

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PURE LAND DOCTRINE IN BUDDHISM

IF we believe, as we must from the modern critical point of view, that the history of any religious system consists, partly, in the exfoliation of the unessential elements, but, chiefly, in the revelation and the constant growth of the most vital spiritual elements which lie hidden either in the words of the founder or in his personality, the following question naturally comes up for solution in our investigation of the history of Buddhist dogmatics: "How much of the Pure Land (*jōdo*) idea is deducible from the teaching of primitive Buddhism so called, or from the personality of Śākyamuni Buddha himself?"

This is one of the most important and fundamental questions in the history of Buddhism, seeing that the majority of Japanese Buddhists are adherents of the Pure Land teaching. Indeed, the origin of the Pure Land idea is simultaneous with the general growth of Mahayana Buddhism itself, which evidently took place within a few centuries after the passing of the Master. At the present stage, however, of our knowledge of Indian thought and culture generally, the solution of the question above cited will be necessarily philosophical and psychological rather than strictly historical. There ought to be more materials at our disposal before we can objectively trace every step of development in reference to historical facts. Therefore, what I have attempted in the following pages may be said to be a philosophy of religious experience which has been gone through with by the followers of the Enlightened One; that is to say, it will be the interpretation of the Pure

Land teaching as a formulation of the experience which has so far unfolded itself in the Buddhist life.

For the benefit of readers who are not well acquainted with the characteristic features of Japanese or Eastern Buddhism, a few introductory remarks concerning the teaching of the Pure Land school may not be out of place here. Without some knowledge of this, the purport of the present article will be more or less unintelligible.

I

By the Pure Land school of Japanese Buddhism* I mean the Buddhist doctrine that teaches the invocation of the name of Amida Buddha in order to be saved from an imperfect and sinful life which we all lead, and be taken up after death into the abode of the Buddha, which is known as the Land of Purity or Land of Bliss.** This school is also called the Nembutsu School, *nembutsu* being Japanese (*nien-fo* in Chinese, 念佛) for the invocation of the Buddha's name. *Nen* or *nien* (*smṛiti* in Sanskrit) literally means "to recollect," "to remember," "to reflect upon," or "to think of," and consequently *nembutsu* is to think of the Buddha, and as far as its literal sense is concerned it is not the invoking of his name as is understood at present. This was no doubt all true, primarily; but as the doctrine of Nembutsu began to unfold all its im-

* Historically, as far as the doctrine of the Pure Land goes, it originated in India and made notable progress in China soon after the introduction of Buddhism there. But it never came to be recognised as an independent school of Buddhism as for instance Zen or Tendai did. Its position was somewhat secondary or subsidiary to the main sects. It was in Japan that the Pure Land school attained its full growth even to the extent of overshadowing all the other forms of Buddhism.

** Sanskrit, *sukhāvatī*. The term "Pure Land" is much more frequently in use in Japanese and Chinese Buddhist literature though the sutras have "Blissful Land," or "Pure Land of Happiness," instead of simple "Pure Land."

plications, it came to be synonymous with the reciting of the name of the Buddha; for the intense thinking of the Buddha with all his moral and spiritual qualities would inevitably burst out in a loud call on his name. Later, the vocal accompaniment was isolated* and given an independent programme in the progressive development of the doctrine of Nembutsu. Nembutsu was then no more "meditative recollection" (觀念) but "vocal recollection (稱念)." And at present as all the aspirants for the Pure Land of Bliss are taught to resort to

* In this isolation we can trace the mystic tendency of the Pure Land school. The idea that in the name itself there is a miraculous power to save us from misery and bondage, evidently suggests the symbolic mysticism of the Shingon. When Amida attained the Supreme Enlightenment, he compressed all the merit he had acquired through the spiritual discipline of innumerable kalpas into this one phrase, *na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu*. For this reason when this one phrase, or dharani in a sense, is recited with singleness of purpose and with all the intensity of feeling, all the merit contained in it is miraculously transferred into the soul of the devotee, and he is at once embraced into the light of Amida. The miraculous power thus lying latent in the name of Amida belongs to the unfathomability of the Buddha-wisdom, and the only thing we ignorant mortals can do or have to do for our own salvation is to believe the wisdom and invoke the name just for once; for the "other-power" achieves the rest for us. In one sense, "Amida" is a kind of mystic "Om", a spiritual "sesame", or a mantram which unlocks the secrets of life. Does this not remind us of Tennyson's experience in connection with the repeating of his own name? "I have," writes the poet, "never had any revelations through anaesthetics, but a kind of waking trance—this for lack of a better word—I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words—where death was an almost laughable impossibility—the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?" We may say, "What's in a name?" but after all we have to own "the magic of a name." That, instead of mentally dwelling on the superhuman qualities of the Buddha, the nembutsu came to be merely reciting the name, is highly significant as showing how much mysticism is cherished in the hearts of tariki followers. I shall have occasion later to refer to the psychology of the nembutsu.

this "vocal recollection" as the means of rebirth there, they are followers of Nembutsu.

There are three or four sects now in Japan that are to be classed under the Pure Land school: they are the Jōdo (淨土), Shin (眞), and Ji (時). The Yūdzu-nembutsu (融通念佛) may also be brought under this category, as it teaches the nembutsu and the possibility of rebirth in the land of Amida. But as it will grow clearer later, this sect is based on the philosophy of identity and interpenetration as is expounded in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and not on the Original Vows of Amida which are detailed in the *Sukhāvati-vyūha Sutra*, and this latter constitutes the foundation of the Pure Land sects. While the Yūdzu no doubt precipitated the development of the Pure Land school proper as we understand it, the Yūdzu stands by itself when we consider its peculiar features; and it may be best not to group it with such purely Pure Land sects as the Jōdo, Shin, and Ji. We shall later treat of its tenets in connection with the history of the Pure Land teaching in Japan.

The following are the main ideas which support the structure of the great Pure Land edifice. While each Pure Land sect may differ in its way of upholding certain aspects of the doctrine more emphatically than others, all the sects agree in recognising the following elements as essential to their faith and incorporating them in the system of their teaching. When we are therefore acquainted with these factors as enumerated below, we know in what respects the Pure Land teaching varies from other Mahayana systems, in other words, how in spite of its assumption of such an apparently un-Buddhist complexion it is essentially Mahayanistic.

1. *Amida*.* Amida occupies the centre of the Pure Land

* Japanese "Amida" stands both for Amitābha (infinite light) and for Amitāyus (eternal life). According to the Pure Land school, the author of the Original Vows is Infinite Light and Eternal Life, though he assumed temporarily the form of the Bhikshu Dharmakara in order to go through with

doctrine and we must know who he is. According to the *Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha*, he was a king in one of his former incarnations, and moved by the sermons of the Buddha Lokeśvara who was the reigning Buddha of that age, he conceived the idea of becoming a homeless śramana and later realising Buddhahood.

His monkish name was Dharmākara. He meditated for five kalpas before he made a certain number of vows (*prañidhāna*) as conditions of his attainment of enlightenment. When these vows were declared in the presence of Buddha Lokeśvara, the earth shook in six different ways. After this, the Bhikshu Dharmākara devoted himself to the practice of all kinds of virtues and meritorious deeds for a period of incalculable kalpas. He went through many an incarnation as kings, lay-disciples of the Buddha, celestial gods, etc. He finally attained enlightenment, and became the Buddha of infinite light (*amitābha*) and eternal life (*amitāyus*). It has now passed ten kalpas since then.

2. *The Pure Land.* This is the country where the Buddha of Eternal Life and Infinite Light is abiding and is described minutely in the *Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha* and the *Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha*. In the main it is the world in which "there is neither bodily nor mental pain for living beings, and where the sources of happiness are innumerable." While Buddha Akṣobhya has his Buddha-land in the east, Amida has his in the west, distant from this world by a hundred thousand nyūtas of kotis of Buddha-countries. And the Pure Land school teaches that Amida Buddha is awaiting us there and that we must cherish the desire to be born in his country. The object, however, is not necessarily to enjoy happiness pure and simple in that world, but to attain enlightenment which is impossible for ordinary mortals to realise while on earth. For they are fettered on all sides by things finite and imperfect, indeed they

the human discipline or experience known as the six virtues of perfection (*pāramitā*).

are themselves all this, and have no way to attain their ideals of freedom and perfection except by going out of this *sahāloka* (world of endurance) and being taken up by Amida into his world. He made his Vows and reached his enlightenment proving that all the Vows were fulfilled, and therefore if we only invoke his name and ask him to be helped in our trials here, he will undoubtedly listen to us and carry us up to his own abode. In fact, he is constantly calling out to us to come to him, and what we have to do is just to pay attention to the fact and hear his voice.

