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The Genesis and the Development of the Pure Land Idea

by

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Foreword

I have been honoured on this occasion by your distinguished Department of Asian Studies of the University of British Columbia, through your head, Professor Daniel Overmyer, and through his colleague, Professor Leon Hurvitz, with an invitation to deliver three addresses on Buddhist subjects, an invitation by which I am deeply touched. Having discussed this matter with the latter of the two, I feel most inclined to propose the topic of Pure Land Buddhism, which, having originated in India, proceeded to develop in that country itself and, even further, in both China and Japan. The reason for this decision is twofold in the sense that a focus can be more easily established by a more or less compact treatment of Pure Land Buddhism, which constitutes one important current in the sea of Buddhism, than by a vague and loose discussion of the totality of that sea, as well as in the sense that I myself have devoted more than a little continual attention to the original ideas of Pure Land Buddhism.

The fact is, however, that, on such an occasion as this, to tell in detail and with precision of the currents of Pure Land thought is no easy matter. My aim here is to begin with a summary description of the Pure Land movement in Japan, then to carry that back to its origin in Indian thought, finally to follow it from there into China before returning to Japan. Since the aforementioned Professor Hurvitz has taken the trouble to amend my English manuscript, I now wish to read this paper aloud to you. My pronunciation of English will probably be a strain on your ears, but, if you will deign to bear with me for this short while, I shall consider myself most fortunate.

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I The Genesis of the Pure Land Idea

1. The place of the Pure Land doctrine within Japanese Buddhism

The official acceptance in Japan of a Buddhism that had come from India through Central Asia, China and Korea is an event that took place about the sixth century of our era. In the approximately fourteen centuries-and-a-half that have transpired since, in the peculiarly Japanese forms that religion has adopted in my country, a great variety of sects and denominations has come into being.

For a time following the abovementioned arrival, there was neither sect nor denomination, but, once into the Nara period (eighth century), six forms of Buddhism arrived from China, represented by the so-called Six Nara Schools, to wit, Sanron (Chinese *San lun*, referring to Chinese translations of three treatises of the Indian Mādhyamika School), Jōjitsu (Ch. *Ch'eng shih*, the name of the Chinese translation of another Indian treatise), Kusha (Ch. *Ju she*, a school whose central authority was the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, treatise of the Sarvāstivāda school of Indian Buddhism), Hossō (Ch. *Fa hsiang*, the Yogācāra school of Indian Buddhism, transplanted on the soil of China), Kegon (Ch. *Hua yen*, based on the *Avataṃsakasūtra*) and Ritsu (Ch. *Lü*, based on the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, one of the monastic codes). When there is mention of 'Nara Buddhism', this is what is meant. Of these six, only the latter three still survive in Japan.

With the arrival of the succeeding Heian era, which lasted approximately four hundred years, from the ninth century till the end of the twelfth, what came to constitute the main current of Japanese Buddhism consisted of two schools, the Tendai, founded by Saichō (767-822), and the Shingon, founded by Kūkai (774-835). While these two do owe their origin to China, neither is a case of transplant without change, for, in being launched under a new form in Japan, they acquired characteristics unique to Japan.

The period spanning the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which saw the end of the Heian era and the beginning of its successor, the Kamakura, saw the emergence of three newly independent schools, Jōdo (the 'Pure Land' mentioned above), Zen (a word derived from the Sanskrit *dhyāna*, 'meditation') and Nichiren (named after its founder). Where the first of these is concerned, one may speak of four tendencies, that of Ryōnin's (1072-1132) *Yūzū nembutsu shū*, of Hōnen's (1133-1212) *Jōdo shū*, of Shinran's (1173-1262) *Jōdo shinshū* and of Ippen's (1239-1289) *Jishū*. Where Zen is concerned, one may speak of two persons, namely of Eisai or Yōsai (1141-1215), who introduced the

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Lin-chi school from China (under the Japanese form of that name, *Rinzai*), and of Dōgen (1200-1253), who brought another form of Ch'an from the same country, namely, Ts'ao-tung (under its Japanese form, *Sōtō*), each establishing a separate and distinct school. Nichiren (1222-1282) is the founder of the school that bears his name, a school based on another of the Indian Buddhist scriptures, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, better known in English as the *Lotus Sutra*. There was a further Zen development about the middle of the seventeenth century, early in the Edo period, when the doctrines of another Chinese branch, Huang-po by name (*Ōbaku* in its Japanese version), was introduced by a monk named Yin-yuan (1592-1673), called Ingen by the Japanese. In spite of this latter, however, the tone set for Japanese Buddhism in Kamakura times dominates it to this very day. Up until the Second World War, general reference was made to Japanese Buddhism in terms of "thirteen schools and fifty-six sects", the former excluding three of the aforementioned six Nara schools, namely, Sanron, Jōjitsu and Kusha. Since the war, partly because of the discontinuation of governmental control over which religious movements were to be tolerated and which suppressed, there has been ever more splintering of existing groups and creation of new ones, the result being a proliferation of the latter. According to statistics in the *Religion Yearbook for 1985*, published by the Agency for Cultural Affairs in the Ministry of Education, the schools and sects of Buddhism in Japan today, if one confines oneself merely to religious organizations recognized as "religious legal persons" (*shūkyō hōjin*) by the ministry itself, number 159, while, if one includes groups so designated by local governors, or enjoying no recognition whatsoever, they far exceed that.

Further, the total number of persons registered as Buddhist 'believers', that is, as persons professing that faith, comes to eighty-nine million.[1] This amounts to seventy-four per cent of a total population of about one hundred and twenty million persons. However, this figure means something quite different from what its analogue would mean in Europe or in America. That is to say, the same statistics number believers in Shintō at roughly a hundred and twelve million or, in other words, ninety-three per cent of Japan's total population. If one adds to that believers in other religions, most notably Christianity, who total sixteen million, the final figure will be some two hundred and seventeen million, a number exceeding the actual population by nearly a hundred million![2] The reason for this is that the majority of Buddhists are also registered as believers in Shintō.

Consequently, in order to arrive at the total number of Buddhists one must

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subtract somewhat from the recorded figure of eighty-nine million. Thus, if one divides the eighty-two million believers in the 159 groups registered with the national ministry into schools and sects, beginning with the most numerous and proceeding to the least, one concludes that the Nichiren followers number thirty-four million; the Jōdo, twenty million; the Shingon, thirteen million; the Zen, nine million.

If one turns now to houses of worship, one finds a total of some eighty-one thousand, of which some thirty thousand are of the Jōdo variety; twenty-one thousand of the Zen variety; fourteen thousand of the Shingon variety; nine thousand of the Nichiren variety.[3]

A cursory examination of the figures just cited will indicate that, while, in the Japanese Buddhist world of today, Nichiren has the greatest numbers, followed by Jōdo, where houses of worship are concerned, the opposite is true to the overwhelming advantage of the Jōdo movement. As to the number of adherents, the present state of affairs is due to the rapid postwar growth, within the Nichiren movement, of groups such as the *Sōka gakkai*, the *Risshō kōsei kai* and the *Reiyū kai*, all dominated by layfolk. Of this rapid growth since the war, some eighty per cent belong to the so-called 'new religions'.[4] By contrast, the number of traditional Nichiren adherents has shrunk to about six million, while their houses of worship have decreased accordingly, to the point that they comprise less than a third of the Jōdo movement and are falling behind the Zen and Shingon as well.

In the light of all this, one concludes that the number of believers and of houses of worship in Japanese Buddhism today, if one will but omit from conideration the new religious movements of Nichiren inspiration, remains greatest in the Pure Land movement. This Pure Land movement, as already stated, falls into four major divisions, manely, *Yūzū nembutsu shū*, *Jōdo shū*, *Jōdo shinshū* and *Jishū*, the second and third being even further subdivided. By far the most numerous, however, whether in terms of believers or of houses of worship, are the Jōdo shinshū Honganji-ha, headquartered in the Nishi Honganji; the Shinshū Ōtani-ha, headquartered in the Higashi Honganji; and the Jōdo shū, headquartered in the Chion'in. These, then, embody the Pure Land doctrine in Japan today.

It goes without saying that one cannot seek the *raison d'être* of the schools of Buddhism in the mere calculation of numbers of believers and of houses of worship. On the other hand, it does strike me that one can at the very least by these means deduce the position of the Pure Land doctrine within the complex of Japanese Buddhism.

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Notes

1. Total number of adherents of the various subdivisions of the Japanese Buddhist community:

88,965,060 (*95,787,121)

a. Total number of adherents to religious groups registered as 'religious legal persons' with the Ministry of Education.

82,715,098(*57,201,829)

1) Nichiren	38 sects (*38 sects)	34,197,778(*17,461,021)
2) Jōdo	24 sects (*23 sects)	20,149,084(*19,470,975)
3) Shingon	47 sects (*46 sects)	13,819,806(*12,658,898)
4) Zen	22 sects (*22 sects)	9,257,471(*3,354,798)
5) Tendai	20 sects (*20 sects)	3,117,158(*3,484,894)
6) Nara schools	6 sects (*6 sects)	2,095,937(*760,044)
7) Others	2 sects (*2 sects)	77,864(*11,199)

b. Number of adherents of such 'religious legal persons' registered with local governments.

483,515 (*456,234)

c. Number of adherents of religious groups not so registered.

917,927 (*849,329)

d. Number of adherents of independent religious legal persons, i.e., incorporated religious groups not affiliated with any sectarian organization.

4,848,520 (*37,279,729)

2. Religions in Japan listed by numbers of adherents.

	217,105,537	(*214,028,032)
1) Shintō	112,106,715 〈51.6%〉	(*106,241,598 〈49.6%〉)
2) Buddhism	88,965,060 〈41.0%〉	(*95,787,121 〈44.8%〉)
3) Christianity	1,656,103 〈 0.8%〉	(*1,756,583 〈 0.8%〉)
4) Miscellaneous	14,377,659 〈 6.6%〉	(*10,242,730 〈 4.8%〉)

3. Number of Buddhist religious edifices in the 159 (*157) sects.

	81,440	(*83,560)
1) Jōdo	30,409	(*30,233)
2) Zen	21,107	(*21,017)
3) Shingon	14,721	(*14,806)
4) Nichiren	9,455	(*12,023)
5) Tendai	5,167	(*4,995)
6) Nara schools	58	(*455)

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7) Others	23	(*31)

4. New religious movements in the Nichiren tradition by numbers of adherents.

1) Sōka gakkai	17,138,212	(*not mentioned)
2) Risshō kōsei kai	6,013,401	(*5,856,939)
3) Reiyū kai	3,000,000	(*1,754,535)

(P.S. * denotes the number in the *Religion Yearbook for 2000*, pub. by the Agency for Cultural Affairs in the Ministry of Education, Japan.)

2. The history and ideas of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan

How, then, did this Pure Land doctrine come to occupy so important a position? To answer that, I daresay one must inquire into the history and ideas of Japan's Pure Land doctrine.

The first appearance of the Pure Land doctrine in Japan is rather later than the aforementioned official introduction of Buddhism, namely, the former half of the seventh century. By Nara times, there was an uninterrupted arrival from China of scriptures, treatises and commentaries of the Pure Land doctrine. Also, learned monks of other schools, such as Chikō (709-770/781) of the Sanron and others of the Kegon and Hossō, embarked on doctrinal studies of scriptures and treatises of the Pure Land tendency.

With the arrival of the next epoch, that of Heian, Pure Land ideas began gradually to display a vigorous development. In the former half of the ninth century, Ennin (794-864), a Tendai monk and disciple of Saichō, spent some time as a student in China, where he combined research into T'ien-t'ai doctrine with a pilgrimage to Mount Wu-t'ai, whose practice of concentration on Buddha-recollection (*nien fo san-mei fa*, *nembutsu zammai hō* in Japanese) he brought back to Japan, establishing on Mount Hiei a 'hall for concentration while constantly walking' (*jōgyō zammai dō*). This latter, in turn, was to become the source of the Tendai Pure Land doctrine known as 'Buddha-recollection on the mountain' (*yama no nembutsu*). As heir to that tradition of thought, in the tenth century the eighteenth Tendai abbot, Ryōgen (912-985), wrote on the basis of a work sacred to the Pure Land tradition, the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, a work entitled, *Meaning of Rebirth on Nine Stages in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land* (*Gokuraku jōdo kuhon ōjō gi*), while another monk roughly contemporaneous with him, Kūya or Kōya (903-972), forsaking a position of authority within the Tendai school and spreading the gospel of the Pure Land among common folk, became celebrated as the 'common man's saint' (*ichi no hijiri*). Towards the end of the tenth

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century, a disciple of Ryōgen, Genshin by name (942-1017), published a work entitled *Collection (of) Essential (Writings on) Rebirth (in the Pure Land)*, (*Ōjō yōshū*), with the use of which as a guide there were formed groups aiming at the proper practice of Buddha-recollection, resulting in the rapid triumph of the Tendai Pure Land doctrine. Another practitioner of Buddha-recollection within the Tendai school, the above-mentioned Ryōnin, whose life bestrode the eleventh and twelfth centuries, emerged to form the likewise above-mentioned *Yūzū nembutsu* school, while outside of that school there appeared personalities such as Yōkan or Eikan (1033-1111) of the Sanron school and Kakuban (1095-1143) of the Shingon, likewise heirs to belief in the Pure Land doctrine.

In this way the Pure Land doctrine gradually spread in Heian times, exerting a powerful influence on Japanese Buddhism as a whole, a fact still evident in a variety of still surviving art objects of that religious school. As examples one might cite portrayals of the Pure Land of Amida Buddha (*Amida hensō zu*) or of the arrival of Amida Buddha to welcome the faithful practitioner of Buddha-recollection at the hour of death (*Amida raigō zu*), symbolic representations of arrival in the Pure Land (such as the 'white road through the two rivers' *niga byakudō zu*), architecture designed in imitation of the geography of the Pure Land (such as the Byōdōin at Uji) and many other such things, all of them proof of the variegated development of the Pure Land doctrine in Heian times.

In a period of time ranging from late Heian into the Kamakura era in the thirteenth century, against the background of a sort of Buddhist millenarism called *mappō* in Japan, three schools already mentioned, the *Jōdo shū* of Hōnen, the *Jōdo shinshū* of Shinran and the *Jishū* of Ippen, came into being, uniting with the *Yūzū nembutsu shū* of which I have just spoken to form the four schools of Pure Land Buddhism associated with Japan. What I will now attempt is a somewhat simplified description of the principal features of the ideas of these four men.

