

## BOOK REVIEWS

But the *Cb'u-san-ts'ang-chi-chi* 出三藏記集, the oldest surviving catalogue of translated Buddhist texts compiled by Seng-yu of the Liang dynasty, makes no reference to this work. It is mentioned as Kumārajīva's translation for the first time in the *Li-tai-san-pao-chi* 歷代三寶記, the catalogue compiled in 597 by Fei ch'ang-fang of the Sui dynasty. It thus seems doubtful that Kumārajīva himself could be its author. Considering, however, that this text bears some resemblance in content with the *Tso-ch'an-san-mei ching* whose translator is acknowledged as Kumārajīva, it is conceivable that it came into existence under his influence.

The translation of the text into English, closely done in a very literal style, is highly dependable. Footnotes will be helpful for readers in tracing technical terms in Chinese back to their original forms in Pali and Sanskrit. However, a few terms, such as *sambhoga-kāya* and *nirmāna-kāya*, could have received closer explanation, given their great importance in Mahayana Buddhism.

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*COLLECTED WRITINGS ON SHIN BUDDHISM.* By Daisetz Teitarō Suzuki. Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtani-ha, 1973, 262 pp.

*THE KYŌGTŌSHINSHŌ.* Translated by Daisetz Teitarō Suzuki. Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtani-ha, 1973, 442 pp.

It is extremely significant that on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the birth of *Shinran Shōnin* (1173–1262) and the 750th anniversary of the founding of the *Jōdo Shin* school of Buddhism in Japan, that the western world of Buddhist scholarship should be afforded one of the basic sources for assessing the value of Shinran's philosophy and understanding the spiritual movement that is *Jōdo Shin* tradition in our contemporary times.

As Shinran was a pioneering spirit in his own time, so was Dr. D. T. Suzuki (1871–1966) the acknowledged leader in the propagation and interpretation of Mahāyāna Buddhism for the Western world. Dr. Suzuki was also a pioneer in the efforts to reveal to the world the depths of the Pure Land tradition in Buddhism through his various writings and lastly through his translation of the monumental work by Shinran, *The Kyōgyōshinshō* (Doctrine, Practice, Faith and Realization). These writings have been brought together by The Eastern Buddhist Society under the supervising editorship of Professor Nishitani Keiji.

Dr. Suzuki was perhaps best known for his interpretations of Zen Buddhism through a wide variety of publications. In addition, for most of his life he also pursued a scholarly interest in Shin Buddhism, stimulated by his many activities of teaching and lecturing at the Shinshū Ōtani University and editing *The Eastern*

*Buddhist* journal. The essays gathered in the present collection come from the last twenty-five years of his life. In 1956 Higashi Honganji commissioned Dr. Suzuki to translate *The Kyōg yōshinbō* to be published in conjunction with the anniversary of Shinran's birth. Throughout all his work, Dr. Suzuki's purpose in expounding both Zen and Shin Buddhism was to show the essential *oneness* of Mahāyāna Buddhism and demonstrate the depths of living Mahāyāna teaching.

We shall initially discuss the volume of collected essays and materials which cover the period mainly from the mid-1940's to the mid-1950's. These writings include an essay in the development of Pure Land teaching, an early compilation of essay and translations entitled: *A Miscellany on the Shin Teaching of Buddhism* (1949), two short essays on Shin and two translations in which Dr. Suzuki participated, the *Godensbō* (1923), a life of Shinran, and the *Tannishō* (1928), a small but major text for Shin and Japanese Buddhism in general.

The basic character of Dr. Suzuki's exposition is essentially explanatory. He attempts to introduce the basic concepts and religious perspectives of this remarkable, and perhaps unique, school of Japanese Buddhism which the Western world at that time knew little about, and hardly understood or appreciated. He endeavors to survey its emergence out of the broad Mahāyāna tradition which originated in India and evolved through China, reaching its peak in medieval Japan. In the course of his study of the development of Pure Land Buddhism, he takes up crucial concepts and symbols such as *Amida* (*Amitabha*; *Amitayus*) Buddha, the object of devotion, the Buddha's *Prayer* (the term used by Dr. Suzuki but which is usually known as *Vows*), the Pure Land, the principle of the transfer of merit, the distinction of Self-power and Other-power, and the *Nembutsu* (generally the practice of reciting Amida Buddha's name).

Dr. Suzuki, in seeking the foundation of these concepts, sees them arising out of the religious consciousness of humanity which has constantly been aware of higher dimensions and potentialities of existence. Humanity has striven to rise above the limitations that surround finite existence. These symbols have their roots in the processes of human aspiration and psychology. They reflect the profundity and essential mystery of human existence. Although the symbols highlight man's sense of dependency and necessity of faith, Dr. Suzuki maintains that these developments and modes of expression are consistent with traditional Buddhism based on the disciplines of meditation and rigorous training. Despite differences in forms, he would assert their fundamental identity in goals and underlying philosophy.