3. *The Original Vows.* The fact that he is calling out to us is established by the fulfilment of all his Original Vows (*pūrvapranidhāna*), which he made after meditation for five long kalpas. There are, according to Sanghavarman's Chinese translation of the *Sukhāvati-vyūha*, forty-eight* Vows made by Amida. While some of them have apparently no practical bearings on our modern conception of life and salvation, there is one most important and most significant Vow, without which the whole system of the forty-eight *pranidhānas* would collapse. This is known as the Eighteenth Vow, which reads:

"If all beings in the ten quarters, when I have attained Buddhahood, should believe in me with all sincerity of heart, desiring to be born in my country, and should, say ten times, think of me, and if they should not be reborn there, may I not obtain enlightenment, barring only those who have committed the five deadly sins and who have abused the Good Law (*Dharma*)."

That the Bodhisattva will practise the virtues of perfection (*pāramitā*) not merely for his own benefit but for others as well is one of the original ideas in Buddhism, which grew up in the course of development in India. And with Amida this thought of benefitting others was made the condition of

* The number of the Vows vary according to the different versions of the text, or rather to the different texts. I have followed here the teaching of the Japanese Pure Land school.

enlightenment, for he vowed that he would not be enlightened unless the conditions were not fulfilled. In Hinayana Buddhism Arhatship was the ideal of the Buddhist life and the Arhat was satisfied with his own enlightenment. Naturally as a social being, he wished to see others enlightened as himself, but this was in no wise thought of in connection with his own attainment. His individuality did not extend so far as to embrace others in it. But Amida's love for all beings was so intense and all-embracing, that even when he could have for himself all he aspired to in the way of Buddhahood, he postponed it until his fellow-creatures were also assured of a share in his attainment.

4. *The conception of sin.* Now that Amida has fulfilled his part, what shall common mortals have to do in order to respond to his call? That is, how are we to be reborn in his Land of Purity? First, we have to realise that we are sinful beings due to the karma of innumerable evil deeds committed by us in our former lives, and that if we are left to ourselves we shall have no chance whatever to be delivered from this life of misery and suffering. In this, the Pure Land followers are sometimes apt to run to an extreme by drawing a too sharply defined line between Amida and ourselves. Amida is love, they would say, and light and goodness and has nothing evil in himself, while common mortals are so depraved that, by themselves, they are destined nowhere else than to purgatory. Practically, however, when this remorseful attitude is the more intensely realised, the more earnest and sincere a man will be in his desire to be born in the Pure Land of Amida. Thus three things are considered most necessary for rebirth in the other world: 1. Sincerity of heart (至誠心), 2. a deep (believing) heart (深信), and 3. desire to be reborn in Amida's Pure Land (回向發願心).

5. *Nembutsu.* The nembutsu is the expression of a man's complete dependence on Amida as far as his salvation and rebirth are concerned. When he is sincerely awakened to the

fact that his moral depravity finally condemns him to purgatory (*naraka*), this, according to Pure Land scholars, is the time he hears the call of Amida, and the nembutsu is the natural outcome of this awakening and hearing. Whatever the historical meaning of nembutsu might have been, it is now no more mere thinking of the Buddha and his virtues, but, as was explained above, it is the invocation of the name of Amida as one whose forty-eight Original Vows were fulfilled ten kalpas ago. The name Amida itself has now come to have a mysterious meaning charged with a power to save all who uttered it with sincerity of heart and singleness of thought. This is the most remarkable part in the development of the "tariki" (other-power) system in Buddhism.

6. *The moral Life.* That moral perfection is not essential, i.e., not absolutely needed, for salvation, is one of the principal keynotes in all the Pure Land schools of Buddhism. Even in primitive Buddhism mere morality was not regarded as sufficient for the attainment of Arhatship; for meditation (*dhyāna*) and spiritual intuition (*prajñā*) were also strongly inculcated upon the minds of the Bhikshus and Śramanas. The contention most emphatically set forward by Pure Land devotees is that we are fundamentally imperfect, and therefore that no amount of our human and unaided efforts to perfect ourselves morally, if that is the only condition for enlightenment and deliverance, will ever lead to the attainment of the end. The will as expressed in the Original Vows of Amida is thus absolutely essential to lift us from this hopeless situation. Our own efforts called "jiriki" (self-power) always contain in them something, however minute or faint, of the residual idea of ego, and the basic teaching of Buddhism in whatever form is that we must be free from the thought of ego if we really desire for Nirvana or Sambodhi (enlightenment). We often have, principally I think in Mahayana literature, that the Bodhisattvas ask questions of the Buddha through his grace or power (*tathāgatā-dhīsthāna* or *-anubhāva*) and not of their

own accord. If this can happen, that is, if the Buddha has the power to move others as he wills, and if common mortals are not their own saviours, it seems to be natural for certain Buddhists to arrive at the conclusion that "tariki" and not "jiriki" is the condition of salvation, and that faith and not morality is what is absolutely required of Pure Land aspirants. At all events, teachers of the Pure Land school look askance at the doctrine of self-reliance or self-power (*jiriki*) as the assertion of egoism, and strongly insist on "tariki," other-power, or on the unparalleled superiority of faith and passivity. The following passage from Tauler is in full agreement with the view held by the Pure Land advocates: "Alles das Gott von uns haben will, das ist, dass wir müssig seyen und ihn Werkmeister seyen lassen; wären wir ganz und gar müssig, so wären wir vollkommen Menschen."

These six factors or ideas are closely interwoven into the fabric of the Pure Land teaching, determining in various ways the relationship of Amida and all sentient beings (*sarvasattva*) and thereby the conditions of rebirth in the Pure Land.

The questions may be raised: How do we come to know about Amida, his all-embracing love, his Original Vows, his Pure Land, and his realisation of enlightenment? How are we justified in placing our spiritual destiny entirely into the hands of Amida? How do we come to be assured of the fulfilment of his Vows? How is it that Amida whose existence seems to be altogether mythical and not at all historical can exercise such an exalted spiritual influence over human souls which seem to be so really sinful and under the sway of karmic law? These are all profound questions relating to the bases of our religious consciousness, and when they were fully answered a book on the philosophy of religion would be written. In the following pages some phases of these questions are touched upon, though necessarily cursorily; and further investigation is reserved for future articles.

There are three principal sutras constituting the Pure Land group of Mahayana literature: The *Larger* and the *Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha** *Sūtra* and the *Sutra of the Meditations on Amitāyus*; and they conjointly make up the foundations of the doctrine of Amida. The Jātaka story of Amida and his forty-eight Original Vows are detailed in the *Larger Sukhāvati*. The scenes in the Pure Land are minutely described in the *Larger* and the *Smaller Sukhāvati*. The *Meditation Sutra* gives an account of Śākyamuni Buddha's vision as it appeared to Queen Vaidehī in her imprisonment and his sermon to her on the various forms of meditation, of which the most important is the one on the Buddha of Infinite Light and Eternal Life. The sutra also tells in detail as to the plans or grades in the Pure Land, which are assigned to different classes of the aspirants according to their ways of living and understanding while in this world.

As long as those Original Vows are the living source of "tariki" faith, one may say, the *Larger Sukhāvati* ought to occupy, as with the Shin sect, the most central position in its teaching, but this is not always the case; for the Jodo tends to emphasise the importance of the *Meditation Sutra* more than the *Larger Sukhāvati*, while the Ji apparently upholds the *Smaller Sukhāvati* as the chief scriptural authority for its doctrine.

The fact is that while Amida and his attributes including his Pure Land are topics common to these three sutras, each has its own peculiar way of dealing with the subject-matter. For instance, while the Original Vows are not at all the subject of the *Meditation Sutra* or of the *Smaller Sukhāvati*, they are fully described in the *Larger Sukhāvati*, in fact they are the chief topic of the first part of the sutra. Meditations on Amida are highly recommended in the *Meditation Sutra*,

* These are the titles of the Sanskrit MSS. edited by Max Müller and Bunyu Nanjo in 1883, forming a volume in the "Anecdota Oxoniensia." Max Müller's English translations appeared in 1894 as S. B. E., Vol. XLIX. The Chinese translations of the *Larger Sukhāvati* by Sanghavarman and of the *Smaller* one by Kumārajīva bear different titles: the former is known as the *Muryōjukyo* (*Amitāyuh-sūtra*) and the latter simply as the *Amida-kyō* (*Amita-sūtra*).

reminding one strongly of the five or ten subjects of meditation* suggested already in the Agamas. There is no doubt that the idea of the compiler of this sutra was to teach the doctrine that the perfections of the Pure Land presided over by Amida are realisable by the strength of mental concentration and not by the mysterious "tariki" power of Amida as the author of the forty-eight Vows. The *Smaller Sukhāvati* shares in this respect the tendency of the *Meditation Sutra*, but with this difference that while the latter relies on the power of self-concentration to realise Amida and his Pure Land, the *Smaller Sukhāvati* makes most of the holding in thought of the name of Amida.