To begin, Ryōnin, the originator of *Yūzū nembutsu*, in his youth joined the monastery atop Mount Hiei, where he studied Tendai doctrine, ultimately evolving from it his own brand of faith in the doctrines of the Pure Land. What he was saying is that the invocation of Amida Buddha by one person coalesces with that of all others, that, in other words, they interact in mutual influence. This idea, based on the Tendai notion of 'mutual coalescence' (*ennyū*), is noted for its application of that idea to the Buddha-recollection of the Pure Land school.

The next person to be discussed, Hōnen, likewise ascended Mount Hiei as a young

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man, there becoming a Tendai scholar-monk, but, responding to the attractive power of Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū*, became a Pure Land convert, proceeding to read through all of the works of th T'ang systematizer of the said school, Shan-tao (613-681). Then, at the age of forty-three (in 1175), in response to the said Shan-tao's commentary to the abovementioned scripture, he called for the invocation, to the exclusion of all other forms of religious activity, as a means to rebirth in the Pure Land, thus establishing, for the first time in history, a separate school bearing, and entitled to, the name of the Pure Land (*Jōdo shū*, as it is known in Japan). He proceeded thence to draw up a collection of references to the Pure Land, culled from various writings in the Buddhist canon in Chinese translation and entitled *Senchaku* (or *Senjaku*) *hongan nembutsu shū*, in which he stressed the following: (1) This being the era of *mappō*, the difficult approach to salvation, the 'gateway of the Path of the Saints' (*shōdō mon*), must yield to the easier approach, the 'gateway of the Pure Land' (*jōdo mon*). (2) At that, 'miscellaneous acts' (*zōgyō*) must yield to 'action proper' (*shōgyō*). (3) Even at that, ancillary practices (*jogō*) must take second place to the 'practice of concentration proper' (*shōjō gō*) i.e., to 'invocation of the Name' (*shōmyō*). What he was advocating, in other words, is the choice, as an action leading to rebirth in the Pure Land, of one act and of one alone, that of Buddha-recollection expressed in intoning the name of Amida Buddha, an act 'based exclusively on (the instructions of the) one Master, Shan-tao'. As scriptural authorities Hōnen settled on three, two of Indian origin (the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha*) and one of non-Indian origin (which he, however, fancied to be a Chinese translation made from the Sanskrit, the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*), a triad that he was the first person to endow with a collective name, *Jōdo sambukyō*. He also formulated a doctrinal genealogy of five Chinese masters, beginning with T'an-luan (approximately 476-542) and proceeding through Tao-ch'o (562-645), Shan-tao and Huai-kan (fl. 682) to Shao-k'ang (d. 805). This lineage, for all that it consists only of Chinese monks, is not recognized as such in China, being the work of none other than Hōnen, the Japanese Buddhist who distinguished himself by seeing in Buddha-recollection and in the accompanying invocation the great significance of a mystical religious experience consisting of a vision of the Buddha gained in transic meditation.

Next in turn, Shinran, while a disciple of Hōnen, in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (roughly 'Teaching, practice, faith and enlightement'), composed between 1224 and 1247, that is, between the ages of fifty-two and seventy-five, both accepted and expanded his master's ideas. In the 'Verses on Buddha-recollection in Proper Faith' (*Shōshin*

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nembutsu ge), contained in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* just mentioned, he went on to establish his own genealogy, that of the *Jōdo shinshū*, leading from India through China to Japan, beginning with Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu and proceeding through T'an-luan, Tao-ch'o, and Shan-tao to Genshin and to Hōnen to form the 'Seven Exalted Monks' (*shichi kōsō*), on whose base he constructed his own system of religious faith. The thought forming the core of this latter consisted of viewing Buddha-recollection, the only practice leading to rebirth in the Pure Land, as something conferred upon the world by the saving might of Amida Buddha (by 'the might of Another'—*tariki*, as the Japanese would say), that is, through the functioning of the vows taken by Him before he became a Buddha (*pūrvapraṇidhāna*, which the Japanese call *hongan*). Unreserved faith in these vows is also, according to the same thinking, likewise a 'believing heart' (*shinjin*) owed to the same 'might of Another'. While Hōnen advocated Buddha-recollection accompanied by intonation as a means to rebirth in the Pure Land, Shinran rejecting all self-motivated acts accompanying the above, took the view that practice consonant with the vows taken by the might of Another and the faith accompanying it are everything. He preached, in other words, that truth is to be found only with the Buddha, while on the side of ordinary folk there is nothing but lie, deception and untruth. By means of this stern self-examination he came to a belief in the absolute character of the salvation wrought by Amida Buddha, holding that a 'believing heart', and it alone, was the 'means proper' (*shōin*) to rebirth in the Pure Land. On the firm foundation of this 'believing heart', so he maintained, anyone is certain to become a Buddha in this very life, and in that sense he condemned the idea of awaiting an invitation (*raigō* or *raikō*) from the Buddha at the hour of one's death.

The *Jōdo shū* established by Hōnen was accepted as *Jōdo shinshū* (roughly 'the true teaching of the Pure Land', commonly abbreviated to *Shinshū*) by Shinran, who never thought of himself as founding a new school. Where practice was concerned, while Hōnen adhered to the monastic code, being celibate his life long, Shinran, for his part, declaring himself to be 'neither monk nor layman' (*hisō hizoku*), exemplified clearly the position of the Buddhism of the householder in his daily life, which included marriage. Another distinguishing mark of his is that he firmly rejected the incantations, the folk-beliefs and superstitions and other such things rife in the society of his own day. This deepening of Buddhist ideas, such as are owed to Shinran, as well as the religious practice unique to him, represents a new development, one unseen in Buddhism before his time, one that may be said, without exaggeration, to have reached one of the high points of the Pure Land doctrine in Japan.

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Ippen likewise, while at first a disciple of Hōnen in the fourth generation, eventually established a school of his own, the so-called *Jishū*, the 'time' school, so to speak. What this means is that Ippen, using as his text a passage in the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* that mentions 'facing the *time* at which one's life is to end' (*lin ming chung shih* in the Chinese version, pronounced *rin myōjū ji* in Japanese), held that one should recollect the Buddha as if every moment were the 'time' in question. Ippen declared that, faith or no faith, a single invocation would assure one of rebirth in the Pure Land. Travelling the length and breadth of Japan, he propagated his 'dancing Buddha-recollection' (*odori nembutsu*), demonstrating in the form of a dance the joyous thought that any fool could be saved by Buddha-recollection. This is said by some to be the origin of Japan's present-day '*Bon* dance'.

What I have just given is a brief statement on the founders of the four principal manifestations of the Pure Land doctrine in Japan, four religious movements that later underwent their several developments, coming ultimately to take deep root in Japan's cultural soil.

For one example, the renowned literary work entitled the 'Tale of the House of Taira' (*Heike monogatari*), believed to have been composed early in the Kamakura era, in the former half of the thirteenth century, was much influenced by Hōnen's Pure Land doctrines. The idea, popularized by this literary work, of 'disgust with the defiled land and joyous quest for the Pure Land' (*onri edo gongu jōdo* in Japanese) was to captivate the hearts of the people for a long time to come, eventually being incorporated in song and in works of literature.

The influence of Ippen's *Jishū* manifests itself in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, during the North-South dispute over the throne and in the Muromachi era, in the many artists who incorporated the name of Amida Buddha into their professional sobriquets. An example would be Kan'*ami* (1332-1384), to whom is owed the Kanze school of the Nō drama, as well as his son Ze*ami* (1363-1443), or, for that matter, in the realm of art appreciation, Sō*ami* (d. 1525), all of whom were influenced to do this by their adherence to the school of 'dancing Buddha-recollection'.

Shinran's *Jōdo shinshū*, on the other hand, through his descendants and disciples, gained a foothold in peasant society, where it proceded to develop. The temple called Honganji ('fane of the preliminary vow'), originally Shinran's mausoleum, managed by his descendants after his death, was converted into a temple by his great-grandson, Kakunyo (1270-1351), who gave it its present name, thus proclaiming the validity of Shinran's bloodline (as opposed to the master-disciple lineage that had been the rule up

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until his time). The fifteenth century, under Muromachi rule, saw the appearance of Rennyo (1415-1499), a lineal descendant of Shinran in the eighth generation, who sponsored the rapid development of the Honganji school. In terms of social history it bears notice that the peasant adherents of the Honganji fomented a series of uprisings known as *ikkō ikki* in which they challenged the authority of the landlords, thus converting the Honganji and its community into a powerful force that for eleven years did battle with Japan's effective ruler of the time, ODA Nobunaga (1534-1582). Early in the Edo period (which began in the 1630's), thanks both to the disputed succession and to the divide-and-rule policies of the feudal government, the Honganji was divided in two, East and West, each of which was to go its own way, developing into the vast religious communities that they represent today.

Having completed a general survey or Japan's Pure Land school, what I wish to do now is to examine how a school of the sort just described, within the scope of a religious history beginning in India, took its initial shape and how it made its way from India all the way to Japan.

3. The notion of a 'Pure Land' and the early ideas associated therewith.

In terms of the history of Buddhism, it is in India that the ideas of the Pure Land first took shape at about the time of the origin of the so-called Greater Vehicle (*mahāyāna*), finally assuming the concrete form of Pure Land scriptures. When I speak of 'Pure Land ideas' or of 'Pure Land scriptures', I am referring to the thoughts surrounding the 'Extremely Delightful Pure Land' of Amida Buddha and to the writings describing that land. 'Pure land' (*ching t'u*) is a well-established Chinese word, but the concept of which the word is but an expression was in existence in early Mahāyāna Buddhism in India well before the Chinese word was coined. For example, in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* one finds Indian words corresponding to the Chinese words such as *buddhakṣetrapariśuddhi*, 'purification of a Buddha's land', or *pariśuddhaṃ buddhakṣetram*, 'a Buddha's land that has been purified'. What is meant here by 'a Buddha's land' is not the land of a particular Buddha but the lands of many Buddhas of Whom Amida Buddha is imagined to be but One. In other words, all of the many Buddhas as well as Amida Buddha are said to have each His own Pure Land. However, when the expression 'Pure Land' is used today, it is generally assumed to refer to that of Amida Buddha alone. The reason for this is that since antiquity, in both China and Japan, the Pure Land of Amida Buddha, object of fervent belief, has been regarded as representative of the Pure Lands of all Buddhas.

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Yet, where this particular notion of the 'Pure Land' is concerned, some doubt has been shed on this by knowledgeable persons both Buddhist and not. The doubt consists of the persistent suspicion that the notion of the 'Pure Land' is a special doctrine, one off the original main track of Buddhism itself. Here, for example, is a statement from Sir Charles Eliot, one-time British ambassador in Tokyo and himself a person with a profound interest in Japanese Buddhism:

> The worshippers of Amida in Japan are numerous, prosperous, and progressive, but should this worship be called Buddhism? It has grown out of Buddhism, no doubt: all the stages except the very earliest are perfectly clear, but has not the process of development resulted in such a complete transformation that one can no longer apply the same name to the teaching of Gotama and the teaching of Shinran?
>
> (Quoted from *Japanese Buddhism*, London, 1935, p. 389 f.)

In reaction to such doubts as this one, responses can probably be provided from a variety of points of view, but I for my part prefer to answer them by reaching back to the source of the Pure Land idea itself. In order to do that, one must bring into bold relief the very first ideas of the 'pure land', in which, however, many things are unclear, as Eliot himself points out. On this account, students of the subject have ventured on some bold hypotheses, in the midst of which it is difficult, if not impossible, to gain a precise sense of the matter. If the suspicion is entertained that the very idea of the 'Pure Land' is a special brand of Buddhist doctrine, this is due, as a quest for its origins must surely show, to the fact that there remains a host of unsolved problems where the original ideas themselves are concerned.

The range of the very first Pure Land notions, of 'Early Pure Land Buddhism', as I choose to designate them, is coterminous, in my view, with that of thought, originating in India, from the origin of the ideas themselves until the scriptural expressions of those ideas were first completed. By this I mean the following: To speak in terms of date and of place, one surmises that Pure Land ideas originated about the year 100 in Northwest India within the territory governed by the Kuṣāṇa dynasty. In order to bring the first ideas into the bold relief I mentioned a moment ago and to draw, in scholarly terms, a clear and valid picture of the whole, one is obliged to approach the study of the subject from two methodological standpoints, textual and historical. The study must, in other words, clarify, and that in a critical manner, the position occupied by the first Pure Land ideas, within the larger framework of the history of Indian thought in general and of Buddhist thought in particular, and the significance borne by

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them there.

Given this premise, a point to which particular attention must be paid is that of the relationship of Early Pure Land ideas to those of Early Buddhism as a whole. While the need for an examination of this question might seem self-evident, in the studies of Pure Land doctrine conducted hitherto, this aspect of the problem has been the one most neglected.

When one speaks of Early Buddhism, one refers to the period spanning the presence of Gautama Buddha on earth and the first century after his *parinirvāṇa*, at the end of which the first schisms took place. During this space of time, there was, of course, neither the concept of an Amida Buddha or of an 'Extremely Delightful Pure Land' nor the idea of rebirth in such a place. There is, therefore, plainly an historical lacuna between Early Buddhism and the earliest ideas of a Pure Land. As Eliot has said, the question of whether one can call both by the same name was present in embryonic form in Pure Land thought from the very beginning. On the other hand, the moment one looks closely into the background of any of these ideas, be it that of Amida Buddha, of His 'Extremely Delightful Pure Land' or of rebirth in the latter, it becomes clear that none of them was preached in total isolation from Early Buddhism itself. In the light of this, one is obliged to say that there is a sort of continuity between Early Buddhism and the earliest Pure Land ideas. Consequently, it should be possible, if one but conduct a close examination of both aspects of the matter, namely, of the lacuna and of the continuity, to bring into relief the place of Pure Land ideas among the other streams of Indian Buddhism and, thus, to clarify the source of the former.

4. A textual examination of the Pure Land scriptures

To trace the Pure Land ideas to their source, one needs first, presumably, to examine the source materials. Central to the latter are the Pure Land scriptures, three, specifically, to wit, the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, grouped together by Hōnen, as already stated, under the collective name of *Jōdo sambukyō*. By this grouping I do not mean that these three appeared together as a unity from the very outset. Of the three, the presumption is that two appeared first, the third after a considerable lapse of time.

Now, of the two *Sukhāvatīvyūha* versions which is the elder has been the subject of conflicting opinions not yet resolved. Perhaps it is safest to conclude that the two are more or less contemporaneous, owing their origins to rather different circum-

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stances.