## BOOK REVIEWS

It is generally well known that Buddhism is not a speculative tradition as indicated in the "Silences of the Buddha." It attempts to reach out beyond any given assertion to point consistently to that realm of experience which cannot be contained in words or logical formula. Nevertheless, the competition of ideologies and diversities of perspectives East and West stimulates many questions along with avid interest. It is necessary to explore these questions based on Western orientation and concerns. In line with Dr. Suzuki's intention to present Buddhism to the Western world, more detailing of the symbolic and metaphysical of the diverse and seemingly Buddhist philosophies such as Zen and Pure Land seems to be needed. Thus the issues we raise are intended only to serve as suggestions for further possible lines of inquiry continuing the work of Dr. Suzuki in clarifying and deepening our understanding of aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Among these issues is the relation between Sakyamuni Buddha and Amida Buddha. The concrete nature of the Pure Land sutras seems to imply that the original message concerning the nature of existence as given in the Four Noble Truths was transformed into a visionary revelation. Buddha relates how Amida became Buddha of the Western Pure Land in the *Larger Pure Land Sutra* (*Dai Muryōjūkyō*; *Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha*). In the *Smaller Pure Land Sutra* (*Amida-kyō*; *Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha*) he describes the character of the Pure Land itself.

Although Dr. Suzuki describes in detail the basic principles derived from the sutras, some more consideration needs to be given concerning the metaphysical or ontological nature of these teachings. For example, from the standpoint of authority, what is the standing of these accounts in relation to the historical Sakyamuni Buddha? Dr. Suzuki does not consider the concept of revelation adequate to account for the sutra narratives. However, he does not indicate what guarantees the validity of such expressions. If they reflect internal experience alone, what gives that experience its decisive meaning?

On p. 204 of *The Kyōgyōshinsbō* translation, Dr. Suzuki states: "But Amida is not a historical personage, but a metaphysical reality created by the demand of the religious consciousness." However, metaphysical reality must be prior to religious consciousness, or at least believed to be, otherwise it would not have the power it has nor provide the assurance that the salvation offered is actually a way of salvation. Consideration of this issue also seems warranted in view of the diversity of Buddhist experience and expression.

While Dr. Suzuki has pointed to the deep roots in human aspiration for the emergence of Pure Land doctrine, there is some further explanation needed for

## THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

the displacement of Sakyamuni as the focal point for the universal working of Compassion. In other words, it is important to relate the symbolism of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Saddharmapundarika sutra*) to that of the Pure Land sutras since the *Lotus Sutra* was the central text of the Tendai system which Shinran and others of his day studied. Also while the symbolism may have its basic roots in human experience, is Amida to be regarded as a mere cultural expression of this universal experience? Without an ontological or metaphysical basis beyond the psychosocial experience for this symbol, it would be completely relativized.

We should point out that the concept of *upāya* (Jap. *bōben*, convenient or expedient means) is frequently employed by Buddhist teachers to account for the concrete and symbolic character of the Sutra narratives. This concept indicates that Buddha taught by adapting to the spiritual capacities of his audience. Consequently such expressions are secondary to the truth which the listeners attain through believing them. They do not need to be justified, since they are only a means to the truth and not the truth itself.

However, under the inspiration of the *Lotus Sutra* and the Tendai school, the belief developed that in *mappō* (the last Age in the degeneration of the Dharma) the direct application and presentation of the truth replaced the use of *bōben* or mediated truth. The Kamakura period, when Hōnen, Shinran, Dōgen and Nichiren were active, was deep into *mappō* according to traditional calculations which dated *mappō* from 1052. For Shinran in the year 1224 it was already the 683rd year of *mappō*. The *mappō* theory of crisis, when conjoined with the Tendai thought of *Original Enlightenment* (*Hongaku-sbisō*) and *One Vehicle* (*Ichijō*) brought a heightened degree of absolutism and exclusivism unparalleled in earlier Buddhist tradition. These developments add to the historical and metaphysical, as well as religious, implications of the ideological assertions made by the teachers of that age.

In connection with the proclamation of the One Vehicle or final truth of Buddhism in the age of *mappō* the concept of the critical classification of doctrine developed in order to determine which among the diverse teachings of Buddhism qualified as the final teaching. The most comprehensive was the Tendai system formulated by Chih-i (531-597) and that evolved in the Pure Land tradition and organized by Shan-tao (613-681). More explanation of this concept and the justification offered by the various teachers would contribute to a deeper understanding of the problem of authority and religious existence and the relations of various Mahāyāna schools.

Among the significant aspects of Pure Land teaching, Dr. Suzuki refers to

## BOOK REVIEWS

the innovative interpretations of the doctrine of transfer of merit which Shinran formulated. He writes in the introduction to the translation of the "Tract on Steadily Holding to the Faith," (*Sbūjishō*) in the *Miscellany on Shin Teaching of Buddhism*, "the idea of merit transference, we must know, is really at the bottom of the whole system of thought which makes up the teaching of Shin as distinguished from the Jōdo." (p. 121) In order to understand more clearly this crucial concept, readers may consult glossary entry No. 281 in conjunction with discussions on pp. 60-61, 72-73, and 128 in the volume of collected writings. It would have been helpful to clarify for the reader the significance of Shinran's re-interpretation of tradition by giving examples of important passages from the Chinese texts which Shinran modified in order to make all forms of transfer of merit essentially the act of Amida Buddha.

