization that all things are immediately empty, provisionally real and the middle way between these extremes.

The scheme of the four doctrines of conversion appears repeatedly throughout the *Xuanyi* and plays a central role in its interpretation of the *Lotus Sutra*. Interestingly, the four doctrines of conversion are mentioned only in passing in the Summary and the Extended Analysis. The most important reference to these four teachings in the Summary is a brief and cryptic line: “The *Huayan* is combined (*jian* 兼), the Tripitaka is only (*dan* 但), the *Vaipulya* is contrasted (*dui* 對), the *Prajñāpāramitā* is girded (*dai* 帶)” (T 1716.33: 682b). This formula correlates the five periods of the Buddha’s preaching career with the four teachings. According to this formulation, in the *Huayan* period, the Buddha taught both distinct and perfect teachings; in the Tripitaka period, he taught only the Tripitaka teaching; in the *Vaipulya* period, he taught all four teachings, contrasting the inferior Tripitaka teaching with the other three more advanced teachings; and in the *Prajñāpāramitā* teaching, he taught the perfect teaching in conjunction with the shared and distinct teachings.

In this way, the interpretive scheme of the four teachings appears only tangentially in the sections devoted to the tenet classification. However, it plays an extremely important role in the Tiantai hermeneutical system because the

⁸ This classification system corresponds to the “four doctrines of conversion” (*huayi sijiao* 化儀四教) found in the *Tiantai sijiaoyi*. Zhiyi, however, does not use this term in his works.

four teachings provide the framework for analyzing the question of why the Buddha taught so many different, and often quite contradictory, sutras during his lifetime. This, as mentioned before, is the central issue for Chinese Buddhist hermeneutics.

The most important point that Zhiyi wants to make in this fourfold classification is that the Perfect Teaching represents the highest insight of the Buddha. And—this is just as important—Zhiyi wants to argue that this highest insight is set forth in pure form only in the *Lotus Sutra*. But why did the Buddha have to teach less advanced levels of insight, such as the Tripitaka, Shared and Distinct teachings, if the Perfect Teaching represents his highest insight? In other words, why didn't he just preach the Perfect Teaching all along? The answer is that the insight associated with the Perfect Teaching is so profound and so hard to understand that it was first necessary for the Buddha to teach less advanced teachings (such as those of the Tripitaka, Shared and Distinct teachings) in order to gradually lead his audience to his highest insight—the Perfect Teaching.

This, as is well known, is the doctrine of expedient means (*upāya*) found in the *Lotus Sutra*. But it is important to note that, in the *Lotus Sutra* itself, the *upāya* doctrine is used to explain why the Buddha preached the doctrine of the Three Vehicles if the doctrine of the One Vehicle was his true teaching. But, in the *Xuanyi*, Zhiyi amplified the concept of *upāya* into a general hermeneutic concept to explain the existence of different levels of teachings within the Buddhist sutras (not just the contradiction between the Three Vehicles and One Vehicle but all contradictions found in the sutras). So for Zhiyi the notion of *upāya* becomes the master key for unlocking the fundamental hermeneutic issue for Chinese Buddhists, which, as I just said, was: why are there so many, often mutually contradictory, teachings within the Buddhist scriptures?

Now, with this in mind, I would like to move on to another fundamental question of Tiantai hermeneutics, which is the question of the relationship between the Buddha's highest insight (that is to say, the insight expressed in the Perfect Teaching) and the provisional, expedient insight that he preached as *upāya* in the Tripitaka, Shared and Distinct teachings. In other words, what is the relationship between the truth and *upāya*? To explain this point, let me first consider the notions of the relative sublime (*xiangdai miao* 相待妙) and absolute sublime (*juedai miao* 絕待妙) found in the *Xuanyi*.⁹

Zhiyi devotes almost ninety percent of the section discussing the title of the *Lotus Sutra* to expounding the meaning of the term “sublime.” He explains

⁹ The following analysis is based on Tamura 1965: 3-12. The passage in the *Xuanyi* dealing with the concept of the sublime is translated in Swanson 1989: 124-129.

this term using the concepts of relative sublime and absolute sublime. The former refers to the case where the sublime is considered to be sublime in contrast with the coarse (*cu* 麤). Zhiyi maintains that the term “sublime” is synonymous with “absolute” (*jue* 絕; T 1716.33: 697b), so from this perspective, the relative sublime can be defined as the situation in which the absolute is considered absolute in contrast to the relative. However, in this case, the absolute is still relative to the relative. In other words, it is a relative absolute. Hence, it is still not absolute in a genuine sense.

On the other hand, the absolute sublime refers to the situation in which all relativity is totally transcended. In this case, the term “sublime” refers to the state beyond all dualities, including even the dualities of “coarse” and “sublime” (or “relative” and “absolute”). Since it is a state in which all discrimination (*fenbie* 分別) has been transcended, Zhiyi describes it as “inconceivable” (*bukesiyi* 不可思議), i.e., beyond conceptual understanding and perceivable only through the wisdom of the buddhas. Moreover, since it refers to a state in which the distinction between the sublime and coarse (or between the absolute and the relative) has been overcome, it would mean that, in Tiantai Buddhist parlance, the sublime is immediately the coarse (*miao ji cu* 妙即麤) and the coarse is immediately the sublime (*cu ji miao* 麤即妙). There is, in other words, no distinction between the coarse and sublime; the sublime is in itself the coarse, and the coarse is in itself the sublime.

According to Zhiyi, it is only in the *Lotus Sutra* that this world of absolute non-duality is described in pristine form. This absolute non-duality is what is indicated by the word “sublime” found in the sutra’s title. However, as noted above, Zhiyi recognizes that there are two aspects to the notion of “sublime”—relative sublime and absolute sublime—and interprets the sutra’s teaching from these two perspectives. First, from the perspective of the relative sublime, the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* is considered to be superior to that of all other sutras. This is because, in Zhiyi’s understanding, the *Lotus Sutra* presents the Buddha’s true teaching, while earlier sutras were mixed with provisional teachings employed as expedient means (*upāya*) for leading sentient beings to the true teaching.

However, Zhiyi continues that it is inadequate to understand the significance of the *Lotus Sutra* simply from the perspective of the relative sublime. It is also necessary to take into consideration the perspective of the absolute sublime. As noted above, from this perspective, the coarse is in itself the sublime, and vice versa. This implies that the provisional teachings expounded in earlier sutras are identical to the true teaching presented in the *Lotus Sutra*. In other words, the provisional teachings also partake of the true teaching, inasmuch as they are genuine, though partial, expressions of the Buddha’s insight into absolute reality. Frequently, in Buddhist texts

the provisional teachings are likened to a raft that one casts away after crossing a river. According to this simile, once the true teaching is revealed, the earlier provisional teachings are superseded and should be cast aside since they are no longer necessary. This, in fact, is how the provisional teachings are understood from the standpoint of the relative sublime. However, from the viewpoint of the absolute sublime, once the true teaching is revealed, the provisional teachings are recognized as playing indispensable roles in bringing sentient beings to buddhahood. In this way, the Buddha's teachings are understood holistically, with all the manifold Buddhist teachings, the true as well as the provisional, possessing absolute value in leading sentient beings to buddhahood.

How then does Zhiyi use this theoretical structure to develop his hermeneutics in the *Xuanyi*? In the second fascicle of this text, he takes up for analysis six objects (*jing* 境), or six sets of Buddhist doctrines, and analyzes them using the scheme of the four teachings. The six objects he takes up are: 1. ten such-likes; 2. twelfold chain of dependent origination; 3. four noble truths; 4. two truths; 5. three truths; 6. one truth. Since these passages have already been translated into English (Swanson 1989: 212-56), I will refrain from discussing them at length here. Instead I will focus only on the twelfold chain of dependent origination and use it as an example to illustrate Zhiyi's argument.

Zhiyi analyzes the teachings concerning the twelfold chain of dependent origination found in Buddhist sutras into four levels corresponding to the four teachings.

1. The level corresponding to the Tripitaka teaching is called "conceivable arising-and-perishing twelfold chain of dependent origination" (*siyi shengmie shieryinyuan* 思議生滅十二因緣). This refers to the situation in which all of the twelve links are understood as arising and passing away from one instant to the next.

2. The level corresponding to the Shared teaching is called "conceivable non-arising-and-perishing twelfold chain of dependent origination" (*siyi bushengmie shieryinyuan* 思議不生滅十二因緣). This refers to the twelve links understood as being empty.

3. The level corresponding to the Distinct teaching is called "inconceivable arising-and-perishing twelfold chain of dependent origination" (*busi yi shengmie shieryinyuan* 不思議生滅十二因緣). This refers to the twelve links understood as existing provisionally.

4. The level corresponding to the Perfect teaching is called "inconceivable non-arising-and-perishing twelfold chain of dependent origination" (*busi yi bushengmie shieryinyuan* 不思議不生滅十二因緣). This refers to the

twelve links seen to be immediately empty, provisionally existent and the middle.

After classifying the teachings concerning the twelvefold chain of dependent origination into these four levels, Zhiyi next discusses in two sections how they are related to each other. The sections are entitled Classification into the Coarse and Sublime (*pancumiao* 判麤妙) and Exposing the Coarse and Manifesting the Sublime (*kaicu xianmiao* 開麤顯妙). Although Zhiyi does not say so explicitly, they correspond to the perspectives of the relative and the absolute sublime, respectively. In the first section (Classification into the Coarse and Sublime), Zhiyi argues that each successive level can be seen as being more sublime than the previous level. According to this scheme, the understanding of the twelvefold chain of dependent origination developed at the level of the Separate teaching is sublime, in contrast to that of the Tripiṭaka teaching, which is coarse. In the same way, the understanding of the twelvefold chain of dependent origination at the level of the Distinct teaching is sublime, while those of the Tripiṭaka and Shared teachings are coarse. Finally, the understanding of the twelvefold chain of dependent origination at the level of the Perfect teaching is sublime, in contrast to those of the three previous levels, which are all coarse. In this way, the understanding of the twelvefold chain at the level of the Perfect teaching is considered to represent the highest level of insight into this doctrine. From this perspective, the first three teachings are understood as provisional, *upāya* teachings leading up to, and ultimately superseded by, the true insight presented in the Perfect teaching.

On the other hand, from the perspective of “exposing the coarse and manifesting the sublime,” the first three teachings are considered to be genuine, if partial, expressions of the position advanced in the final Perfect teaching. In more traditional terminology, the understanding of the twelvefold chain of dependent origination at the levels of the Tripiṭaka, Shared and Distinct teachings are identical with (*ji* 卽) that of the Perfect teaching. In other words, the doctrine of the twelvefold chain of dependent origination expounded in the former three teachings, although inferior to that of the Perfect teaching in a relative sense, is identical with the Perfect teaching in an absolute sense. In other words, they all possess absolute value as expressions of the Buddha’s compassionate desire to bring all beings to perfect enlightenment.

Although here I have taken up only the example of the twelvefold chain of dependent origination, Zhiyi uses the notions of “classification into the coarse and sublime” and “exposing the coarse and manifesting the sublime” in his analysis of the four noble truths, two truths, three truths and one truth as well. Hence, it can be said that these two notions, and the notion of expedient

means that undergirds these notions, are central to Zhiyi's entire approach to understanding the diverse, and frequently contradictory, interpretations of Buddhist doctrines found in the sutras.

Conclusion

In the ways outlined above, Zhiyi created in the *Xuanyi* a complex hermeneutic system for interpreting the *Lotus Sutra*. Such a hermeneutic system was necessary to answer the following question that confronted Zhiyi and many other Buddhists: why are there so many diverse, and often contradictory, teachings within the Buddhist canon? He argued that they reflect the existence of many provisional, expedient teachings in the Buddhist sutras, all preached by the Buddha in order to lead sentient beings to his final true insight. In terms of the four teachings, the Tripiṭaka, Shared and Distinct teachings are all expedient (*upāya*) teachings, while the Perfect teaching, revealed in unadulterated form in the *Lotus Sutra*, is the Buddha's true teaching. Hence, in one sense (specifically from the perspective of the relative sublime), once the true teaching is revealed in the *Lotus Sutra*, the teachings found in all earlier sutras are simultaneously revealed to be expedient *upāya* teachings. However, this does not mean that the expedient teachings become useless. In Zhiyi's opinion, the opposite is actually the case. From the standpoint of the Buddha's true teaching (that is to say, from the standpoint of the Perfect teaching, where all dualities are transcended), the true Perfect teaching is seen to be identical with the expedient Tripiṭaka, Shared and Distinct teachings. From this perspective, all the teachings preached by the Buddha, the expedient as well as the true, or the Tripiṭaka, Shared and Distinct teachings as well as the Perfect teaching, are seen as having absolute, irreplaceable value in leading sentient beings to buddhahood.

To conclude, the notion of expedient means found in the *Lotus Sutra* holds a central place in Zhiyi's hermeneutic system. Although the *Lotus Sutra* used it for the specific purpose of explaining why the Buddha preached the doctrine of the Three Vehicles although the doctrine of the One Vehicle was his true teaching, Zhiyi amplified this into a general hermeneutic concept for explaining the existence of diverse positions on a particular teaching or doctrine within the Buddhist sutras. Hence, it can be said that the notion of expedient means provided Zhiyi with a master key for unlocking the fundamental hermeneutic issue for Chinese Buddhists: why do there exist many, often mutually contradictory, teachings within the Buddhist scriptures?

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Daochuo's Creative Quotation Practices

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Daochuo 道綽 (562-645) begins his *Anleji* 安樂集 by stating: “Within this work, *Anleji* (*A Collection [of Passages on the Land of] Peace and Bliss*), there are twelve chapters, all together. In each, sutras and treatises are quoted, given to prove and clarify, encourage faith and cause one to seek birth in the Pure Land.”¹ As this passage indicates, the work itself primarily consists of quotations from scriptural authorities, the majority of which were thought to be of Indian origin. That is to say, Daochuo quotes broadly from a variety of scriptures that relay the words of Śākyamuni Buddha and the Indian thinkers who were revered as bodhisattvas.

Daochuo's quotations, however, seem to indicate an attitude toward the words of the Buddha that might strike us as disrespectful or disingenuous, because he very rarely quotes from these scriptural sources verbatim. Instead, in almost every quotation that he makes from sutras (and there are many), he makes some sort of change to the language, such that it is nearly impossible to find an exact quotation of the Chinese-language sutras that were held to relay the Buddha's words. What is more, Daochuo often adds phrases or words that accentuate the point that he is trying to make in the discussion at hand. In that sense, one might say that he is not simply taking the meaning of scripture and rephrasing it in his own words, but he is instead reshaping scripture to fit his purposes—putting words into Śākyamuni's mouth.

Daochuo's liberal attitude toward the letter of scripture seems to have been shared broadly, both among his contemporaries, such as Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛 (538-597), Jizang 吉藏 (549-623), and Jingyingsi Huiyuan 淨影寺慧遠 (523-592), and across much of Chinese Buddhist history. This fact seems to challenge some of our assumptions² about the status of the Buddha's

¹ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書 (hereafter SSZ), 1: 377; T 1958.47: 4a8-9.

² In a discussion of the role of quotation in religious speech, Webb Keane quotes Vološinov's statement, “The stronger the feeling of hierarchical eminence in another's utterance, the

words in the Buddhist exegetical tradition and forces us to question the nature of scriptural authority in medieval China. While we might believe that the Buddha's words were an absolute, unquestionable authority, these quotation practices indicate that the words of the Buddha were neither sacrosanct nor immutable for a very broad range of Chinese Buddhists from the earliest commentators at least through to the end of the Tang dynasty. Why did Chinese exegetes feel free to take such liberties with the words of the Buddha? What higher authorities did they appeal to in their revisions? What standards did they apply in reshaping scriptural language?

Paul Swanson, in his analysis of Zhiyi's quotation practices, suggests that the admonition by Śākyamuni on his deathbed to his disciples to "rely on the meaning, not on the word"³ perhaps was viewed as granting permission for such creative rewriting in the course of a quotation.⁴ However, there is no direct reference to this passage as a justification for quoting the Buddha's words freely with little concern for the letter. In fact, as far as I can tell, there seems to be little sense that such practices required any form of justification or defense at all. Most Chinese and Japanese commentators on these early Chinese Buddhist works seem to view creative quotation practices as a matter of course. Generally speaking, they simply provide the source of the quotation. In Edo-period Japanese commentaries we find analyses of the differences between the quoted passages and the originals, but no apparent sense that such treatment of the Buddha's words is problematic or irreverent. Even in the modern period, Swanson appears to be the only scholar who has even addressed the issue as somehow requiring explanation.

That said, these quotation practices are worthy of note and consideration when discussing the issue of how the Buddha's words have been accepted and interpreted within the Buddhist tradition. Therefore, I will explore some of these issues by focusing specifically on one extensive quotation in Daochuo's *Anleji* that is particularly noteworthy because of the extent and nature of the revisions. After examining the quotation and its source in detail, I will consider the authorities and standards that Daochuo makes recourse to in his revisions and suggest that these quotation practices and those of his contemporaries should be seen as an outgrowth of the creation of doctrinal

more sharply defined will its boundaries be, and the less accessible will it be to penetration by reporting and commenting tendencies from outside" (Keane 1997: 62). The words of the Buddha and Indian masters were clearly hierarchically eminent over Chinese commentators, so their free revision indicates that there is a flaw in Vološinov's position, at least in the case of Chinese Buddhism.

³ *Dabanniepanjing* 大般涅槃經 (T 374.12: 401b-c; T 375.12: 642a-b).

⁴ See Swanson 1993: 897-93. See also Swanson 1997.

classification systems and the determination of Śākyamuni's "true intent" (*benhuai* 本懷) in preaching the sutras.