On the other hand, for a clarification of the earliest Pure Land ideas, there can be no question that the two *Sukhāvatīvyūha* are the more important. Let us first look at these two from the point of view of their role as source materials. As to the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, most commonly known in Chinese under the title *Wu-liang-shou ching* (pronounced *Muryōju kyō* in Japanese), there survives the original Sanskrit text, as well as a Tibetan translation, admittedly under a different title, and five Chinese versions listed in the following:

a. The Sanskrit text, of which the oldest surviving is presumed to date from 1152 or 1153, first to appear in print in 1883.

b. Tibetan translation, entitled *'Phags pa 'od dpag med kyi bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, issued as part of the *Ratnakūṭasūtra* and translated in the former half of the nineth century by the Indians Jinamitra and Dānaśīla and by the Tibetan Ye śes de.

c. Chinese versions

1) *A-mi-t'o san-yeh-san-fo-sa-lou-fo-t'an kuo-tu-jen-tao ching*, more commonly known as the *Ta a-mi-t'o ching*, 2 rolls, translated under the Wu by Chih Ch'ien. Not only is the date disputed (222 or 223-228 or 253), but the ascription itself is questioned, some holding the translator to have been Lokakṣema.

2) *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching*, 4 rolls, translated under the Latter Han by Lokakṣema, according to tradition, but the more recent ascription is to Po-yen and to 258, under the Wei. There is also a third ascription, crediting the translation to Dharmarakṣa late in the third century, under the Western Tsin.

3) *Wu-liang-shou ching*, 2 rolls, credited by tradition to Saṃghavarman, also under the Wei, but presumed to have been a translation done under the Eastern Tsin by Buddhabhadra and revised under the Liu-Sung by Pao-yün in 421.

4) *Wu-liang-shou ju-lai hui*, 2 rolls, namely, nos. 17 and 18 in the Chinese translation of the *Ratnakūṭasūtra*, done under the T'ang by Bodhiruci between 706 and 713.

5) *Ta-cheng wu-liang-shou chuang-yen ching*, 3 rolls, translated under the Sung by Fa-hsien in 991.

The version current in Japan, and in use by the Pure Land schools as their scriptural authority, is, among the five Chinese translations, the third, credited — but the ascription is not above doubt — to Saṃghavarman, while the current view is that

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it is the joint work of Buddhabhadra and of Pao-yün in the former half of the fifth century.

There survive fragments of other versions, namely, (1) a Khotanese translation, (2) a translation from the *Wu-liang-shou ching* into Uighur, a Turkic language, (3) a translation into Tibetan from the *Wu-liang-shou ju-lai hui*, (4) a translation from the same Chinese into Hsi-hsia, also called Tangut, a language related to Tibetan.

As just seen, there survive a variety of translations, fragments included, but more important for a study of the thought content of this *Sukhāvatīvyūha* are seven texts, the Sanskrit original, the Tibetan version and five Chinese translations. A comparison of these seven will reveal many discrepancies, leading one to deduce separate stages of development in each of the several versions. In the light of all this, what is needed in order to trace the original thought content is a comparative study of the seven versions and, through that, an arrival at a reconstruction, within the limits of possibility, of the original form under which this scripture took shape. For it is only thus that a clarification of the original notions of the Pure Land will be possible.

The next text in order is one that, while bearing the same Indian title, *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, is much smaller than the one just described. There is, in fact, a Sanskrit text of this one, preserved in Japan in *Siddha* script and used for ritual purposes, from which the title is known. Of this one there is a Tibetan translation bearing the same title and two Chinese versions, bearing different titles, as follows:

a. The Sanskrit text, first published in *Siddha* script in 1773, in *Devanāgarī* in 1880.

b. Tibetan translation entitled *'Phags pa bde ba can gyi bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, done in the former half of the nineth century by the aforementioned Dānaśīla and Ye śes sde.

c. Chinese translations

1) *A-mi-t'o ching*, 1 roll, translated in 402 by Kumārajīva in the state of Ch'in ruled by the Yao clan.

2) *Ch'eng-tsan ching-t'u fo-she-shou ching*, 1 roll, translated in 650 by Hsüan-tsang under the T'ang.

Of the two Chinese translations of this scripture, going under the name *A-mi-t'o ching* (pronounced *Amida kyō* in Japanese) and in authoritative use in the Pure Land movement in both China and Japan, that of Kumārajīva was translated in the beginning of the fifth century.

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Here too there are fragments of other translations, one into Uighur from the *A-mi-t'o ching* as well as one into Tibetan from the same source, in addition to a Hsi-hsia rendition. Also, there was excavated at Tun-huang a copy of the *A-mi-t'o ching* in Tibetan transcription. For a study of the thought content, however, the important texts are the original, the Tibetan and the two Chinese. By comparing these four with one another one can arrive at a reconstruction of the original form of this text; then, by going on to compare this with the pronouncements of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, one is at last in possession of materials on whose basis one can arrive at an estimate of original Pure Land ideas.

The case of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* is rather different from that of the other two. For one thing, as there will be occasion to state later on, it is quite difficult to look upon this work as something compiled in India. For another, it is plain that the time and circumstances of its compilation differed from those of the other two. In sum, it is impossible to treat it as a primary source when seeking a clarification of Pure Land ideas in India. It must be looked upon as a religious text that played an important role in the development of the Pure Land doctrine in China and in Japan, but not to their west.

5. The historical and social background

At what time, in what place and by what sort of persons in India were these early Pure Land ideas, as deduced from the original form of the two recensions of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, formed? The question is not easily answered. Materials contributing directly and positively to a clarification of it are scarce, yet, by interweaving various points of view, it is possible to establish a general hypothesis.

To begin with, while an examination of archaeological remains will reveal, among Indian stone inscriptions dating to about the beginning of the Christian era, nothing pointing to the existence of Pure Land ideas, still, among the Buddhist icons discovered in India there are some that can be positively identified as Amida figures. One of them, discovered at Govindnagar, to the west of Mathura, is an inscribed pedestal of a Buddha image. The pedestal bears a Brāhmī inscription to the effect that the Buddha is Amitābha and that it was carved in the twenty-eighth year in the reign of Huviṣka, a Kuṣāṇa king. This is interpreted to refer to the twenty-eighth year in the Kaniṣka calendar, identified by Dr. R. C. Sharma, curator of the local Museum, with the year 106 in the Western calendar and by my countryman, Dr. Hajime Nakamura, with the year 156. This is concrete proof that in the second century there was already

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a cult of Amida Buddha on Indian soil.

Another relic, described by the late Prof. J. Brough of Cambridge University in the last report published in his lifetime, is a Gandhāra relief of a Buddhist triad, on the pedestal of which are legible the names Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara (as deciphered by him). While the date of the inscription is not a matter of certainty, the author of the article deduces from the Kharoṣṭhī inscription that it can be traced, approximately, to the second century. However, as some doubts remain in part as to the inscription and its reading, it cannot as yet be cleary deduced from this that a cult of Amida Buddha existed in Gandhāra.

Next, if one turns to Indian literature, in the broader sense of the expression, while there is no reference to notions of the Pure Land as such, the *Bhagavadgītā*, a typical literary object of veneration on the part of Hindus, there is, as there will be occasion to mention later, a pronouncement analogous to that of the Buddha-recollection advocated in the scriptures of the Pure Land, a circumstance that does leave room to suppose that the two sets of ideas moved in parallel, or that they influenced each other. If it is valid to suppose that the *Bhagavadgītā* dates to the first century of the Christian era, it becomes possible to assign approximately the same date to the scriptures of the Pure Land.

If now one turns to the scriptures and treatises of the Greater Vehicle, one notes that the number of such writings that allude to Pure Land ideas is very numerous indeed, leaving no doubt that these latter owe their origin to the earliest periods in the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism. These allusions are evident in scriptures such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi* and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa,* leading one to conclude the existence of some sort of contact between them and the scriptures of the Pure Land. It is equally true of some of the other early scriptures of the Greater Vehicle, such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* and the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, that there is in them no specific mention of Pure Land ideas, but this intimates not absence of the latter but the total disconnection between the said tendency and the scriptures just mentioned. At any rate, a many-sided inquiry into the relationship between the scriptures of the Pure Land and those of the early Greater Vehicle in general will make it clear that the former was present in the latter from the very beginning. A definite conclusion as to the time of origin of the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle is not possible, but, given the widespread theory that it dates to about the beginning of the Christian era, one deduces, if one accepts the said theory, a similar date for the origin of Pure Land thought.

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Since, however, a comparative study based solely on scriptural comparison can easily lead to disagreements among individuals, one may be inclined to seek more solid evidence elsewhere. If so, one will find definite proof in the history of the translation of these scriptures into Chinese. As already stated, there are five Chinese versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the oldest of which, the *Ta a-mi-t'o ching*, in view of its date of translation, must go back, at the very latest, to an original composed some time before the year 200. Since, on the other hand, a look at some other scriptures will reveal that in the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*, translated by Lokakṣema under the Latter Han in the year 179, there are already several references to Amida Buddha, the origin of Pure Land ideas must be pushed back even further, possibly to about 150. This, however, is a *terminus ad quem*, while the idea of Amida Buddha, independently of the ideas expressed in the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*, presumably precede that, so that it becomes possible to date the origin of Pure Land ideas even a bit earlier. By putting these findings together with those mentioned before, one would not be too far wrong in surmising the date of origin of the earliest form of the Pure Land scriptures at about the year 100.

The historical facts surrounding the translation of the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese also provide a clue to the place of origin of Pure Land ideas. By looking into the birthplaces of the translators of Pure land scriptures and of other scriptures and treatises that allude to Pure Land ideas, one finds an overwhelming majority of natives of Northern India and of Central Asia.

Also, an investigation of the phonetic transcriptions of Indian words in the so-called 'ancient' translations and 'old' translations of Pure Land scriptures (to resort to two Japanese terms), leads to the supposition that the originals underlying these transcriptions go back either to Gāndhārī or to a similar language. The aforementioned J. Brough says that even in translations (as opposed to phonetic transcriptions) of such things as names of the Buddha's disciples in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, names appearing in Chinese as *Liao pen chi* (*Ryō hon zai* in Japanese), *Cheng yüan* (*Shō gan* in J.) and *Cheng yü* (*Shō go* in J.), are proof of a Gāndhārī connection. Even an investigation of the language of the verses in the original text of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* gives evidence linguistic phenomena demonstrating points in common with Gāndhārī. Gāndhārī is a Prakrit in use in an area extending from Gandhāra, in Northwest India, into Central Asia over a period spanning the third century B. C. and the third century A.D. It is thus possible to conclude that the Pure Land idea,

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originating in Northwest India, spread early into Central Asia and was there by the time of the beginning of the Chinese translations.

If the above deductions as to time and place of origin are valid, then the former coincides, in terms of Indian political history, with the reign of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty. The next logical question would be as to the presence or absence in the Pure Land scriptures of written evidence supporting connections with the said Kuṣāṇa dynasty. The answer would have to be that they are not totally lacking. To give an example, under Kuṣāṇa rule trade with the Roman-Hellenistic world became very active, with the resulting import of huge quantities of gold from the Occident and, as a consequence, the rapid development of merchant capital in India — at least, that is the accepted view. In the Pure Land scriptures there are elaborate descriptions of the shape of things in the 'Extremely Delightful Pure Land' with much reference to gold, to gems and the like. There is also depiction of rich merchants (*śreṣṭhin*, guild leader) and of property owners (*gṛhapati*, literally 'householder') as powerful persons in the society of the time, which must surely be a reflection of the then social reality.

Since, as goes without saying, the scriptural accounts vary from recension to recension, and since there are many cases in which there are other possibilities, through surviving material, of tracing things back to their respective sources, a rigorous and many-sided investigation of the matter is surely necessary, but, be that as it may, if only by resort to the Pure Land scriptures themselves, one is surely not unjustified in concluding that the social base of these scriptures lay in territories under Kuṣāṇa rule.

At that, the question remains as to what sort of persons formed, then maintained, these Pure Land ideas. What can be said, beyond the shadow of a doubt, after examining the Pure Land scriptures is that they were compiled by Buddhists believing in the Greater Vehicle. If, however, one looks a bit deeper, one finds almost no references to Pure Land scriptures themselves. This is true not only of Pure Land texts but of virtually the totality of the Mahāyāna scriptural canon. A comparative study of the fruits of recent scholarship would, on the other hand, lead, more or less, to the following conclusions.

Since the objects of address in the Pure Land scriptures, as in the *Prajñāpāramitā* and in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* are 'sons or daughters of good family' (*kulaputrā vā kuladuhitaro vā*), with no evident distinction between layfolk and clerics, the compilers of these scriptures were presumably of the same sort as those of the scriptures of the Greater Vehicle in general. Concretely speaking, it is not possible to know with any

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precision what sort of persons they were. Since, on the other hand, the Pure Land scriptures mention the 'fellowship of bodhisattvas' (*bodhisattvagaṇa*), the reference is probably to a connected formation with the monastic community (*saṃgha*) belonging to the several schools. The majority of this 'bodhisattva community' probably had its relation to the Buddhist reliquaries, for, few as they are, there are, in fact, references to these reliquaries (*stūpa*) in these scriptures, furnishing some basis, if no more, for this supposition. On the other hand, the Dharma-preacher (*dharmabhāṇaka*), who must have played a leading role in the compilation of the scriptures of the Greater Vehicle, is never mentioned in those of the Pure Land. When one brings all of the above together, one may conclude that those who formed and maintained the Pure Land were persons of virtually the same nature as the supporters of the early Mahāyāna scriptures in general, persons somewhat distinguished from the traditional, conservative, sectarian community of those who had constituted the only Buddhist religious community known until that time.

II An outline of the original Pure Land Idea

1. The origin of Amida Buddha

If asked 'what Pure Land thought is all about', one might say that it is the doctrine that preaches rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land of Amida Buddha. The question to which this answer would lead would be 'what sort of Buddha He is'. The latter question would be answered by the Pure Land scriptures to the effect that He is a Buddha Who, dwelling in an Extremely Delightful World Sphere to the West, is there preaching the Dharma. What is the relationship of this 'Buddha' to Gautama, who likewise goes by the name of 'Buddha'?

One must first look at this Buddha's name. In India, from the very outset, it has appeared in two Sanskrit forms, *Amitāyus* and *Amitābha*, meaning respectively, 'the One of immeasurable life' and 'the One of immeasurable splendour', both names shortened to a Chinese form seeming to go back to a mere *amida*. In the Chinese translations of the Buddhist scriptures, the name appears in two guises, that of the transcription just mentioned and the translation *wu liang shou*, 'measureless longevity', the latter literally going back to *amitāyus*. However, the fact that the Chinese translations have *wu liang shou* does not mean that the original is *amitāyus*. This is, presumably, due to its perceived compatibility with the ideas of the Chinese, a nation that delighted in stories of Taoistic 'superhuman sylphs' and that sought longevity and even immortality.