Beyond the question of scriptural and metaphysical or symbolic considerations, Shinran's own life and religious experience is crucial. He rejected the disciplines and meditations of Mount Hiei and later gave extensive theoretical foundation to this rejection in his writings. Dr. Suzuki notes its foundation of this rejection in the experience of frustration and ego-exhaustion which Shinran encountered in his twenty years of studies there. This dramatic turning point in Shinran's life has behavioral implications for the evaluation of other schools of Buddhism. Shinran's view of Buddhism created a new style of religious existence quite different from the traditional paths. The question of the existential basis of this divergence and its universal religious validity needs to be explored.

Dr. Suzuki has dealt very sensitively with the religious experience of the Shin Buddhists in his account of the Tariki mystics represented by Shichiri Gōjun who died around 1900. The experience involves a subtle combination of duality within non-duality. In the comparison of Zen and Shin perspectives on religious existence Dr. Suzuki notes:

While Shin regards the one who responds to the call of Amida and says "Yes" unconditionally, as Amida himself in you, that is, The Other standing in opposition to "I," Zen merges the "I" in The Other, and this synthetic merging forms the basis for the Zen psychology of affirmation. In Zen this consciousness of identification is read in terms of the enlightened "I" whereas in Shin, The Other always stands out prominently and the "I" is considered to have been embraced in the wholeness of The Other. Zen is therefore richer in the intellectual

## THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

elements and Shin in the affective or emotional. Isolation is one of the features of Zen and sociability of Shin. (p. 97)

The volume of collected essays and translations provides a background and context for approaching the second volume of the set, the translation of *The Kyōgyōshinsbō*. Essentially, *The Kyōgyōshinsbō* offers a detailed and systematic expression of Shinran's interpretation of Buddhism. Its uniqueness as an expression of Buddhist thought may be observed in the interposition of the volume on *Faith* between the volumes on *Living* (practice) and *Realization* or *Attainment*. This development resulted from Shinran's view that the fundamental basis for salvation lay in Amida's practice in fulfillment of the Original Prayers (or Vows) and in the Faith which arises in us through Amida's efforts on our behalf. It was Shinran's understanding that no practice we perform saves us and the faith which we have in the possibility and reality of our salvation does not depend for its origin on our intention or willfulness.

In order to make clear the meaning of salvation, Shinran gathered from numerous sutras, commentaries and treatises those passages and insights which supported his view. The text is basically anthological in which abundant quotations are enumerated to support Shinran's own declaration, the necessary evidences are set forth. It should be noted that while the original text was composed of six volumes including a volume on the final attainment of the believer (True Buddha Land) and a volume concerning the attainments of those of different views (Land of the Transformation Body), Dr. Suzuki was only able to complete the first four sections which he maintains contain the heart of Shinran's thought.

Dr. Suzuki's version of this important text will be of exceptional value to the researcher because its English style is freer and more readable than previous versions. It has a sense of flow and conveys, perhaps, the deep feeling that Shinran must have felt as he composed the work. The nature of the text as a scholarly work means that it will be read more for study rather than mere pleasure. Nevertheless, one is conveyed directly to Shinran's mind in those passages which contain Shinran's own personal observations and comments.

The translation of the entire text of the various sections enables us to observe Shinran's use of Buddhist texts and his mode of interpretation. We can see how he drew nuances from the many Mahayana Buddhist texts to amplify and strengthen his point.

In addition to the translation, there is an extensive glossary which offers

## BOOK REVIEWS

detailed analysis for major concepts and terms employed in the texts. Chinese and Japanese readings of the terms are given as well as Sanskrit when appropriate. The index facilitates looking up terms in the glossary. Also, a variety of charts are given in order to clarify the many aspects of the relation of Shinran's thought to aspects of Pure Land and the Mahayana Buddhist tradition.

Dr. Suzuki's translation of the term Original Vow (*bonngan*) as "Original Prayer" will undoubtedly create much discussion among Buddhist scholars. The problem focuses on the term "prayer" which Dr. Suzuki came to believe most adequately expressed the meaning of the term *Gan* in Japanese and *Pranidbāna* in Sanskrit. He does not set forth the grounds for this in detail. While respecting his view, it would appear that the use of the term might lead to confusion with the popular or Christian understanding of the word.

In conclusion, we may state that the publication of these volumes is a landmark in the development of studies of Shin thought. They bring into a concentrated focus the essential texts for deeper inquiry and analysis into Shin thought. The handsome volumes and excellent print enhance the monumental quality of the texts. Scholars and students of Buddhism and religious studies throughout the world will commend the dedicated labors of the late Dr. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, the Ōtani Branch of the Jōdo Shin School, the Editors and their associates for opening new doors of insight and inquiry into the teachings of Shinran Shōnin in the light of today's perspectives.

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