Clarifying the Central Purport of the *Contemplation Sutra*

In the fourth section of Chapter 1 of the *Anleji*, Daochuo makes a delicate argument about the central purport (*zong* 宗) of the *Guanwuliangshoujing* 觀無量壽經 (T 365.12, hereafter *Contemplation Sutra*), where he highlights the special role of the *nianfo* 念佛 in Pure Land practice as a whole and in the *Contemplation Sutra* in particular. The first portion of this section is based largely on Jingyingsi Huiyuan's discussion of the central purport of the *Contemplation Sutra* in his *Guanwuliangshoujinyishu* 觀無量壽經義疏 (T 1749.37), such that at first glance Daochuo appears to take exactly the same position as Huiyuan does regarding this matter. That is, both Huiyuan and Daochuo state that the central message of the sutra is the presentation of the *samādhi* of contemplating the Buddha (*guanfo sanmei* 觀仏三昧). The second portion, however, is made up of several creatively reworked passages from the *Guanfosanmeihajing* 觀仏三昧海經 (T 643.15) and the *Huayanjing* 華嚴經 (T 278.09), which indicate that Daochuo's understanding of the content of that *samādhi* differed considerably from Huiyuan's. In the following, I will examine how Daochuo reshaped disparate passages from these two sutras to show that the central purport of the *Contemplation Sutra* lies in the clarification of a *samādhi* that can be practiced by ordinary human beings beset with grave karmic hindrances and that transforms such beings into effective, compassionate bodhisattvas.

First, let us take a look at Huiyuan's understanding of the content of *guanfo sanmei*. At the start of his *Guanwuliangshoujinyishu*, after designating the central purport of the sutra, he provides an explication of the title, where he writes:

Extending one's thoughts, considering and observing based on the exposition is "to contemplate." "Immeasurable Life" is the buddha that is contemplated. There are two types of contemplating the Buddha: first, contemplating the true body; second, contemplating the response body. Contemplating the body of the dharma gate of the equality of all buddhas is to contemplate the true body. Contemplating the bodies of buddhas and Tathāgatas together in a world is to contemplate the response body. Contemplating the true body is the contemplation of the body of actual form in the chapter on seeing Akṣobhya in the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa*. Contemplating the Buddha is just like this: "I see that the Tathāgata neither comes from before me, passes behind me, nor now

stays,” etc. . . . Contemplating the response body is as described in that *Guanfosanmeijing*. Taking the form and characteristics of a buddha, focusing one’s thoughts, considering and observing is referred to as “contemplating the response body.” This contemplation of the response body cannot be limited to one type, for form is brought forth based on the teaching, and there are various different characteristics [of the various buddhas]. Among these contemplations of the response body, there are initial and ultimate forms. The initial form is to hear the storehouse of bodhisattva teachings and knowing that there are innumerable buddhas in the ten directions, focus one’s thoughts, consider and observe, making one’s mind perfectly distinct and clear. This sort of contemplation, where one sees roughly purely based on faith, is referred to as the “initial.” Using great superhuman powers, intimately visiting, worshipping and serving, or being born in front of a buddha, seeing personally, and making offering is referred to as “truly seeing,” which is the ultimate form. . . . The [contemplation] under discussion in this sutra is, among response bodies, the roughly pure contemplation based on faith. . . . The [contemplation] under discussion in this sutra is a specific contemplation. One specifically contemplates the Buddha of Immeasurable Life in the Western Quarter.⁵

Huiyuan distinguishes two types of contemplating the Buddha, holding that contemplating the true body of the Buddha is superior to contemplating the response body. He further distinguishes the response body into initial and ultimate, arguing that the contemplation of the Buddha that is the primary focus of the *Contemplation Sutra* is an initial, introductory level of such meditative practice. In that sense, from Huiyuan’s perspective, the meditative practice laid out in the *Contemplation Sutra* is not necessarily a pivotal practice leading to the attainment of enlightenment. At best, it is one initial form of meditative practice that is on par with the practice of meditating on the thirty-two gross and eighty fine features of Śākyamuni as laid out in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*. Although this meditation is effective to some extent, it is far from a central practice in Huiyuan’s view of the Buddhist path. Indeed, in his discussion of the benefits that accrue to one who contemplates Amituo Buddha, he merely mentions that this practice allows one to see the buddhas of the ten directions and attain insight into the fact that they are all of identical substance.⁶

⁵ T 1749.37: 173b19-c14.

⁶ T 1749.37: 180c19-22.

Daochuo, on the other hand, takes the position that the teaching of the *Contemplation Sutra* itself directly clarifies the path out of birth and death for all suffering sentient beings.⁷ For him, then, *guanfo sanmei* as the central message of the sutra is of utmost significance as a soteriological key. Further, Daochuo displays considerable ambivalence regarding the effectiveness of meditative practice in general, designating it as an “auxiliary practice” that takes second place to the “right practice” of calling the name of Amituo.⁸ Therefore, his presentation of the content and benefits of that *samādhi* is far more layered and nuanced than Huiyuan's. While Huiyuan saw *guanfo sanmei* as one somewhat effective *samādhi* among many others and treated it with concomitant interest in his commentary on the *Contemplation Sutra*, Daochuo saw it as one of the chief elements of how human beings attain liberation. His quotation from the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* and the extent to which he revised the original reflect that central position, while also highlighting that he did not necessarily understand *guanfo sanmei* to be simply a meditative state in which one envisioned the various wondrous physical aspects common to all buddhas' response bodies.

In terms of quotation practices, one general feature of this quotation that we should keep in mind is that the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* is a sutra about the wondrous forms of Śākyamuni's body and the sources for those forms and is not at all related to Amituo Buddha. Daochuo's choice to quote this sutra in the context of the discussion of the *Contemplation Sutra* is thus a major reworking in itself, as naturally the contemplation referred to in the quotation takes on the meaning of contemplating Amituo Buddha by juxtaposition.

The quotation is quite long, but it is primarily a discussion of the three types of benefits that sentient beings are able to achieve through the appearance of a buddha in the world. These are enumerated as: 1. the benefits attained by the buddha's preaching; 2. the benefits obtained by contemplating the various physical features of the buddha's body and light; 3. the benefits attained through the mind of the *nianfo* and the realization of the *nianfo sanmei* 念仏三昧. We should note that in this enumeration Daochuo is making a distinction between simply meditating on the physical characteristics of the buddha and the *nianfo sanmei*, as well as showing that the *guanfo sanmei* that he holds up as the central message of the *Contemplation Sutra* subsumes both aspects. As such, it is a far wider definition than Huiyuan's. We should also note that the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* makes no reference to these three benefits as a set. In his quotation, Daochuo is bringing together

⁷ SSZ 1: 379; T 1958.47: 4b24-28.

⁸ SSZ 1: 378-379; T 1958.47: 4b22.

three disparate parts of the sutra under a single heading that is not present in the sutra at all.

First, let us consider the first two benefits. The passage as quoted in the *Anleji* reads:

The Buddha told the father king, “There are three types of benefits in the appearance of the myriad buddhas in the world. First, with their mouths, they preach the twelve types of sutras. Benefiting [sentient beings] by dispensing the dharma, they remove the dark obstructions of the ignorance of sentient beings and open [their] eyes of wisdom, causing [them] to be born before myriad buddhas and to quickly attain the unsurpassed *bodhi*. Second, the myriad buddhas, Tathāgatas, have innumerable fine features in their bodily form and their light. If there are sentient beings who consider, call, and contemplate [these forms], whether the general forms [of all buddhas] or the specific forms [of particular buddhas], with no question of whether the buddha’s body is of the past or present, all have [the residual effects of] the four grave offenses and the five abhorrent acts removed and obliterated, turn their backs on the three [evil] modes of existence, and, in accord with the wish of their minds, are continually born in Pure Lands until they attain buddhahood.”⁹

This first part of the quotation is based on the opening passage of the second chapter of the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*, entitled “Preface of Viewing the Basis.” That passage reads:

What is referred to as contemplating the state of the myriad buddhas? When myriad buddhas, Tathāgatas, appear in the world, there are two dharmas by which they adorn themselves. What are these two? First, they first preach the twelve types of sutras and bring benefits to sentient beings by causing them to intone them. These various actions are referred to as dispensing the dharma. With their wondrous physical form, they appear in Jambudvīpa or the worlds of the ten directions and by making myriad sentient beings see the buddha’s physical form fully adorned with the thirty-two gross features and the eighty fine features without anything lacking or deficient, they cause great joy to arise in the minds [of sentient beings]. Based on what causes are the forms seen in this way attained? All of these characteristics arise based on

⁹ SSZ 1: 381; T 47.01: 5a29-b6. The quotation up to this point is based on the passage at T 643.15: 647b17-22.

the hundreds of thousands of ascetic practices, cultivating the myriad *pāramitās* and auxiliary dharmas of the path in previous lives.¹⁰

As the closing sentences indicate, this passage appears at the start of what is essentially an introduction to the main body of this sutra, which is an exposition of how Śākyamuni attained the various features of a great man both in his current life and in his various practices in his previous life. These features and their causes are seen as being common to all buddhas. Daochuo, however, takes this passage out of its context, appends information from other parts of the sutra, and rewords the passage to serve as a discussion of the content of *guanfo sanmei*.

Close examination reveals that there are great differences between the two passages. Perhaps most strikingly, this passage refers to only two ways in which buddhas adorn themselves, as opposed to Daochuo's full quotation, which contains three "benefits" that result from the buddhas' appearance in the world. Secondly, Daochuo describes these benefits in great detail that is not present in Chapter 2 of the sutra. There is reference in Chapter 8 of the sutra to the effectiveness of the meditative practices outlined in the body of the scripture in removing the residual effects of the four grave offences and the five abhorrent acts,¹¹ as well as some discussion of how this practice leads to birth in a variety of Pure Lands,¹² so it is likely that Daochuo is bringing that content, separated by a full forty pages in the Taishō canon, together into this single quotation. Further, Daochuo considerably changes the portion about the buddha's bodily form to include reference to a variety of practices laid out in the *Contemplation Sutra*. While the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* simply states that sentient beings "are made to see" the buddha's body, Daochuo says that sentient beings attain benefits when they "consider, call, and contemplate [these forms]." Given Daochuo's emphasis on invocation of Amituo Buddha's name, the inclusion of "call" here is noteworthy. The addition is clearly based on the *Contemplation Sutra*, which explicitly recommends chanting the Buddha's name. There is only one passing reference to chanting the name of the Buddha in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*,¹³ a few lines from the discussion of the benefits that are attained by those who have committed grave sins, so the inclusion of "to call" in the quotation is not entirely baseless, but it is clear that Daochuo's

¹⁰ T 643.15: 647b16-23.

¹¹ T 643.15: 687b12-16.

¹² T 643.15: 687c29-689c4.

¹³ T 643.15: 687b23.

focus on it is heavily informed by the position that practice has in the *Contemplation Sutra*. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Daochuo rewrites the passage to state that these benefits ultimately lead to the attainment of buddhahood. For the first benefit, it “quickly leads” to its attainment, while, for the second, enlightenment is said to be attained after multiple births in various Pure Lands.

Daochuo’s quotation, then, shows that when he speaks of *guanfo sanmei*, he interprets it broadly to include the benefits gained from coming into contact with the Buddha’s words in scripture, contemplating the physical form of the Buddha, as well as intoning and thinking on the Buddha’s name. Further, Daochuo contextualizes these practices as essential and highly effective elements on the Buddhist path (even for those heavily burdened by karmic evil) by closing his discussion of each with a reference to the ultimate goal of buddhahood.

He further broadens this definition of *guanfo sanmei* by appending the third benefit to this quotation, again pulling together distinct elements from several different parts of the sutra. Through this inclusion, Daochuo indicates that the *guanfo sanmei* discussed in the *Contemplation Sutra* refers to the realization of the *nianfo sanmei*, or the attainment of what he calls “the mind of the *nianfo*,” while also pointing out that this practice is appropriate for foolish ordinary beings.

We should note here that in spite of the fact that Daochuo states that the central purport of the *Contemplation Sutra* is the *guanfo sanmei*, he uses the term only twice in the entire *Anleji*, while using the term *nianfo sanmei* thirty-seven times in the work. This clearly indicates that Daochuo preferred the term *nianfo sanmei* over *guanfo sanmei* and hints that his discussion of *guanfo sanmei* in the section under consideration is largely in response and deference to Huiyuan, who was a major authority in Chinese Buddhism during Daochuo’s life. In contrast to Daochuo’s emphasis on *nianfo sanmei*, Huiyuan only uses the term once in his commentary on the *Contemplation Sutra*,¹⁴ and that instance is simply because the term appears in the sutra itself. Much of the reworking of the sutra passages in the section under consideration here appears to be Daochuo’s attempt to deferentially disagree with Huiyuan and imbue new significance in Huiyuan’s interpretation. A major part of that process is Daochuo’s presentation of the *nianfo sanmei* as a synonym for *guanfo sanmei* in this third benefit described in the quotation under consideration. Through this quotation, he is refilling the content of Huiyuan’s *guanfo sanmei* with something that is entirely absent in Huiyuan’s

¹⁴ T 1749.37: 180c21.

understanding, shifting it from a low-level meditative experience to a key factor in the attainment of buddhahood.

The latter half of Daochuo's quotation from the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* can be broken into two parts. First is a dialogue between Śākyamuni and his father, Śuddhodana, and second is Śākyamuni's presentation of a metaphor to describe the merits of the *nianfo*. Let us consider each in turn. First, the dialogue reads:

Third, [the Buddha] encouraged the father king to practice *nianfo sanmei*. The father king said to the Buddha, "The completed virtues of the stage of buddhahood are true suchness, actual form, and the primary truth of emptiness. What is the reason that you do not have your disciple practice this?" The Buddha told the father king, "The completed virtues of the myriad buddhas have innumerable and deeply wondrous states, supernatural powers, and liberation. Because this is not a state to be practiced by [foolish] ordinary human beings, [I] encourage [you], the father king, to practice *nianfo sanmei*."¹⁵

Although Śuddhodana is one of the main interlocutors of the Buddha in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*, no such dialogue exists there. Śuddhodana appears in Chapter 1, where he pays a visit to his son and asks him to explain how he came to have the thirty-two fabulous features of a great man. There is reference to how the dharma body of the Buddha is not a state to be practiced by foolish, ordinary human beings, but it does not appear in an exchange between the Buddha and his father. Instead, it appears in a monologue at the beginning of Chapter 8 where the Buddha is addressing Ānanda about the ease and effectiveness of the *nianfo*. The Buddha states that if one simply focuses one's mind on a single follicle of the Buddha's hair, one will be able to see myriad buddhas standing before one and preaching the true Dharma. Such a meditation on just one part of the Buddha leads a person to attain the seed of the Tathāgatas, so, Śākyamuni continues,

How much more so one who is able to think on the complete physical form of the Buddha? The Tathāgata also possesses an immeasurable dharma-body, the ten powers, fearlessness, *samādhi*, freedom, various superhuman powers. These wondrous capacities are not a state to be studied by [foolish] ordinary beings like you. One should simply, with a profound mind, give rise to sympathetic joy. After giving rise to this

¹⁵ SSZ 1: 381; T 1958.47: 5b6-10. This portion of this quotation is based on the passage at T 643.15: 687b29-c4.

thought [of joy], one should then focus one's thought and consider the virtues of the Buddha.¹⁶

He then lists a variety of virtues that are unique to buddhas, such as the eighteen uncommonly held dharmas, the thirty-two gross and eighty fine features, the ten powers, and fearlessness. In this context, the reference to foolish ordinary beings is to highlight the contrast with the wonderful virtues that buddhas possess, and those virtues are simply being praised to prove the vast effectiveness of contemplating the Buddha. That is to say, the original sutra does not make any contrast between the *nianfo sanmei* and contemplation of the ultimate truth of Buddhism, as Daochuo's quotation does. He reshapes the passage so that it appears Śākyamuni is discouraging his father from trying to gain meditative insight into that ultimate truth of emptiness, because it is beyond his capacities as an ordinary human being. This contrast and Śākyamuni's encouragement to engage in the *nianfo* in Daochuo's quotation calls to mind the distinction that Huiyuan made between contemplating the Buddha's dharma body and the Buddha's response body. Daochuo likely had that distinction, and Huiyuan's prioritization of the former, in mind when he has Śākyamuni say, "Because this is not a state to be practiced by [foolish] ordinary human beings, [I] encourage [you], the father king, to practice *nianfo sanmei*."

We should also note this particular concern with the word "ordinary human being" in Daochuo's presentation. The term only appears nine times in the whole of the *Guanfosanmeihajing*. While the sutra does state that it is being preached for the sake of "ordinary human beings" after Śākyamuni's passing, practitioners at that stage are not necessarily of paramount concern. In the passage quoted above, it is nothing more than a passing reference, but Daochuo seized on the term as central to the message of the sutra and, perhaps influenced by another passage that speaks of the "*nianfo sanmei* for ordinary human beings,"¹⁷ brings it up as an important point about the nature of that *sanmei* that is driven home by Śākyamuni. Daochuo's sensitivity to this term likely relies on the passages in the *Contemplation Sutra* where Śākyamuni declares that the teachings there are intended for all future ordinary beings¹⁸ and states that the primary interlocutor in that sutra is an ordinary human being and should therefore listen well to the teachings preached there.¹⁹ That is, because Daochuo saw the *Contemplation Sutra* as a sutra

¹⁶ T 643.15: 687c1-5.

¹⁷ T 643.15: 692c21-22.

¹⁸ T 365.12: 341c7-8.