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The appearance of this Buddha in two Chinese guises, one a phonetic transcription (albeit abbreviated), the other meaning the "Buddha of measureless longevity", actually and obviously has its origin in the Pure Land scriptures themselves. It is those scriptures that designate one and the same Buddha by two names that are neither synonyms nor homophones. To be specific, while the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* whose central figure is *Amitābha*, regards *Amitāyus* as an identical being, the Smaller does the reverse. The reason for this bifurcation-identification is presumably the belief of the compilers of these scriptures that in this way they could most appropriately express the reality and the essence of the Buddha.

Now, where the origin of Amida Buddha is concerned, the learned community is rife with theories on which there is no fixed agreement. One may sum up the vast body of theories European and Japanese (to mention only them) into two groups, some seeking the source outside India (principally in Zoroastrianism), others inside India (in Indian mythology, whether Vedic or Buddhist). Both, however, contain difficulties that render them both insupportable. There is thus a need for examination from a new point of view. If I may state my own, it is that it is most fitting, in the light of that Buddha's original name and of the stories of His previous lives, to seek His origin in an expansion of the Buddha-view as a whole. What I mean by that is that an examination of the history of the development of that view, away from Early Buddhism in the direction of the Sectarian Buddhism, of the Mahāsāṃghika school in particular, will reveal views corresponding, in a manner of speaking, to the names *Amitāyus* and *Amitābha* and, even where the content and variety of the various accounts of previous incarnations are concerned, the possibility of analyzing them in terms of the development of the Buddha-view. A consequence of this would be the deduction of an origin against a background of a development of the Buddha-view going back to the very beginnings of Buddhism itself.

Once such an account of origin is accepted, the conclusion is that either name, whether *Amitāyus* or *Amitābha*, far from referring to a Buddha other than Gautama, are but two different designations for that very Buddha Himself. They are, in other words, nothing other than expressions looking upon Gautama from different aspects, *Amitāyus* from that of His immortality, *Amitābha* from that of the universality of His splendour. In yet other words, the former name views that Buddha as a Being infinite in time; the latter, as One infinite in space. The thought of the compilers of the Pure Land scriptures was, by combining these two names and by identifying them in their own minds, to give the best expression possible to the true essence of Gautama

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Buddha.

What one must still bear in mind, however, is that, even if it is possible to find the origin of *Amitāyus/Amitābha* in the development of the Buddha-idea in general, the fact remains that Amida Buddha is not presented from the standpoint of a Buddha-view common to those of the Sectarian Buddhism (conventionally referred to as those of the "Lesser Vehicle", *Hīnayāna*), of one studiously loyal to their traditional pronouncements. The Buddha-view of these latter, holding that Gautama is the one and only Buddha of the present, makes allowance for no other(s). By contrast, Amida Buddha, being, in the eyes of His devotees, a Buddha currently preaching the Dharma in a world sphere west of here, hence a "present Buddha", is therefore a Buddha on the same plane as Gautama Himself. It is thus evident that this Buddha was never presented from the standpoint of the Sectarian Buddhism, to say nothing of Early Buddhism.

What, then, is the standpoint from which Amida Buddha was presented? As far as I can see, it is that of the bodhisattva-idea in its Mahāyāna guise. The word *bodhisattva*, meaning originally "a seeker after enlightened intuition", which, in the terms of the Greater Vehicle, signifies the ultimate in enlightenment, is loudly and insistently proclaimed to be moved by a spirit of good will and of compassion in the service of others, in his resolve to save all living beings, all without exception. This seeker after the path of the Greater Vehicle, the bodhisattva, in keeping with this spirit, takes different vows to work the weal of others, vows differing with time, with place and with circumstance, and conducts religious practices aiming at the fulfilment of those vows. Since the perfection of these practices fully realizes both sides of a bodhisattva's activity, the working of his own weal as well as that of others, he thus arrives at the abovementioned ultimate in enlightenment, which means that he achieves Buddahood, that he becomes a Buddha. Thus, within the scope of the Greater Vehicle at least, to the extent that there are presently many bodhisattvas engaged simultaneously in religious practice aiming at enlightened intuition, the logical conclusion must be that many Buddhas emerge simultaneously in places other than ours.

If one confines one's view to Amida Buddha, it becomes clear that the base of the ideas described above lies in the bodhisattva idea and nowhere else. The Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* tells us that Amida Buddha, in a former life the bodhisattva *Dharmākara* (*Fa tsang* in Chinese, pronounced *Hōzō* in Japanese) determined to achieve the ultimate in enlightenment, established a set of vows to save all living beings, in keeping

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with which he subjected himself to a long period of religious practice, eventuating in perfection both of the vows and of the practices and in the achievement of Buddhahood, in which guise He is now established in the Pure Land to the West. That is to say, Amida Buddha, having perfected the path of the bodhisattva in terms of the Greater Vehicle, has made His appearance in the guise of a Buddha in a world other than ours. As a consequence of the above, it is clear that, though the name of Amida Buddha and the stories of His previous lives may owe their origin to the notions surrounding Gautama, what was inherited was by no means the outlook of the Sectarian Buddhism, much less that of Early Buddhism, but rather that of a totally different doctrinal base. A reasonable conclusion would be that of Amida Buddha emerging, so to speak, from a 'second look' at Gautama, and that in the sense of an idealized bodhisattva-image in terms of the Greater Vehicle, of a Buddha appearing at a time when the hopes of believers in the said Greater Vehicle were pinned on a Saviour-Buddha.

2. A genealogy of the notion of the 'preliminary vow'

The story of the bodhisattva Dharmākara, reported to have perfected the Path of the Greater Vehicle, thus becoming Amida Buddha, constitutes the skeleton of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, and it is the idea of the 'preliminary vows', contained in that story, that has played the greatest role in the formation of Pure Land ideas. The expression 'preliminary vow' (a more or less accurate translation of Chinese *pen yüan*, pronounced *hongan* in Japanese) corresponds to the word *pūrvapraṇidhāna*, referring, in this case, to vows taken by the abovementioned Dharmākara. There were, in fact, forty-eight of these, known, without qualification, in East Asia as the Forty-Eight Vows, the meaning of the expression being understood, without further ado, to anyone who hears it: The number forty-eight, however, is not common to all of the recensions, being confined to the Chinese versions ascribed to Saṃghavarman and to Bodhiruci, while those of Chih-ch'ien and of the so-called Lokakṣema have twenty-four each; that of Fa-hsien, thirty-six; the Sanskrit text, forty-seven; the Tibetan translation, forty-nine. It is not only in respect of number that they differ, for a comparative examination of the different versions will reveal a variety of discrepancies in content as well. One must perforce conclude that the Forty-Eight Vows were not originally present in that form in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, but that they represent addition and rearrangement, to say the least.

One conjectures the presumed original form of the vows to fall, broadly speaking,

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into four groups, according to their respective subjects, namely, those concerning (1) Amida Buddha himself, (2) His land, (3) those reborn in the said land, (4) those whose goal is to be reborn there. In the so-called Saṃghavarman Chinese version, the eighteenth vow, belonging to group (4), contains a celebrated passage which, in paraphrase, would be as follows:

> When I attain to Buddhahood, living beings in all ten quarters, in wholehearted faith and desire, in their wish to be reborn in my land, may devote thereto as many as ten thoughts. If they are not (then) reborn there, may I never attain to right enlightened intuition, unless (the said persons are guilty of) the five cardinal sins or of maligning the Right Dharma.

This, called the 'vow to be reborn through Buddha-recollection', is the one that subsequently, in the Pure Land doctrine of both China and Japan, has come to be regarded as the most important of the forty-eight. It is a well-known fact that the basis of Hōnen's and Shinran's 'salvation through the might of Another' is to be found in the wording of this vow. In philological terms, however, a text identical to this one is not to be found in any other version. On the other hand, in these other versions there are texts that partially, at least, do match this one, whereas, in the importance they attach to the view of rebirth in the Pure Land in response to Buddha-recollection, the agreement among the different versions is virtually complete. Thus, while, in respect of the unequivocal emphasis laid by this eighteenth vow upon rebirth in the Pure Land in response to Buddha-recollection, this eighteenth vow is, in a sense, unique, the sense of it, at least, must surely have taken shape in the original form of the text of the 'preliminary vows'.

Now, whereas the notion of 'preliminary vows', when seen through the eyes of the present day, may seem to be peculiar to Pure Land doctrine, this is by no means the case. For, while, upon examining other scriptures of the Greater Vehicle, one will observe that, when the practices of a bodhisattva are mentioned, these latter do not necessarily take the form of preliminary vows, in one sense or another there is, more often than not, reference to vows. By compiling them, one sees that they fall into two classes, those common to bodhisattvas in general and those unique to particular bodhisattvas. For example, in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* and *Daśabhūmika* there is mention of a variety of general vows taken by bodhisattvas, while others specify the varied vows of particular individuals, of bodhisattvas such as Akṣobhya, Avalokiteśvara, Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī, Maitreya and Kṣitigarbha and of Buddhas such as Bhaiṣajyaguru and Śākyamuni. When the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* mentions

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the vows of Dharmākara, thanks to which he became Amida Buddha, this is but one example of the latter class.

A comparative examination of these vows, of the general and of the particular, will make it clear that the base on which they stand is the same, that the descriptions of them belong to the same doctrinal lineage. Still, if asked which of these pronouncements is the most systematized, in terms both of form and of content, in answer to the question one must cite the doctrine of the preliminary vow propounded in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*.

It is possible to trace this genealogy historically as well. In purely philological terms, in the earliest Buddhist texts, preserved in Pāli, one finds frequent use of the word *paṇidhi*, akin to Sanskrit *praṇidhāna* and used in the same sense. Apart from this, the word *kratu*, 'intention', used similarly, is endowed with great significance in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads*, texts that antedate Buddhism. The origin of the notion of the 'vow' is older by far than one thinks.

A look even at the literature of Sectarian Buddhism, which had already appeared before that of the Greater Vehicle took shape, will reveal forerunners of the doctrine of the 'preliminary vow'. A good example is the vow taken by Gautama in the Dīpaṃkara story found in the literature of virtually all the schools. It must be admitted that the vows of the Bodhisattva, in Sectarian Buddhism, are virtually confined to the previous lives of Gautama, something that does not easily lend itself to identification of them with the vows of a bodhisattva in the framework of the Greater Vehicle, and that the former give no evidence of any extensive development. All the same, if seen from a sufficiently varied point of view, it become obvious that a quest in Sectarian Buddhism for the lineage of the notions of the Pure Land in terms of the Greater Vehicle is far from unreasonable.

3. The concept of the 'Extremely Delightful Pure Land'

The world sphere realized through the preliminary vows of Amida Buddha is called, in the Far East, the 'Extremely Delightful Pure Land' (*chi lo ching t'u* in Chinese, pronouced *gokuraku jōdo* in Japanese). What sort of 'world sphere' is it?

The expression 'extreme delight' (*chi lo*, *gokuraku* in J.), first used by Kumārajīva, as an equivalent of *Sukhāvatī*, 'joyous [realm]', corresponds to different words in other Chinese versions, words such as *an lo* (*anraku* in J.) 'secure delight', and *an yang* (*annyō* in J.) 'secure nurture'. In what sense is it a 'joyous realm'? The Pure Land scriptures describe the scenery from a variety of angles. That of the Smaller

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Sukhāvatīvyūha is, in paraphrase, about as follows:

The Extremely Delightful Pure Land, separated from us by several hundreds of thousands, or tens of millions (Kumārajīva has *shin wan yi*, which could as easily mean 10,000,000,000 as 10,000,000,000,000) of Buddha-lands, is a place presently inhabited by Amida Buddha, who is there preaching the Dharma. In that place there is no pain, whether physical or mental (emotional or spiritual), for there no one experiences anything but pleasure. It is adorned by such things as seven kinds of handrails and a great variety of precious stones. Its soil being of pure gold, it has ponds replete with seven kinds of gems and with plenty of water, on which float lotuses, blue, yellow, red and white in colour, and under which is gold dust instead of sand, in addition to stairways made of precious stones and to many other splendid things. The ponds are surrounded by blossoming trees, made of the aforementioned seven gems instead of wood. There is an endless symphony of divine music and an equally endless precipitation of celestial flowers, the latter taking place thrice daily. The very chirping of the birds reaches one with the sound of the Buddha preaching the Dharma. The wind blowing through the *tāla* trees and touching the bells on the nets produces cheering sounds of its own. These sounds consistently induce in their hearers thoughts of the Three Jewels, that is, of Buddha, of Dharma and of Saṃgha (the monastic community). In that land one hears not even the names of Hell, of *pretas* (disembodied spirits condemned to eternal hunger), of beasts or of *Yama* (the guardian of Hell). The disciples of the Buddha dwelling in the land are beyond number and limit, as are those who have attained the status of arhat. The same is true of bodhisattvas, while only two words are fit to characterize those among these latter who shall never backslide (*avinivartanīya*) and those who shall attain Buddhahood in their very next lifetime (*ekajātipratibaddha*); the words are 'incalculable' and 'innumerable'.

The Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* reproduces the above in greater detail and with recourse to far more words. What is evident in these descriptions is the notion of an ideal world as portrayed by the compilers of the Pure Land scriptures.

Now how was the above-described concept formed? The first thing to strike one, in this regard, is the frequent evidence of analogous concepts in scriptures of the Greater Vehicle other than those of the Pure Land. If one chooses to look, for example, at the city of Gandhavatī ('fragrant') in the *Aṣṭasāhaśrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, at the multitude of various Buddha-lands in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, at the pleasure gardens and cities in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, at the world called Abhirati ('joy, delight') in the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, or at other such, one will find there descriptions bearing astounding

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resemblances to those of the Pure Land. One may conclude only that the notion of 'extreme delight' was a concept not limited to the scriptures of the Pure Land but common to the Greater Vehicle as a whole. The fact that, although the descriptions given in the Pure Land scriptures are more detailed and systematic than those found elsewhere, the concept itself, in the light of the Greater Vehicle as a whole, is not a unique one is something to be kept constantly in mind when discussing the origin of the concept itself.

Now, where this latter is concerned, the number of learned theories is almost as great as that of the learned theoreticians. As stated already in the case of Amida Buddha, the accounts in both East and West tend to fall into two groups, those seeking an Indian origin and those seeking a source outside of India. Of the latter, some look to Zoroastrianism as a source, some to the Garden of Eden; in both cases the evidence is so feeble that it is hard to take it seriously. As to the former, it too falls into two subgroups, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, among both of which there are opinions that do, in fact, merit serious attention. Taking these into account, one is obliged to formulate one's views along lines both philological and mythological or, to put it in Latin, Greek and German, to resort to both *Textkritik* and *Märchenforschung*. In my own view, the greater part of the material from which the notion of 'extreme delight' was derived was a body of myths existing in India since earliest times, myths such as those of the 'wheel-turning king' (*cakravartin*), of the continent of *Uttarakuru* and of the heavens of various deities, in addition to connection with concepts idealizing the *stūpa*, the shrine housing relics of the Buddha, whether real or imagined. What the compilers of the scriptures of the Greater Vehicle did was, presumably, to portray an idealized world by pulling together all of this material.

