

BOOK REVIEWS

T'IENT-T'AI BUDDHISM: An Outline of the Fourfold Teachings. Introduced and edited by David W. Chappell. Translated by the Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii. Published by Daiichi Shobō, Tokyo, 1983; pp. 191. Distributed through the University Press of Hawaii.

The dearth of scholarship by Western Buddhologists concerning the T'ien-t'ai (Japanese: Tendai) tradition is like the weather: everybody talks about it but no one does anything about it. No one denies the importance of the T'ien-t'ai school in East Asian Buddhism. In fact there is a growing recognition of its pivotal role in many areas. T'ien-t'ai was, with Hua-yen, one of the two philosophical pillars of classical Chinese Buddhism. Recently both Japanese and Western scholars have presented a strong case for the importance of T'ien-t'ai in the development of the early Chinese Ch'an tradition.¹ Chappell goes so far as to suggest that "one should look for the roots of Ch'an [Zen] meditative practices not so much with Bodhidharma as in the T'ien-t'ai tradition exemplified by the *T'ien-t'ai hsiao chih-kuan* of Chih-i" (Lai and Lancaster, p. 91). In Japan the Tendai school dominated the social and religious scene of the Heian period (794–1185) and was the foundation from which emerged the "new" Kamakura movements of Nichiren, Hōnen, Shinran, Eisai, and Dōgen.

Given this situation, a reliable and annotated English translation of the *T'ien-t'ai ssu-chiao-i*, the content of the book under review, is long overdue and most welcome. As Chappell points out in his introduction, this time-honored introductory text to T'ien-t'ai "was written in China by a Korean named Chegwan 諦觀 in the late tenth century, and has dominated the study of T'ien-t'ai doctrine for the last three hundred years" (p. 21). It is still commonly used in Japan as a textbook for familiarizing the beginner with T'ien-t'ai doctrine and technical terminology. The introduction and footnotes by David Chappell are helpful

¹ See Sekiguchi Shindai, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969), pp. 271–281, Andō Toshio, *Tendaigaku* (Kyoto: Heiraku-ji Shoten, 1978), p. 189; David W. Chappell, "The Teachings of the Fourth Ch'an Patriarch Tao-hsin (580–651)," in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. by Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 5 (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), pp. 89–129.

and informative. For example, in the introduction Chappell discusses the problem of whether or not the doctrinal classification scheme (*p'an-chiao*) of "Five Periods and Eight Teachings," which forms the central theme and takes up the lion's share of the *T'ien-t'ai ssu-chiao-i*, "accurately reflects the thought of Chih-i" (p. 36). This is an important issue because Leon Hurvitz's pioneering work on Chih-i,² the only other major English language work on T'ien-t'ai, is also dominated by the T'ien-t'ai doctrinal classification scheme. Chappell outlines Sekiguchi's arguments and conclusions that the doctrinal classification scheme of the *T'ien-t'ai ssu-chiao-i* owes much to later T'ien-t'ai developments. One could go further and question the historical relevance of the doctrinal classification scheme as a whole. In Chih-i's day it was necessary to construct such classifications to deal with the various, often contradictory, Buddhist texts introduced into China from India, all of which were accepted without question as actual sermons of the historical Buddha. Today it is irrelevant, in fact untenable, to claim as in the T'ien-t'ai classification scheme that, for example, the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* was the first sermon actually spoken by the historical Buddha Śākyamuni after his enlightenment. In this sense many parts of the *T'ien-t'ai ssu-chiao-i* are of mere academic interest, and the real meaning and significance of T'ien-t'ai lie in philosophical and practical matters which are barely outlined in this text.

The translation of the text itself, a group effort led by Chappell in Hawaii, is as good as one could hope for given the technical nature of the original text. Comparison with the original Chinese, conveniently located within the translation, shows that the terminology has been carefully chosen. The varied translation of the same technical term according to its context, such as 補處 (p. 117, n. 45; p. 136; p. 171, n. 71) correctly avoids a dogmatic consistency and literalism which would play havoc with the meaning of the text. Nevertheless there are a few translations with which one can take tentative exception. I prefer the term "perfect" rather than "complete" for 圓, since this better captures the "perfection" of the Lotus teachings. Also, both 妙境 and 妙理 are translated as "supreme reality" in the same section (p. 181). These translations are not wrong, but clarity and accuracy are better served by reading them as "subtle objects" and "subtle reality," respectively. On the whole the translation is accurate, clear, and consistent—a happy exception to the usual awkward translations of technical Buddhist texts.

This work is not beyond criticism. In the introduction it may have been helpful to discuss the historical background for the popularity of this text. Why has it been extensively used in Japan for the past three hundred years, but not the

² Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-i (538-597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*, *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 12, 1960-1962.

several hundred years before that? Some comments on the importance of esoteric Buddhism in Japanese Tendai, and the revival of Tendai proper three centuries ago among Tendai scholars would have clarified the issue. Also, why was this text used rather than other introductory Tendai texts such as the *Tendai hokke-shū gishū* by the first Tendai abbot Gishin? In the text, a few annoying misprints include: on p. 113, n. 29, "in *ho chih-kuan* (T 46. 8a-106)" should read "in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* (T. 46. 8a-10b)"; King Śivi in the text (p. 106) is King Sivi in the note (p. 114, no. 38); on p. 166, n. 30, "Chih-i's 金光明經" must mean Chih-i's *commentary* on the *Suvarṇaprabhā Sūtra*; on p. 179, "Grad-and Sudden" should read "Gradual and Sudden;" on p. 181, "Correcty" should read "Correctly;" on p. 182 "pasageways" should read "passageways." Also, when the text quotes the Lotus Sūtra, reference is made in the notes to the English translations by Murano and Kato, but not to that by Hurvitz. All three of these translations from the Chinese are mentioned when the subject first arises (p. 72, n. 7), but the notes thereafter mention the page numbers only for the Murano and Kato translation. It is much preferable that the reference also be given for Hurvitz's superior translation, the *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). Finally, the Addition of an index would have amplified its usefulness as a reference work.

The minor nature of these criticisms reflect the generally high quality of this work and should not distract from the assessment that it is an important contribution to Buddhist studies. There are now two major works in English on T'ien-t'ai, including Hurvitz's *Chih-i*. However, both are concerned for the most part with the T'ien-t'ai doctrinal classification system, an issue which is not of the highest relevancy. It is to be desired that future work will delve further into the profound insights of T'ien-t'ai by examining subjects such as the threefold truth of emptiness, conventional existence, and the middle; the integrated unity of all reality; the potential for evil in the Buddha; and Chih-i's comprehensive analysis and detailed description of Buddhist contemplative practice.

PAUL L. SWANSON