¹⁹ T 365.12: 341c23.

that preached a path to Buddhahood for foolish ordinary beings, he picked up on the use of the term in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* and emphasized it in his quotation. Here again, Daochuo is reshaping the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* in the image of the *Contemplation Sutra*.

The metaphor that Daochuo quotes is also removed from its original context so the elements take on a different meaning in the *Anleji* than they hold in the original. Daochuo's quotation reads:

The father king said to the Buddha, "What are the conditions of the virtues of *nianfo*?" The Buddha told the father king, "It is as though, in a forest of *eraṇḍa*²⁰ that is forty *yojana* square, there is one *gośīrṣa-candana*,²¹ which, although it has roots and sprouts, has not yet broken forth from the ground. The forest of *eraṇḍa* is only foul smelling, not at all aromatic. If one eats those fruits or flowers, one will go mad and die. At a later time, the roots and sprouts of the *candana* gradually grow and have barely become like a tree. The fine aroma flourishes and ultimately transforms this forest, completely giving everything a beautiful scent. Those sentient beings who see this all give rise to a rare mind." The Buddha told the father king, "For all sentient beings within birth and death, the mind of the *nianfo* is also like this. If one just connects one's thoughts [to that Buddha], without cease, one will definitely be born before a buddha. If one attains birth once, then all the various evils are transformed and become great compassion, in the same way that this fragrant tree changes the forest of *eraṇḍa*."

Here, Daochuo introduces the metaphor with a line that is clearly based on the next line from the passage from Chapter 8 of the sutra quoted above, which encourages people to consider the virtues of the Buddha. That line says, "considering the Buddha's virtues refers to" (念仏功德者), while Daochuo's quotation reads, "What are the conditions of the virtues of *nianfo*?" (念仏之功其状云何). The imagery of the large forest of foul-smelling *eraṇḍa* being transformed by a single sandalwood tree is, however, taken from Chapter 1 of the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*, which lists six metaphors that describe how the mind of sentient beings that contemplates the Buddha is identical to the mind of the Buddha itself. The passage in the sutra reads:

"Next, O father king, it is as though *eraṇḍa* were to grow together with a *candana* on a mountain. A *gośīrṣa-candana* grew within a thicket of *eraṇḍa*, but, when it had not yet grown large and was still within the

²⁰ Also *erāvaṇa*, a foul-smelling tree of the same family as the castor oil plant.

²¹ Ox-head sandalwood, a tree known for its fine scent and often used for making incense.

ground, it was like a bamboo shoot of Jambudvīpa, and the various people did not recognize it and would say that on this mountain there are only *eraṇḍa* and no *candana*. The *eraṇḍa* were foul-smelling, and the stench was like a decomposing corpse, which spread over forty *yojana*. Its flowers are red in color and very attractive. If one eats them, one will go mad and die. Although the *gośīrṣa-candana* started growing within this forest, since it had not finished growing, it was unable to emit a scent. After the full moon of mid-autumn, it came forth from the ground and became a *gośīrṣa-candana* tree. The various people could all smell the superb, wondrous fragrance of the *gośīrṣa-candana* and the scent of the foul-smelling *eraṇḍa* was extinguished forever.” The Buddha said to the father king, “The mind of the *nianfo* is also this way. Because of this mind, one is able to attain the roots of the three types of *bodhi*.”²²

Although the use of this imagery to describe the “mind of the *nianfo*” is clearly the same, Daochuo’s presentation is far more detailed, especially the last portion, where Daochuo has Śākyamuni explain the transformative function of this mind. The sutra itself does not explicitly explain the elements of the metaphor at all, but we can surmise that the *eraṇḍa* refers to the state of sentient beings’ minds prior to contemplating the Buddha, while the *candana* refers to the transformative power of that mind that contemplates the Buddha. There is no reference to birth in the Pure Land nor to the content of the transformation in the original sutra, but Daochuo causes Śākyamuni to say: “If one just connects one’s thoughts [to that Buddha] without cease, one will definitely be born before a buddha. If one attains birth once, then all the various evils are transformed and become great compassion, in the same way that this fragrant tree changes the forest of *eraṇḍa*.” This revision, which takes birth before a buddha to be a prerequisite for the transformation of evil into great compassion, is, like the other major revisions here, informed by the Pure Land scriptural tradition, especially the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, which discusses the way in which bodhisattvas who are born in Amituo’s Pure Land then function compassionately to liberate sentient beings.

Daochuo not only phrases the quotation so that Śākyamuni explains the elements of the metaphor, he explains them again himself, as follows.

In the metaphor, the forest of *eraṇḍa* stands for the three poisons, the three obstructions, and the limitless grave sins within the bodies of sentient beings. *Candana* represents the mind of the *nianfo* of sentient

²² T 643.15: 646a21-b1.

beings. "Have barely become a tree" means if all sentient beings simply can pile thought upon thought [of the Buddha] without break, the karmic path is completed and clear.

Here, Daochuo emphasizes the *nianfo*'s power to transform sentient beings' evil karma and open up a path to buddhahood that would otherwise be closed off to them. This passage also echoes the passage at the end of the *Contemplation Sutra* that speaks of the power of the *nianfo* to destroy karmic hindrances and bring about birth in the Pure Land for even the most limited, sinful person. Again, these are issues of concern in Pure Land scriptures related to Amituo Buddha and his land, but not necessarily the focus of the sutra that Daochuo is quoting.

On the whole, then, Daochuo can be said to be making a Pure Land sutra out of the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* in an attempt to show that the Pure Land tradition offers a path for limited, ordinary beings to first become bodhisattvas and then attain buddhahood through the *nianfo*. This quotation and many of the changes to the original text are clearly motivated by Daochuo's attempt to correct or reinterpret Huiyuan's understanding of the *Contemplation Sutra*, in a sense borrowing the authority of Śākyamuni to undermine the authority of Huiyuan or at least to breathe new vitality and immediacy into Huiyuan's rather tepid interpretation of that sutra.

The Buddha's Words as the Standard to Judge the Buddha's Words

This brings us back to the questions I posed at the beginning regarding the authorities and standards that Daochuo employs in his rewriting of Śākyamuni's words. From the above considerations, it is quite clear that he is taking his authority from the words of Śākyamuni within the Pure Land sutras. The *Contemplation Sutra* serves as a standard by which Daochuo judges the other sutras. He twists their words so that they conform to that sutra's message.

Daochuo is famous for his declaration that the Pure Land Way is the only effective path to buddhahood for ordinary beings (and even for highly accomplished bodhisattvas). That declaration is based on his understanding that Śākyamuni's central message lay in the clarification of the working of Amituo Buddha's vows within the world to liberate sentient beings, an understanding that prioritizes the Pure Land sutras over all the other sutras that preach different practices and paths to enlightenment. Those Pure Land sutras became a lens through which Daochuo viewed the rest of Śākyamuni's teachings, a litmus test for the true and effective, and a mold that he used to shape the message and the words of other sutras. In that sense, Daochuo's creative quotation practices can be seen as an outgrowth of his work of doctrinal

classification. By clarifying Śākyamuni's central message, Daochuo established for himself a scriptural standard through which he was able to evaluate the teachings in the rest of the canon. He employed that standard in his quotation of scripture. In doing so, perhaps he not only relied on Śākyamuni's dying admonition to "rely on the meaning, not the words," but also on the one to "rely on the sutras in which the Buddha's intent is fully revealed (*leyijing* 了義經), not on those where it is not."²³ For Daochuo, Śākyamuni's intention in leading sentient beings to buddhahood is most clearly and fully expressed in these Pure Land scriptures, and therefore he is able to take liberties with the letter of the Buddha's word in order to express its true intent.

When thinking about Daochuo's attitude toward scripture, there is one passage in the *Anleji* that offers some insight into the care with which he read Mahāyāna sutras and also what he saw to be their central message. In closing, I would like to briefly introduce that passage:

The profound storehouse of the Mahāyāna [contains] words and meanings [as innumerable as] particles of dust and sand. For this reason, the *Nirvana Sutra* states, "In one word, there are immeasurable meanings. Regarding a single meaning, there are immeasurable words."²⁴ One should necessarily fully investigate the multitudinous scriptures, and then perfectly clarify the essence of [each] work. It is not like Hīnayāna or secular works, where one fully grasps the meaning by reading the passages. Why should this be the case? It is just that the Pure Land is ineffably indistinct and the sutras and treatises teach about it in both obvious and subtle ways in order to affect the feelings of ordinary beings and lead them across using a variety of means.²⁵

Daochuo discusses the need for close, careful reading in order to determine the meaning of any specific passage. The passage should be read in light of the "essence" or essential significance of and its relation to the whole of the Mahāyāna canon. It is through that sort of broad vision about the intent of a scripture that the specific meaning of the letter of any passage should be determined. It is the last sentence, though, that is most telling about Daochuo's attitude toward the storehouse of the Mahāyāna. Here he says that the treatises and sutras teach about the Pure Land in both obvious and subtle ways, which implies that for Daochuo all the Mahāyāna sutras and treatises clarify in one way or another the teachings of the Pure Land. This passage

²³ T 374.12: 401b27-402c10; T 375.12: 642a21-643b9.

²⁴ This quotation is based on the passage at T 374.12: 563c15-16 and T 375.12: 810a27-28.

²⁵ SSZ 1: 391.

certainly succinctly summarizes the attitude that Daochuo took in his creative quotation from the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* that we examined above. It is likely that Daochuo's contemporaries had a similar view of the Mahāyāna canon as an expression, in one way or another, of Śākyamuni's essential teaching. For them, it was not the Pure Land, but some other essential message like the *ekayāna* that served as the lens for viewing scripture and the mold for reshaping its message.

Abbreviations

- SSZ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書, ed. Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensansho 真宗聖教全書編纂所. 5 vols. Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932.

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The “True Words” of the Buddha: *Mantra* and *Dhāraṇī* in Relation to Fugen Enmei in Ritual Context

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Anyone researching any aspect of esoteric Buddhism—even art and art history in my case—cannot avoid encountering various mystical (somewhat magical) utterances, such as *mantra* and *dhāraṇī*. Many researchers who have tried to give a sound definition of either of those, unfortunately, could only determine some aspects of their meaning after thorough investigation. Perhaps we will never know the origins of *mantra* or *dhāraṇī*, so we have to settle for what has already been said about their characteristics and meaning.

As far as definitions go, *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* are barely distinguishable. According to Peter Harvey’s definition, “mantras are sacred words of powers, mostly meaningless syllables or strings of syllables, which give an arrangement of sound of great potency.”¹ Similarly, when defining *dhāraṇī*, scholars usually describe it as a spell, an incantation or a mnemonic device, comprised of a string of meaningless syllables or words.² No one has been brave enough so far to declare a confident definition of either of the two terms. I do not aim to solve the problem of defining *mantra* or *dhāraṇī*, especially after so many renowned Buddhist and Indian scholars (Jan Gonda, André Padoux, Harvey Alper and Paul Copp, among others) could not succeed in this task. Padoux asks, “Should one try to define mantras at all?” and he answers, “I am not sure.”³ So I would rather give an overview of why *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* are still such a mystery and then discuss how they are represented in Japanese esoteric traditions.

Mantra and *dhāraṇī* have been studied by many scholars during the previous and present centuries, and it is important that we understand the current state of scholarship. Since F. Max Müller’s work on one of the incantations

¹ Harvey 1990: 260-261.

² Copp 2014: 1.

³ Padoux 2008: 300.

(*Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī*) in 1884 (Müller and Nanjio 1884 [1972]), we know that these spells have been part of the Buddhist traditions since at least the early centuries CE.⁴ But the earlier scholars of Buddhism were fairly dismissive of incantations and did not pay too much attention to their nature and meaning, regarding them as meaningless mumbo-jumbo. Müller was not at all gentle when he wrote the following:

Most of these Dharanis are prayers so utterly devoid of sense and grammar that they hardly admit and still less are deserving of a translation, however important they may be palaeographically, and, in one sense, historically also, as marking the lowest degradation of one of the most perfect religions, at least as conceived originally in the mind of its founder. Here we have in mere gibberish a prayer for a long life, addressed to Buddha, who taught that deliverance from life was the greatest of all blessings.⁵

In the twentieth century, this attitude seemed to change, since an abundant number of books became basic material for the study of Buddhist incantations. However, only in recent years can we see fruitful results, especially in the field of esoteric Buddhism. Of particular note is the long-awaited comprehensive work, *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sorensen and Richard K. Payne (2011), which gives us a broad picture of esoteric Buddhism. The topics discussed in the book include doctrines, practices, rituals and art in China, Korea and Japan.

There are ample articles and books about *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs*, and almost all the authors emphasize the similarities between the two. They argue that formulas such as *mantras*, *dhāraṇīs* (or *vidyā*, *paritta*, etc.) are not to be understood, they are to be *pronounced correctly*. This is the reason, I may presume, why the Chinese translations are not really translations but rather transliterations of the original Sanskrit, because in a translation these auspicious pronunciations would be lost. (In any event, throughout most eras of Buddhist history Chinese and Japanese monks studied only the sounds of Sanskrit, not the grammar.) The sounds are more important than the meaning, since they are mainly used—chanted—in esoteric rituals. For *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* as well, the ritual context is very significant. As Padoux writes, “(Mantras) are part of a ritual performance outside of which they cannot really be understood.”⁶ The only differences that we can see between the two are:

⁴ Copp 2014: 1.

⁵ Müller and Nanjio 1884: 31.

⁶ Padoux 2008: 301.

1. *Mantras* are shorter than *dhāraṇīs*.
2. *Mantras* were in use in India long before Buddhism, and they had Vedic roots, such as the *Rigveda* or *Atharvaveda*.
3. *Dhāraṇīs* have appeared only in the Mahāyāna Buddhist context.

Mantras

In the study of *mantras*, first of all, we have to differentiate between Hindu (or Vedic) *mantras* and Buddhist *mantras*. The *mantras* were originally used to communicate with the gods, to pray to a god and wish for something. The Vedas were recited in rituals, therefore *mantras* also can be regarded as ritual language. The word *mantra* derives from the Sanskrit root *man* (“to think/consider”) with the suffix *tra* (“tool”), meaning “instrument of thought” or “speech.” The definition in the Sanskrit dictionary is also *Vedic hymn, sacred formula, mystical verse*.

As for their history, we know from Vedic sources that *mantras* had been in use long before Buddhism was established. *Mantras* were part of the Vedas, where they were used as tools for personal gain or against enemies. It was perhaps for this reason that the historical Buddha banned all kinds of magic. The legitimization of *mantras* comes in a later period, when the *Adamantine Peak Sūtra* (Jp. *Kongōchōkyō* 金剛頂經, Sk. *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha Sūtra*),⁷ one of the fundamental scriptures of the esoteric tradition dated to the seventh century, reworks the life story of the Buddha.⁸ The scripture begins with the story of Sarvarthasiddhi (the esoteric name of Siddhartha Gautama, in Japanese called the Bodhisattva All-Attained or All Wishes Realized 一切義成就菩薩), which tells us that he reached enlightenment because the Tathāgatas visited him under the Bodhi tree and gave him a number of *mantras*, among which was the one that produced *bodhicitta*, or aspiration for enlightenment.

In Japanese, there is more than one word for *mantra*, the two most fundamental being *ju* 呪 and *shingon* 真言. The former word is why *mantras* are regarded as spells, because *ju* means precisely a spell. The latter word, which became the name of the esoteric tradition in China and Japan, literally means “true words.” Here it refers to the true teachings of the Buddha.

There are also different kinds of *mantras*, for example the seed *mantra* or seed-syllable (or germ-letter, Jp. *shu* 種 or *shuji* 種子, Sk. *bīja*), which is the essence of the buddha, bodhisattva or any kind of deity it belongs to. It is

⁷ The shorter version is 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T 865.18), translated by Amoghavajra 不空. The longer version is 佛說一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經 (T 882.18), translated by Dānapāla 施護.

⁸ Williams and Tribe 2000: 222.

considered a “seed containing supernatural powers.”⁹ Then there is also the heart *mantra* (Jp. *shinju* 心呪), the heart-of-heart *mantra* (Jp. *shinjū shinju* 心中心呪), and so forth.

Dhāraṇīs

There is still disagreement about the meaning of the word *dhāraṇī*, with opinions generally falling into two camps. One side, mostly followers of Étienne Lamotte,¹⁰ insists that *dhāraṇī* means “memory” or “mnemonic device.” The other side consists of scholars who still maintain the idea that a *dhāraṇī* is mainly a “spell” or “magical word” (these are followers of the writings of L. Augustine Waddell or Giuseppe Tucci).¹¹ Essentially both groups are correct.

The word *dhāraṇī* derives from the Sanskrit root *dhr*, meaning “to support,” “to maintain” or “to hold” (the word *dharma* has the same root). This suggests that the basic meaning of *dhāraṇī* can be summarized as “holding the scriptures.”¹² So the mnemonic function is given, although it does not mean “memorizing the scriptures” but rather keeping in mind their essence, i.e., the essence of the Buddha’s teachings, more clearly, the Buddha’s words. Also, their ritual usage suggests more than just a contemplative function, since in Buddhism chanting usually produces some kind of protective power,¹³ and since *dhāraṇīs* are chanted in rituals, they possess something mystical, something ungraspable, a power of protection. Here comes the paradox that Copp has highlighted in his very detailed study of *dhāraṇī*: a proper grasp (*chi*) of reality shows it to be ungraspable, the true grasp is of that which cannot be grasped; the true meaning is that there is no meaning.¹⁴

The Japanese word for *dhāraṇī* is the term that was transliterated into Chinese as 陀羅尼 (Jp. *darani*, Ch. *tuoluoni*). In Chinese, there are other translated words for *dhāraṇī* (such as *ji/chi* 持 “to grasp/hold,” *sōji/zongchi* 總持 “encompassing grasp,” or *mitsugon/miyan* 密言 “mystic word”). Although there is no seed *dhāraṇī*, there is a mention of the fundamental *dhāraṇī* 根本陀羅尼, heart *dhāraṇī* 心陀羅尼 and follow-the-heart *dhāraṇī* 随心陀羅尼 in, for example, the *Sutra of the Secret Dhāraṇī of Vipulagrabhe Maniprabhe Tathāgata* 大宝廣博樓閣善住秘密陀羅尼經 (T 1005A), translated by Amoghavajra (Jp. Fukū, Ch. Bukong 不空, an Indian priest active in eighth-century Tang China).

