

The Path of Ganshō (Vow to Birth)

A Study of *Ching-t'u-lun-chu*

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While Mahāyāna Buddhism was formed in India as the path of the Bodhisattva, it was transmitted to China and re-formulated there as the One Vehicle Path. Vasubandhu's *Ching-t'u-lun* and T'an-luan's *Ching-t'u-lun-chu* take their place in these two respective traditions.

Vasubandhu's *Ching-t'u-lun* is a śāstra of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path focusing on śamatha-vipaśyanā meditation. T'an-luan's *Ching-t'u-lun-chu*, though it is a word-by-word commentary of Vasubandhu's, is not a śāstra of the Bodhisattva path; rather it expounds that the path towards Buddhahood is the supreme path towards Buddhahood for a Pṛthagjana who possesses all of the afflictions. As it is known, Shinran followed T'an-luan's viewpoint of Buddhism which came to form the core of *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*. In this article I have inquired into the arguments concerning the development from the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path to the supreme path towards Buddhahood which are expanded in the *Lun-chu*, and I have shown the affirmative nature of Buddhism in that the significance of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path is obtained the supreme path towards Buddhahood by making clear the grounds for accomplishing the path towards Buddhahood for a Pṛthagjana.

In the first chapter by inquiring into his interpretation of the Two

Paths, the Easy Path and the Hard Path, I have shown that the path towards Buddhahood, which T'an-luan himself took as his own, was the path towards Buddhahood for a Pṛthagjana in which he became awakened to the invalidity of Self-power.

The second chapter puts the focus on Buddhānusmṛti. Vasubandhu presented as a Mahāyāna Bodhisattva practice the fivefold practice leading to birth in Amitābha's Buddha-field. T'an-luan transformed it into the Pṛthagjana practice of Buddhānusmṛti. Therefore it can be said that T'an-luan found the significance of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva practice in the path of Ganshō (Vow to birth) which was realized by Buddhānusmṛti.

In the third chapter I have clarified that obtaining the significance of Seeing a Buddha in the Buddha-field, by which a Bodhisattva can overcome the difficulties of falling into emptiness in the seventh stage, is established, through the nature of Tathāgata's Original Vow, in the converted mind of a Pṛthagjana who is ultimately based on Buddhānusmṛti. Therefore the faith, the Mind which has single-mindedly taken refuge which arises in the converted mind of a Pṛthagjana, can be said to lead to the realm of the supreme Nirvāṇa of the Tathāgata.

In the fourth chapter, it is inquired whether the supreme path towards Buddhahood for a Pṛthagjana, which is realized through obtaining the significance of Seeing a Buddha, could be accomplished through the twofold Ekō (Transferring), Ōsō Ekō and Gensō Ekō, of the Power of the Original Vow which consists in the Tathāgata's virtue of Exertion-which-is-not-in-vain.

From the above observations on the development from Vaasubandhu's

Ching-t'u-lun to T'an-luan's *Ching-t'u-lun-chu* we can ascertain a development from the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path to the supreme path towards Buddhahood for a Pṛthagjana, from Bodhisattvas to all Pṛthagjanas, as well as heretics, regarded as the subjects of their paths, from Non-retrogression to Certainty-to-attain-to-Nirvāṇa regarded as the themes, and from Self Benefit and Other Benefit Practices of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva to Tathāgata's Ōsō and Gensō Ekō regarded as the grounds for accomplishing the path towards Buddhahood for a Pṛthagjana.

I have found the predecessor of Shinran's Buddhism in the efforts above-mentioned T'an-luan's. And also I have discerned the great path towards Mahāparinirvāṇa where a Pṛthagjana as he is can attain supreme Nirvāṇa through fully awakened to himself as well as through the nature of Ekō, of the Power of the Original Vow.