What has just been said refers, of course, to a quest for the origin of the 'extremely delightful' in terms of the physical setting of the Pure Land itself, while, where the description of the Buddha and of His disciples, chief among whom are bodhisattvas, is concerned, one must pursue a different course. In respect of these latter, one is entitled to the view that the portrayal is based on the idealized image of the bodhisattva and on the view of the Buddha's disciples already maturing by that time within the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle as a whole.

Why, then, should the 'extremely delightful' be portrayed in this way as an ideal world? The answer probably lies in the concrete representation of the idea of a 'pure land' common to the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle in general. As already stated, the expression 'pure land' is of Chinese origin, *ching t'u* signifying either that or

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'purified land' or, in other words, a world resulting from the act of 'purifying a realm'. By this latter is meant that, in terms of the Greater Vehicle, all bodhisattvas, due to be Buddhas in time to come, purify the respective lands in which this is to take place or, in other words, enable the living beings who make up those realms, all without exception, to enter upon the path of purity, or again, in yet other words, to perfect the Path of the Buddha. This means the fulfilment of the vows of achieving their own weal and that of others, also of the practice that goes with this, the realization of the ideal of the bodhisattva path. This is, consequently, a demonstration of the basic ideas of the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle, meaning that the 'pure land' thus realized is a manifestation of the Buddha's realm of enlightened intuition.

By the 'extremely delightful' is meant nothing other than the Pure Land in the sense just specified. It is a sphere realized by the fulfilment of the vows taken by Amida Buddha when He was still the bodhisattva Dharmākara, the meaning of which is made even clearer by the word *nirvāṇadhātusaukhya*, the 'joy of the realm of *nirvāṇa*'. One must conclude, then, that the elaborate descriptions of the Extremely Delightful Pure Land are but concrete demonstrations of the perfect purity of the sphere of enlightened intuition. One might phrase it more simply by calling It a depiction in form of something essentially formless. This is also why the Extremely Delightful Pure Land is declared to be physically located in the West. While it is said to be in the West since its distance from here is calculated to be beyond ten thousand millions, or even ten million millions, of Buddha-lands, one concludes that considerations of space are essentially irrelevant to it. The fact remains, however, that the assignment to that land of a well-defined space in a specific direction, that of the West, is proof of the idea of a Pure Land in concrete terms. The name itself, *sukhāvatī*, 'joyous', has, without question, to do with the absolute joy, in the religious sense, of enlightened intuition, but its description in terms of relative wordly joy, as relative as anything must be in this world, represents a very skillful use of the name. For it is surely through the representation of 'extreme delight' by resort to concrete expressions that the world of the Buddha, the sphere of His enlightened intuition, becomes accessible to large numbers of human beings. It is thus possible to take the view that the 'extremely delightful' is a classic expression of the perception or view of the Pure Land within the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle, demonstrating a religious idea in a new form, one not present in Sectarian Buddhism or in Early Buddhism.

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4. Rebirth and Buddha-recollection

The aim of the scriptures of the Pure Land was to tell of rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land described above. The notion of rebirth, as seen in the verbs *utpadyate*, *upapadyate* and *pratyājāyate*, corresponds to a variety of nouns, of finite verbs and of participles formed from the roots *pad* and *jan*, both indicating birth. What does it mean to be 'born' in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land? It means to attain to enlightened intuition, to achieve Buddhahood. This is clear from the fact that the Extremely Delightful Pure Land is an expression of the sphere of the Buddha's enlightened intuition. This explains why such a wide variety of statements of the matter is to be found in the scriptures of the Pure Land. Thus, in the original form of Amida Buddha's vows one sees expressed wishes such as that anyone reborn in the Extremely Delightful World Sphere may, without fail, attain to *nirvāṇa*, become a Buddha in his next life, endowed with all of the distinguishing physical features, most notably the thirty-two primary marks — all of this clear proof that rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land means the perfection of the bodhisattva path in terms of the Greater Vehicle, eventuating in the certain achievement of Buddhahood. To resort to the expressions used in the original, the wish that others may be reborn in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land is a wish that, before that, they may 'raise up their thought to unexcelled, right and perfect enlightened intuition' (*anuttarāyāṃ samyak-saṃbodhau cittam utpādya*), then, once born there, that they may never backslide from the said enlightened intuition (*avaivarttikāś ca bhaviṣyanty anuttarāyāḥ samyak-saṃbodheḥ*).

It must be pointed out that rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land, described above, is, in the terms of the scriptures of the Pure Land, something to be realized in one's next life. The Extremely Delightful Pure Land may indeed be in essence something absolute, transcending time and space, but it is presented to us as a world having form, situated in a space well to the West of us. Thus, if it is to be comprehended in terms of time, since we are not there at present, it follows that it must be situated in the future, in one of our next lives. It may well be a sphere transcending currents of time represented in words such as 'present' and 'future', but arrival thither becomes possible only after death. This is what is meant by using the word 'birth' to refer to the act of going to the Extremely Delightful Pure Land.

The word 'birth', however, as used in the present context, does not mean what it would mean with reference to members of the animal kingdom in this world of ours. This is why the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* speaks of such beings as 'born through transformation'

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(*upapāduka*, *aupapāduka*, rendered into Chinese with *hua sheng*, pronounced *keshō* in Japanese). The meaning of this term is the sudden appearance of anything, independently of anything else, through some inscrutable force. As a technical term, the word in question was well established in the Buddhist vocabulary from the earliest times as the last member of the traditional catalogue of the four kinds of birth, the first three reputed to be 'from an egg' (*aṇḍaja*, appearing in Chinese as *luan sheng*, pronounced *ranshō* in Japanese), 'from a womb' (*jarāyuja*, *t'ai sheng, taishō*) and 'from moisture' (*saṃsvedaja*, *shih sheng, shisshō*). This fourth one, used to refer to the 'rebirth in Heaven' (*sheng t'ien*, *shōten*), seems to have been adopted by the Pure Land scriptures to be applied to rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land.

In general, it is clear that the origin of the idea of rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land is due to the influence of the abovementioned early Buddhist notion of 'rebirth in Heaven'. Still, inasmuch as this latter idea, confined as it is to the world of transmigration (*saṃsāra*), is clearly delineated from all thought of deliverance, this cannot mean that the notion of rebirth in Heaven developed, simply and without further ado, into that of rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land. While having its base in the idea of rebirth in Heaven, still, since it is something related, in respect of deliverance, to the thought of rebirth in the Pure Land, it would be as well, in this regard, to consider another idea present in Buddhism from the very beginning, that of the 'Four Fruits' of the Buddhist monastic practitioner (*catvāri śrāmaṇyaphalāni*, known in Chinese as *ssu sha-men kuo*, pronounced *shi shamon ka* in Japanese). This is a collective name for the 'stream winner' (*srota'āpanna*, translated into Chinese as *yü liu*, pronounced *yoru* in Japanese), 'once returner' (*sakṛdāgāmin*, *yi lai, ichirai*), 'non-returner' (*anāgāmin*, *pu huan*, *fugen*) and arhat, referring to a process of religious practice including the expectation of deliverance in a future life through the intermediary of rebirth in Heaven, and it is here that the doctrinal model for rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land is seen.

Now, how does this rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land become possible? In this connection, the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* speaks of such rebirth in the case of three kinds of persons. This represents a threefold division into upper, middle and lower of those who desire rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land, the division being based on the respective quality of the various practices that made this rebirth possible. A fact worthy of note is that a practice declared to be common to all is that of recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti*, *nien fo*, *nembutsu*), a practice whose efficacy is almost never alleged to be in proportion to the class of practitioner.

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This demonstrates that in the earliest Pure Land thought the motive was to place Buddha-recollection at the centre of practices leading to rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land. Even what appears in the so-called Saṃghavarman Chinese version as the eighteenth vow, already quoted, I presume to have had nothing to do with the threefold division just mentioned, but it is what came to represent in the clearest form the declaration, as is evidenced by the name under which it is commonly known, the 'vow of rebirth through Buddha-recollection', that Buddha-recollection is at the very centre of rebirth in the Pure Land.

When my countrymen speak today of 'Buddha-recollection' (*nembutsu*), they tend to think of it almost as a pronoun, so to speak, for the Pure Land doctrine, but the term and idea behind it are by no means the monopoly of that school. The idea is one common to all of Buddhism, one preached within all of its tendencies. This is why it is possible to seek the origin of the Buddha-recollection preached in the Pure Land scriptures within that found in Early Buddhism, why it is possible to gain a clear image of its original form by correlating it with the traditional interpretations given of it in Sectarian Buddhism and with the statements made about it in the earliest scriptures of the Greater Vehicle.

'Buddha-recollection' as understood within the scope of Pure Land doctrine in China and Japan is taken to mean invocation of the name (*ch'eng ming*, *shōmyō*) of Amida Buddha, a sense given it by the Chinese master Shan-tao and to which we will come back later.

Now, in the Pure Land scriptures themselves, the 'objective' proof of the efficacy of the practices consisting chiefly of Buddha-recollection for achieving rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land is declared to be the arrival of the Amida Buddha at the hour of the practitioner's death to welcome him personally. To be more specific, at the hour of death of those who recollect Amida Buddha and/or of those who have stored up merit, Amida Buddha, surrounded by many disciples, makes His appearance to receive the person in question, after his death, into the Extremely Delightful Pure Land. In terms of content, while on the one hand fulfilling the hope of being able to behold Amida Buddha in this life, on the other it is a proof of the certainty of rebirth, in the next, in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land. As such it assumes positively dramatic quality, the role assigned it being very great in the genesis and unfolding of the Pure Land idea. As already mentioned, in Japanese Pure Land paintings as well, an important area is occupied by portraits of the arrival of Amida Buddha to receive the faithful. Thus, while the first predictions of the said arrival and of the events

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attending it are to be traced to the compilers of the Pure Land scriptures who so vigorously stressed rebirth in the Extremely Delightful Pure Land, where their origin is concerned, there can be virtually no mistake that these were heir to forerunners in the earliest Buddhist scriptures and even in Brāhmanical literature.

5. The forms of faith

The question of faith occupies a position of extreme importance in Pure Land thought; hence, one is motivated to inquire into the form or forms in which faith is presented in the Pure Land scriptures. When I say 'faith', I mean what appears in the Chinese versions as *hsin*, pronounced *shin* in Japanese. The modern Japanese word corresponding most closely to English 'faith' is *shinkō* (pronounced *hsin yang* in Mandarin Chinese), a word which, with very few exceptions, was not in use in the Buddhist scriptures in Chinese translation. Where the translations of Pure Land scriptures are concerned, apart from the word *hsin* itself one finds words such as *hsin hsin*, 'believing heart' (pronounced *shinjin* in Japanese), *hsin yao*, 'belief-desire' (*shin-gyō in J.*) and *hsin shou*, 'beliving acceptance' (*shinju in J.*), but *hsin yang* (*shinkō*) is nowhere in use. This is a point particularly worthy of note.

Now, to make clear the forms of faith in the Pure Land scriptures, the surest method is to examine it with reference to the original. A search for the Sanskrit underlying the Chinese words just mentioned will reveal a variety of correspondences.

First to be cited are *śraddhā* and its cognates. Apart from the noun *śraddhā* just mentioned there are the adjective *śrāddha* and the verb *śraddhatte*, then, with the prefix of *abhi-* ('with regard to', 'superior to'), another verb, *abhiśraddadhāti*. The noun *śraddhā*, whose literal meaning is 'placement of truth', has been, since as long ago as the *Ṛgveda*, the word most commonly used in the sense of 'faith' or of 'trust'. (It is also cognate with Latin *credo*, 'I believe', from which are derived English words such as 'creed, credit, credible', etc.) In Buddhism as well, it was the word most commonly used, from the very beginning, to express the idea of 'belief', in respect of which the Pure Land scriptures are no different from any of the others.

Another word is *prasāda*, appearing in the Pure Land scriptures as a noun alongside of *prasanna*, the past participle cognate with it. *Prasāda* appears in Chinese as *ch'eng ching*, pronounced *chōjō* in Japanese and interpreted to mean 'limpid purity', 'quiet joy, complacency' or even 'pure faith'. Originally, however, the meaning of 'faith' or of 'belief' was not associated with this word. On the other hand, the fact that the word is now in use in those very senses is felt to corroborate the view that the

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'faith' of the Pure Land scriptures has an essentially serene, introspective nature, that it is not anything hotheaded or fanatical. It is therefore noteworthy that the word *hsin yao* appearing in the eighteenth vow in the so-called Saṃghavarman Chinese version is felt to correspond to *prasāda* or to a word cognate with it.

Another word is *adhimukti*, a word which in that (noun) form does not appear in the Pure Land scriptures, while its cognates, namely, the adjective *adhimuktika*, the finite verb *adhimucyate* and the past participle *adhimukta*, do. While the original meaning seems to have been 'to turn one's thought to ···', the traditional Buddhist interpretation has understood it to refer to the mental act of judgment and of understanding with regard to a given object, as much as to say of it, 'It is thus and not otherwise.' Hence, the use of the word in the sense of 'faith' or of 'belief' shows that those who did so saw the content of that faith or belief as something pronouncedly intellectual. The Chinese translators render the word with *hsin chieh*, pronounced *shinge* in Japanese, and with *sheng chieh*, pronounced *shōge* in Japanese. *Hsin* means 'faith' and *sheng* means 'superior', but *chieh* can mean both 'understanding' and 'deliverance'.

There are two Sanskrit verbs in addition to the above, namely, *avakalpayati* and *pattīyati*, but it is the others, previously mentioned, that represent, in the Pure Land scriptures, the words underlying Chinese *hsin*. The Pure Land scriptures, by resort to the variety of words seen above, stress in a variety of forms this faith in Amida Buddha, preaching its function in relation to wisdom (*prajñā*) and to contemplation (*dhyāna*).

Now an examination of the etymology of the words for 'faith' used in original texts of the Pure Land scriptures shows unmistakably that they accepted the role of this faith as inherited from Buddhism in its earliest form. The fact that these key words were used in the same way in Early Buddhism as well becomes clear through a comparison of them with their Pāli analogues, *saddhā*, *pasāda* and *adhimutti*, as used in the Theravāda canon. In particular, the use of the words *prasāda* and *adhimukti* in the Pure Land scriptures to signify 'faith' is plain evidence of their succession to the earliest Buddhist doctrine where the forms of faith were concerned. The reason one says this is that the use of these two words to signify 'faith' is almost unknown in any of India's other religious systems, being distinguished by and for its first appearance in Buddhism, and in Early Buddhism at that.