⁹ Soothill and Hodous 2005: 426.

¹⁰ McBride 2005: 86.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Copp 2014: 3.

¹³ Harvey 1990: 180.

¹⁴ Copp 2014: 15.

These *dhāraṇīs* begin with the same *om* 唵 sound as *mantras* usually do, so here we see again the interchangeability of the two.

In Japanese Buddhism, *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* are considered to be almost, if not completely, the same. Even Sawa’s dictionary of esoteric Buddhism defines them as synonymous (along with other words for “spell,” e.g., *vidyā* [Jp. *myō* 明]).¹⁵ But we have to take into consideration that Japanese Buddhism is based on the scriptures translated into, and the commentaries written in, Chinese, so the Japanese adoption of these terms relates to the Chinese translations and usage.

Mantras and Dhāraṇīs in (Con) text

There is almost no esoteric scripture without a *mantra* or a *dhāraṇī*. The translated sutras, especially ones explaining a deity or a ritual (i.e., ritual manuals [Jp. *giki* 儀軌, *gisoku* 儀則 or *gihō* 儀法; Sk. *kalpa* [used only in esoteric traditions with this meaning, otherwise meaning *eon*]), contain many of these formulas relating to that deity, or the central divinity (Jp. *honzon* 本尊) of that ritual. Usually the *mantra* or *dhāraṇī* is written only in the transliterated form, with Chinese characters and pronunciation aids, but sometimes special Sanskrit characters, called *siddham* (Jp. *shittan* 悉曇 or *bonji* 梵字, Fig. 1), also appear.¹⁶

These characters were brought to Japan with the scriptures, and so was their academic study, in the first half of the eighth century, in the Nara period. Before that, we have no evidence of a Japanese interest in anything Indian, until Japanese monks went to China during the Tang period, where they met Indian Buddhist monks. Since Chinese monks generally did not learn Sanskrit, the Japanese acquired this attitude from their teachers as well.¹⁷

Many famous scholars of the Shingon and some of the Tendai traditions, however, became known as masters of the *siddham* script. Even the founders of the schools, Kūkai 空海 and Saichō 最澄, were fascinated by these letters, and their writings in *siddham* script have survived (Fig. 2).¹⁸ Kūkai’s major work on the letters and their proper transliteration is *Siddham Mother-letters*



Fig. 1. The “Mystic Words” of the Four Characters

¹⁵ Sawa 1975: 407.

¹⁶ See T 2701-2731, texts devoted to Sanskrit letters.

¹⁷ van Gulik 1980: 119.

¹⁸ van Gulik 1980: 113-115.



Fig. 2. Siddham written by Kūkai

[*mātrkā*] with *Explanation of their Meaning* 梵字悉曇字母并釋義 (T 2701).¹⁹ In this text, he also writes about *dhāraṇīs* and the meanings of the main *siddham* characters. It is widely believed in Japan that the table of these characters is the origin of the Japanese *kana* syllabary, the Table of the Fifty Sounds 五十音圖 (and probably that is how the legend was started that Kūkai created the *kana* system).

Commentaries written by Japanese monks also use the *siddham* characters sometimes. For example, the “Scripture of Fugen Enmei Bodhisattva” 普賢延命菩薩 includes only the transliterated form of the *dhāraṇī* of this deity. But in the *Annotation of the Practices in the Forest* 行林抄 (T 2409), a text written by the Tendai monk Jōnen 靜然 in 1154, *siddham* letters are also included. The only problem is that they are slightly different from the ones in the original scripture.

Shingon and *dhāraṇī* seem to be interchangeable in the scriptures. Many terms are used in Chinese characters; the most common ones are *ju* 呪, *shingon* 真言, *mitsugon* 密言, *darani* 陀羅尼. We can also notice a kind of development, a timeline of which

word was used when. For example, in earlier texts relating to the long-life formula, such as the *Sutra of the Dhāraṇī of the Fine Means of Access, Preached by the Buddha* 仏說善法方便陀羅尼經,²⁰ or the *Sutra of the Dhāraṇī of the Assembly of the Buddhas* 諸仏集会陀羅尼經,²¹ although the titles say *dhāraṇī* (or *dhāraṇī-mantra* 陀羅尼呪), in the text the word *dhāraṇī* appears only in the explanations, while the actual formulas use the terms *ju* or *daraniju*.

汝今諦聽當爲汝說善法方便陀羅尼呪。爾時世尊即說呪曰

“Now you should listen to the (clear) truth, for you, I will expound

¹⁹ *Mātrkā* is a goddess and the mother (source) of all *mantras*. For further reading, see Törzsök, Judit, *The Alphabet Goddess Mātrkā in Some Early Śaiva Tantras*, Second International Workshop on Early Tantras, 2009, Pondicherry, India.

²⁰ T 1137.20, translated during the Eastern Jin dynasty, 317-420, although the translator’s name is lost. But the catalogue of Nanjō Bun’yū 南条文雄 (*A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, 1883) attributes the translation to Jñānagupta of the Sui dynasty (589-618).

²¹ T 1346.21, translated by Devaprajñā 提雲般若, a monk from Khotan, and others, c. 689-691.

the *dhāraṇī*-spell [*mantra*] of the Fine Means of Access (to the teachings).” At that time, the World Honored One then expounded the spell [*mantra*] that said (. . .)²²

In the later texts of eighth-century Tang China, when the three main propagators and translators (Śubhakarasiṃha 善無畏, Vajrabodhi 金剛智 and Amoghavajra) worked, the terms *mantra* and *dhāraṇī* are generally expressed by *shingon*, *mitsugon* and *darani*.

As mentioned before, most of these formulas are just meaningless sounds, especially in the transliterated Chinese characters. But if we have the *siddham* Sanskrit letters as well, some words make sense, while others sometimes are just sounds included to give some kind of musicality to the verse (scholars also have examined and compared *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* to Sanskrit poems, because sometimes the sounds are there to make it whole, although grammatically and semantically they have no place there). For example, the *mantra* (or *dhāraṇī*) of the Adamantine Life-span says,

ॐ वज्रयुषे वृक्ष 唵 嚩日囉二合論囉 娑嚩二合賀 *oṃ vajrāyuse svāhā*
(*oṃ* adamantine life-span *svāhā*).

Here, the beginning and end cannot be translated, but as esoteric monks explain it, *oṃ* is like praise, and *svāhā* is generally added at the end (also like *phat*), and even though its literal meaning is “well said” or “so be it,” it is never translated. Though *oṃ* and *svāhā* do not mean anything in the context of the incantation formulas, they have important functions in the sense that they give the formula an emphasized beginning and end. But there are many *mantras* that have only additional sounds, like the *dhāraṇī* of Kōmokuten 広目天 (Sk. Virūpākṣa), one of the guardians of the Four Heavenly Kings (Jp. *shitennō* 四天王, Sk. *caturmahārāja* or *lokapāla*), which says,

मल्लिं म म म 末臨麼麼麼 *malim ma ma ma* (holding *ma ma ma*).²³

Here, the *ma ma ma* has no meaning. It is merely added to provide a kind of rhythm when it is chanted during a ritual.

Another problem of the translated works is that in many cases the transliterated Chinese characters vary for the same Sanskrit words. In the case of the aforementioned *dhāraṇī* of the Adamantine Life-span, the following character-variations are used:

²² T 1137.20: 580b9-11.

²³ T 2409.76: 145a20-21.

- 唵 嚩日囉二合喻囉 娑嚩二合 (T 1133.20 金剛壽命陀羅尼念誦法)
 唵 嚩日囉二合喻灑 娑嚩二合 賀 (T 1134A.20 金剛壽命陀羅尼經法)
 唵 嚩日囉二合喻囉 薩嚩二合 訶 引 (T 1134B.20 金剛壽命陀羅尼經)
 唵 二十五 麼折囉論師某甲二十六 薩嚩訶 (T 1135.20 仏説一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經)²⁴
 唵 嚩日囉二合論囉 娑嚩二合賀 (T 1136.20 仏説一切諸如來心光明加持普賢菩薩延命金剛最勝陀羅尼經)

There is one question remaining that I would like to address here: do these mystical (magical) formulas work? In this matter, I agree with Padoux, who surmises that the efficacy of *mantras*, *dhāraṇīs* or any kind of ritual incantation with alleged magical power cannot be proven.²⁵ It is ascribed to them, it is believed they possess it, because that is what the Buddhist scriptures say.

The *Fugen Enmei Scripture*

There is an ambiguous short scripture in the twentieth volume of the *Taishō* canon, which tells the story of how Fugen Bodhisattva became Fugen, the Prolonger of Life. The earliest mention of the scripture indicates that in 865 it was brought back to Japan from China by Shūei 宗叡 (809-884), one of the most prominent Shingon monks of the ninth century.²⁶ The full title of the scripture is: *Sutra of the Most Excellent Adamantine Dhāraṇī of Samantabhadra, Empowered by the Light of all the Tathāgatas, Preached by the Buddha*.²⁷

It is a perfect example of a *dhāraṇī sūtra* as defined by Paul Copp: a “Buddhist text that centers on the presentation and means to actualize the incantations known as *dhāraṇī*.”²⁸ The text describes how the Buddha expounded the adamantine life-span *dhāraṇī*, the conditions and implements for the ritual, and all the benefits for the practitioners.

²⁴ This formula is completely different from the others, for in this scripture the usual mantra is not to be found.

²⁵ Padoux 2008: 310-311.

²⁶ It is recorded in Shūei’s catalogue of imported scriptures: *Shinshosha shōrai hōmontō mukuroku* 新書寫請來法門等目錄 (2174A.55: 1108b06-07). Also repeated in Annen’s comprehensive catalogue of all the important monks, in which Annen included all the texts of the Longevity Ritual (Jp. Enmeihō 延命法): *Shoajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄 (T 2176.55: 1121b16-18).

²⁷ Jp. *Bussetsu issai sho nyorai shin kōmyō kaji Fugen bosatsu enmei kongō saishō darani kyō* 佛説一切諸如來心光明加持普賢菩薩延命金剛最勝陀羅尼經, T 1136.20.

²⁸ Sorensen, Payne and Orzech 2011: 176.

²⁹ *Bukkyō Daizōkyō* 仏教大藏經 (Buddhist Tripitaka), Vol. 58, Mikkyōbu 密教部 (Esoteric Teachings Section) 7, Taipei: Bukkyō Shuppansha, 1978.

The text can also be found in the *Bukkyō daizōkyō* 仏教大藏經²⁹ but nowhere else. Thus, together with the lack of an original Sanskrit text, we cannot help but be suspicious of its origins. We know that the *Taishō* canon is mainly based upon the printed Korean *Kōrai daizōkyō* 高麗大藏經, which does not include the Fugen Enmei scripture. Before the *Taishō*, this scripture had not been part of any Chinese Buddhist canon, but the Japanese editors also used the scriptures and writings from all the regions of Japan. In the *Bukkyō daizōkyō* the scripture is No. 1769 in Volume 58. The texts in these two canons (the *Taishō* and the *Bukkyō daizōkyō*) are identical. The *Buddhist Canon* follows the *Pinjia Canon* 頻伽大藏經 (Ch. *Pinjia da zangjing*),³⁰ and was compiled in the 1970s and 1980s, so this text was probably included as it was preserved in the *Taishō*. The *Fugen Enmei Sutra* is not a long scripture, taking up only one page in the *Taishō*, and three in the *Buddhist Canon*.

One of the reasons to include it in the *Taishōzō* may have been the fact that in Japan this scripture and its ritual had strong ties to the imperial family and ruling class through the two esoteric schools from the ninth century onward. Copies of this text, usually alongside the other adamantine life-span scriptures, are still part of the inventory of many Japanese esoteric temples, such as Kongōbuji, Tōji and Daigoji, which have been fairly influential temples since the beginning of the Heian period.³¹

No source has been recovered from either Dunhuang, which was one of the most prominent centers of esoteric Buddhism on the Silk Road, or Sri Lanka, where Amoghavajra spent years gathering hundreds of esoteric scriptures, which he took back to China by boat. The other sutras of the adamantine life-span group were most probably brought to China along the Silk Road, since the principal *mantra* “*Oṃ vajrāyūse svāhā*” appears on one of the *dhāraṇī* amulets associated with Amida Buddha 阿弥陀仏 (Sk. Amitābha) found in the Library Cave (or Cave 17) in Dunhuang.³²

It is not just the sutra that is missing from the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist collections; neither is the image found in the history of art of the two countries. Not one image or text or any other kind of source survives that mentions Fugen as a two- or twenty-armed life-prolonging bodhisattva, as represented in Japan. The only mention of a statue that might be the depiction of the canonical image is briefly described by the Tendai monk Ennin

³⁰ Full title: *The Kalaviṅka Hermitage Canon* (Ch. *Pinjia jingshe jiaokan da zangjing* 頻伽精舍校刊大藏經). This was the first letterpress edition of the Buddhist canon printed in China. Consisting of 8,416 volumes, it was first published from 1909 to 1913.

³¹ Unfortunately, it is very difficult to get permission to take a look at these documents, so I have not examined these firsthand yet.

³² See Hidas 2014.

円仁 (794-864), who was the first to bring the image³³ and the so-called Enmei *dhāraṇī* in Sanskrit³⁴ to Japan.

The Dhāraṇīs in the Text

There are six *dhāraṇīs* in this scripture. The first and longest one is called the adamantine life-span *dhāraṇī*. The other five are the long-life *dhāraṇīs* (Jp. *enmei darani* 延命陀羅尼). The first one reads:

恒儻也二合他一者隸者擺者隸二尾曩知三娑縛二合悉底二合計四斫羯囉二合誡爾五鉢囉二合捨
漫觀六陸轉路識引陸轉娑但囉二合南七阿曩 唵 八句曩 唵 九摩賀曩 唵 十者隸者隸十一係摩誤
僑二合反哩十二係摩儻薩禰十三係摩尸棄十四矯囉吠十五矯囉悌十六係俱囉吠十七俱囉 唵 十八
俱囉摩底十九微捨摩寧摩寧二十戌躡毘囉二合二十一阿者梨二十二微者梨二十三摩尾覽囉二合四
呼牟呼牟二十五唵囉日囉二合論囉囉娑囉二合賀

Unfortunately, the original *siddham* letters are not included here, only the Chinese transliterations, so it is difficult to translate and understand. These factors make it incredibly arduous to decode it and transliterate it back into Sanskrit, since there is no usable dictionary for the transliterated characters, which can differ with every translator. At the end of the 1960s, however, a Japanese scholar researching the esoteric teachings, Hatsuzaki Shōjun 初崎正純,³⁵ took on this huge task and produced not just a Sanskrit version but also an English translation, although he uses the Tibetan version of the *dhāraṇīs*. The adamantine life-span *dhāraṇī* says:

tadyathā cale calācale vinati svastike cakrāṅgānām. pracamantu sarva-rogam sarva-satvānām. ā naṭe kunaṭe mahānaṭe. care care hema-giri. hema-gaure, hema-niṣunte, hema-sikhi gaurave, gaurave, he kurare, kurare, kumati, viśasa-maṇi-maṇi, śuṣi-vibhe acale vicale, mā vilamba humu humu.

What is called a goddess of destiny, which is immovable and yet movable, and which is humble, which possesses *cakrāṅgā*'s sacred aspects. Strike out all sicknesses of all beings. Oh *naṭi* (scented

³³ This is recorded in his catalogue of imported teachings, which he wrote during his eight-year sojourn in Tang China. The diary of Ennin, translated into English by Edwin O. Reischauer, refers to an unusual Fugen image on top of three elephants (Reischauer 1955: 255). This could be the prototype for the painting Ennin brought back to Japan (*Nittō shingu shōkyō mokuroku* 入唐新求聖教目錄, T 2167.55: 1084c02).

³⁴ It is recorded in the same catalogue: 梵字金剛延命真言一本 (T 2167.55: 1082a13).

³⁵ T 2409.76.

trees), *kunaṭi* (herbs), great *naṭi*. That which is full of life, that which is full of life, the summit of snow. White snow, that which possesses the glory of snow, the top of the snow, which is awe inspiring, awe inspiring. Oh *kurara* (medicine tree), *kurara*, *kumati*, that which possesses the supreme *maṇi*, that which possesses powerful light, that which is immovable, away from transitions, do not lean, *humu*, *humu*.³⁶

We can see that the last verse of the *dhāraṇī* in the *Fugen Enmei Sutra*, *om vajrāyuse svāhā*, is missing, which, Hatsuzaki further adds, is only a part of the two sutras translated by Amoghavajra. (This is not quite true in this form, as we will see below.)

