

## BOOK REVIEWS

**LES DOCTRINES DE L'ECOLE JAPONAISE TENDAI AU DEBUT DU IX<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE: *Gishin et le Hokkeshū gishū*. By Jean-Noël Robert. Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes Japonaises, Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris, 1991. xiv + 455 pp. ISBN 2-7068-1018-1.**

Coming, as it does, from an author with the triple qualification of Directeur d'études at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sciences Religieuses), disciple of Professor Bernard Frank at the Collège de France, and co-director, with Hartmut O. Rotermond, of the Centre d'Etudes des Religions et Traditions populaires du Japon, the present work, which is published under the patronage of the three above-mentioned institutions, should be considered as a representative product of contemporary French scholarship in Buddhist studies.

These days when, in France, the tendency of religious studies is centered more toward practice and ritual than toward dogma, the present work, a subtle doctrinal analysis, inscribes itself in an older and venerable tradition going back to the medieval "scholastique" of which J. N. Robert is a fervent admirer. If we consider this book only in the perspective of Buddhist studies, we can say that it continues the exegetical tradition of masters such as La Vallée Poussin and Lamotte, abundantly quoted in its annotation. But we have to say also that in France it opens a new field, as current Tiantai studies (except for the mostly historical *Huiji* of Paul Magnin—Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1979) have yet to develop very far in this country.

The text translated and commented upon by Robert, the Japanese *Tendai Hokkeshū gishū* 天台法華宗義集 (T. 2366), constitutes, with the Chinese *Bajiao dayi* 八教大意 (T. 1930) and the Korean *Ch'ontae sakyō ui* 天台四教意 (T. 1931), a triad of compendia of Tiantai doctrine. Robert has the intention of publishing translations of all three of these works, and already refers, in his introduction to and commentary on the Japanese compendium (whose composition is chronologically situated between the Chinese and Korean works), to the doctrinal links existing between them.

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These three short compendia are themselves based on the two monumental "triads" written by the two leading figures of Chinese Tiantai, Zhiyi 智顛 and Zhanran 湛然. I will refer to the Japanese shortened titles of these six monumental treatises: the *Hokkegengi* (T. 1716), the *Hokkemongu* (T. 1718), and the *Makashikan* (T. 1911) by Zhiyi; the commentaries on the above-mentioned works of Zhiyi, i.e. the *Gengishakusen* (T. 1717), the *Monguki* (T. 1719), and the *Shikanbugyō* (T. 1912) by Zhanran.

In the labyrinths of Tendai scholastics, fortuitous encounters can occur. It happens that Paul Swanson, co-translator with Robert of the *Makashikan*, has translated the *Hokkeshū gishū* into English (to be published in the *Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai* series). This independent translation will be of benefit, allowing a comparison between the English and a French version of the same text, but we must point out that the main interest of the French work, which is based on the translator's 1980 doctoral thesis, consists in the bulky and minute annotation which accompanies the comparatively short *Hokkeshū gishū*, and in his original research on its author, Gishin 義真 (781-832). It was also independently that J. N. Robert and David Chappell worked on the *Ch'ontae sakyō ui* of Chegwan 諦觀 (a Korean monk active in China from 961 until his death in 971). The work in English, translated by the Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii, introduced and edited by David W. Chappell and compiled by Ichishima Masao, was published in 1983 by Daiichi Shobō, Tōkyō. An initial version of the first part appeared earlier in the *Eastern Buddhist* (May, 1976).

It is compulsory for anybody using the compendium literature of the Tiantai School to remember the voluminous nature of the Tiantai treatises from which the compendia have been compiled. These above-mentioned treatises are themselves mostly systematic elaborations of much older canonical scriptures, generally of India origin. To identify the passages in the scriptural or exegetical sources and to take into account their background, either Buddhist or specifically Tiantai, is the crucial enterprise in the analysis of compendia like the *Hokkeshū gishū*. This is a task in which Robert excels. He leads us not only in what he calls the "labyrinthine structure of Zhiyi thought" but also in the highly intricate tradition which derives from Zhiyi.