It is likely that these three Pure Land sutras were compiled at different times, and with different objects in view. For this reason, when the three Pure Land sects came each to emphasise its own special teaching in the system of Amida doctrine, each took up the one most suited to its purpose, thus distinguishing itself from the others; but when they wished to elucidate generally the Amida doctrine, they systematically and uniformly upheld the three sutras as unfolding in a most specific sense the mystery of Amida. We can thus readily understand how easy it was for the Pure Land school to be differentiated into the Jōdo, Shin, and Ji.

This was still more so when such strong and independent souls as Shinran or Hōnen with their own deep religious experiences read and interpreted the scriptures in their own original way and were not always scrupulous to follow literally the traditional reading. Naturally, they would not ignore the authority of Śākyamuni Buddha, through whom they were first made acquainted with Amida and his Vows; indeed they never neglected to bring Śākyamuni forward as the source of their

* The five subjects are generally: Impurity, Compassion, Breathing, Causality, and Buddha. The ten are: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, Morality, Charity, the Heavenly worlds, Solitude, Breathing, the Physical Body, and Death.

inspirations. But they interpreted this source with their own experiences. We can say that the latter were really of the first importance to them—how could it be otherwise?—and that the scriptural authority was used to support them. This is the way we would now judge the matter before us, but as far as their own consciousness went they must have sincerely believed that everything they had in the way of “tariki” faith came from the teaching of Śākyamuni himself. This being the case, at least with modern critics of the Pure Land faith, some of the questions raised above are to be answered in terms of the inner experience of a highly spiritual character, and not in the conventional manner of professional scholars bent on defending their faith on scriptural authority.

Incidentally, let us note here that the idea of scriptural authority in whatever form is no more tenable and therefore that whatever ideas that have proved vital, inspiring, and uplifting in the history of religion must find another way of establishing themselves as the ultimate facts of the religious consciousness. Scriptures, Christian or Buddhist, are divine revelations inasmuch as they tally with the deeper experiences of the soul and really help humanity to break through the fetters of finitude and open up a vista full of light and life. In other words, authority must come from within and not from without. The conception of an external God who revealed himself only at a certain time and place cannot be maintained in the face of science and philosophy. The real God is revealed not only in history as it unfolds itself in time, but especially in the human heart when it dives down into itself. This being our standpoint, the Pure Land teaching is to be interpreted, as I said before, in terms of religious consciousness, and not, as is done usually by its orthodox followers, in terms of scriptural authority or special revelation.

Before we proceed farther, let us define the use of the two commonest words which will arrest our attention in every

work dealing with the Pure Land teaching. They are "tariki" (literally, other-power) and "jiriki" (self-power), to which reference has already been made in the present article. Broadly stated, "jiriki" means individual human efforts and "tariki" divine grace. These terms have come in vogue since the day of Donran (T'an Luan, 曇鸞) when he illustrated the "tariki" method of salvation by the analogy of a weak man going about everywhere in the world when he attaches himself to the Lord of the Universe, Chakravarti. In contrast to this, "jiriki" is relying on one's own moral and spiritual discipline by which he would practise meditations for the acquisition of miraculous powers. This latter is however too hard a task to be accomplished by ordinary mortals; for they are imperfect in every way and full of sinful thoughts and desires, which the harder they try to eradicate the stronger the evils seem to grow. In Self there is nothing that will lead one up to Buddhahood. The latter is to be attained only by the grace of a higher or "other" being whose wise and compassionate spirit-power works even in sinful human hearts. Truly, without this mysterious power working in them, they are unable to achieve final salvation when they are left to themselves, that is, when they endeavour to attain Buddhahood by jiriki. In order to make the mysterious power of a higher being work within ourselves, we must abandon jiriki and resort entirely to tariki which will effect its own end by itself.

To express the idea in Christian terminology, "This inward work of God, though never ceasing or altering, is yet always and only hindered by the activity of our own nature and faculties, by bad men through their obedience to earthly passions, and by good men through their striving to be good in their own way, by their natural strength, and a multiplicity of seemingly holy labours and contrivances." "Their own way" here corresponds to jiriki. Tariki is the spirit of faith, or the ultimate perfection of piety, "which not here, or now and then, but everywhere, and in all things, looks up to God alone,

trusts solely in Him, depends absolutely upon Him, expects all from Him, and does all it does for Him."

The difference between Christian and Buddhist mysticism is perhaps that Buddhists do not regard the whole nature of man as "consisting in its being fallen from God into itself, into a self-government and activity, under its own powers broken off from God."* They realise that karma works either way, good or bad, according to the direction we give to it, and however tremendous the work may be to counterbalance the evils of the past accumulated karma-force, we can still accomplish it if we would apply ourselves to it most assiduously through countless ages. But the Christians seem to think that the first karma committed by our first father by deviating from a fall, absolute dependence upon God can never be made good until we are brought out of ourselves by a power from Christ living in us; for otherwise our lost goodness could never come back to us. That is to say, while the Christians uphold tariki and leave no room for jiriki, the Buddhists recognise the possibility of a purely jiriki school under the name of the Holy Path or Difficult Practice. Therefore, when Buddhism is taken as a whole, we note that there are two systems apparently contradicting each other but really working in unison.

Below is the most noted parable of the "Two Streams and a White Path"*** given first by Zendo (Shan-tao, 善導) in his commentary to the *Sutra of the Meditation on Amida*. Zendo of the seventh century in the T'ang is one of the seven patriarchs of the Pure Land school, and his commentary constitutes one of the main springs of its teaching. As the parable graphically represents the position of the tariki follower as he stands related to Amida, to Śākyamuni Buddha, to this world of defilement, and to himself, it is reproduced here from Zendo's text.

* These quotations here are from William L. W.'s "The Spirit is Life," edited and arranged by M. M. Schofield.

** Cf. Gessho Sasaki's *Study of Shin Buddhism*, p. 57 et seq.

“Here is a man wishing to travel in the western direction on a road extending over a hundred or even a thousand *li*.^{*} Suddenly he descries in the way two streams, the one of fire and the other of water: the fire is on the south and the water on the north. Both are one hundred steps wide but the depths are unknown. How far they extend northward and southward nobody can measure. Just between the fire and the water there lies a white path about four or five *sun*^{*} broad and running from the east bank to the west; its length is also one hundred steps. Not only the waves rising in succession from this water sweep over the path, but the flames of the fire also reach up and scorch it. The path is thus found washed by waves and flames, alternately and without cessation.

“A traveller already in the midst of the wilderness far away from human habitations, is now detected by highway robbers and ferocious beasts. Taking advantage of his helpless situation they vie with one another to lay their murderous hands on the poor victim. He is mortally afraid and runs at full speed in the western direction until suddenly he finds himself confronted by the great river. He thinks within himself: ‘This river extends without bounds to the south and to the north, with just one white path cutting through the middle. The passage is extremely narrow. Though the further bank does not seem to be very far from here, how can I cross it? No doubt I am going to die this very moment. If I should turn back, the highwaymen and the wild beasts are steadily approaching. If I should run south or north, the wild beasts and the poisonous reptiles are ready to devour me. But if I should attempt to find my escape to the west, in all probability I should be drowned in these streams of fire and water.’

“At this moment his terror is beyond description. However, he reflects again: ‘To go back means death, to stay here means death, to go ahead means death: if death thus inevitably threatens me on all sides, why not rather try the

* *Li* corresponds to mile and *sun* to inch.

path before me, and run on straight ahead? The path lies anyhow right in front, and surely it is possible for me to cross it.'

"When the traveller comes to this resolution, he suddenly hears a voice coming from the east bank, which urges him to go ahead, saying, 'You be only resolute and go ahead along this path and you will be delivered from death. But if you tarry here death will be your fate.' There is another voice at the time reaching him from the west bank, which calls out to him, saying, 'With singleness of thought and with a rightly directed heart, come straight to me. I will protect you, you need not at all fear falling into the abyss of water and fire.'