The Tendai iconography and ritual manual of Jōnen 靜然,³⁷ the *Gyōrinshō* 行林抄 (T 2409), gives *siddham* letters to this *dhāraṇī*. We do not know, however, the origins of these letters, as Jōnen provides no explanation. The transliterations of three translators, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra and Devaprajñā, are also given in the *Gyōrinshō*:

1. Vajrabodhi's text (*Bussetsu issai nyorai kongō jumyō darani kyō*, T 1135.20)³⁸

折禮句一折羅折禮句二毘那借音即此字之上聲下有字傍注上去者皆做此微彌里反句三莎蘇枯反悉底都以反下同鷄句四祈迦爛揭時句五鉢羅舍漫都句六薩婆嚕依魯字本音而轉舌呼之其下口邊作梨犁麗皆做此伽句七阿那上蘇卓譜反句八俱那上蘇句九摩訶捺蘇句十折嚕〃〃句十一醯呼計反下句摩具嚕句十二醯摩僂產去地句十三醯摩室戶句十四吉囉上陞句十五吉囉上鞞句十六醯引聲俱囉上嚕句十七俱末底句十九毘奢麼謀跋反泥句二十戌暑輪矩反毘上婆句二十一阿折禮毘折禮句二十二摩毘濫婆句二十三呼去牟呼去牟句二十四

2. Devaprajñā's text (*Shobutsu jūe darani-kyō*, T 1346.21)³⁹

怛姪他一者犁二者攞者犁三彌那坻薩嚕二合薩底二合稽四斫訖浪二合藥南五鉢囉二合舍滿都薩婆路識六薩婆薩怛嚕二合南七阿娜蘇八俱那蘇摩訶娜蘇九遮隸〃〃十係麼纒羊嬌反哩十一係麼僂錘尼十二係摩尸棄十三嬌囉微十四嬌囉迷十五係俱囉微十六俱囉犁十七俱摩尼十八微始麼泥〃〃十九戌〃毘嚕二十阿者犁二十一彌者犁二十二麼尾嚕麼二十三戶毛〃〃二十四唵二十五嚕折囉論(論)師某甲二十六娑縛訶

³⁶ Hatsuzaki 1968: 938-939.

³⁷ Tendai monk who lived in the twelfth century at Mudōji 無道寺. His master was Sōjitsu 相実 (1081-1165).

³⁸ T 2409.76: 143a06-16.

³⁹ T 2409.76: 143a17-27.

3. Amoghavajra's text (the *Fugen Enmei Scripture*, T 1136.20)⁴⁰

恒儻也二合他一者隸二者羅者隸三尾曩知娑嚩二合悉底二合計四折羯囉二合誡爾五鉢囉二合捨
漫觀六薩嚩路誡引薩嚩娑但嚩二合南七阿曩嚩八句曩嚩九摩賀曩嚩十者隸」」十一係摩橋二
合哩十二係摩爾鐘爾十三係摩尸棄十四嬌羅吠十五嬌囉梯十六係俱囉吠十七俱囉囉十八俱麼底
十九微捨麼寧二十戌秣毘嚩二合二十一阿者梨微者梨二十二摩尾嚩二十三吽牟呼牟二十四唵嚩日
囉二合論搏娑嚩二合賀引

Devaprajñā's is the earliest of the three (end of the seventh century), and from the transliteration we can see that it is close to the Tibetan version that Hatsuzaki translated into Sanskrit and English. Vajrabodhi's and Amoghavara's are almost identical, except for the *dhāraṇī* at the end: the Fugen Enmei text gives the usual adamantine life-span *dhāraṇī*, the other gives a different version, saying *om vajrāyusi svāhā*.⁴¹

The other five *dhāraṇīs* in the Fugen Enmei text, which are all called *enmei darani* 延命陀羅尼, or “*dhāraṇī* for longevity,” are expounded first by the *vajradharas* (vajra-holders) and then by the Four Heavenly Kings, one by one, with their oath to protect and help sentient beings.⁴² But the problem is that these *dhāraṇīs* for longevity are different from what the Shingon and Tendai ritual manuals designate as the *enmei darani* 延命陀羅尼 or “longevity *dhāraṇī*.” In the *Kakuzenshō* 覺禪鈔, compiled by the Shingon monk Kakuzen 覺禪 (1143-?), a *mantra* is given in the Enmei section, which is actually the last part of the long *dhāraṇī* above: 唵 嚩日囉 二合 論囉 娑嚩 引 賀.⁴³ The Tendai ritual manuals, such as the *Asabashō* of the thirteenth century, also give this *mantra* (although it is called there the adamantine life-span *dhāraṇī*).

Ritual Applications in the Scripture and the Fugen Enmei Ritual

There are different kinds of uses for the *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs*. The two most common are the recital of the utterances by themselves or as part of a complex ritualistic environment. For the first type of use, the earliest record is from Enchin 円珍, the prominent Tendai monk of the ninth century, who brought the adamantine life-span scriptures to Japan, and in his miscellaneous writings we find an entry about the recitation of the “longevity *mantra*” in 852 in the imperial palace: 延命真言十一萬九千四百遍 每日三百遍.⁴⁴ This

⁴⁰ T 2409.76: 143b01-13.

⁴¹ The end of the *Gyōrinshō* text says 論師, but this is a mistake; in the original scripture it is 論師, read as *yushi* in Japanese.

⁴² T 1136.20: 579c01-25.

⁴³ *Kakuzenshō* 70, TZ 5: 110b08.

⁴⁴ *Chishō daishi zenshū* 智証大師全集 1917-18: 1297.

record shows that this *mantra* was recited three hundred times every day for a whole year.

The second type of use of the utterances involves a multifaceted ritual that included, as countless registered accounts tell us, four major platforms, one head monk (Jp. *ajari* 阿闍梨, Sk. *ācārya*) with twenty assistants (Jp. *bansō* 伴僧), and usually lasted seven days. The Fugen Enmei scripture, however, gives only a brief description of one ritualistic usage, consisting of basic instructions:

若有衆生怖畏死難病苦夭橫。有如是苦。但書寫此經受持讀誦。或別持此陀羅尼。或畫普賢延命像。作此方法依月一日八日十五日。建立道場燒四十九燈。花香果藥各置十六器散於壇上。合掌禮拜高聲讚詠此陀羅尼。及懺悔往咎。不墮三惡道。捨此身獲得金剛壽命更不輪迴。

If there are sentient beings who fear the difficulty of death, suffering from illness or having unnatural death, and if they have these kinds of suffering, if they only copy this sutra, uphold and recite it, and in addition uphold this *dhāraṇī*, or draw the image of Samantabhadra, do this ritual on the first, eighth, fifteenth day of the month, build an altar and light forty-nine lanterns, put flowers, incense, fruits and medicine, each in sixteen bowls, and scatter them on the altar, put their hands together, do worship, praise out loud this *dhāraṇī*, and repent their faults in the past, then they will not be reborn in the three evil paths. If they renounce this body, they will obtain the adamant life span and will not be born again.

This is a very short and condensed version of the ritual that in Japan became one of the major rituals in the Tendai esoteric school. Although “Enmei hō” 延命法, or the “ritual for longevity,” has been recorded since the beginning of the tenth century, the first specific mention of the “Fugen Enmei hō” 普賢延命法 appears only in 1075 in Tendai accounts. It is recorded in the most extensive Tendai ritual manual written by Shōchō 承澄 (1205-1282), the *Asabashō* 阿婆縛抄:

承保二年十月九日。法性寺座主蒙二綸旨一。於二賀陽院內裏一。卒二於廿口伴僧一。被レ始二修普賢延命法一。⁴⁵

Jōhō 2nd year (1075) 10th month 9th day, the Hosshōji temple head (*zasu*), at the Kayanoin imperial palace first performed the *fugen enmeihō* with the assistance of twenty priests.

⁴⁵ *Asabashō* 220, TZ 9: 864c7-9.

The Shingon chronicles first mention the “Fugen Enmei hō” in 1099. The *Kakuzenshō* 覚禪鈔 records the ritual of Fugen Enmei being performed by Kakugyō *hosshinnō* 覚行法親王⁴⁶ (prince-priest, 1075-1105) for the cloistered former emperor Shirakawa 白河法皇 (1053-1129, r. 1073-1083).

From the many historical records, we know that a variety of *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* were recited during the rituals. For example, the *mantras* of the aforementioned ritual of 1099 are listed in the *Kakuzenshō* 覚禪鈔:⁴⁷

- Dainichi shingon 大日真言
- Butsugen shingon 佛眼真言
- Honzon (the Fugen Enmei image) 本尊
- Hachiji monju 八字文殊
- Kyōryōrin 教令輪
- Goma 護摩
- “Ichiji kinrin” 一字金輪⁴⁸

The Shingon and Tendai rituals that appeared in the tenth century are much more elaborate and complicated than the brief description in the scripture. We get the full picture from the numerous Shingon and Tendai ritual manuals, which include many explanations as well. In a future study, I will compare these manuals according to the schools and their streams, in the hope of understanding why the two names (Enmei and Fugen Enmei) of the basically the same ritual became common in the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Concluding Remarks

Mantras and *dhāraṇīs* no doubt remain a mystery, but their usage gives us a glimpse into the ritual milieu of the early centuries in the history of esoteric teachings in Japan. The emphasis is on faith, not understanding, on believing that the recitation grants wonderful benefits and ultimately enlightenment. Even as early as the beginning of the “golden age” of esoteric Buddhism in eighth-century Tang China, these magical words were not well understood, as shown by the treatise written by Amoghavajra, *Encomia on*

⁴⁶ He was the second son of Emperor Shirakawa and became a priest at the age of ten at Ninnaji, becoming the third *monzeki* (Japanese Buddhist priest of imperial lineage) there. He was the first to proclaim the title of *hosshinnō*.

⁴⁷ There is another version of this in the *Dainihon shiryō* 大日本史料 (Vol. 3/5: 386), which also gives the number of times the *mantras* should be recited, but this is missing from the *Taishōzō zuzō* version.

⁴⁸ *Kakuzenshō* 70, TZ 5: 112b25-c02.

a *General Interpretation of the Meaning of Dhāraṇī* 総釈陀羅尼義讚.⁴⁹ It was written on imperial order to clarify the meaning of the term *dhāraṇī*. In his text—although he emphasizes the mnemonic nature of the *dhāraṇī*, not the magical one, never using the word “spell”—Amoghavajra surmises that all these terms (*dhāraṇī*, *mantra*, *vidyā*, mystic words) are just types of the true words of the secret teachings, whether they are one, two, three, one hundred, one thousand or ten thousand characters.

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Interpretations of the Eighteenth Vow and Its Fulfillment Passage in the Thought of Shandao, Hōnen, and Shinran

MYŌSHIN FUJITAKE

Introduction

In this paper I will discuss the words of the Buddha as expounded in the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (大無量壽經). I will look at the Eighteenth Vow of the Forty-eight Vows from Volume 1 and the passage on the fulfillment (*jōju* 成就) of the Eighteenth Vow in Volume 2. The Eighteenth Vow reads as follows:

If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and think of me even as few as ten times—but are not born there—may I not attain perfect enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five gravest offences and abuse the right Dharma.

設我得佛 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 誹謗正法¹

And the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow states that:

All sentient beings who, having heard his Name, rejoice in faith, remember him even once and sincerely transfer the merit of virtuous practices to that land, aspiring to be born there, will attain Birth and dwell in the Stage of Non-retrogression. But excluded are those who have committed the five gravest offenses and abused the right Dharma.

諸有衆生 聞其名號 信心歡喜 乃至一念 至心迴向 願生彼國 即得往生 住不退轉 唯除五逆 誹謗正法²

¹ T 360 12: 268a. The English translation is based on Inagaki 1995: 34.

² T 360 12: 272b. Inagaki 1995: 54.

In this paper I will discuss the interpretations of the Eighteenth Vow and the fulfillment passages by Shandao 善導 (613–681), Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212) and Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262).

Shandao

1. The Original Vow Vows Birth through Reciting the Name

Shandao comments on the Eighteenth Vow in his *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*:

[Bodhisattva Dharmākara] made the Forty-eight Vows, and, as said in each of the Vows, “If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten directions call my Name, desire to be born in my land, and think of me even as few as ten times but are not born there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”

發四十八願 一願言 若我得佛 十方衆生 稱我名號 願生我國 下至十念若不生者 不取正覺³

Shandao holds here that each of the Forty-eight Vows is a vow that sentient beings will attain Birth (*ōjō* 往生, birth in the Pure Land) if they recite the Name of Amida (vocal *nenbutsu*, 稱名念佛). The essential vow that is common to all Forty-eight is this vow of Birth through the reciting of the Name. This is how Shandao understood the Forty-eight Vows.

Among these Vows, it is the Eighteenth that correctly expounds the attainment of Birth through reciting the Name. Shandao quotes the Eighteenth Vow in *The Method of Contemplation on Amida* (觀念法門) and *Liturgy for Birth* (往生禮讚). In *The Method of Contemplation on Amida* it is quoted as follows:

As it is taught in the Forty-eight Vows in the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*: “The Buddha said: “If, when I become a Buddha, all sentient beings in the ten directions desire to be born in my land and say my name even as few as ten times but are not born there through my Vow-Power, then may I not attain perfect enlightenment.””

如無量壽經四十八願中說 佛言 若我成佛 十方衆生 願生我國 稱我名字 下至十聲 乘我願力 若不生者 不取正覺⁴

In *Liturgy for Birth* it is quoted as follows:

³ SSZ 1: 457. T 1753.37: 250b. The English translation is quoted from Inagaki’s translation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, where this passage is cited (cf. CWS 1: 197)

⁴ SSZ 1: 635. T 1959.47: 27a16-19. The English translation is based on Inagaki 2005: 58-60.

As it is stated in *The Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, “If, when I become a Buddha, all sentient beings in the ten directions call my Name—even as few as ten times—but fail to be born in my land, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”

如無量壽經云 若我成佛 十方衆生 稱我名號 下至十聲 若不生者 不取正覺⁵

The Eighteenth Vow that Shandao quotes is not worded exactly as it is in the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. The characters 至心信樂 (“sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me”) have been omitted and the characters 稱名 (“call [my] Name”) have been added. Through this omission and addition, Shandao made it clear that the Eighteenth Vow is vowing *ōjō* through the reciting of the Name (*nenbutsu*).

2. The *Nenbutsu* is a Practice for the Ordinary Person to Achieve Birth

Why did Shandao interpret the Eighteenth Vow in this way? It turns out that he has made a deep realization regarding the relationship between human beings and the Original Vow. Shandao refers to this as the “two types of deep faith” (二種深信).⁶ The “individual” (自身, “self”) is the ordinary, unenlightened person (凡夫), mired in sin, who has no hope of escaping this world of delusion. It was Amida Buddha’s Original Vow that pledged that those foolish, ordinary ones would attain *ōjō*. Thus, the Original Vow pledged that *ōjō* will be attained through the reciting of the Name. This is because, for the unenlightened, Birth cannot be attained through contemplation (or meditation). Shandao discusses this as follows in *Liturgy for Birth*:

Sentient beings have heavy karmic hindrances, the objects of contemplation are subtle but the contemplating mind is coarse, and their consciousness is agitated and their mind is distracted; therefore, it is difficult

⁵ SSZ 1: 683. T 1980.47: 447c. The English translation is based on Inagaki 2000.

⁶ “Two types of deep faith” is discussed as follows in the *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*: “One is to believe deeply and decidedly that you are a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, ever sinking and ever wandering in transmigration from “Two types of deep faith” is discussed as follows in the *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*: “One is to believe deeply and decidedly that you are 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.” 一者決定深信自身現是罪惡生死凡夫 曠劫已來常沒常流轉 無有出離之緣 二者決定深信彼阿彌陀佛四十八願攝受衆生 無疑無慮 乘彼願力定得往生. (SSZ 1: 534. T 1753.37:271a28-b02. CWS: 85)

to accomplish contemplation. For this reason, the Great Sage, out of compassion, straightforwardly encourages people to recite the Name exclusively. Since the recitative practice is easy to follow, they can attain Birth in the Buddha-land through continuous practice of it.⁷

We are ordinary, unenlightened persons for whom it is difficult to accomplish contemplation. Shandao took this view of human beings in interpreting the Original Vow. For him, the Original Vow is none other than the vow through which unenlightened beings can achieve *ōjō* by reciting the Name.

The “ordinary, unenlightened person” is a being that takes on all sorts of different bodily and mental forms due to karmic circumstance.⁸ Hōzō Bosatsu made the vow that he would save all unenlightened beings, with not even a single exception. It is precisely because of this that the Eighteenth Vow pledged to ensure *ōjō* through the reciting of the Name, a practice such ordinary beings could perform.

Shandao understands the Eighteenth Vow through a combination of his readings of the teachings of the Three Pure Land Sutras (*The Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, *The Contemplation Sutra* and *The Smaller Sutra of Amida Buddha*).⁹ Shandao interpreted the fundamental message of these three sutras to be that the buddhas (Shakyamuni, Amida and myriad other buddhas) recommend ordinary, unenlightened beings to attain *ōjō* through practicing the *nenbutsu*, the basis for which is the Eighteenth Vow.

⁷ SSZ 1: 651. T 1980.47.0439a-b. Inagaki 2000.

⁸ On “the ordinary, unenlightened person” (凡夫), Shandao comments as follows in his *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*: “Again, when one considers the meaning of the goodness that derives from meditation in the *Contemplation Sutra* and “the most superior and most inferior disciples of the three types,” one can see that all of this refers to the unenlightened beings of five defilements in the time after the Buddha’s passing from this world. However, as there are differences in these beings’ karmic circumstances, they are to be divided into nine classes.”