The acceptance by the Pure Land scriptures of the notion of 'faith' in undiluted form from Buddhism in its earliest guise is corroborated by the total absence of the

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word *bhakti*. This latter word is an expression, in Indian thought in general, of an intense, self-sacrificing commitment, well known for its appearance in the *Bhagavadgītā*, that paragon of the Hindu classical tradition, where such a commitment to the supreme god Viṣṇu is much touted. To be sure, the word *bhakti* (*bhatti* in its Pāli form) is known even in Early Buddhism, but use of the word is infrequent, and there was no great eagerness to accept it. It is most unlikely that *bhakti* was unknown to the compilers of the Pure Land scriptures, but they made no use of the word. This fact is another proof that 'faith', in the terms of the Pure Land scriptures, was an heir to the tradition of 'faith' in Early Buddhism.

It goes without saying that 'faith' as it appears in the earliest Buddhist scriptures was not a one-for-one copy of faith as it occurred in Early Buddhism itself. There are respects in which the position on faith in Early Buddhism has been ignored, as well as some in which new doctrines not preached in Early Buddhim have been interpolated. By this I mean that the compilers of the Pure Land scriptures have ignored what Early Buddhism does have to say about faith, while in some cases they impute to Early Buddhism notions of faith that the latter never had. All the same, a comparison of the form of faith in the two will reveal that there are certain basic features common to both. In that sense it may be said that faith, as it appears in the Pure Land scriptures, is an heir to the 'faith' present in Early Buddhism itself, that and nothing else.

6. Conclusion

The outline just given of original Pure Land ideas, with particular attention to their connections with Early Buddhism, should, presumably, have made possible a general inquiry into the principal currents of this Pure Land thought. It also seems to me that I have contrived to provide answers to some of the questions and to settle some doubts concerning these ideas as I have described them. If these assumptions are valid, I feel entitled to speak of the possibility of seeking the main currents of Pure Land thought within the broader currents of Buddhism as a whole, beginning with Early Buddhism itself, and to say that, in those terms, Pure Land thought is, within the scope of Buddhist ideas in general, far from being a unique doctrine.

It should go without saying, however, that Pure Land ideas, inasmuch as they made their appearance on one wing, so to speak, of the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle, do not occcupy a doctrinal position identical with those of Early Buddhism or of Sectarian Buddhism. From the structure of the doctrine itself, one is obliged to say

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that it has many and much closer ties to other forms of Mahāyāna thought. It is also to be presumed that, by the time Pure Land ideas took final form, a number of varied external elements had inserted themselves into their midst. That Pure Land ideas are — in part, at least — in profound contact with Indian thought in general is a matter on which I have already touched to a certain extent. In the same way, one must surely take into account the possibility of contact with foreign ideas making their way into India at the time of the formation of Pure Land ideas themselves. On the other hand, since the theories hitherto propounded of the foreign origin of Amida Buddha, or of the Extremely Delightful Pure Land, are so fraught with difficulties as to make them virtually unacceptable, the foreign connection should not be exaggerated or, at any rate, insisted on beyond what is necessary. While the abovementioned quests, whatever the angle from which they are made, are entitled to a respectful hearing, each in its own terms, one still feels that, if one takes the doctrines and the scriptural formulations of the original Pure Land ideas as seen above, one should be able to find the source of these ideas, broadly speaking, by going back to the mainstream of Buddhism as it has been since the very beginning. One is justified in saying that these Pure Land ideas, having, in the most fundamental sense, a profound connection with the original Buddhist doctrines, came into being through an internal and locally necessary development.

III The Development of the Pure Land Idea

1. In India

The Pure Land ideas that took shape in the original form of the two versions of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* later, with the passage of time, experienced much development. Viewed geographically, what is at issue here is a Pure Land doctrine whose mainstream flowed from India through Central Asia into China and thence into Korea and into Japan. While the process that took it from India through Central Asia into China has much about it that — in scholarly terms, at least — is unclear, one now attempts to describe the general outline.

As already stated, from iconic inscription discovered in the region of Mathura it is known as a matter of undisputed fact that as early as the second century of our era an Amida Buddha cult existed on the soil of India. Where textual evidence is concerned, if one conducts one's investigations among the extant Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures and treatises, there are approximately two hundred and ninety works mentioning Amida Buddha and/or His Pure Land, amounting to 21.5% of the

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approximately 1,350 Mahāyāna works contained in the first thirty-two volumes of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, clear evidence of the fact that Pure Land ideas had spread far and wide throughout the Indian Buddhist world.

Indian Buddhism, with the passage of time, tended, in general, towards esotericism, a tendency to which history bears evidence and one to which Pure Land thought was no exception. By the latter half of the seventh century, in two of the cardinal esoteric scriptures, the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* and the *Vajraśekharasūtra*, Amida Buddha is seen as one of five Buddhas in a pentad of the patrons of Esoteric Buddhism, Vairocana being at the centre, something that tells us that Pure Land ideas had already been absorbed into Esoteric Buddhism.

Thus, in India itself there survives evidence of the broad development of Pure Land ideas, but, in the process of their development, there appeared a small number of doctrinal treatises that exerted a great influence on the Pure Land doctrine that made its way into Central Asia and into China.

First to be specifically mentioned are doctrinal writings ascribed to Nāgārjuna, who some time in the second and third centuries laid the philosophic foundations for the idea of Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) as it apears in the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle. Within this vast number of works, two that catch the eye, where Pure Land ideas are concerned, both translated by Kumārajīva, are the 'Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom' (*Ta chih-tu lun*) and the 'Discussion of the Ten Stages' (*Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā*), most notable being the 'Chapter on Easy Passage' (*Yi-hsing p'in*, pronounced *Igyō hon* in Japanese), contained in the fifth roll of the latter. As stated therein, the passage of the bodhisattva from the first stage to that of the non-backslider is a difficult one, to be likened to passage over land on foot, while, for a person of inferior endowments, the same is made as easy as a boat going through water, if one does so by recourse to faith. This path easily traversed consists of intoning the names of different Buddhas, most notably that of Amida Buddha, the geatest stress being laid upon the recollection of Him and upon the consequent repetition of His Name. This point of view determines the relative position of Pure Land thought, placing it, within the total Buddhist framework, on the side of the Path of Easy Passage, as opposed to that of Difficult Passage, with which it identified the rest of Buddhism. Then, once the Chinese monk T'an-luan made the issue clearer yet with his comparison of the two paths, hard and easy, the influence of this notion of the Pure Land doctrine, from then on, was enormous. Since, however, there is nothing in the Sanskrit text or in the Tibetan translations to correspond to this, there is some room for doubt, in terms of

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the content itself, as to whether it is in fact the work of Nāgārjuna, that great spokesman of the idea of Emptiness. It is not a matter of certainty with regard to the presumed actual text of the Pure Land scriptures; at least, there is no evidence that would lead one to presume the existence of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*.

After Nāgārjuna, it is Asaṅga (fourth and fifth centuries), who in one of his doctrinal treatises, the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, mentions Pure Land ideas. The said work, a sort of encyclopaedic Buddhist treatise, composed from the point of view of the Yogācāra school, does not survive in the original, but its authorship is not in doubt. There, the view that the mere wish to be reborn in Sukhāvatī suffices to make such rebirth possible is said to be, in Chinese, a *pieh shih yi* or, in Tibetan, a *dus gzhan la dgoṅs pa*, restored to an original *kālāntarābhiprāya*. By this is meant that the Buddha, in order to induce diligence in an otherwise lazy multitude, tells them that the fruit of Buddhahood, which actually is attainable only in the distant future, may be had right now; in other words, according to the same view, that it is nothing more than an attractive device. This is, beyond any doubt, a statement from one who takes a critical, deprecatory view of the idea of the Pure Land. On the other hand, the view taken in the said work of rebirth in the Pure Land bears a close resemblance to the statements made in the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha*.

Next to be mentioned in this connection is a person roughly contemporaneus with Asaṅga, namely, Vasubandhu, also presumed to have lived in the fourth and fifth centuries. Asaṅga's younger brother, he first belonged to the Sarvāstivāda school, a school of the so-called Lesser Vehicle, from which he was won over by his brother's persuasive arguments, proceeding to become a great Yogācāra systematizer. From his commentary to the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, in which he reproduces the above-mentioned *kālāntarābhiprāya* doctrine, but only to expand it and to elucidate it further, it is evident that his theroretical position was the same as that of his brother. Vasubandhu, however, is credited with a Pure Land work commonly known in Chinese under the title of *Ching-t'u lun* or of *Wang-sheng lun*. (The full Chinese title suggests a possible *Sukhāvatīvyūhopadeśa*, translated by Bodhiruci.) The book, beginning with verses of prayer for rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha, follows with prose commentary divided into five sections or 'gateways', the Five Gateways of Recollection (*wu nien men*, *go nen mon* in Japanese), namely, those of worship (*li pai*, *rai hai*), of praise (*tsan t'an*, *san dan*), of the taking of vows (*tso yüan*, *sa gan*), of contemplation (*kuan ch'a*, *kan zatsu*) and of transferring of one's merit to others (*hui hsiang*, *e kō*) in the fourth of which there is a detailed statement, based on the verses, of the splendid

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appearance of Amida Buddha's land and of its Buddha and bodhisattvas. The usual view is that this is an elaboration on Pure Land ideas from the standpoint of Yogācāra; be that as it may, this is the only doctrinal treatise in all of Indian Buddhism that explicates Pure Land thought in an organized, systematic fashion. The role of this work, one may say, was, in contrast to the abovementioned 'Chapter on Easy Passage', addressed as it was to persons of inferior faculties, to place Pure Land ideas on a high plane, as representing the path of the bodhisattva in terms of the Greater Vehicle. In the event, thanks to T'an-luan and to his commentary, alternately entitled *Ching-t'u lun-chu* and *Wang-sheng lun-chu*, the work in question came to exert a decisive influence on Pure Land doctrine in both China and Japan. On the other hand, in the absence of both a Sanskrit original and a Tibetan translation and, where content is concerned, in the light of the touting of Pure Land thought on the part of a Vasubandhu who elsewhere declared himself a successor of the *kālāntarābhiprāya* theory, one must allow room for doubt as to the ascription of authorship. Again, since the work poses as an *upadeśa* (commentary) on the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, whose text, as now accessible, differs in places from the one quoted, the facts of the case are not quite clear. There is a view of long standing that the base of the commentary is, rather, the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, but there is no solid proof of that either.

The principal exegetical work related to Pure Land ideas is the one just described, demonstrating that, however unclearly, it is possible to retrace the steps of the two *Sukhāvatīvyūha* versions in India. There is another, however, pointing to the existence in that country of an original underlying the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. This means that it is open to grave doubt whether or not one is entitled to assign to the said work a proper place wihtin the development of Pure Land ideas in India. The whole question of the origin of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* must then be reopened for examination.

2. The problem of the origin of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*

Tradition has it that the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* (pronounced *Kan muryōju kyō* in Japanese) was translated by a Central Asian whose very name, Chiang liang yeh she (Kyōryōyasha in J.), presumed to go back to Kālayaśas (approximately 383-442), is open to some question, then taken down in writing by a Chinese monk named Seng-han. 'Taken down in writing' respresents the Chinese expression *pi shou* (*hitsu ju* in J.), which can as easily refer to embellishment of the Chinese style as to actual translation into Chinese; it is safe to say that the translation was the joint work of the

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two men. From the 'Lives of Eminent Monks' (*Kao-seng chuan, Kōsō den* in J.) compiled by Hui-chiao (497-554), one dates the translation at some time between 430 and 442. As may be concluded from what has already been said, this places it anywhere between twenty-eight years and forty years after Kumārajīva, who, in the vicinity of 402, produced his own translation of the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, somewhere between nine years and twenty-one years after Buddhabhadra and Pao-yün, in 421, did their translation of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, a translation attributed to Saṃghavarman. In other words, it was the last of the 'Three Pure Land Scriptures' to be produced in China, appearing, like the other two, in the former half of the fifth century.

Now this scripture exists only in this one form, there being no Sanskrit orginal and no other translations, whether Tibetan or Chinese. To be sure, fragments of three different Uighur versions do exist, but, since none of them is anything other than a retranslation of the abovementioned Chinese text, they shed absolutely no light on the presumed original. Given the circumstances, the case of this text, being so different form those of the two versions of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, is enough to occasion grave doubts as to the Indian origin of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*.

It should go without saying that there are Buddhist writings, lost in the original and surviving though only in a single Chinese version, with no Tibetan parallel, whose Indian origin has never been questioned. In the case of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, on the other hand, there are several questionable points in addition to the ones just mentioned. One now cites only two or three of most general.

First to be mentioned is the existence of another test alleged, in a manner similar to the above, to have been translated into Chinese by this same Kālayaśas, one entitled 'Scripture of the Contemplation of Two Bodhisattvas, King of Medicine (Bhaiṣajyarāja) and Above Medicine (Bhaiṣajyasamudgata)', *Kuan yao-wang yao-shang erh p'u-sa ching* and, like the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, having no Sanskrit orginal, no Tibetan version and no alternate Chinese translations. The same may be said to apply to virtually all of the Chinese translations of scriptures of 'Buddha-contemplation', such as the 'Sea of Buddha-samādhi' (*Kuan fo sam-mei hai ching*, translated by Buddhabhadra, 358-429), the 'Dharma-conduct of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra' (*Kuan p'u-hsien p'u-sa hsing-fa ching*, translated by Dharmamitra, 356-442), the 'Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha' (*Kuan hsü-k'ung-tsang p'u-sa ching*, same translator) and the 'Ascent of the Bodhisattva Maitreya into the Heaven of the Tuṣita Gods' (*Kuan mi-lo p'u-sa shang-sheng t'u-shuai-t'ien ching*, translated by the sinicized non-Chinese layman whose Chinese name was Chü-ch'ü Ching-sheng, d. 464). While it is true that there are two

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recensions of a Tibetan translation of the last named, those of Sde-dge and of Lhasa, they are in fact retranslations made from the Chinese, proof that Tibet was never in possession of a Sanskrit text of the same. In the light of the nature of these scriptures just named, it may not be dismissed as mere accident that there does not exist a Sanskrit text for the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*.

As in the case of the scripture just named, so in that of all the others, where the word *kuan* (rendered above the 'contemplation') occurs in the title, there is no way of knowing with certainty to what Indian word, if to any, this Chinese word corresponds. While this same *kuan*, as a technical term, renders Sanskrit *vipaśyanā*, usually appearing in English as 'insight', given the context, the greater likelihood, according to some, would be *dhyāna*, 'contemplation', or even *anusmṛti*, 'recollection'. However, as said before, there can be no certainty in the matter. Although, admittedly, the titles of Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures are not limited to word-for-word renditions of the originals underlying them, the title of this particular Chinese text is one of the grounds for uncertainty.