Speaking of intricacies, it is not by accident that Zhanran uses the image of a canvas to describe his tradition. Zhanran's comparison is quoted (less clearly than in the original text) by Gishin in the brilliant preface to his compendium: "The dogmas (教旨) which are used in our unique school (一家教門) have (1) the *Lotus of the Law [sūtra]* as bone (structure of teaching 宗骨), (2) the *Treatise [of the Perfection] of Wisdom* as compass 指南, (3) the Mahayanic *Mahā[parinirvāna]sūtra* as support (扶疏), (4) the *Grand Chapter*—i.e. *Prajñāpāramitā in 25,000 verses*—as method of contemplation (觀法), (5)

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quotations from multiple *sūtras* as complements for faith (増信), (6) quotations from the *sūtras* as auxiliary for success (助成). Contemplation (觀心) is the vertical thread or warp (經) and doctrine (諸法) the horizontal thread or woof (緯).”

This quotation once more confirms the importance in the Far East of the *Treatise of the Perfection of Wisdom*, the *Da zhi du lun* 大智度論 (T. 1509), which since its translation by Kumārajīva in the early 5th century has been the source of inexhaustible nourishment for all the currents of Chinese Buddhism and especially the Tiantai school. In his annotation (p. 202), Robert (under Tiantai influence) insists on the doctrinal affinities between the *Perfection Treatise* and the *Lotus Sūtra*. Alluding to a common tendency in the two texts to present the vacuity of the *dharma*s somewhat positively, he refers also to two among the numerous passages of the *Perfection Treatise* referring to the *Lotus Sūtra* (they have been collected by Tsukamoto Keishō 塚本啓祥 in the volume “*Hokkekyō to Chūgokuteki tenkai*” edited by Sakamoto Yukio 坂本幸男, Heirakuji, 1972).

In the first passage (T. XXV, 1509 57th juan, p. 466b), it is said that the *Lotus Sūtra* and other esoteric (密迹) *sūtras*, although belonging to the twelve *aṅgas* and being of similar meaning (義同) as the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*, are nevertheless not designated with the same name as the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*. The author of the *Da zhi du lun* makes thus a cleavage in the Mahayanic literature between the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* and the average *vaipulyasūtras*.

The second passage (*ibid.*, 100th juan, p. 754b) occurs in the discussion about the *Parīdanā*, the bestowal of the teaching of a *sūtra* upon a trustworthy person (see *Buddhist Studies Review* 5, 2 [1988], pp. 3–6). The contrast between the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* bestowed upon Ānanda and the *vaipulyasūtras* bestowed upon Bodhisattvas generates several questions. It is thus in interrogative form that the ultimate superiority (勝) of the *Lotus* and *vaipulyasūtras* on the *prajñā* texts is raised. Robert interprets the answer to that question by showing that the *Lotus Sūtra* was considered an esoteric doctrine, teaching that for adepts of the two vehicles it was possible to become Buddha. This interpretation has to be slightly mitigated: the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* are not esoteric in fact, although it is said here that they can have two levels of understanding. On the other hand, the *Lotus* and other *vaipulyasūtras* may cause the arhat to decide to enter immediately into Buddhahood (instead of taking the way of the Bodhisattva). Thus, *sūtras* such as the *Lotus* are fit only for the great Bodhisattva who, like the grand Master of Medicine, is able to use a poisonous drug as a medicine.

Needless to say, the word “esoterism” (秘密) which appears in this passage of the *Da zhi du lun* has not to be taken as “Tantrism.” Better to say that in the language of the *Da zhi du lun*, it refers to what could be called the mystical

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way, not repudiated, but carefully distinguished from the philosophical approach practiced in that Treatise. It is thus close to the fundamental distinction in the Tiantai school between Contemplation (觀門) and Doctrine (教門). The two parts of the *Hokkeshū gishū* are "Doctrine" and "Contemplation." There is not a word on Tantrism, which was flourishing at the time of the presentation of the compendium to the emperor of Japan and which must have exerted considerable influence on Japanese Tendai.