⁹ Shandao understands the Eighteenth Vow via a combination of the teachings of *The Larger Sutra*, *The Contemplation Sutra*, and *The Smaller Sutra*. The *ōjō* of the nine classes of unenlightened beings is expounded in the second half of *The Contemplation Sutra*. In regard to those classes, those of the lowest of the lowest class of beings (下品下生), who have continued to sin throughout their lives, it is taught that they can attain *ōjō* through the *nenbutsu* of reciting of the name, but not through the *nenbutsu* of thinking of the Buddha. In *The Smaller Sutra*, it is taught that they can attain *ōjō* through single-mindedly holding onto the Name of Amida Buddha. Through the teachings of the Three Sutras, Shandao came to the understanding that the Eighteenth Vow pledges that unenlightened beings can attain *ōjō* through the *nenbutsu* of reciting of the Name.

Shandao quotes the passage on the fulfillment of the Original Vow in *The Method of Contemplation on Amida*.¹⁰ There are omissions and differences in the characters used, but he quotes fulfillment passages for the Eleventh, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Vows from *The Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. The fulfillment passage for the Eighteenth Vow reads as follows:

If sentient beings, having heard his Name, rejoice with a heart of absolute trust and think of him even once, desiring to be born in his Land, then they will attain Birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression.
若有衆生 聞其名號 信心歡喜 乃至一念 願生彼國 即得往生 住不退轉¹¹

Because Shandao does not provide an annotation for the phrase “even once think of Amida / say the Name” (乃至一念), it is not entirely clear how he interpreted it. However, as Shandao interpreted the Eighteenth Vow and the Forty-eight Vows as a whole as pledging to ensure *ōjō* for those who recite the Name (稱名), it seems likely that he interpreted that phrase we see in the fulfillment passage as meaning “say the Name even once.” That is to say, Shandao probably thought that *nian* 念, which is translated above as “think of,” should be understood to mean “recite” or “call.”

Further, in his quotation, Shandao omits the phrase “sincere transference of merit” (至心廻向), which Shinran would later come to emphasize. This is also a point worth noting, but it is only based on Shinran’s interpretation of this phrase that it comes to have the meaning of the Tathāgata’s merit transference (*ekō*).

Hōnen

1. The Original Vow Selects out the *Nenbutsu* and Weeds out All Other Practices

In the *Senjakushū*, Hōnen explains how the Eighteenth Vow is the central focus of the Forty-eight Vows and that it is the “King of the Vows.”¹² This

¹⁰ The “Fulfillment of the Vow” is quoted as follows: “Further, it is stated in the *Larger Sutra*: ‘The Buddha said to Ānanda: “If sentient beings have been born in his Land, they all join the group of the rightly established state. All the Buddhas of the ten directions praise that Buddha. If sentient beings, having heard his Name, rejoice with a heart of absolute trust and think of him even once, desiring to be born in his Land, then they will attain Birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression.”’”又如無量壽經云 佛告阿難 其有衆生 生彼國者 皆悉住於正定之聚 十方諸佛皆共讚歎彼佛 若有衆生 聞其名號 信心歡喜 乃至一念願生彼國 即得往生住不退轉. (SSZ 1: 639. T 1959.47: 28a8-11. English translation in Inagaki 2005: 70-72).

¹¹ SSZ 1: 639. T 1959.47: 28a10-11. English translation in Inagaki 2005: 70-72.

¹² Hōnen comments on the Forty-eight Vows as follows in the *Senjakushū*: “Although generally speaking all Forty-eight Vows are Original Vows, the *Nenbutsu* was specially

Eighteenth Vow is taken up as the main topic in the Original Vow Chapter (“Honganshō” 本願章) of the *Senjakushū*. The chapter opens as follows:

The Passage Concerning Amida Tathāgata’s Original Vow, Which Promised Birth Not for Other Practices but for the Nenbutsu Only
 彌陀如來不以餘行爲往生本願 唯以念佛爲往生本願之文¹³

Hōnen, consulting different translations of *The Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, explained that the important thing achieved through the Original Vow was the “selection” of practices, that is, choosing and weeding out. Each of the Forty-eight Vows is a choice of some aspect of Amida, the Pure Land, or the beings to be born there, but the heart of this is the choice made in the Eighteenth Vow. The Eighteenth Vow weeds out other practices and selects the exclusive practice of the *nenbutsu*. It is precisely due to this selection that the path for the salvation of all sentient beings was opened. Hōnen explains that it is this selection, and none other, that is the heart of the Original Vow. Thus, we can say that Hōnen interprets the Eighteenth Vow through focusing on “selection.”

2. The Selection was Made due to Amida’s All-Encompassing Great Compassion

Why is it that Amida Buddha’s Original Vow weeded out other practices and selected the *nenbutsu*? Hōnen explains the reason through “the principle of superior and inferior” and “the principle of difficult and easy”. Hōnen discusses the former as follows:

Firstly, as regards superior versus inferior, the *nenbutsu* is superior and the other practices are inferior. This is because the Name is the container into which all of [Amida’s] uncountable virtues have flowed.¹⁴

The Name embodies all of the Buddha’s virtues, which both “benefit oneself and benefit others.” In contrast, the various practices other than the *nenbutsu* are only partially effective, since they resolve problems only in a specific area. Thus, they are described as inferior. Hōnen comments on the the “principle of difficult and easy” as follows:

prescribed as the means for Birth. . . . Therefore from the above it should be clear that the Vow of Birth through the Nenbutsu was already long ago made king among the Original Vows (本願中之王也).” (SSZ 1: 955. T2608.83: 9a4-8. English translation in Augustine and Kondō 1997:60–61).

¹³ SSZ 1: 940; T 2608.83: 4b. English translation in Augustine and Kondō 1997: 29.

¹⁴ SSZ 1: 943; T 2608.83: 5c1-3. Augustine and Kondō 1997: 34.

Secondly, as regards difficult versus easy, the *nenbutsu* is easy to practice while the other practices are difficult to perform.¹⁵

The *nenbutsu* is a practice that is easy to follow, whereas the various other practices are difficult to follow. The Original Vow selected out the *nenbutsu*, which can be practiced by any person, at any time and in any place. Hōnen comments on the meaning as follows:

For this reason, Amida Tathāgata, in the distant past when he was the Bhikṣu Dharmākara [Hōzō Bosatsu], moved with an impartial compassion and wishing to save all beings universally, did not choose in his Original Vow concerning Birth the manifold practices, such as making images of the Buddha and building stupas. He chose the single practice of uttering the *nenbutsu* in that Original Vow.¹⁶

The Original Vow aims to liberate all sentient beings equally, regardless of their status. In order to ensure *ōjō* for all, excluding not even one person, practices other than the *nenbutsu* were weeded out and the exclusive practice of the *nenbutsu* was selected. Hōnen directly faced the problem of his personal limitations and the limitations of the time period in which he lived. That is, he saw himself as an ordinary, unenlightened person living in the age of the latter dharma (*mappō* 末法) and therefore understood that he himself was not able to successfully practice the “path of the sages.” Then, he discovered that there was a path by which he could be led to salvation laid out in the Original Vow which promises *ōjō* through the *nenbutsu*. Hōnen saw the *nenbutsu* as the practice that was selected based on impartial compassion; it is the practice that illustrates the compassion of Amida Buddha.

Hōnen states that each of the Forty-eight Vows has been fulfilled, and then goes on to quote the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow:

In the passage regarding the fulfillment of the Vow of Birth through the *nenbutsu* we read: “If sentient beings hear his Name and, rejoicing with believing hearts, think of him even one thought-moment while sincerely transferring their merits in the desire for Birth in his Land, then they will attain Birth and abide in the State of Non-retrogression.”
念佛往生願成就文云 諸有衆生 聞其名號 信心歡喜 乃至一念 至心廻向 願生彼國 即得往生 住不退轉¹⁷

¹⁵ SSZ 1: 944. T 2608.83: 5c12-13. Augustine and Kondō 1997: 35.

¹⁶ SSZ 1: 945. T 2608.83: 6a6-10. Augustine and Kondō 1997: 37.

¹⁷ SSZ 1: 946; T 2608.83: 6b. Augustine and Kondō 1997: 38.

Because for Hōnen the Eighteenth Vow is a “vow of Birth through the *nenbutsu*,” he reads the passage on its fulfillment as “a passage on the fulfillment of the vow of Birth through the *nenbutsu*.” Therefore, the phrase “even one thought-moment” (乃至一念) means the single thought moment of sentient beings’ reciting of the Name. “Sincerely transferring their merits” (至心廻向) refers to merit transference performed by sentient beings.¹⁸

As we can see from the above, for Hōnen the Eighteenth Vow is none other than a “vow of Birth through the *nenbutsu*,” and the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow is none other than the “fulfillment of the vow of Birth through the *nenbutsu*.”

Shinran

1. True and Great Practice is Fulfilled through the Seventeenth Vow, True and Great Faith is Fulfilled through the Eighteenth Vow

Concerning the Forty-eight Vows, Shinran—focusing on not just the “true” (眞実) vows but also those that are “provisional” (方便)—placed special importance on a total of eight vows.¹⁹ Here, I will discuss the Eighteenth

¹⁸ In the *Senjakushū*, Hōnen explains that the *nenbutsu* completes the Ten Vows and the Ten Practices and that it is the practice of *ōjō* which does not require transference of merit (*ekō*) by sentient beings. However, the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow includes the phrase “sincerely transferring their merits.” Hōnen comments on this point in the *Wago tōroku* 和語灯録 as follows: “The mind of aspiration for Birth and merit transference (廻向發願心) is an aspiration to be born in the Pure Land through the transfer of merit from the practice we conduct. [However,] we are not to think that our hearts can attain to splendid *ōjō* through the power of our practice. Rather, we must believe that even those beings who have no hope of attaining Birth will also attain it through the splendid power of the Buddhas’ vows. We must deeply trust in the heart that believes that the Buddha will certainly come to guide us at the end of our lives. This heart is utterly unbreakable, like a *vajra* diamond. As long as we are unailing until the time we face death, if there are ten of us, ten will be born, if there are one hundred, one hundred will be born.” (SSZ 4: 638–39). This passage describes merit transference by sentient beings, but it claims that one must not think that *ōjō* can be attained through sentient beings’ power. That is to say, *ōjō* is achieved through the power of the Buddha’s Vow. Therefore, even if it appears to be discussing *nenbutsu* through merit transference by sentient beings, on a fundamental level it is actually about *ōjō* through the power of the Buddha’s Vow. This is Hōnen’s interpretation of *nenbutsu* *ōjō*.

¹⁹ Hōnen summed up his understanding of the Forty-eight Vows focusing on the Eighteenth “vow of Birth through the *nenbutsu*.” In contrast, Shinran focuses on not only the “true” vows but also on the “provisional” vows, placing importance on a combined eight vows, which are the Seventeenth (諸仏称名之願), Eighteenth (至心信樂之願), Eleventh (必至滅度之願), Twenty-second (還相廻向之願), Twelfth (光明無量之願), Thirteenth (壽命無量之願), Nineteenth (至心發願之願), and the Twentieth (至心廻向之願). By indicating these eight vows, Shinran clarifies how the following are all originally rooted in Amida Buddha’s

Vow and the Seventeenth Vow, the two that are most central of the “true” Vows that he discusses. The ideas of *shinjin* 信心 (“entrusting heart”) and *nenbutsu* are both expounded in the Eighteenth Vow. “Sincerely and joyfully entrusting themselves to me and desiring to be born in my land” (至心信樂欲生我國) lays out *shinjin* as a condition for *ōjō*, while the phrase “thinking [of Amida] / reciting [the Name] even ten times” (“as few as ten thought-moments” 乃至十念) is seen as referring to the *nenbutsu* as a condition for it. Both Hōnen and Shinran fully understood that both *shinjin* and *nenbutsu* are called for in the Eighteenth Vow.²⁰ On top of this, Hōnen summed up his understanding through emphasizing the call to practice the *nenbutsu* in the Eighteenth Vow. And, on the topic of *shinjin*, he almost always limited his discussion to the three aspects of *shinjin* that are expounded in the *Contemplation Sutra*: Sincere Mind, Profound Mind, the Mind that Aspires for Birth and Transfers Merit. In contrast to this, Shinran confirms his understanding of *nenbutsu* (True and Great Practice) through focusing on the Seventeenth Vow. And he clarifies the meaning of *shinjin* based on the Eighteenth Vow.

The Seventeenth Vow vows that the Name of Amida Buddha will be reverently recited (稱讚) by all of the buddhas in the ten directions.²¹ By doing so, the vow makes it so the Name can be spread throughout all the worlds in the ten directions and all sentient beings in the ten directions can hear the

Original Vow: 1) the True teaching (真実教), 2) the True practice (真实行), 3) the True faith (真実信), 4) the True realization (真実証), 5) the True Buddha-land (真仏土), and 6) the Provisional means of the transformed Buddha-bodies and lands (方便化身土). He also clarifies how these are fulfilled through the power of the Original Vow.

²⁰ In his *Lecture on the Contemplation Sutra* (觀無量壽經釈), Hōnen discusses as follows on the topic of “Sincerely and joyfully entrusting themselves to me and desiring to be born in my land” (至心信樂欲生我國) referring to the meaning of *shinjin*: “The ‘threefold mind’ (三心) in this sutra refers to the opening of the ‘threefold mind’ of the Original Vow. As this is the case, ‘sincere mind’ (至心) is the mind rooted in sincerity (至誠心), ‘joyful entrusting’ (信樂) is the profound mind (深心), and ‘desiring to be born in my land’ (欲生我國) is the mind that aspires for Birth and transfers merit (廻向發願心).” (SSZ 4: 352). Again, in *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls* (尊号真像銘文), Shinran discusses as follows on how the topic of “thinking [of Amida/saying the Name] even ten times” (乃至十念) refers to the meaning of *nenbutsu*: “*Saying my Name perhaps even ten times*: In encouraging us to say the Name that embodies the Vow, the Tathagata added *perhaps even* to the words *ten times* to show that there is no set number of times the Name must be said and to teach sentient beings that there is no determined hour or occasion for saying it.” (T 2656.83: 679b13-19. CWS: 494).

²¹ The Seventeenth Vow is expounded as follows in *The Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, innumerable Buddhas in the lands of the ten directions should not all praise and glorify my Name, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.” 設我得佛 十方世界無量諸佛 不悉讚嗟 稱我名者 不取正覺 (SSZ 1: 9. T 0360.12:268a25. Inagaki 1995: 34).

Name. This way of understanding the Seventeenth Vow existed even before Shinran's time.²² Shinran followed these previous interpretations, but he also took that understanding one step further. This is evident in his attempt to highlight the relationship between the Seventeenth Vow and the reciting of the Name by sentient beings. The Seventeenth Vow expounds the giving of praise (稱揚) and reciting of the Name (稱名) by all the buddhas, but it does not mention the reciting of the Name by sentient beings. However, in the Chapter on Practice of his *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran takes up the topic of the Seventeenth Vow, while also explaining as follows:

The Great practice is to say the Name of the Tathāgata of unhindered light.

大行者則稱無礙光如來名²³

Again,

Thus, saying the Name breaks through all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations.

爾者稱名能破衆生一切無明 能滿衆生一切志願²⁴

These passages refer to sentient beings' saying the Name. Shinran not only attempts to explain through the Seventeenth Vow how sentient beings are enabled to hear the Name through the reciting of such by all the buddhas, he also tries to show that the Seventeenth Vow reveals how those sentient beings themselves also perform the *nenbutsu*. "Namu Amida Butsu" (verbally saying the Name) is the True practice that transcends sentient beings, in that it is in itself the Name of Amida Buddha. Therefore, it is a practice that cannot be made one's own personal possession—one's own practice—simply because one recites it. The True/Great practice as reciting the Name is, as one whole, recommended by way of all buddhas' reciting of the Name. And, through this reciting of the Name by all buddhas, sentient beings are induced to say the Name. Further, on the most fundamental level, the *nenbutsu* exists

²² This sort of understanding in regard to the Seventeenth Vow can also be seen, for example, in Hōnen's *Sanbukyō tai'i* 三部經大意 ("The Outline of the Three Pure Land Sutras") and Seikaku's 聖覺 (1167–1235) *Yuishinshō* 唯信鈔 ("Essentials of Faith Alone").

²³ T 2646.83: 590a10-11. CWS: 13.

²⁴ T 2646.83: 590c28-29. In the Chapter on Practice in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* it is discussed as follows: "... saying the Name breaks through all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills their aspirations. Saying the Name is the right act, supreme, true, and excellent. The right act is the nembutsu. The nembutsu is Namu-amida-butsu. Namu-amida-butsu is right-mindedness. Let this be known." (CWS: 17–18).

as the command (勅命) of the Original Vow to call to and summon (招喚) sentient beings.²⁵ Thus, in an attempt to clarify this aspect of True/Great practice as transcending individual practitioners, Shinran brings up the Seventeenth Vow as the foundation for *nenbutsu* practice and designates it the Vow of All Buddhas Reciting the Name.

Shinran interprets the Eighteenth Vow through focusing on *shinjin*. Why is this? Shinran came to view the Eighteenth Vow as a vow of *shinjin* faith because he realized that *shinjin* was an issue of the utmost importance for sentient beings. In the *Shōshinge* (正信偈) section of the Chapter on Practice, he states:

For evil sentient beings of wrong views and arrogance, the *nenbutsu* that embodies Amida's Original Vow is hard to accept in *shinjin*; this most difficult of difficulties, nothing surpasses.