Another thing is that, if the ascription of the 'translation' of this work is taken at face value, the 'original' behind it would have been complete by the year 400 at the latest, yet, as already stated, there is no evidence for the existence of such a scripture in India itself by this time.

It thus becomes very difficult to ascribe Indian origin to the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. It is in view of these circumstances that one proposes Central Asian origin, or even Chinese origin, for this text. Since there is not, here and now, the time or the leisure needed to spell out the theoretical proofs in detail, I content myself with summarizing what I have said in a book which I devote to the subject, a book entitled *Kan muryōju kyō kōkyū* ("A Study of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*", Kyoto, 1985), in which I take, so to speak, a compromise position between the alternatives. To be more specific, while in a variety of respects Chinese elements are in evidence, one cannot find decisive proof entitling one to conclude that the whole thing came form China. The general outline, at least, seems to have been drawn around methods of contemplation current somewhere in Central Asia, possibly in Turfan. However, since the colophonic material plainly says that, as Kālayaśas translated it, the Chinese monk Seng-han took it down in writing, by 'translation' is probably meant oral interpretation, in the written rendition of which a variety of scriptural translations already in existence in China were presumably drawn upon in order to endow the final product with additional Chinese colour and flavour, in respect of such things as

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thought content and expression, thus converting it into a religious message that looked, for all the world, like something drawn up, originally, in China itself. When I spoke, a few moments ago, of a 'compromise position', I meant it in the sense that there are elements supporting both theories, that of Central Asian origin and that of Chinese origin. While my position is, indeed, open to the charge that it lacks crystal clarity, in the absence of definitive proof meeting scholarly standards, and at the present stage of our knowledge, it does seem the most fitting.

The content of the scripture in question, if greatly simplified, would be as follows: In response to a request from Vaidehī, who knows that her son, Ajātaśatru, king of Rājagṛha (modern Rajgir, meaning 'king's house'), plans to kill both her and her husband, the Buddha first demonstrates the three kinds of merit (Chinese *san fu*) necessary for rebirth in Sukhāvatī; then explains at length thirteen different ways of contemplating the said land, as well as Amida Buddha Who presides over it; next proceeds to preach, by recourse to three methods, nine modes of rebirth there; finally proclaims the idea of rebirth in the Pure Land in the form of 'sixteen views'. In terms of the idea of the Pure Land it gives evidence of a form well in advance over the two versions of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, while differing from them in its clear advocacy of intonation of the holy Name in place of Buddha-contemplation or -recollection. It is thanks to the appearance of this writing that Pure Land ideas took such deep root in China, there to experience the development that they did.

3. Developments in China

It is in the latter half of the second century, under the reign of the Latter Han, that Pure Land ideas were first introduced into China, with the translation by Lokakṣema, a monk of Yüeh-chih origin whose principle missionary activity ranged from 178 to 189, of the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*, whose subject, as indicated in the title, is a form of concentration resulting in the appearance of Buddhas before one's very eyes. Among these Buddhas special mention is reserved for Amida Buddha dwelling to the West in Sukhāvatī, by the wholehearted recollection of Whom it becomes possible to have a Buddha-vision. This was followed, in the third century, by the first translation, at the hands of Chih Ch'ien, of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, after which, with the passage of time, there was a succession of translations of Pure Land scriptures and of other scriptures, of many different kinds, mentioning Pure Land beliefs. It is in the fifth century, as already said, that the three religious writings known to Japanese tradition as the Three Scriptures of the Pure Land were all

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accessible in China.

Now Hōnen, the previously mentioned Japanese monk, spoke of three currents in the development of Pure Land doctrinal thought in China.

The first of these was that of a fellowship of Buddha-recollection, called the Fellowship of the White Lotus (*Po lien she*), founded early in the fifth century, under the Eastern Tsin, by Hui-yüan of Mount Lu (334-416). What this group advocated was the practice of contemplation aimed at Buddha-vision in keeping with the doctrines preached in the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*, 'Buddha-recollection' in the meditative sense.

The second is 'Buddha-recollection' in the sense of invocation of the holy Name, something that began, under the Northern Wei, with T'an-luan, proceeding to Tao-ch'o under the Sui, thence to Shan-tao, who, under the early T'ang, perfected it. These three, as can be seen from the inclusion of them by both Hōnen and Shinran in the doctrinal lineage of Pure Land teachings, are the source from which flow the corrents of that doctrine in Japan as well.

The third, which combines three traditions, those of *dhyāna* (contemplation) and of *vinaya* (rigorous observance of the monastic code) in addition to those of the Pure Land itself, is the one preached in mid-T'ang by Hui-jih (680-748), more commonly known by the honorific title of Tz'u-min San Tsang, the 'benevolent monk thoroughly versed in Scripture'. This third tendency is one that later influenced the other syncretistic tendencies peculiar to Buddhism in China.

This division into 'three currents', nowhere to be seen in the Chinese literature, is something first pointed to by Hōnen, a Japanese, who, however, may be said to have well captured the development of the Pure Land doctrine on Chinese soil. Of the three, in respect of showing a deeper development in the ideas of the Pure Land themselves, also in respect of the great influence it was to exert on this doctrine in Japan, the second current is the most important. In that sense, one will now attempt a simple introduction of the three men who, so to speak, formed this current.

To turn first to T'an-luan, he was the author of the abovementioned commentary to Vasubandhu's treatise on the Pure Land, also mentioned above. He begins with a delineation of the twofold devision of the paths, attributed to Nāgārjuna, the one of hard passage and the one of easy passage, the latter of which he indentifies with rebirth in the Pure Land due to the power of Amida Buddha's preliminary vow (to 'the might of Another', *t'a li*, in simpler trems), going on then to assert that Vasubandhu's treatise represents the ultimate of the Greater Vehicle in that it makes clear the Path

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of Easy Passage thorugh the might of Another. Next, by comparing the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* with the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, he stresses the possibility of rebirth in the Pure Land for the evil as well, speaking of the 'birth of non-birth' and interpreting the latter from the point of view of Emptiness. Also, taking the view that the essence of the three scriptures was in the very name of Amida Buddha, he shifted the centre of gravity of the five practices (*wu nien men*) mentioned in Vasubandhu's treatise from that of contemplation (*kuan ch'a*) to that of praise (*tsan t'an*), thus showing the great weight that he attached to the intonation of the said Name. In the remarks he made concerning this invocation, by calling into service popular beliefs of a Taoistic nature as well, he laid a foundation that eventually gave Pure Land doctrine a firm and fixed place in China. This is why, for all practical purposes, T'an-luan is regarded as the patriarch of the Pure Land doctrine in China.

Next in turn is Tao-ch'o, who, while not a direct disciple of T'an-luan, attracted by latter's teachings after his death, professed his faith in the doctrines of the Pure Land, producing in due course a 'Collection on the Secure and Delightful Land', (*An-lo chi*). What this work emphasizes, on the premise of the two abovementioned paths, easy and hard, proclaimed by Nāgārjuna and by T'an-luan, is the division of Buddhist doctrine as a whole into two approaches or 'gateways', that of the Path of the Saints (*sheng tao men*) and that of the Pure Land (*ching t'u men*), the latter of which he professed to be a doctrine suited to a human race possessed of the inferior character typical of this latter, degenerate age. This poignant awareness of the notion of the 'final, degenerate age' (*mo fa*) and the consequent emphasis laid upon rebirth in the Pure Land represent a new development, one scarcely to be found in the thinking of T'an-luan. In his *An-lo chi*, it is the essential ideas of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* that Tao-ch'o tried to clarify, for which purpose he actually went so far as to make use of Buddhist apocrypha of Chinese origin, an act that, presumably, pushed the Sinicization of Buddhism one step further. It is also worthy of note that to the abovementioned eighteenth vow he added words expressive of the idea of intoning the holy Name, thus interpreting the text of the vow itself in close connection with the said act of intonation. It is said of him that, in order to keep a tally of his own intonations, he made use of little beans, another move that went far in finding a fixed place for the doctrines of the Pure Land on the soil of China.

Next in turn is Shan-tao, Tao-ch'o's disciple, who, as heir to two masters, perfected the doctrines of the Pure Land in China. Shan-tao is credited with five works in a total of nine rolls, the most of important of these being the *Kuan-ching shu*, a

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commentary to the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. The only Chinese scriptural commentaries antedating this were written by Hui-yuan of the Ching-ying Temple (523-592), a member of the *Ti-lun* school (one of the forerunners of Yogācāra Buddhism in China), and by Chi-tsang (549-623) of the *San-lun* school.

It is said of Shan-tao that, in composing this commentary, he sorted out the rights and wrongs of his predecessors and contemporaries, thus furnishing a valid model for all to follow (*k'ai ting ku chin*). Taking the sixteen methods of view set forth in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, he divided them into two main groups, thirteen of 'fixed goodness' (*ting shan*, that is of goodness realized by unifying one's thought) and three of 'scattered goodness' (*san shan*, that is, of goodness performed with one's thought in the actual state of distraction which is usual to it), for he held the entire scripture to have been preached for the benefit of 'ordinary folk' (*fan fu*). From this he drew the conclusion that even extremely evil men, such as those guilty of the previously mentioned five cardinal sins or of maligning the True Dharma, are not beyond rebirth in the Pure Land. As the cause proper of the said rebirth, he attached great weight to 'profound thought', another way of saying 'profound faith', which meant, on the one hand, the profound conviction that one's present life is that of a common fellow, wandering mired in the deepest sin and unable, since a past without beginning, to wrench himself free of this world of error, but, at the same time, the no less profound belief that one such as oneself could, by the might of Amida Buddha's preliminary vows, be reborn without fail in the Pure Land — known as the 'two kinds of profound faith' (*nishu jinshin* in Japanese). As the cardinal idea of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, Shan-tao singled out two things, the Concentration (*samādhi*) of Buddha-viewing (*kuan-fo san-mei*) and that of Buddha-recollection (*nien-fo san-mei*). He stressed the profundity of the mystical experience called Concentration on Buddha-viewing with reference to the aforementioned thirteen views of 'fixed goodness' while, on the other hand, placing the intonation of the Name at the centre of Concentration on Buddha-recollection, thus stressing the importance of this intonation-invocation as the central idea in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. For this reason, and with Tao-ch'o as a model, he affixed to the eighteenth vow words signifying 'intonation of the Name', altering the expression 'ten (moments of) thought' (*shih nien*) to read 'ten vocal utterances' (*shih sheng*). What most systematically demonstrates this interpretation of Shan-tao's is the way in which, giving a firm place to profound faith and citing five 'proper acts' (*cheng hsing*) as practice leading to rebirth in the Pure Land, namely, reading and recitation of Scripture (*tu sung*), contemplation (*kuan ch'a*), worship (*li pai*), invocation

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of the Name (*ch'eng ming*), and praise and making offerings (*tsan t'an kung yang*), he went on to divide these again into two, namely, 'acts of concentration proper' (*cheng ting yeh*) and 'ancillary acts' (*chu yeh*), identifying invocation of the Name with the former. It is thanks to this that the idea of Buddha-recollection in the sense of invocation of the holy Name became firmly established as a central practice leading to rebirth in the Pure Land, thanks to this also that the Pure Lnad doctrine in China contrived to reach one of the peaks of its development.

4. The significance of 'Buddha-recollection' in the sense of invocation

The six-syllable formula established by Shan-tao for Buddha-recollection in the form of invocation, *na-mo-o-mi-t'o-fo*, pronounced *nan wu o mi t'o fo* in modern Mandarin, reconstructed to something like *nam mu â mi dâ bwut* for his time, is found in that explicit shape for the first time in only one of the three scriptures revered by the Pure Land school, namely, the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. The six syllables do, to be sure, go back to something in Sanskrit, but a positive reconstruction of the original is not possible. In part this is due to the absence of a Sanskrit version of the said text, but also in part to the fact that the total meaning imputed to the formula cannot be expressed in Sanskrit. By this I mean that, while *nam mu* corresponds unmistakably to *namas*, and *bwut* to *Buddha*, since *â mi dâ* represents both *Amitāyus* and *Amitābha*, there is no way of uniting all of this into a single Sanskrit expression. To take a concrete example, there are, in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, verses of invocation, absent from the Chinese and Tibetan versions, two expressions, *namo 'mitābhāya* and *namo 'mitāyuṣe*. In other words, corresponding to the expression in Chinese transcription are two Sanskrit formulas, not one. What the Chinese transcription does, in other words, is to coin a single name that can do duty for both. One is entitled to say, in the light of this, that the use of a formula that has contrived to contain two holy Names in one represents a highly skilled creative act, and that not merely from the point of veiw of adaptability to invocation but from that of semantic content as well.

In spite of what has just been said about the first appearance of this formula in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, it does not follow that this sort of thing made its appearance all of a sudden, for it is possible to trace its source through the streams of Buddhist thought itself.

It surely goes without saying that it is in the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* that Buddha-recollection is stressed as the principal practical means for rebirth in the Pure Land. However, while in these two the Sanskrit word underlying the Chinese

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word for 'recollection' or for 'mindfulness', *nien*, is either a compound made with the root *smṛ* or a combination of the noun *manas* with a form of the root *kṛ*, such as *anusmarati*, *samanusmarati*, *anusmṛti*, *manasikaroti* or *manasikāra*, the first three rendered in Chinese with *sui nien*, the last two with *tso yi*, the same word when used in the Chinese version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* represents *citta*, 'thought', as in 'ten moments (on even "one moment") of thought'. Whichever Indian word the Chinese term goes back to, the reference is to a mental act, for nowhere is the sense of 'intonation' or of 'invocation' in evidence.

Still, this does not mean that advocacy of this intonation or invocation is not in evidence. In the seventeenth vow of the so-called Saṃghavarman Chinese version, for instance, it is plainly stated that other Buddhas do call upon the name of Amida Buddha. 'Call upon' renders Chinese *ch'eng*, which corresponds to words and phrases such as *parikīrtayate*, *varṇaṃ bhāṣate*, *praśaṃsām abhyudīrayati* or *samudīrayati*, all of which mean more or less the same thing, 'utter praise', which is nothing to do with pronouncing a Name as an exercise for the purpose of rebirth in a Pure Land. Further, in the translation attributed by tradition to Chih Ch'ien, it is noted that Ānanda uttered the phrase *nan wu a mi t'o san yeh san fo t'an* in modern Mandarin, reconstructed to something in the vicinity of *nam mu â mi dâ sam ya sam bwut dan*, the original of which is tentatively restored to *namo 'mitābhāya samyaksaṃbuddhāya*, meaning what the Chinese formula is also taken to mean. This bears a striking resemblance to what one derives from the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*.