"Hearing an order to go on this side and a summoning call on the other, the traveller is fully determined with his body as well as in his mind to proceed along the path. He now goes on straightforward without entertaining either a doubt or a backsliding thought. As he thus goes along a little way, the robbers on the east bank call out loudly, saying, 'The path is stormy and full of dangers, you cannot possibly cross it, and there is no doubt about your meeting a certain death. We are all far from having an evil design on you.' The traveller hears the calling voice but never turns his head back. He keeps on his way with singleness of heart and with his thoughts fixed on the path. Before long he reaches the west bank where, eternally released from all ills, he is greeted by all good friends and blessed forever more.

"Now to explain the meaning of the parable. The east bank is likened to the fiery residence of this world of endurance, while the west bank is likened to the treasure-land of happiness. A number of the highway robbers, wild beasts, and their treacherous intimacy are likened to the six sense-organs, six consciousnesses, six sense-objects, five skandhas, and four elements, with which all sentient beings are constituted. The wilderness with no inhabitants is likened to our being constantly attended by evil advisers and being kept away from

good sincere friends. The two streams of water and fire are likened to the desires and cravings of all sentient beings, which resemble water, and to their anger and hatred which resemble fire. The white path in the middle which is four or five *sun* in width is likened to one's heart pure in itself and desiring to be born [in the Pure Land], which is awakened even in the midst of our cravings, hatreds, and evil passions. As our cravings and hatreds are powerful, they are likened to water and fire, while the faintness of the devotional heart resembles the white path. The waves constantly sweeping over the path are likened to our cravings, which, being constantly stirred within us, defile the devotional heart. The flames always ablaze on the path are likened to our dislikes and hatreds which burn up the spiritual treasure of merit. The traveller's going west straight along the path is likened to a man's turning all his deeds right towards the west [to be born in the Pure Land]. That the traveller hears a voice on the east bank urging him to go ahead along the path, means that after the death of Śakyamuni those who follow him are unable to see him except through the teaching left by him, which resembling the master's voice they can hear. That after going a little way the man is called back by the band of robbers means that there are some people whose understanding and behaviours are at variance [with those of the Pure Land followers] and whose views are not at all true and that they get themselves and others into confusion by their false views and arguments, ending finally in the commission of sinful deeds which make them go backward [in their spiritual progress]. That there is a voice calling from the west bank refers to Amida's Vows. That before long the man reaches the west bank and there greeted by all his good friends is made happy, means that all beings who have long been sinking in [the sea of] birth-and-death, transmigrating from time immemorial, binding themselves in errors and falsehoods, and knowing no way to emancipation, are now mercifully directed by Śakyamuni to proceed westward and then

summoned by Amida whose loving heart is ever beckoning them, and that they, now in faithful obedience to the intentions of these two Honoured Ones, pay no heed to the two streams of water and fire, and, ever in remembrance of Amida's Vows, walk on the path led by the strength of the Vows, and that when they abandon this life they are born in his land and coming into his presence are exceedingly made happy."

Having explained what is meant by the Pure Land doctrine generally, and hoping that the above is enough to acquaint the reader with its principal elements, let us proceed to the main subject which is to trace the growth of this doctrine in the body of Buddhism.

II

There is no doubt that Buddhism has been throughout its history a religion of enlightenment (*sambodhi*) and emancipation (*vimutti* or *vimoksha*), and in the beginning there were no indications in the teaching of the master, which betrayed the "other-power" (*tariki*) elements of later Buddhism. Everything the Buddha taught tended towards self-reliance, self-realisation, and self-emancipation. To be dependent upon another in any sense of the word was eschewed. Even relying on the Buddha was interdicted. "Be ye lamps to yourselves; be ye a refuge to yourselves; betake yourselves to no external refuge!" (*Atta-dīpā viharatha attasaraṇā anañña-saraṇā!*)* This was the keynote of his spiritual discipline; and after his death the Dharma was to be represented as the master himself by the disciples. So he told them, "Yo kho dhammam passati so mam passati." (He who sees the Dharma sees me.) And this Dharma, as was proclaimed by the Buddha, was *sandittika*, *akālika*, *ehi-passika*, *opaniyika*, *paccatam veditabbo viññūhi*.** The

* *Dīgha-nikāya*, XVI, 2, 26.

** To be directly perceived, beyond limits of time, to be personally experienced, altogether persuasive, and to be cognised by the wise, each by himself.

Arhat who subdued all his āśravas (depravities), who destroyed the bonds of birth-and-death, and was completely detached from the intellectual and affectional hindrances, was the one who grasped the Dharma by his own mental efforts (*sayam abhinnaya*), devoting himself to meditation (*jhānānuyutta*), in some secluded spot remote from the haunts of men (*gaṇamhā vūpakattho*). He was alone (*eko*), earnest (*appammato*), zealous (*ātāpī*), and master of himself (*pahitatto*), walked in the middle path (*majjhena dhammam*), and enjoyed the twofold emancipation (*ubhato-bhāga-vimutto*) which was the product of the intellectual and the spiritual discipline. There was no room in his heart for the faith-element to enter as developed soon after the passing of the master. Mysticism was there and asceticism too, but the entire outlook of Arhatship consisted in the most vigorous self-discipline intellectual as well as moral.

How could this jiriki religion of enlightenment and emancipation be turned into that of tariki faith and salvation? How could this teaching of the Buddha which when mastered enabled one to realise the truth in this world of ours (*ditthadhamma*), transform itself into a faith in another world, that is, the Land of Bliss (*sukhāvatī*), in which its followers concentrate all their mental efforts to be reborn after death? They are after enlightenment, it is true, as other Buddhists are, but they have decided to postpone its attainment until they reach Amida's Land of Purity and Perfect Bliss. How did they come to create such a being as Amida when to the Buddha even the highest god of the heavens bowed low and offered their homage most reverently? As there was no ego (*ātman*) from the very beginning, it was perhaps natural enough in one sense to abandon the thought of "self-power" (*jiriki*), but to establish "other-power" (*tariki*) in its stead was in a way creating another self, not as narrow indeed, not so limited, and perhaps not so irrational, but was it not against the Buddha's teaching to put faith in anything not realisable

“yathābhūtaṃ” by sammapañña*? When the nembutsu idea is contrasted in more details to Buddhist thought generally as it developed in India early in the history of Buddhism, we find an almost impassable chasm dividing one from the other: there seems no way to reconcile them harmoniously and naturally. It is not strange that some Buddhist critics regard the Nembutsu schools as degeneration and refuse to recognise them as pursuing the orthodox course of development.

When we carefully turn over the pages of the history of Buddhism, however, the following lines of development suggest themselves to our minds. They are no more than suggestions at present, but as we grow in historical knowledge as regards things Indian, they may be more definitely verified. When the doctrine of Nembutsu is analysed we may find many elements going into its make-up, but, generally stated, we can distinguish at least the following five factors constituting its essentials: ethico-mythical, metaphysical, religious, psychological, and historical. These five factors are so inseparably and organically interwoven into the system of “tariki” salvation that when we try to single out one element after another for analytical inspection, the others are invariably found attached to it. Therefore, this enumeration of the various factors must be regarded as merely set up for the practical purpose of this study.

1. By the ethico-mythical factor I mean the Jataka element which has so largely entered into the notion of Buddhahood. Every Buddha was a Bodhisattva in his former life, and while in this stage of spiritual discipline he practised most vigorously all the virtues of perfection (*pāramitā*). And it was due to the cumulative effect of these virtues or merits that the Bodhisattva could finally realise the ultimate end of his life, which was the attainment of supreme enlightenment. If not

* *Evam etaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammapaññāya dassetthabham.*

for his spiritual perfection realised only after a strenuous moral life through a series of rebirths, he could not hope for such a culmination as the realisation of Buddhahood.

Amida had thus also to go through with the same process of discipline as the Bodhisattva Dharmākara in his previous life, and performed innumerable deeds of charity, morality, energy, patience, meditation, and supreme wisdom. And so far the upward course of his life was normal and in full accordance with the ideas of early Buddhism. But in the beginning of his career he made what is known as "Original Vows," *pūrvapranidhāna*, and this was something not to be literally traceable in the Agamas or Nikayas. As far as the Jataka idea is concerned, it is old enough, for this is the direct practical application of the theory of karma to our moral life. Without the accumulation of moral merit in our previous lives, we could not hope for the attainment of anything highly spiritual in the present existence. This is intelligible enough. But when we come to the conception of Amida's *Pūrvapranidhāna* in which he makes his realisation of Buddhahood conditional on the fulfilment of the Vows, we have here something quite new and original germinating in the mere Jataka idea,—something more than mere karma could comprehend in itself. This infusion of a new element transcending the law of causality marks the beginning of Mahayana Buddhism.