彌陀佛本願念佛 邪見憍慢惡衆生 信樂受持甚以難 難中之難無過斯²⁶

In the path to buddhahood based on the *nenbutsu* and the Original Vow, the practice is “easy,” but having faith in the *nenbutsu* and Original Vow without a trace of doubt is a most difficult thing. This is a problem that Shinran himself faced. It is impossible for the True faith of *shinjin* to manifest from sentient beings, who know nothing of Truth. Through diving deeply into the heart of this problem, Shinran came to interpret the Eighteenth Vow as a vow that seeks to save this type of sentient being. From Shinran's perspective, the Eighteenth Vow vows to bring about the fulfillment of True *shinjin* within ignorant sentient beings through the working of Amida's merit transference. In the Chapter on Shinjin in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran shows that True/Great faith is fulfilled through the Eighteenth Vow.

2. Shinran Analyzed the Passage on the Fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow by Dividing it into Two Parts

The relationship between the Eighteenth Vow and True *shinjin* is analyzed in the section containing “questions and answers on the relationship between the three minds and the one mind” (三心一心問答) of the Chapter on Shinjin.²⁷

²⁵ In the Chapter on Practice in *Kyōgyōshinshō* it is discussed as follows: “*Namu* means ‘to take refuge.’ . . . [t]hus, *kimyo* is the command of the Original Vow calling to and summoning us.” 南無之言歸命 . . . 是以歸命者本願招喚之勅命也 (T 2646.83: 594c17-20. CWS 1: 37–38).

²⁶ T 2646.83: 600a26-27. CWS: 70.

²⁷ T 2646.83: 604a1-606b27. CWS: 93-107.

In this section, Shinran carefully analyzes the relationship between (1) “one mind” as it is discussed in Vasubandhu’s *Treatise on the Pure Land* (淨土論) and (2) “three minds” (sincerity 至心, joyfully entrusting oneself [to Amida] 信樂 and desire for Birth 欲生) as expounded in the Eighteenth Vow. Through that analysis it is revealed that True *shinjin* arises in sentient beings due to sincerity, joyful entrusting of oneself and the desire for Birth of the Eighteenth Vow. The “three minds, one mind” section is made up of two pairs of questions and answers. The first of these discusses how the three minds called for in the Eighteenth Vow, as listed above, ultimately are different aspects of the “one heart of joyfully entrusting oneself” (the True *shinjin*). Shinran holds that Vasubandhu was illustrating this point by using the term “one mind” instead of referring to the “three minds” in the Eighteenth Vow.

In the second question-and-answer pair it is confirmed that “sincerity” is the True mind (真心心), “joyfully entrusting oneself” is the mind of Great Compassion (大悲心), and “desire for Birth” is the mind of merit transference (廻向心). Because the True *shinjin* is fulfilled through the working of the three (Amida’s True heart, the heart of Great Compassion, and the heart of merit transference), the True *shinjin* encompasses the act of taking refuge (歸命) in Truth and desiring for Birth (願生). Because True *shinjin* is like this, it is the *shinjin* that arises when one hears the Name, and it is the *shinjin* that was called to awakening through the Name. For this reason, Shinran declares that the body (or “essence” 体) of the True *shinjin* is the Name. It is the True *shinjin* that is fulfilled in sentient beings through the True working of the Tathāgata. Therefore, True *shinjin* allows sentient beings to dwell in the stage of those whose attainment of enlightenment has been determined (正定聚) and to arrive at Great Nirvana.

True *shinjin* is fulfilled through Amida’s merit transference. In order to clearly illustrate this, in the “three mind, one mind” question-and-answer section, Shinran quotes the two different parts of the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow in two separate places. The first part of the fulfillment passage is found in Shinran’s commentary on “joyfully entrusting oneself [to Amida]”:

The passage on the Vow’s fulfillment that reveals the *shinjin* of the Original Vow states: “All sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of *shinjin* and joy.”

本願信心願成就文 經言 諸有衆生 聞其名號 信心歡喜 乃至一念²⁸

The second half of the fulfillment passage is quoted in his comment on the “desire for Birth”:

²⁸ T 2646.83: 604a1-606b27. CWS: 98.

Here, let us turn to the passage teaching the Original Vow's fulfillment with respect to the mind of aspiration for Birth. The [*Larger*] *Sutra* states: "This is directed to them from Amida's sincere mind, and aspiring to be born in that land, they then 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."

是以本願欲生心成就文 經言 至心廻向シタマヘリ 願生彼國 即得往生 住不退轉 唯除五逆 誹謗正法²⁹

(*Shinshū seiten* 233)

By separating the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow into two parts, Shinran illustrates his own unique interpretation. In the first part, the "one thought-moment" (一念) in the passage on fulfillment is not referring to *nenbutsu* but rather to *shinjin*. This sort of interpretation by Shinran takes hints from the *Sutra of the Tathāgata of Immeasurable Life* (無量壽如來會).³⁰ However, this is not all. Because Shinran interpreted the Eighteenth Vow as a vow of *shinjin*, it is also the case that he interpreted the passage on fulfillment as expounding the fulfillment of *shinjin*.

In the second part, Shinran shows that the "sincere merit transference" (至心廻向) is a transference by Amida by using Japanese *kana* (シタマヘリ) that signify respect for the subject of the verb in "sincerely transferring," thereby clarifying that it is not sentient beings who make the transference but rather Amida Tathāgata.

When the passage on fulfillment is separated into two parts, "one thought-moment" of faith and "merit transference" are cut off from one another, and it is no longer possible to interpret "one thought-moment" as referring to the act of merit transference by sentient beings through one recitation of the *nenbutsu*. Shinran described this "one thought-moment" as the one thought-moment of realizing "*shinjin* and joy" (信心歡喜). That is to say, it is the one thought-moment of faith, not recitation of the *nenbutsu*. And, by transliterating the text with *kana* using an honorific verb ending, he showed that merit transference was carried out by Amida. Through describing things in the above manner, Shinran made it clear that True *shinjin* is something that is fulfilled through merit transference by the Tathāgata.

²⁹ T 2646.83: 606a2-4. CWS: 104.

³⁰ The passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow in the *Sutra of the Tathāgata of Immeasurable Life* is quoted as follows in the "Shingyō shaku" 信樂釈 section of the Chapter on Shinjin: "When, upon hearing the Name of the Tathagata of immeasurable life, sentient beings of the buddha-lands of other quarters awaken one thought-moment of pure *shinjin*, rejoice." 他方佛國所有衆生 聞無量壽如來名號 能發一念淨信歡喜. (T 2646.83: 605a6-7. CWS: 98)

Conclusion

This paper has shown that the interpretations of Shandao, Hōnen and Shinran in regard to the Eighteenth Vow and the passage on its fulfillment have their own distinctive characters based on the passages they emphasize and the way in which they express their ideas. Each of these interpretations arose out of the search for a path to salvation for sentient beings (i.e., for oneself and others) in the Original Vow in light of each thinker's solid grasp of the time (the historical period) and the capacities of sentient beings.

Abbreviations

- CWS *The Collected Works of Shinran. Vol. 1. The Writings*, translated by Dennis Hirota, et al. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997.
- SSZ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書, ed. Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensansho 真宗聖教全書編纂所. 5 vols. Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō. 1941.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932.

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Shinran's Viewpoint on the Buddha's Teachings: The True and the Provisional

MASAFUMI FUJIMOTO

Introduction

In the introduction of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, the major work of Shinran (1173-1262), he writes, “Among all the teachings the Great Sage preached in his lifetime, none surpasses this ocean of virtues.”¹ Here, Shinran is praising the Buddha Way of the Primal Vow *nenbutsu* (“this ocean of virtues”) as the teaching of Śākyamuni that is unequaled and unsurpassed by his other teachings. These words show the content of Shinran’s own deep awakening and also present the true Buddha Way within Śākyamuni’s teachings that is attained by beings “whose evils are heavy and whose karmic obstructions manifold” (*aku omoku sawari ooki* 悪重く障り多き). In other words, for Shinran, to inquire into the Buddha’s teachings is to make clear the true teachings for “foolish beings replete with afflictions” (*bonnō gusoku no bonbu* 煩惱具足の凡夫). This can be clearly seen in the words that follow those above:

Let the one who seeks to abandon the defiled and aspire for the pure; who is confused in practice and vacillating in faith; whose mind is dark and whose understanding deficient; whose evils are heavy and whose karmic obstructions manifold—let such persons embrace above all the Tathāgata’s exhortations, take refuge without fail in the most excellent direct path, devote themselves solely to this practice, and revere only this faith.²

While Shinran sought to attain the Buddha Way within the path of the sages (*shōdō* 聖道) at Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei until the age of twenty-nine, in

¹ TSSZ 1: 5. T 2646.83: 589a12. 大聖一代教無如是之徳海. Translations of Shinran’s works are from CWS. Translations have been slightly modified.

² Ibid. 捨穢折淨 迷行惑信 心昏識寡 惡重障多 特仰如來發遣 必歸最勝直道 專奉斯行 唯崇斯信. CWS: 3-4.

the end he only continued to be confused as to what are truly effective practice and faith in Buddhism. This went beyond his individual experience in a way that made him understand the profound issue of being “replete with afflictions” that humans confront. While whole-heartedly seeking teachings that could be put into practice by such humans, he encountered the words of the Buddha about Amida’s Primal Vow and made the significance of them clear.

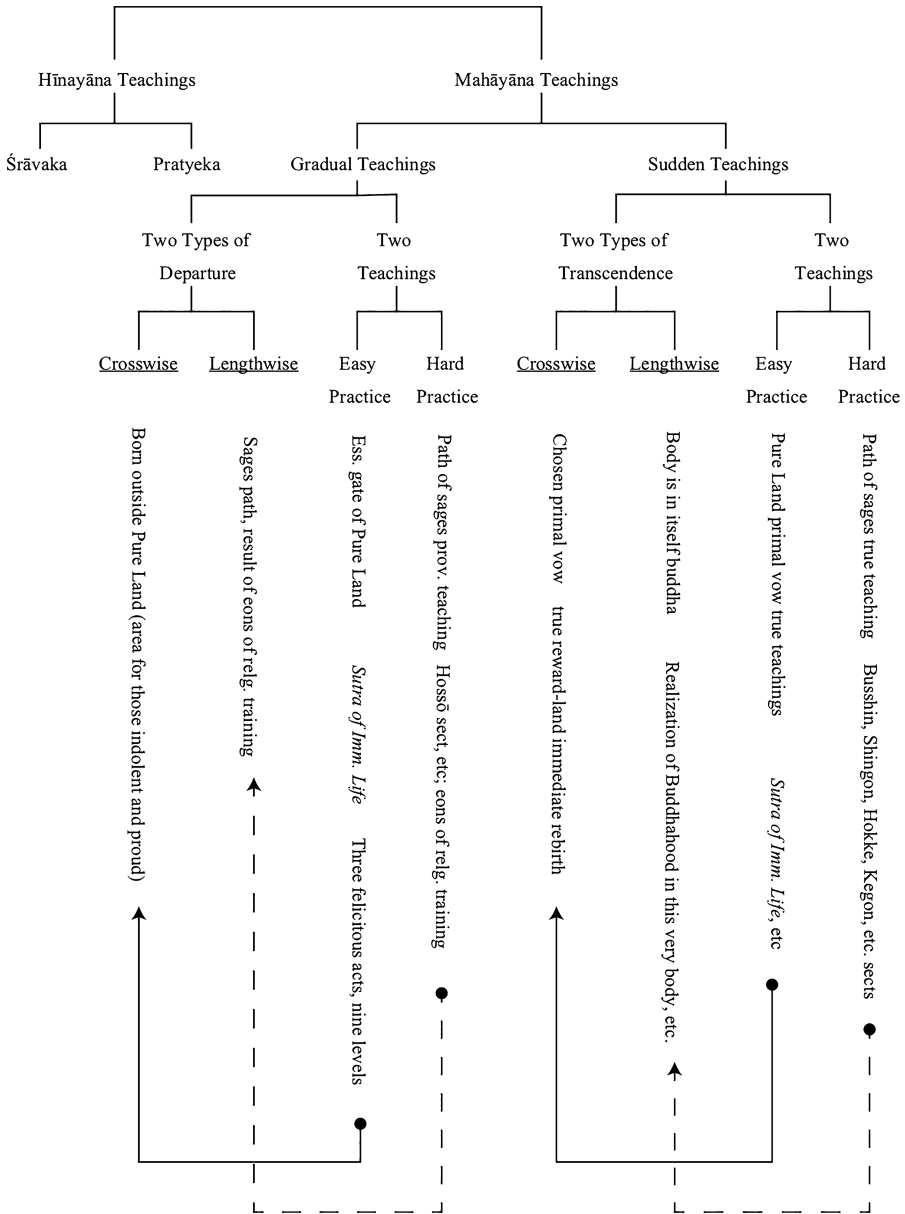
Concretely speaking, how did Shinran understand the “teachings the Great Sage preached in his lifetime” and why was he able to say that “none surpasses this ocean of virtues”? While this question must be understood from various angles, in this paper I will focus on Shinran’s doctrinal understanding that divides Śākyamuni’s teachings into the true and the provisional. Thus, first I will discuss how he understood these teachings. Next, I will discuss Shinran’s viewpoint from which he constructs the categories. In closing, based on these discussions, I will summarize the characteristics of Shinran’s understanding of the nature of the Buddha’s teachings.

1. Shinran’s Doctrinal Understanding

Based on Shinran’s *Gutokushō* 愚禿鈔,³ we can summarize his understanding of the nature of Śākyamuni’s teachings using the diagram on the right. First, based on the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, Shinran divides all of Śākyamuni’s teachings into Hīnayāna teachings, which seek self-benefit, and Mahāyāna teachings, which seek to benefit both oneself and others. Having done so, he then divides the Mahāyāna into gradual enlightenment and sudden enlightenment teachings, and he further divides the former into “crosswise departure” (*ōshutsu* 横出) and “lengthwise departure” (*shushutsu* 豎出) and the latter into “crosswise transcendence” (*ōchō* 横超) and “lengthwise transcendence” (*shuchō* 豎超). This four-type categorization is one of the major characteristics of Shinran’s doctrinal understanding, so I would like to look at it in some detail.

“Lengthwise transcendence” teachings immediately bring one to enlightenment amidst difficult practices, such as those found in the schools of Zen (Busshin 仏心), Shingon, Hokke and Kegon. The Buddhism propounded at Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei falls into this category. “Crosswise transcendence” refers to true Pure Land teachings, based on the chosen Primal Vow, that are easy to practice. It is the Buddhist path elucidated in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. This corresponds to the teachings that Shinran describes above as the unsurpassed “ocean of virtues.” While Shinran does for the time being

³ TSSZ 2 Kanbun hen 漢文篇: 3-51.



describe both of these kinds of transcendence as “true teachings” (*jikkyō* 実教 and *shinjitsu no oshie* 真実の教え), he indicates they are different in terms of difficulty. In other words, there is a decisive difference between the path of difficult practice, in which the attainment of the Buddha Way depends upon whether or not one can engage in such practices, and the path of easy practice, which does not take as a precondition the capacities of sentient beings.

Gradual enlightenment teachings are provisional when seen from the perspective of truth. Just as with the gradual teachings, Shinran divides them based on their level of difficulty into “lengthwise departure” and “crosswise departure.” The former is the provisional teachings of the sages’ path of difficult practice such as those of the Hossō school. It is the Buddhist path by which one seeks enlightenment through eons of religious training. The latter is the Pure Land “essential gate” (*yōmon* 要門) of easy practice. It refers to the teachings on being born in the expedient transformation land (*hōben kedo* 方便化土), that is, the Pure Land. Shinran covers all of Mahāyāna teachings with these four categories, and for the time being recognizes that in both the path of the sages and the Pure Land path there are provisional and true teachings.

However, in *Gutokushō*, after organizing Śākyamuni’s teachings in this way, Shinran states,

Know that all the teachings other than solely the selected Primal Vow of Amida Tathāgata, whether Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna, provisional or true, exoteric or esoteric, are the path of difficult practice, the path of sages, or they are the path of easy practice, the Pure Land way, that is termed the directing of merit and aspiration for Birth in the Pure Land path, the self-power, provisional gateway of expedience.⁴

Here he clearly categorizes the above-mentioned four kinds of teachings further as either those of the selected Primal Vow (crosswise transcendence) or others (lengthwise transcendence, lengthwise departure and crosswise departure). This is to show that, as is clear from his words in the introduction to the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, out of all Śākyamuni’s teachings the chosen Primal Vow (the path of crosswise transcendence) is *the* unsurpassed Buddha Way.

He expresses basically the same understanding in the Chapter on the Transformation Land in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.⁵ Based on this understanding,

⁴ TSSZ 2 Kanbun hen: 6. T 2648.83: 647b28-c2. 唯除阿彌陀如來選擇本願已外 大小權實顯蜜諸教皆是難行道聖道門 又易行道淨土門之教 是曰淨土廻向發願自力方便假門也 應知。CWS: 589.

⁵ The relevant passage is as follows (TSSZ 1: 289-290. T 2646.83: 629c16-29):

In the expression, “gateways . . . and more,” “gateways” refers to the eighty-four

he clearly states, "Among all the teachings the Great Sage preached in his lifetime, none surpasses this ocean of virtues." Next, I would like to analyze this doctrinal classification system of Shinran's.

2. Shinran's Viewpoint on the Teachings' Characteristics (1): Appropriate for the Time and Sentient Beings' Capacities

As I discussed in the previous section, Shinran's understanding of Śākyamuni's teachings sees the true and the provisional as existing within both the path of the sages and the Pure Land path. However, in the end Shinran's stance is that the Buddha Way of crosswise transcendence that is founded upon the chosen Primal Vow is an unsurpassed teaching that is incomparable to others. In order to understand Shinran's viewpoint on Buddhist teachings, it is necessary to touch upon that of his teacher Hōnen (1133-1212).