If one pursues one's quest for the origin of this recollection-invocation elsewhere in Early Buddhism and into Sectarian Buddhism, as well as into the first manifestations of Mahāyāna Buddhism, one will find there a variety of pronouncements that may furnish the source one is looking for.

First is the Pāli evidence, where *buddhānussati*, corresponding to Sanskrit *buddhānusmṛti* and to Chinese *nien fo*, as early as in Early Buddhism is cited as the first of the six recollections (*cha anussatiṭṭhānāni*, to wit, recollection of the Buddha, of the Dharma, of the Saṃgha, of the monastic code, of the act of surrendering one's possession, and of the gods). What is especially noteworthy in this connection that the recompense for this Buddha-recollection, rather than the layman's reward of rebirth in Heaven, is the religious one of the 'Fruit of the Streamwinner' (*sotāpattiphala*), thus demonstrating that this Buddha-recollection, while, at bottom, having the character of the path of the lay believer, is at the same time representative of a doctrine based on the fundamental ground of Buddhism, which is the path of one who leaves secular life.

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Seen from this point of view, the presentation by the Pure Land scriptures of Buddha-recollection as a central practice, common to both layfolk and religious, leading to rebirth in the Pure Land, may be said to place it in a current subsequent to that of Early Budhism.

If one redirects one's inquiry now to intonation/invocation, here too it must be declared possible to seek its source in Early Buddhism. By this I refer, in Pāli terms, to the threefold repetition of the formula *namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*. This is, however, a euphoric utterance (*udāna*) naturally produced by emotional excitement, stated in such ancient poetic collections as the *Suttanipāta* to be the same as saying *namo te*, 'homage to you', when seeing the Buddha face to face, much as in modern India one person would greet another with the expression *namas te*. In Sectarian Buddhism, which were heirs to this tradition, it was felt that one could gain the assurance of preservation from disaster by calling out the name Gotama or by saying *namo Buddhāya* or *namo Buddhasya* (homage to Buddha).

Similar statements, under various forms, are found in the scriptures of the Greater Vehicle. For example, in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, in the Chapter on skill in means, there is a verse saying that by the mere utterance of the phrase *namo 'stu Buddhāya* (homage be to Buddha, rendered in Chinese transcription as *nan wu fo*) one may attain to the highest enlightened intuition, while, in the Chapter on Avalokiteśvara in the same scripture, it is declared that, if in the quest for salvation one cries out (*ākrandaṃ karoti*, *samākrandaṃ karoti*) to the said bodhisattva, one shall obtain various benefits. In connection with this 'outcry', one sees the expressions *nāmadheyaṃ gṛhṇāti* and *nāmadheyaṃ dhārayati*, 'take' or 'hold' the Name, and the nouns *nāmagrahaṇa* and *nāmadheyagrahaṇa*, indicating something close in meaning to intonation or to invocation of a Name. Also to be noted, among the verses in the latter Chapter, is the presence of expressions that say similar things by resort to the verb *smarati*, 'be mindful', a demonstration of the clese proximity of the two notions of invocation and of mindfulness. The *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* contains the expression *namo buddhānām iti manasikariṣyati* (he shall pay attention of the expression "homage to the Buddhas"). Since here *manasikaroti*, 'pay attention', and *anusmarati*, 'recollect', are virtual synonyms, one is safe in saying that the phrase *namo buddhānām*, 'homage to the Buddhas', is displayed as having virtually the content of Buddha-recollection.

The conclusions one draws from all this are that invocation of holy Names is an act of religious practice pervading three forms of Buddhism, the Early, Sectarian and Mahāyāna, widely recognized throughout, and that it is seen even in a form quite close

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to that of Buddha-recollection. In view of this, one is justified in regarding the doctrinal pronouncements even of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* as statements in a similar vein or, in other words, as something having a legitimate position in the mainstream of Buddhist thought.

Another bit of noteworthy evidence of this identification of Buddha-recollection with the invocation of holy Names is the existence of the Chinese word *ch'eng nien*, 'invocation-recollection'. This word, in use in the writings of Tao-ch'o and of Shan-tao, is seen, from time to time, in Buddhist texts of the T'ang and even later. A look at the Sanskrit originals shows underlying words signifying invocation of Names. For example, in the second roll of the 'Scripture of the King of Jewels Adorning the Greater Vehicle' (*Ta-sheng chuang-yen-pao-wang ching*), translated into Chinese under the Northern Sung, one sees the said Chinese word corresponding, in the *Kāraṇḍa-vyūha*, to the expression *nāmam anusmārayanti* ('they cause recollection of the Name'), revealed by the context to mean the utterance of the sound (*śabdaṃ niścārayati*) of *namo buddhāya namo dharmāya namaḥ saṃghāya* ('homage to Buddha, homage to Dharma, homage to Saṃgha').

To go outside of Buddhist literature for evidence of the identification recollection with invocation, one may cite *Bhagavadgītā* 8.13, as follows:

> The single-syllable Brahman (which is) *om*
> Pronouncing, and meditating on Me,
> Who departs, leaving the body,
> He goes to the highest goal.
>
> (Translated by F. Edgerton: *The Bhagavad Gītā*, Part 1, Cambridge, Mass., 1952, p. 83)

In referring both to the pronunciation of the sacred syllable *om* and to recollection (or meditation, in the language of FE) of "Me" (the god Viṣṇu), the verbal form used is that of the present participle, (that is, *vyāharan mām anusmaran*) which means that one may regard the two acts as being simultaneous. That is to say, the content of the recollection is manifested by the act of vocal utterance, evidence of the identification of recollection with invocation. While 'mindfulness' (or 'recollection'), in semantic terms, points to thought, there is plenty of room for the possibility of using the word in the sense of 'invocation'.

Even in China, if it comes to that, one can see in the meanings and uses of the word *nien*, 'recollect', material intimating some connection with the notion of *ch'eng*, 'call'. In a letter of the late T'ang writer Tu Mu (803-853), one finds the word *k'ou nien* in

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the phrase *k'ou nien hsin t'ao erh ch'iu che*, literally, 'one who seeks by recollecting with his mouth and by praying with his heart', where *nien*, here rendered with 'recollecting', plainly means to 'intone', or even to 'mouth'. Since the same word, *k'ou nien*, occurs in the 'Treatise on the Pure Land' (*Ching-t'u lun*), by the early T'ang Buddhist Chia-ts'ai, it is possible that by T'ang times that word was already well established in the Chinese vocabulary. The word *nien* is also used in the sense of 'read', the expression *nien shu* referring to reading a book aloud, an expression which, to judge by a modern Chinese dictionary, the *Tz'u yüan*, 'Wellspring of Words' (1980), goes back to Latter Han times. Even the word *ch'eng nien*, uniquely Buddhist though it may be, is still evidence of the Chinese connection between invocation and recollection.

In the light of what has just been said, one is entitled to conclude that the identification of 'invocation' and of 'recollection' was something capable of developing naturally, whether in India or in China. In India, the act of invoking the names of the gods with praise is someting in evidence ever since the *Ṛgveda*, while in China — in Taoism, at least, or so the theory goes — there was the practice of pronouncing 'prohibitive charms'. From the viewpoint of comparative thought, the doctrine of invocation of names may probably be seen everywhere in Christianity, in Islam and in Zoroastrianism as well. If that is so, then one must perforce conclude that the plain advocacy in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* of Buddha-recollection and of name invocation, adopted by Shan-tao in the combined form of recollection-invocation, has a significance in the history of religion in the broadest sense, so say nothing of the history of Pure Land thought or even of Buddhist thought as a whole.

5. Conclusion — from China to Japan

What has been presented, in this and in my previous addresses, is an outline of the process whereby the doctrines of the Pure Land, originating in India and passing through Central Asia into China, attained to their final form at the hands of Shan-tao in the form of a theory combining recollection of the Buddha with the invocation of His Name.

As may have been deduced from what has been said, the establishment by Hōnen in Japan of a Pure Land School (*Jōdo shū*) took place some five hundred years after Shan-tao's decease. One reads as follows in his principal work, *Senchaku hongan nembutsu shū*:

> The Master Shan-tao regarded the Pure Land teaching as the essential doctrine and not regarded the Saintly Path teaching as such. This is why I (for my own

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part) singlemindedly follow the one Master Shan-tao.

This is a statement, as plain as can be, that Hōnen's sole authority as teacher and schoolman is to be traced to Shan-tao. It proves two things about Hōnen — first, that he assigned the highest value to Shan-tao's 'achievement of *samādhi*' (*sammai-hottoku* in Japanese), namely, his mystical experience of Buddha-vision in the midst of meditative trance; second, that he laid total and unreserved claim to Shan-tao's heritage of the combination of invocation with recollection.

It goes without saying that Hōnen, being a product of a time and society different from those of Shan-tao, was not identical with the latter, for all that he was heir to his doctrinal pronouncements. For one example, while Shan-tao held both the concentration of Buddha-viewing and that of Buddha-recollection as the main purport of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, Hōnen, rejecting the former, insisted uniquely on the latter alone. For another, while accepting Shan-tao's interpretation of the celebrated Eighteenth Vow, he simplified it to mean flatly that 'recollection and invocation are one and the same', thus providing an interpretation that carried the vow's meaning one step forward. Thus, while a development of thought does separate Hōnen from Shan-tao, still, in the sense that he devoted his entire life to Shan-tao's teaching there is no difference. Shan-tao's successors in his own country were indeed his spiritual heirs, but not in a pure sense, for they developed, rather, a syncretistic Pure Land doctrine, the principal partner to the mixture being the Ch'an doctrine, a procedure that deprived the Pure Land teachings of the possibility of establishing an independent school of their own, while Hōnen, on the other hand, in an action transcending both time and place, was Shan-tao's heir in the fullest sense, achieving the independent act that Shan-tao had never contrived to compass. In that sense it can be said that the real heir to Shan-tao, the Chinese monk, was a Japanese desciple, Hōnen.

While Hōnen gathered to his banner many disciples, all of them heirs to his teachings, all of them singing praises of exaltation to Shan-tao, the one to be singled out of that multitude is Shinran.

Shinran everywhere in his writings, but most notably in the aforementioned *Kyōgyōshinshō*, quotes Shan-tao, who, he insisted, was the only person to have understood the Buddha's true meaning. Of course, Shinran read Shan-tao with a comprehension all his own, guided by religious experiences peculiar to himself, working out a faith in the might of Another that is simply not in evidence in Shan-tao's own writings. For example, the 'perfectly sincere thought' (*chin ch'eng hsin*, pronouced *shijō shin* in Japanese) of which the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* speaks is taken by

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Shan-tao to refer to the thought of truth on the part of the beings, but Shinran, who felt that such thought is nowhere to be found among the latter, understood it to refer to the Buddha alone. For instance, Shan-tao, in his commentary to the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, says, in paraphrase, 'It should not happen that, while outwardly assuming the manner of a good and worthy person who exerted himself with vigour, one harboured a deceptive heart inwardly.' Shinran reads this to mean the following: 'One should not assume the outward manner of a good and worthy person exerting himself with vigour. The reason for this is that we all inwardly harbour a deceptive heart.' One may take this to mean that he was so impressed by the 'profound faith' of which Shan-tao spoke, of which he alleged, as we have seen, that there are two kinds, that he took this one step forward to take a good hard look at himself, a look that, in turn, produced this reading. Such altered readings as these, peculiar to himself, are frequently to be seen elsewhere as well, all of them demonstrating that, while he did succeed to the pinnacle of thought achieved in his unique clarity by a Shan-tao outstanding among his contemporaries in the Chinese Buddhist monastic community, he went on from there, in a flying leap, to develop a world of faith peculiar to himself.

This is not, by any means, to say that Shinran was striking the pose of one proclaiming a theory all his own in defiance of his own teacher. As the said teacher, Hōnen, had made clear, he was himself a follower of one teacher alone, namely, Shan-tao, and Shinran in turn, as one devoted his life long to Hōnen, had, as a consequence, an equal faith in Shan-tao. In terms of the development of his ideas, in order to assert firmly, even aggressively, that the Pure Land doctrine was the ultimate in the pronounced teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism, he did, on the one hand, of the 'Seven Exalted Monks' mentioned before single out the ideas of Vasubandhu and of T'an-luan for emphasis, but his own position was no different in respect of his acceptance of a combined invocation-recollection, the one established by none other than Shan-tao.

In the second chapter of his 'Notes Bemoaning Heterodoxy' (*Tannishō*), Shinran has the following to say:

> If Amida's Primal Vow is true, Śākyamuni's teaching cannnot be false. If the Buddha's teaching is true, Shan-tao's commentaries cannnot be false. If Shan-tao's commentaries are true, how can Hōnen's words be empty? If Hōnen's words are true, what I, Shinran, say cannnot be meaningless. In essence, such is the true entrusting of this foolish one.

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(Translated by T. Unno: *Tannisho*, Honolulu, 1984, p. 7)

This shows how Shinran revered Shan-tao through his own teacher, Hōnen, and how through Shan-tao he contrived to see the true meaning of the Indian Gautama, the Founder of Buddhism.

〔追記〕

本稿は1987（昭和62）年3月にカナダ（バンクーバー）のブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学アジア学科から客員教授として招聘された際，3回（3月19日，24日，26日）に分けて行った一般公開講義の原稿である。長く篋底に秘していたが，このたび札幌大谷短期大学を退任するに当たり，在任記念の意を込めて『紀要』に掲載することにした。

今から15年前の原稿であり，内容的に補正すべき部分もあるが，全体の趣旨は現在も変りがない。この間に，浄土思想に関して英文で公表した拙稿も幾つかあるが，本稿は仏教術語の英訳についてこれまでの訳語と違った点があることに聊かの特色があろう。

これは，私の招聘に関して実務をとられたアジア学科の故ハーヴィツ教授（Leon Hurvitz，1923.8.1～1992.9.28）の意見を大幅に採り入れたことによる。ハーヴィツ教授は北米における令名高い異色の仏教学者であり，私の英文原稿の作成に当たって多くの修正の労をとっていただいたが，仏教術語の英訳については同教授の学問的見識を尊重して，原則としてそれに従うことにした。これらについては，同教授と時には激しく議論を交した日々が懐かしく鮮明に思い出されるが，その後5年半ほど経って突然の悲報に接したことは，無常迅速とはいえ哀惜の念が募るのを禁じ得ない。

ここに遅ればせながら，この小稿を故ハーヴィツ教授に捧げ，思い出のよすがにもしたいと思う。

（2002年3月，藤田宏達しるす）

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