While Amida's forty-eight Vows are mixed up with many unessential, and to us moderners nonsensical, *pranidhanas* or vows, the most significant one, that is, the eighteenth *pranidhana*, is really of great religious importance, and by virtue of this in fact all the Pure Land sects are justified for their existence. While the Jataka requires a severe moral and ascetic discipline, the condition implied in the *pranidhana* is an absolute faith in the mysterious virtue of Amida. And this simple faith is enough to lead all sentient beings to his Land of Purity and to make them attain the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment of the Buddha.

This making of the pranidhanas or vows is what distinguishes Amida from Śākyamuni and other Buddhas prior to him; for none of the latter ever expressed any strong desires other than the attainment of their own enlightenment before they entered into the life of a Bodhisattva. It is evident that the idea of pranidhana did not develop until sometime after the passing of the Buddha as we have no mention of it in Pali literature. One of the Tathagatas who appeared, according to some scholars, before Amida in the literature of Mahayana Buddhism, is known as Akshobhya Buddha, and in the sutra detailing his Jataka and his country a number of "Original Vows" is made by him before his enlightenment. Probably this is one of the precedents of the pranidhana idea. The Bodhisattva Maitreya has his Pure Land in Tushita Heaven and the sutras relating his life assure our rebirth in that heaven if we sincerely believe in him; but as far as literature goes we are not acquainted with any definite pranidhanas made by him. In fact Maitreya has not yet attained his Buddhahood, and his work as saviour of mankind, we can say, has not yet really started among us. Bhaishajyaguru Buddha has his pranidhanas, twelve in number; while he seems to have been taken notice of by the Mahayanists later than Amida, his vows make no reference to the idea of universal salvation by faith. In this respect, the vows of Bhaishajyaguru are like those of Akshobhya; both wish to pave the way smoothly for the followers of their Buddha-lands so that they would not encounter too many and too formidable obstructions in their upward course of spiritual discipline. But the faith-element, that is, what is technically known by Buddhist scholars as the "tariki" element has not found its way into the pranidhanas of these two Buddha-Tathagatas. All the other Buddhas that are mentioned in Mahayana literature as having their Pure Lands somewhere in the spiritual universe, do not stand in any intimate relationship to our human world of patience and misery. They are all too mythical. Akshobhya and Bhaishajyaguru have the nearest

approach to us next to Amida, but neither of them can replace the latter to any degree of human satisfaction.

The question now is, How did this notion of *pranidhanas*, especially those made by Amida, come to the minds of earlier Buddhists who did not know much about achieving universal salvation by this means? Their motto was: "Be ye lamps to yourselves," (*attadīpā viharatha*), and enlightenment, if they at all realised it, was the product of a long spiritual discipline by themselves. But here is an element precluded from the original sphere of their thought, but evidently forcing itself into it. How was this?

When the Buddha attained the Enlightenment, he realised that it was too exalted a state of consciousness for common souls to aspire after, and he was for a moment full of the idea of himself disappearing from the world. But this was the intellectual side of his realisation in which however there was something very much deeper than the mere intellect, and it was this deeper side that kept him on earth and made him work hard for the edification of his fellow-beings. He could not help this. According to his penetrating metaphysical insight, he knew too well that it was far beyond the reach of the average understanding, and consequently that it was of no use for him to attempt to induce others to come up to the giddy height of enlightenment, but something in him impelled him to go ahead and mix himself up in the world and to lead it towards the higher ideals of life, if necessary, even by means of contrivance or expediency (*upāya*). What was this impelling force, let me ask, which the Buddha failed to keep in check?

In the Agamas we read about two kinds of emancipation, *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*, and he who has achieved the first kind of emancipation—emancipation of the heart acquire four qualities of the heart, which are: love (*mettā*), sympathy (*karunā*), impartiality (*upekkhā*), and soft-heartedness (*muditā*). If the Buddha was the king of all the emancipations, was he

not also the great possessor of love, amity, kindness, and other cognate feelings in the most boundless measure? While he reasoned somewhat coldly on the surface, his heart always betrayed itself, and if not for this, his moral influence could never be what it actually was as evidenced in the history of Buddhism. This awakening and assertion of *mahākaruṇā* which proved such a powerful factor in the moulding of later Buddhism was a new element infused into the system of the so-called primitive Buddhism. This was the most impelling force the Buddha released in himself. When his mind was still under the spell of enlightenment, he probably failed to be cognisant of this altogether too powerful life-energy which later grew in him ever stronger and ever more inevitable. And it was this indeed that was most operative in the formulation of Amida's *pranidhānas*. If this were the case as I think it was, we must say that there was something in the enlightenment-consciousness of the Buddha far more than the earlier Buddhists could have imagined or analysed.

In the history of Buddhism, the Jataka represents the ideal of Hinayana Buddhists who have amassed an immense treasure of tales and parables, all richly illustrating the laborious course of ascent in the life of a Bodhisattva. The scene however changes when we come to Mahayana literature. There are Jataka tales here no doubt, but they are no more so interesting, they are not at all told in the way as to be so persuasive and enticing as in the Hinayana Jatakas. According to the Mahayanists, this is due to the lack of love-factor in the Jatakas. Every deed of sacrifice for instance performed by the Bodhisattva has for its ultimate object his own attainment of Bodhi and not necessarily the salvation of all sentient as well as non-sentient beings. The Jatakas must develop into the *Pūrvapranidhāna*, if Buddhism has to unfold all that is implied in the Buddha's Enlightenment; for the Enlightenment which is the dispelling of ignorance releases not only a man's intellectual faculty but his noblest emotional energy. When *Prajñā*

goes hand in hand with Karuṇā, the Buddha ceases to be a mere Pratyekabuddha but grows to be a great perfect being, Mahāsattva and Bodhisattva in the meaning as we understand it and not in that of the Jatakas.

2. The Supreme Perfect Enlightenment which was the greatest event in the life of the Buddha and in the history of Buddhism was not after all so intellectual as is ordinarily interpreted by scholars. It goes without saying that it was far more than the discovery of the law of causality which prevails only in the phenomenal world and not in a realm where the deepest religious consciousness obtains. The latter transcends the principle of causation; the idea that "as this is, that is, and as this is not, that is not," is to be abandoned when one wants to meet the deepest longings of our hearts. Did enlightenment satisfy these requirements as well as intellectual speculations? As I take it, enlightenment is negatively the dispelling of ignorance and positively the restoring of freedom to the Will, that is to say, the awakening of the "original vows" (*pūrvapraṇidhāna*) hitherto dormant in the deepest recesses of our being. The removal of ignorance did not mean a state of emptiness, the emancipation of the void, *śūnyatā* *vimutti*; for enlightenment had an altogether positive content and released all the energy that had hitherto been utilised for the pursuit of egotistical interests and aspirations arising from ignorance. The Enlightenment of the Buddha is not to be interpreted merely as an intellectual insight into the thusness of things (*tathātā*), this would make him a passive onlooker at the mad dancing of primordial forces. It is on the contrary the revealing of a creative and self-regulating principle and makes the Will master of itself, giving it back all the native and spontaneous activity stored up primarily in it. This idea later developed into that of *Anutpattikadharmaśhanti* by the Mahayanists.

What does the Will accomplish by itself when it is released

from all the crippling and cramping notions and desires? According to Buddhist interpretation, the first thing the Will as embodied in an individual being wishes to achieve after the release is to do to others what has done for itself. As enlightenment has made it known to the Will that there is no real and impassable gap between oneself and others, the Will feels now no need of asserting itself blindly, that is, of following the dictates of the principle of individuation. While the Will does not ignore the latter as the condition of intellection which is its servant, it knows now how to make him obedient to itself, instead of reversing the position as is ordinarily done by the ignorant. In other words, the efforts of an enlightened consciousness are to lead others to the realisation of a similar state of release. As long as one remains ignorant and under the bondage of the principle of multitudinosity, one is never able to rise above the interests of the ego, but when the chain is cut asunder and one is uplifted to a realm where one can survey the world *yathābhūtam* in the absolute sense of the word, every act of such a spirit most felicitously hits off the harmonious relation between *meum et tuum*. When Amida Nyorai (Tathāgata Amitābha) made his forty-eight Original Vows, he must have been right in the midst of enlightenment, though the attainment of the latter was made conditional on the fulfilment of the Vows. Unless there were some inevitable interrelation between the Enlightenment and Original Vows, it were altogether useless for Amida to make such vows as detailed in the sutra. Indeed when he attained enlightenment, the entire universe was released from ignorance and bondage; and as he is still quietly abiding in his own Land of Purity, the entire universe including all its beings sentient and non-sentient, must be said also to be abiding right in the state of enlightenment, no matter what miserable things we are to the eyes of the ignorant and confused. Thus we find the idea of the Original Vows justified in the metaphysical significance of enlightenment.