The first chapter of Hōnen's magnum opus, *Senjaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集 (Collection of Passages on the *Nenbutsu* of the Chosen Primal Vow), begins by stating the chapter's theme: "Passages that relate how the dhyāna master Daochuo 道綽, setting up the two gateways, the path of the sages and the Pure Land, discarded the path of the sages and took refuge

thousand provisional gateways. "More" refers to the ocean of the One Vehicle, the Primal Vow. Among all the teachings that Śākyamuni Buddha taught during his lifetime, those that teach attaining sacred wisdom and realizing the fruit in this world are called the Path of Sages. They are termed the path of difficult practice. Within this path there are Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna; gradual attainment and sudden attainment; the One Vehicle, two vehicles, and three vehicles; accommodated and true; exoteric and esoteric; departing lengthwise and transcending lengthwise. These are self-power teachings, the path of the accommodated gate of provisional means recommended [by those] in the state of benefiting and guiding others. Attaining sacred wisdom and realizing the fruit in the Pure Land of peace is called the Pure Land path. It is termed the path of easy practice. Within this path there are departing crosswise and transcending crosswise; temporary and true; gradual attainment and sudden attainment; auxiliary, right, and sundry practices; mixed praxis and single praxis. "Right [practices]" refers to the five kinds of right practice. "Auxiliary [practices]" refers to these five kinds of practice with the exception of saying the name. "Sundry practices" refers to all the various practices other than the right and the auxiliary; these are teachings of gradual attainment that expound ways of departing crosswise; they are the temporary gate of self-power, which includes the teachings of meditative and non-meditative practices, the three kinds of meritorious conduct, and the three levels of practitioners and nine grades of beings. "Transcending crosswise" refers to being mindful of the Primal Vow and becoming free of the mind of self-power; this is termed "Other Power of transcending crosswise." It is the single within the single, the sudden within the sudden, the true within the true, the One Vehicle within the [One] Vehicle. It is the true essence [of the Pure Land way]. (CWS: 222-223)

in the Pure Land teaching.”⁶ In other words, while Hōnen divides the Buddha’s teachings into two gates, that does not mean they exist equally alongside each other. Rather, he is making clear that the only one that can be pursued in this latter Dharma age is the Pure Land teachings. Hōnen shows this using the decisive expression of the eminent Chinese Pure Land monk Daochuo (562-645): “We are now in the age of the final Dharma, that is, the evil world of the five defilements. The gateway of the Pure Land is the only one through which we can pass.”⁷

In the concluding part of the *Senjakushū* one finds an even clearer statement regarding what should be done away with and what type of Buddhism should be chosen:

I wish to urge that anyone who desires quickly to escape from the cycle of birth-and-death should, of the two types of the excellent teaching, temporarily lay aside the path of the sages and select to enter through the gateway of the Pure Land. If such a one should desire to enter through the gateway of the Pure Land, of the two practices, the right and the miscellaneous, one should temporarily abandon the various miscellaneous practices and take refuge in the right practices. If one desires to exercise oneself in the right practices, of the two types of right acts, the rightly established and the auxiliary, one should set aside the auxiliary right acts and resolutely select the rightly established act and follow it exclusively. The rightly established act is reciting the name of Amida Buddha. Those who recite the name will unfailingly attain birth because it is based on Amida’s Primal Vow.⁸

Here, Hōnen concludes that the recitation of the *nenbutsu* based on the Primal (eighteenth) Vow of Amida Buddha is what should be chosen, dispensing with the path of the sages, abandoning sundry practices and putting aside auxiliary acts (*jogō* 助業: reciting sutras, making offerings, etc.). Just with the phrase “the *nenbutsu* of the chosen Primal Vow,” Hōnen fully expresses the true Buddhist path that is suitable for the capacities of foolish beings, replete with afflictions in an evil time of the five defilements. Here we should note that by making clear such teachings he was not compromising in response to his age or the religious capacities of practitioners.

In the third chapter of the *Senjakushū*, Hōnen writes, “Was it not in order to bring all sentient beings without exception to birth that he [Dharmākara] in

⁶ SSZ 1: 929. Translation from *Senchakushū* English Translation Project 1998: 56 (modified).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ SSZ 1: 990. *Senchakushū* English Translation Project 1998: 147-148.

his original vow cast aside the difficult practice and selected the easy one?"⁹ This makes clear Amida Tathāgata's (Dharmākara's) mind of the vow (*gan-shin* 願心) that chooses the easy practice of reciting the *nenbutsu*. In other words, the basis of the teachings that Hōnen describes is in the great compassionate mind of Amida Tathāgata that brings everyone equally, regardless of their spiritual capacities, to the Pure Land, beyond the suffering of birth and death. This dictates Hōnen's understanding of the gate of the path of the sages. In the *Jūni mondō* 十二問答, Hōnen states the following regarding the relationship between the Pure Land school and other schools:

The single Pure Land school transcends other schools and the single *nenbutsu* practice surpasses other practices because they embrace all spiritual capacities. The likes of the contemplation of reality, the bodhi mind, reciting Mahāyāna scriptures, mantras, cessation and observation and so on are in no way inferior as the Buddha-Dharma. They are all the Dharma that leads to liberation from birth and death. However, since it is the latter Dharma age they have no power. Since practitioners are not in accordance with the Dharma their capacities are inadequate.¹⁰

Hōnen points out that the Pure Land teachings are outstanding in embracing all sentient beings and leading them away from a state of confusion, regardless of their conditions. While the gate of the path of the sages is not inferior, it is a reality that it is not in accordance with the time and people's capacities. Furthermore, in his *Muryōjūkyō shaku* 無量壽經釈 (Commentary on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*), he states the following regarding the path of the sages:

The ages of the true and semblance Dharmas have already passed, and it has become the age of the latter Dharma. Because there are only the teachings without practice or realization, the three-vehicle or four-vehicle path of the sages has, since the arrival of the latter Dharma age, not led to the elimination of delusion and the experiencing of truth. Since there is no elimination of delusion or experiencing of truth, there is no one who escapes birth and death with this [path].¹¹

Here Hōnen is emphasizing that even if the doctrine of eliminating delusion and experiencing truth (*danwaku shōri* 斷惑證理) is true, it must be said that only these *teachings* exist; they are not practiced or realized. In other words,

⁹ SSZ 1: 944. *Senchakushū* English Translation Project 1998: 77.

¹⁰ SHSZ: 632-633.

¹¹ SHSZ: 68.

there are no people who have left behind birth and death by pursuing the path of the sages.

While adopting Hōnen's focus and doctrinal understanding, Shinran positions the entirety of the path of the sages (including the "true teaching" of "lengthwise transcendence") as provisional expedient means. This is clear from, for example, this hymn by Shinran:

Sentient beings, having long followed the path of the sages—
 The accommodated and temporary teachings that are provisional
 means—
 Have been transmigrating in various forms of existence;
 So take refuge in the One Vehicle of the compassionate vow.¹²

The path of the sages is comprised of teachings preached for turning the minds of sentient beings toward the Buddha Way and recommending it to them. However, for those replete with afflictions in this *sahā* world, it cannot be realized. Thus Shinran clearly states that one should not remain on this path, through which one would seek to become a sage in this world by cutting off afflictions and pursuing wisdom. Rather, he urges one to take refuge in the Primal Vow single-vehicle teachings of Amida Buddha that were preached specifically for foolish beings filled with afflictions.

From the above, we can see that Shinran's approach to the teachings in terms of their suitability for this era and people's capacities inherits his teacher Hōnen's focus and study of Buddhist teachings, as well as playing a major role in elucidating his own classification of doctrine. In other words, in the context of Shinran's doctrinal understanding, what is important is that the entirety of the path of the sages—including "lengthwise transcendence"—can, while including the true Buddha-Dharma in the form of doctrine, function only as provisional expedient means for those who live in the latter Dharma age and are filled with afflictions.

3. Shinran's Viewpoint on the Teachings' Characteristics (2): The True and the Provisional in Amida Tathāgata's Vows

When considering Shinran's understanding of Buddhism's teachings, we should also consider his viewpoint that clearly distinguishes between the true and the provisional in Amida Tathāgata's vows.

In the Chapter on the True Buddha and Land in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran writes, "Concerning the ocean of the vow, there is true and provisional."¹³

¹² TSSZ 2 Wasan hen: 44. 聖道権仮の方便に 衆生ひさしくとゞまりて 諸有に流転の身とぞなる 悲願の一乗帰命せよ. CWS: 344.

¹³ TSSZ 1: 265. T 2646.83: 626b17: 然就願海 有真有假. CWS: 203.

Furthermore, in the Chapter on the Transformation Bodies and Lands, he states, “According to the *Larger Sutra*, true and provisional vows were established.”¹⁴ Shinran categorized the teachings of the three Pure Land sutras preached by Śākyamuni as shown below:

	Three vows	Three sutras	Three Births	Buddha-land
Expedient	19 th vow	<i>Contemplation Sutra</i>	Birth beneath twin <i>sāla</i> trees (<i>sōjuringe ōjō</i> 双樹林下往生)	Expedient land of the transformation body
	20 th vow	<i>Amida Sutra</i>	Non-comprehensible Birth (<i>nanshi ōjō</i> 難思往生)	
True	18 th vow	<i>Sutra of Immeasurable Life</i>	Inconceivable Birth (<i>nanshigi ōjō</i> 難思議往生)	True Buddha-land

As we can see, Shinran designates the eighteenth vow, which vows that those who in sincere faith aspire to be born in Amida's Pure Land will be born there, as the true vow. This vow, called here the Primal Vow or the chosen Primal Vow, is the basis of both his and Hōnen's soteriology. Based on Shinran's interpretation, the provisional vows are the nineteenth vow on “performing meritorious acts” (*shu shokudoku* 修諸功德) and the twentieth vow on “planting the roots of virtue” (*jiki shotokuhon* 植諸德本). The former is written as follows in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*:

If, when I attain buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who awaken aspiration for enlightenment, do various meritorious deeds and sincerely desire to be born in my land, should not, at their death, see me appear before them surrounded by a multitude of sages, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.¹⁵

In other words, if any sentient being who has decided to walk the Buddha Way and engaged in various good deeds and cultivated merit truly wants to be born in the Pure Land, when their life ends Amida will appear before them and have them be born in the Pure Land (Amida's transformation land).

Regarding this vow, Shinran writes the following in the Chapter on the Transformation Bodies and Lands:

We find that even if the multitudes of this defiled world, the sentient beings of corruption and evil, have abandoned the ninety-five wrong paths and entered the various dharma-gates—imperfect or consummate, accommodated or real—those who are authentic [in their practice] are

¹⁴ TSSZ 1: 287. T 2646.83: 629b15: 然今據大本 超發真實方便之願. CWS: 220.

¹⁵ TSSZ 1: 270. T 2646.83: 626c23: 設我得佛 十方衆生發菩提心 修諸功德 至心發願 欲生我國 臨壽終時假令不與大衆圍遶現其人前者 不取正覺. Translation from Inagaki 1995: 34.

extremely difficult to find, and those who are genuine are exceedingly rare. The false are extremely numerous; the hollow are many. For this reason, Śākyamuni Buddha guides the ocean of beings by disclosing the store of merit [for birth in the Pure Land], and Amida Tathāgata, having established the vows, saves the ocean-like multitude of beings everywhere. Already we have the compassionate vow, which is known as “the vow of performing meritorious acts.”¹⁶

Here, Shinran says that among practitioners who enter “various dharmagates” that may be “imperfect or consummate, accommodated or real,” people “who are authentic [in their practice] are extremely difficult to find, and those who are genuine are exceedingly rare.” Thus, he asserts, teachings that are expedient means were preached (the *Contemplation Sutra*), and at their basis is the nineteenth vow, which is also an expedient means. What is important here is that Shinran sees the nineteenth vow as having been made to address the issue of people on the Buddha Way eventually falling into falsehood. Shinran says that the meaning of this vow is to make sentient beings “aspire for the Pure Land.”¹⁷ Amidst those who have entered the Buddha Way sinking in falsehood, Shinran brought people’s attention to a compassionate vow that simply embraces them, leading to aspiration for Birth. On the other hand, this vow is an expedient means, and thus Shinran of course hopes that sentient beings will not limit themselves to it. I will consider this point in more detail when I discuss the twentieth vow.

Before exploring what Shinran sees as the significance of the *Amida Sutra* and the twentieth vow—which he also considers an expedient means—let us go over its content.

If, when I attain buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who, having heard my name, concentrate their thoughts on my land, plant roots of virtue, and sincerely dedicate their merit toward my land with a desire to be born there should not eventually fulfill their aspiration, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.¹⁸

This vow states that if any sentient being hears the teachings of the *nenbutsu*, recites Amida Buddha’s name with the Pure Land in mind, and dedicates the

¹⁶ TSSZ 1: 269. T 2646.83: 626c14. 然濁世群萌穢惡含識 乃出九十五種之邪道 雖入半滿權實之法門 眞者甚以難 實者甚以希 僞者甚以多 虛者甚以滋 是以釋迦牟尼佛 顯說福德藏誘引群生 海阿彌陀如來 本發誓願普化諸有海 既而有悲願 名修諸功德之願。CWS: 207.

¹⁷ TSSZ 3 Wabun hen: 28. T 2654.83: 676a10-11. 淨土を忻慕せしむるなり。

¹⁸ TSSZ 1: 296. T 2646.83: 630c17-19. 設我得佛 十方衆生 聞我名号 係念我國 植諸德本 至心回向 欲生我國 不果遂者 不取正覺。Translation from Inagaki 1995: 34 (modified).

merit of doing so with the desire to be born in the Pure Land, he will ensure their Birth there. This differs from the nineteenth vow in that it speaks not of various good deeds but of the sole practice of reciting Amida's name. From the perspective of practice, reciting Amida Buddha's name should not be different from the path of the chosen Primal Vow that is crosswise transcendence. However, despite this, why does Shinran see it and the content of the *Amida Sutra* as provisional, i.e., something that one eventually moves beyond? He states the following:

Sages of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna and all good people make the auspicious Name of the Primal Vow their own root of good; hence, they cannot give rise to faith and do not apprehend the Buddha's wisdom. Because they cannot comprehend [the Buddha's intent in] establishing the cause [of Birth], they do not enter the fulfilled land.¹⁹

Here Shinran expresses what he sees as the biggest issue in the Buddha Way of crosswise transcendence: the difficulty of belief (Jp. *nanshin* 難信). In the *Jōdo sangyō ōjō monrui* 淨土三經往生文類 (A Collection of Passages on [the Types of] Birth in the Three Pure Land Sutras), Shinran states, "While saying the inconceivable name, [the practitioners of meditative and non-meditative good by self-power] doubt the vow of great compassion, which is indescribable, inexplicable and inconceivable. Their offense being grave and heavy . . ." ²⁰ In other words, Shinran's understanding is that the twentieth vow and the *Amida Sutra* exist due to the human transgression of doubting Amida Buddha's vow—which equally brings all sentient beings beyond the suffering of birth and death—while reciting the *nenbutsu*. The twentieth vow is based on the wish to embrace those who doubt the Primal Vow while making them clearly realize their offense by distinguishing between these two vows.

As described previously, for Shinran the chosen Primal Vow is *the* true teaching. It is not a way to Birth in the Pure Land in which one cultivates good based on self-power or recites the *nenbutsu* as one's own good act. Rather, it is a path that one solely relies upon and that awakens one to Amida Tathāgata's mind of the vow that has chosen an easy practice to make all sentient beings be equally born in the Pure Land. Shinran delineates the true and the provisional among Amida Buddha's vows in order to make clear the expedient vows' function of embracing sentient beings' problematic engagement

¹⁹ TSSZ 1: 309. T 2646.83: 632c12-15. 凡大小聖人一切善人 以本願嘉號爲己善根故 不能生信 不了佛智 不能了知建立彼因故 無入報土也. CWS: 240.

²⁰ TSSZ 3 Wabun hen: 34.

in the practices called for in those two vows, while also turning such sentient beings away from that path of self-power practice to the path of the chosen Primal Vow. Therefore, according to Shinran, the gist of the teachings found in the *Contemplation Sutra* and *Amida Sutra*, which he sees as provisional Pure Land teachings that correspond to Amida Buddha's provisional vows, functions in the same way.

Conclusion

In closing, let us summarize Shinran's understanding of the characteristics of Buddhist doctrines. As I said in the introduction, for Shinran, inquiring into the Buddha's doctrines is to single-mindedly ask what the true teachings are that can be realized by people replete with afflictions. The major characteristic of Shinran's understanding of the Buddha's teachings is his positioning of the entirety of the path of the sages' teachings as provisional, after having temporarily categorized them into true and expedient teachings. In doing so, he inherits Hōnen's focus on teachings suited to the capacities of sentient beings. Furthermore, one finds Shinran's unique viewpoint on the words of the Buddha in his discussion of the true and expedient within Amida's vows and in his correlation of those vows with Śākyamuni's teachings in sutras other than the *Larger Sutra*. In his discussions, Shinran sheds light on the issue of profound religious egoism—what he calls the sin of doubting the Primal Vow—and clarifies that the original intent behind both the expedient vows and the expedient teachings is to embrace those possessed by such egoism and lead them beyond it.

Abbreviations

- CWS *The Collected Works of Shinran. Vol. 1. The Writings.* Trs. Dennis Hirota et al. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha. 1997.
- SHSZ *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū* 昭和新修法然上人全集. Ed. Ishii Kyōdō 石井教道. Kyoto: Heirakuji. 1987.
- SSZ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書. Ed. Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensansho 真宗聖教全書編纂所. 5 vols. Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō. 1941.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. Eds. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai. 1924–1932.
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