The history of the composition of the text explains its characteristics. It was requested for what could be called the "Buddhist Council" of the Tenshō 天長 period (824–833). Without knowing even which emperor ordered their compilation, we know that six works, representing four of the six sects of Nara and the two of the new sects of the Heian period, were issued and called collectively the "Six Sectarian Books of the Tenshō Era" (*Tenchō roppon shūsho* 天長六本宗書). All of them were written in the years 829–830. Almost all of them became famous and have been preserved, although incompletely in the case of the manifesto of the Kegon school (*T.* 2326) and the manifesto of the Discipline school, which is the first general history of Buddhism in Japan: the *Kairitsu denrai shūshi mondō ki* 戒律傳來宗旨門答記 (*T.* 2347). In contrast to the documents that issued from controversies, rather common in the history of Japanese Buddhism, these six works seem lacking in polemical accent. Written to persuade the Japanese emperor—or, more probably, to convince his monastic councilors about the orthodoxy of their respective doctrines, these books are mostly technical.

This technical character of the compendium that Robert translated and annotated makes it probably that his very subtle work will be mostly used as a reference book. With that in mind, we must observe that it could have been made considerably more "reader friendly." I will not take into consideration the superfluity of small details which could probably have been reduced by a more thorough re-reading of the complete text. As this work is the first volume of a projected trilogy on the Tiantai compendia, my observations will be more directed toward the future volumes, with the hope that they will be freed of the few, mostly editorial, defects of the present volume.

Robert's work was, in its essentials, written by 1980. It had to wait ten years for publication. Such a long gestation period is not without inconveniences for the writer as well as for the reader. The author apologizes for not having been able to take into account the materials on his subject published in the meantime. We have thus to deplore that such works as the 5th volume of the *Traité* of Lamotte, issued in 1980, or the 6th volume of the *Hōbōgin* (with the highly pertinent *Daigo* article by Anna Seidel), issued in 1983, have not been used. The same regret can be expressed with regard to many other Japanese and Western books, among which I should mention at least the

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monograph of Paul Groner on Saichō, issued in 1984 (Berkeley). Moreover, although the author refers extensively to both Japanese and Western specialized works, there is only a Japanese bibliography. This Japanese bibliography merits the reader's special gratitude because all the titles are translated. On the other hand, it is divided, rather inconveniently, into three different lists, which contain a few regrettable omissions. A much-needed bibliography of Western sources is announced as forthcoming in the next book of the series, on the *Sakyo ui*. So often today, one must protest the lack of references to Western sources in Japanese books. Here, we find, in a French book, that same lack—owing to reasons of space. A novice reader will have much difficulty forming an idea of the Western scholarship on the subject. Let us hope also that in the next volumes, the text will benefit from a more spacious setting. A more generous dispensation of subheadings (even if they have to be put into brackets as the translator's insertions) is always welcome. Most of all, for such a text, the annotation (850 translation notes, pp. 189–381) should be set as footnotes on every page. Then, instead of becoming the bulkiest part of the book, a harmonious marriage can be achieved between the subtle translation of a compendium which is, by definition, elliptic, and the creative and enlightening annotation. It would have made this early and rather neglected Japanese Tendai classic even more precious.

HUBERT DURT

*A STUDY OF DŌGEN: His Philosophy and Religion.* By Masao Abe, edited by Steven Heine. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 248, ISBN 0-79145-0838-8 (pbk.)

*A Study of Dōgen* by Masao Abe is a kind of Eastern Monadology. The book is "a collection of essays written over nearly thirty years on various occasions" (author's introduction p. 12). Each essay is a sort of monad, a "worldlet" or little world, that embodies the whole of Dōgen's thought with varying perspectives and emphases.

The book is divided into six parts: I. The Oneness of Practice and Attainment: Implications for the Relation between Means and End, II. Dōgen on Buddha-nature, III. Dōgen's View of Time and Space, IV. The Problem of Time in Heidegger and Dōgen, V. and VI. The Problem of Death in Dōgen and Shinran. The first three essays are concerned exclusively with seminal