3. But to make this metaphysical significance workable in our everyday practical life, another concept is needed, by which I mean the doctrine of *Paripāmana*. So far as we can trace in Pali literature there is no approach to this doctrine which really caused an epoch-making revolution in the history of Buddhist thought; but the conception of *Paripāmana* was the logical outcome of enlightenment-consciousness which transcends the category of causality. What made Buddhism great as a universal religion responding to the still small voice of the soul, was due to the discovery of this principle. *Paripāmana* means to turn one's own merit over to others, just the reverse of karmic law. According to the latter, every Bodhisattva is to accumulate his own virtues in order to acquire a capacity for the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment of the Buddha. He went thus through many a rebirth putting himself under the severest moral discipline he was capable of. If every sentient being has to be a Buddha or an Arhat or somebody finally leading up to such, before he can attain to full enlightenment and emancipation, he will have to be thoroughly trained in the Eightfold Path of Righteousness or the Six Virtues of Perfection and completely purgated of all the traces of *kāma* (desire), *bhāva* (becoming), and *diṭṭha* (intellection), and *avijjā* (ignorance). This discipline, if absolutely and universally required of all candidates for Buddhas or Arhats—which was the case with the earlier Buddhists—may prove too formidable and impossible for most common mortals, and the world may be full of unsaved souls with no hopes for ultimate deliverance. This is an unbearable state of things for any one whose heart generously opens to all the sufferings and depravities that are going on in the world. There ought to be some way to mend it. The Buddha-nature or enlightenment-consciousness ought to be present in all sentient and even non-sentient beings, and when this is directly awakened or shown the way to be awakened, the world may have some prospect of being saved in spite of its evils. There ought to be some way to do this,

and the way is to make others share in the benefits accruing in any manner from the accumulation of merit and the realisation of enlightenment. If they fail to come up to the mark even when they try hard to accomplish impossibilities, owing to their innate weaknesses, they must be helped out by such as are capable of spiritual discipline. The gifted are not to be left with themselves, love is to make them come out of their selfishness, and let others also come into the treasury-house of merit. The law of karma may be true and should be made to work in our practical and intellectual plane of life, but it is too rigid, too exclusive, too individualistic, and above all goes against our religious yearnings. While our individualism wishes for self-interest and self-preservation, we have another order of impulses to sacrifice ourselves for others. We want to suffer for others, and when this is not practicable we want to send out our thoughts and sympathies to them. If we are at all spiritual beings capable of enlightenment, this thought-communication or mystical interpenetration must be possible though this of course cannot take place in the way of material things. The possibility of the Original Vows is based upon this theory of Parināmana, which in turn derives its metaphysical reasonableness from the signification of enlightenment.

4. When the doctrine of Parināmana is thus established, enlightenment grows in its tariki significance and the Buddhism of attadipā gradually and inevitably transforms itself into that of the Original Vows (*pūrvaprapñdhāna*). Aristocratic Arhats are now democratic Sarvasattvas. An infinite perfectability of moral character which means a life of unending strenuousness and asceticism ceases to intimidate weak-hearted ones (*bāla* or *prithagjana*). Instead of trying to attain what is almost utterly beyond their powers, they now look up to one whose wisdom and love are strong enough to embrace them. They do not now attempt to attain enlightenment in this life, but would postpone it until they are reborn in the Land of Purity pre-

sided over by Amida, they would rest assured, while here, in his promise to take them to his own abode. They will do all they can to lead a morally pure life, but they will never rely upon their moral superiority for final salvation. They have found some one who will look after their spiritual welfare if only they accept him and place their whole-souled faith in him by invoking his name. If we were all perfect, there would be no need for us to look around and discover an external aid. But we are in most varied ways weak, imperfect, and always ready to fall away from the high ideals, and if we were to be dwelling constantly upon these shortcomings and moral deficiencies, there would never be a chance for us to enjoy spiritual rest and happiness. While the jiriki side of our life means eternal perfectability of our character, the tariki side whispers to us in a most assured manner that with all our failures and unattained aspirations we are finally to be saved as we are abiding right in the midst of enlightenment.

Why? For enlightenment itself has a double aspect, jiriki and tariki, when it is intellectually analysed. The jiriki aspect of enlightenment is the consummation of our spiritual efforts throughout innumerable lives of the past, while its tariki aspect is the fulfilment of all the pranidhanas vowed not only by Amida but by all the Buddhas and Arhats and all common mortals. We usually imagine that the Eighteenth Pranidhana is the monopoly of Amida, but in fact what he did was merely to give expression to what lies deeply and inarticulately hidden in the heart of every sentient being. While it is a great achievement on the part of Amida to be able to give vent to this inmost feeling of ours, we must not be blind to the fact that the feeling of pranidhana is not the exclusive possession of any one highly endowed mind. For this reason we are able to respond to the call of Amida. If there were nothing in our consciousness which answers to his pranidhanas, the latter would surely fall flat on us like gold coins thrown before a cat. The ultimate truth is that we common mortals

are all capable of attaining the Buddha's supreme perfect enlightenment with its double aspect, *jiriki* and *tariki*. This being so, when we think we are saved by the grace of Amida, we are really saving ourselves, and when we think we are hearing his call, we are in fact listening to our own *pranidhanas* which have been planted in our consciousness ever since its awakening. But as it was Amida who pointed them out and gave them a name, he is our saviour. In a book called *安心決定抄** we read that in the "Namu-amida-butsu," Amida and ourselves are united as one and that the one from the other cannot even for a moment be separated, so that every thought we have is of Amida and every breath we breathe is of his virtue. To be separate in oneness and to be one in separation, or, more personally, that Amida is his own saviour by saving others—this is indeed the mystery of mysteries.

Jiriki (self-power) is the *adhipaṇṇā* aspect of enlightenment and *tariki* (other-power) is the *mahākaruṇā* aspect of the same. By *adhipaṇṇā* we transcend the principle of individuation, and by *mahākaruṇā* we descend into a world of particulars. The one goes upwards while the other comes downwards, but this is our intellectual way of understanding or interpreting enlightenment, in whose movement however there is no such twofold direction discernible. Amida himself sitteth forever immovably in his lotus-seat, but from the human point of view we speak of his *pranidhanas* directed towards us and our longings going up to him.

5. But, historically speaking, how did a religion of the threefold discipline (*sikkha* or *śikṣā*) consisting of *adhisīla*, *adhicitta*, and *adhipaṇṇā*, develop into the teaching of salvation by faith? The latter may have its metaphysical ground in the Buddha's enlightenment, but in point of history how did it

* *An-jin Ketsujō Shō* (on the Attainment of Spiritual Peace). The author is not known, but the book is one of the most important of all the Shin writings.

come to happen? Let me see into the course of events after the Buddha's Nirvana or even into the psychology of his followers while he was yet alive among them.

There is no doubt that the Buddha was a wonderfully inspiring personality. When we know that no religious system has ever been built upon logical reasoning however subtle and thoroughgoing it might be, and again that all religion is a kind of edifice constructed around a person who is its animating centre, the fact grows evident that the centre-force supporting the huge structure known as Buddhism must have been a grand figure. Even while still walking among his fellow-beings, the Buddha was an object of adoration and attracted many followers to him who were content just to be with him and to look at him. Something of the magnetic rays of divinity must have emanated from his person, and to those who were struck with them it did not probably matter very much whether his teaching was logically true or not. They were eager to accept it just because it came from the golden lips of such a personality as the Buddha. Even when things are systematically presented and logically tenable, we are often reluctant to accept them abstractly. We may be convinced intellectually of their validity, and nothing may be left for us to say against it. But singularly enough there are so many cases in life in which we feel undecided as to their being final truths. Why? Because life is more than reasoning and personality deeper than mere syllogistic consistency. Therefore, let there be a living spirit behind verbalism and every word dropping from its mouth vibrates through the entire being of the hearer. That such was the case with the Buddha, the early literature of Buddhism eloquently testifies. The Agamas relate of his having been invited into a village infested with an epidemic, for the villagers thought that the Buddha so full of wonderful personal power would be able to keep all the evil spirits away from the village, to whom they ascribed the cause of the disaster.

When the Buddha passed into Nirvana, his followers were

thrown into excessive grief and did not know how to control their feelings. This fact is taken noticed of, for herein lies at least one most important happening in the life of the Buddha in connection with the development of later Buddhist thought. His Nirvana means so much to all Buddhists. The two most fruit-bearing and thought-provoking events in the Buddha's life were Enlightenment and Nirvana. His teaching naturally supplied material for Buddhist philosophy, but the latter could be delineated only on the canvas woven of Nirvana and Enlightenment, so much so indeed that when these two grand facts are taken away from Buddhism, nothing is left behind which is strong and vital enough for the cogitation of Buddhist thinkers. This is also the origin and meaning of the Nirvana figure and the Nirvana picture we see so much in Buddhist temples and monasteries. When Christians kneel before the crucified figure of Christ, I believe, it is not from the sense of lamentation, but from that of reverential gratitude and adoration. To Buddhists the Nirvana picture, as it is painted by Japanese or Chinese painters, represents the peaceful termination of a great historical character whose departure from us could not be stopped even with the earnest entreaties and heart-rending wails of his disciples and followers, including all creatures human as well as non-human. How was it that such a great soul as the Buddha had to pass out? Why did he not prolong his life to the utmost limit, which he said he could if he wished? Is it then that he did not really die as all mortals do but just appeared to be dead to our mortal sense? What is then his true body? His immediate disciples must have reasoned in some such wise while their hearts were filled with grief and adoration and while the living memory of the late master left such a deep stamp in their minds.

The doctrine of the universal transitoriness of things could not check the outbursts of their lamentation, the master's personality appeared to his disciples too great, too superhuman to be regarded as one of their kind, the feelings they enter-

tained towards him were altogether out of the ordinary, and must have had much deeper meaning, probably as deep as the personality of the master. There was no violence connected with his death as was the case with that of Christ, but this peaceful ending impressed the minds of his disciples intellectually rather than affectively. They did not give themselves away altogether to the feeling of loss and grief, however great this was, but there was room left for them to reason quietly about the whole proceeding and about the significance of the Buddha's life on earth and his departure. The reasoning backed by the emotion gradually developed into faith. They now came to consider Gautama, the Muni of the Śākyas, as the eternal Buddha who was manifested temporarily among them in order to enlighten us, to deliver us from the bondage of all sorts, and if needed by some of us, to lead them to his own abode of purity and happiness. This idea is strongly developed in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*.

In the Nikayas, the Buddha is made to have advised his disciples to think of him and his virtues as if they saw his body before their eyes, whereby they would be enabled to accumulate merit and attain Nirvana or be saved from transmigrating in the evil paths of existence and be born in the heavens. Though there is much distance between this and the doctrine of the Pure Land school, it is quite a start towards the latter, and if any thought or belief popularly accepted or beginning to move the masses, which closely approaches to that of the Amida faith happens to lie athwart in the course of Buddhist history, it will very readily have the chance to get planted into the soil thus prepared by the immediate and early disciples of the Buddha. As some scholars suggest, something like the Vishnu cult as is accepted by the author of the *Bhagavatgīta* might find ready sympathisers among such Buddhists. And as the outcome of such contact, the creation of Amida Buddha as eternal being with his Sukhāvātī might have been effected. When rival thoughts are to be disposed of, the

favourite Indian way, I am told, is to swallow them up as the larger and stronger snake does its enemy, and turn them into an organic part of the victor's system. In this respect, Buddhism has never been behind other systems; wherever and whenever it thought it opportune and helping its own growth it was ready to swallow and assimilate any healthy thought with which it came in contact. While we are still unable to trace every step Buddhism took in its course of development, something like the foregoing may fairly be considered true in its general outlines.

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To put the whole story as above analysed in a constructive form: Here is Śākyamuni ready to be apotheosised with all his human qualities, his Enlightenment, and his practical assertions of love (*mahākaruṇā*); and, at the other end, a group of devout disciples trying to get all their doubts, sufferings, and yearnings solved in the teaching and personality of their master; and, further, the fact that no religion can hold itself up without a consolidating, unifying, and vivifying personal power as its centre or as its foundation:—with all this ready, is there not the way perfectly open and without any obstructions directly leading to the tariki conception of salvation? In fact, the logical conclusion of the interplay of the various forces above delineated is the growth of the Pure Land teaching with Amida as its source of aspirations.

The myth of Amida might have been an exotic growth or a foreign transplantation into the native soil of primitive Buddhism. If this were the case though we have no historic facts for this hypothesis, Buddhists could not find anything more suitable than this myth for a nucleus around which they could develop all that was needed for the theory of tariki salvation. As I said before, especially for the Indian mind, no historicity was needed to construct a vital religious belief; for to it as well as to other Oriental minds spiritual facts were more real and fruit-bearing than what is known as objectively historical.

As long as history remained external, that is, as long as it stood outside of our inner life, it had no reality with the power to affect us. To be real and historical meant to be innerly experienced by a pious and earnest soul, and therefore an objective world with all its so-called facts and laws was something that had no living connection with the soul, it was as if it never existed. The Jataka of Amida and his Prāṇidhānas (vows) were true and real to his devotees no matter how they originated.

From the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment there flowed an emotional spring of *Mettā*, *Karunā*, *Upekhā*, and *Muditā*; for it laid low all the barriers constructed by the ego-soul to check the free movement of the original will-power. The Will was not to be overruled by the law of karma or that of moral causation; on the contrary it wished to revoke the law or rather to make it serve its own purpose, that is, for the accomplishment of its Original Vows. Thus it created the principle of *Parināmana* to replace the law of karma. Karma was indeed primarily the agent to bring about the Enlightenment, as it was the outcome of a long and arduous spiritual discipline: but once the end gained, the spirit burned the bridge behind it, and all its merits, virtues, powers, and concentrations were now turned over to all sentient beings, who were thus enabled now to share in them and to achieve with ease and trust what Amida achieved after great sacrifices. The principle of *Parināmana* was not however an absolutely new creation, but it lay from the beginning in the Enlightenment itself as its content, and what Buddhists had to do, that is, to make it work in a world of particulars, was simply to grow conscious of the fact and draw it out as it were from its primordial bed. This drawing-out took the form of the forty-eight *Prāṇidhānas* on the part of Amida.

There is no reason to suppose that because primitive Buddhists failed to draw out all the contents of the Enlightenment and remained satisfied with the Fourfold Noble Truth, or the

Twelvefold Chain of Origination, or some other formulas, the tariki teaching was something externally grafted into the system of Buddhism. The thing required for the adequate reading of the history of the spirit is to get the scales off one's mental eye which is really made to look inward as well as outward, for the outward is inward and the inward outward. When this is done we are initiated right into the mysteries of the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment of Śākyamuni, which he realised while sitting under the shade of the Bodhi tree, and which we today can also attain by delving into the depths of our being.

Thus we can say that while there was something historical or mythical which contributed to the formulation of the Pure Land doctrine, the idea itself principally developed out of the inwardness of the Buddha's Enlightenment and of the eternal yearnings of the soul. The distance from the doctrine of self-discipline and Arhatship to that of salvation by faith seems to be a very long one, but the tariki followers have not abandoned enlightenment and in fact what is considered salvation is enlightenment under the disguise of faith. Professedly, they do not seek enlightenment while in this world, but only wish to attain it in the Pure Land where resides Amida; they are thus contented with the assurance that Amida will take them up after death to his Land of Purity and Bliss. But as this Land is no more than the projection of Amida's Enlightenment, the assurance of one's rebirth there amounts to this that one can share in the Enlightenment itself. The objection that the assurance is a kind of promise and must not be identified with the fact of enlightenment, is not a serious one. For we can for all practical purposes regard this assurance as the fact itself as long as the assurance implies the spiritual recognition of Amida's grace on our part while this grace grows operative only as the outcome of Amida's Enlightenment. There is a process indeed, logically stated, between the two notions, assurance and enlightenment, but psychologically the assurance on the part of sentient beings as the objects of the Original

Vows is identical with Enlightenment on the part of Amida. This is the basic idea of the tariki teaching in which the self-attained enlightenment of primitive Buddhists has taken the form of faith in Amida's Enlightenment. The difference lies in the approach and not in the substance.

Thus we can see that to trace the development of the Pure Land idea or tariki teaching is really writing the history of Mahayana Buddhism. If the essence of Mahayana Buddhism consists in the upholding of infinite Karuṇā lying deep in the enlightened Buddha-heart and making it overflow the narrow and self-murdering limits of intellectual individuation, the Original Vow of Amida is no more than the surest grasp of this essence. To be reborn in the Pure Land by embracing Amida in absolute faith means nothing more, nor less, than our being all one in the Supreme Enlightenment of the perfect Buddha. What generally distinguishes the Mahayana from the Hinayana is chiefly discernible in the teaching of the Pure Land school of Buddhism. In contrast to the metaphysical and moral outlook characterising other schools such as the Tendai, Kegon, or Zen, the Jōdo is emotional, appealing strongly to the affective side of human life. Emotion is always symbolical and artistic and wants to express itself in pictures. Hence the creation of the Pure Land presided over by Amida. And as art has a realm of its own apart from that of reality, so stands there a religion of the Pure Land outside the ken of intellectual criticism.

Before concluding this article, I must not forget to say a word concerning the Buddhist conception of the Pure Land. So far I referred to it as if it made up the entirety of Buddhist eschatology, that is to say, some of our readers may be led to think that the sole object of the Pure Land devotees is to be born in Amida's Land of Bliss and Purity, which is described in detail in some of the Pure Land sutras. But the fact is that the birth itself (which is technically called *wōjō* in Japanese and *wang-shang* in Chinese, 往生, literally meaning

“to go and be born”) is not the object, but to attain enlightenment in the country of Amida where conditions are such as to insure a ready realisation of the true Buddhist life. The Pure Land school in this respect shows no deviation from the main current of Buddhist thought; indeed if it did it could not at all go under the name of Buddhism. Enlightenment is the one fundamental note that reverberates through all the branches of the teaching of the Buddha; whether Mahayana or Hinayana, enlightenment is the consummation of Buddhist discipline. It is true that the difficulties of the Holy Path are very much talked of by the followers of the Pure Land school as if the object of the Holy Path were something un-realizable for us poor sinful mortals. But what they really advise us is to take another way than the one chosen by the holies; as to the object itself the Easy Doctrine is in perfect agreement with the Difficult One. If we can say so, to be born in the Pure Land is the means to the end; for Buddhism in whatever form is the religion of enlightenment and emancipation.

Properly speaking, the Pure Land school is a misnomer, it may better be called the Nembutsu school, for the nembutsu is of more significance and characterises the school more appropriately. What would the followers do after they are actually born in the Pure Land if just to be born there were their only object in view? It makes one feel happy to think that there is an ideal world somewhere within our reach where all the ills of this earthly life are kept away; but to be personally there in all reality and to be doing nothing after the birth, as this is evidently the case if we believe literally all that is described in the sutras, must be, to say the least, a dull and tedious business, and I am sure that we shall all be longing again to be born into this world of patience, *sahaloka*. Unless we are altogether deprived of humanity, the Pure Land is no place for us. The most desirable thing for us to attain will be to descend on earth as soon as we have attained enlighten-

ment through the grace of Amida and to work again among our still benighted brothers and sisters. And it is indeed for this reason that Shinran has a doctrine known as Genso-yeko (還相廻向), which means "to return and transfer," that is, to come back to this life and to dedicate all one's merits towards the enlightenment of one's fellow-beings, sentient and non-sentient. He knew well that the Pure Land was meant either for beings far above ourselves or for those far below. For beings such as we ourselves are, life must contain something stimulating, something that will make us struggle and conquer; if things come to materialise as soon as desired, the Will is an empty term, and without the Will what are we? The Pure Land is the annihilator of the Will and consequently of the human soul. The Buddha wants to save it and not to annul it. The reason why the Bodhisattva wishes to descend to Hell instead of going up heavenward, is mainly due to the fact that in Heaven he has no occupation for his faculties to exercise. Love dormant is the same as love dead. Therefore, what even the adherents of the Pure Land school long for and endeavour to realise through the easy practice of the nembutsu is no other than enlightenment.

Here the question is: What is the Pure Land? Is it an objective reality? or does it belong to the same category as the Platonic world of ideas? Those who rely on scriptural authority of course cherish no doubt as to the objectivity of the Pure Land; for according to them Śākyamuni the Buddha is no story-teller and all the sutras beginning with "evam mayā śrutam" are truthful records of his sermons. To raise any doubt about their genuineness will be an unpardonable sin. The Buddha tells us all about Amida, his country, his vows, his Jataka, etc., and if we did not accept these stories as they are narrated in the Pure Land sutras, where does our faith in the nembutsu come? And the forty-eight Original Vows will be mere empty talk. Any criticism, higher or lower, will mean the destruction of the foundation of the school. When the nembutsu is

accepted, everything else must come along with it. But this position of the defenders of scriptural authority is not countenanced by modernists.

The latter being naturally critically inclined refuse to swallow the scriptures bodily, they would appeal first either to their intellectual judgments or their individual religious experiences, before they accept the scriptures; for after all no outside authority or historical conventionalism can stand in the way of personal conviction. An idealistic interpretation of the scriptural legends concerning the Pure Land is thus the inevitable consequence in these modern days. What is true and vital in religion is not its tradition, literary or otherwise, but its essential inwardness whose expressions are subject to constant modification, but which remain ever the same in its spirit and meaning. The Pure Land in the form as it is given in the sutras may vanish, but the Original Vows of Amida will retain their validity and the nembutsu school will not lose any signification in its essential features. Whatever this may be, the main point is whether the nembutsu is the "Easy Practice" leading to enlightenment, and not whether the Pure Land really or objectively exists to receive us after death. When we are actually enlightened and our *prajñā-cakṣu* is opened we shall know where we are and what is expected of us. Even the idealists who attempt to interpret the Pure Land platonically may have missed the point really at issue; for they are more concerned with the Pure Land than with enlightenment, which should be regarded as the most fundamental in the teaching of "Easy Practice" as it truly is.

One reason at least why the conception of the Pure Land is apparently made so much of and often, though erroneously as we have seen, brought out to the centre of interest as if the sole object of the nembutsu were to be born just in the Land of Purity and Happiness presided over by Amida, and nothing else, is partly because some of the Chinese and Japanese leaders of the Pure Land school laid too much stress on

the idea of the land of defilement in contrast to that of the Pure Land, and partly because Honen, the founder of the Jodo sect, preferred to designate his teaching as such. To take our thoughts away from sensuousity and worldliness with which we are ordinarily found deeply engaged, the leaders dwelt too strongly upon the defiled and disgusting conditions of existence here. Their main idea was to impress us common mortals with the futility of our attempts to satisfy our innermost yearnings with things mundane and "defiled." Our souls which are ever seeking for rest and peace, cannot be appeased with the limitations and defilements of a dualistic world. When the latter are transcended, we have what our hearts have been hungering after. Therefore, we may say that the Pure Land symbolises a mystical world of transcendental idealism where all traces of dualistic defilements are wiped off and where souls move with their native freedom hindered or stained in no way by limitations of the senses. Or we may say that the Pure Land is the shadow of enlightenment cast over a world of name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*). Those who are told by Honen and Shinran and other spiritual leaders to seek rebirth in Amida's kingdom are not really seeking after a Western world lying so many thousands of kotis of miles away from this earth of ours, but an inner illumination which has a miraculous power to transform or rather transfigure every object it touches into that of the Pure Land. In this sense, Amida and his worshippers are one just as Christ and his Father are one, and this conception of oneness is one of the most fundamental tenets of the Shin. The greatest happiness one can have in the Pure Land and which constitutes the object of rebirth there, is to see Amida face to face and to listen to his personal sermons.

Wherever its historical development may be traced, the Pure Land is not a world existing in space-time but an idealistic world of enlightenment, or, to use the phraseology of the Pure Land sutras, a world illumined by the eternal light of Amida and subsisting in it. In one sense, it has nothing to do

with this world of dualistic limitations and defilements, but in another sense it is right here with us and has reality as we read in the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* that "Wherever your hearts are pure there is a Pure Land."* The Land of Purity is not to be sought outside this land of defilement and patience; when it is thought of as independent of the latter, it is sheer emptiness; all the inhabitants of the Land of Purity are recruited from those of this earth and the Land has a signification as long as its earthly archetype, however defiled, is suffered to exist. Amida himself once belonged to this world of particulars and that is the reason why he knows all our passions, failings, defilements, bondages, and sufferings and could make his forty-eight Vows. Moreover, for this reason these vows are proving wonderfully efficacious and soul-saving.

DAISETZ TEITARO SUZUKI

* Here is a Western version of *Vimalakīrti*:

"The whole earth's filled with Heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it, and pluck blackberries."