

ON THE PURE LAND DOCTRINE OF TZ'Ū-MIN

The recent discovery of two works by Tz'ū-min, *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* 淨土慈悲集 (Pure Land Mercy Collection) and *Hsi-fang-tsan* 西方讚 (Western Quarter Hymn), sheds a new light upon the interpretation of his doctrine of the Pure Land, removing the doubt which was entertained by us for a long time and at the same time enabling us to trace the development of the idea which grew out of the attempt of reconciling the Zen meditation with the nembutsu of the Pure Land doctrine—the idea that has ruled the Buddhist world in the Far East since the eighth century.

Life and Works of Tz'ū-min

Tz'ū-min, whose other name was Hui-jih 慧日, was born in the first year of Yung-liu 永隆 (A.D. 680) in the reign of Kao-tzu of the T'ang dynasty. When he was but a boy of sixteen years old, he made up his mind to follow the example of I-tsing 義淨 who had just then come back from his pilgrimage in India. It was in 702 when he was thirty-three years old that he was able to carry out his long-cherished desire; for he then set out to sail by sea to India. He reached there two years later, where he stayed for several years, studying Buddhist philosophy and making occasional trips to the sacred places. He left India in 716 and, journeying by land, reached Chang-an 長安 in 719. In this pilgrimage which lasted eighteen years a year longer than that of Hsüan-chuang, Tz'ū-min seems to have had a great religious experience. He found in India that there were many ardent believers in Amitābha, and he himself was inspired by Avalokiteśvara in Kapisa (though traditionally the place is known as Gandhara), his faith in Amida was greatly strengthened, he came to regard the propagation of the Pure Land doctrine as a mission of his life. Accordingly on his

return to China, he kept himself away from such works as the translation of sutras and so forth, he gave himself up as a simple-hearted devotee to the practice and spreading of the nembutsu. It is for this purpose that he composed the "Hymn to the Constant Meditation" and the "Western Quarter Hymn". He evidently endeavoured to introduce the Pure Land doctrine among the lower classes. For these religious deeds he was later given by Emperor Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang dynasty the posthumous title Tz'ü-min, meaning the benevolent and compassionate.

At that time the chief obstacle on the path of the Pure Land doctrine was the erroneous idea cherished by some of the disciples of Hui-nêng 慧能, the sixth patriarch of Zen in China,—who recommended their own view of meditation as all-important at the expense of other practices which were then prevalent. They tended naturally to disregard the study of Buddhist sutras as well as the observance of morality; the influence thus exercised by the one-sided discipline of Zen Buddhism served to produce an undesirable effect upon the whole Buddhist world of China. This being the case, Tz'ü-min undertook to remind them of their one-sidedness and evil consequences that follow. The *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* was compiled by him to refute their prejudices of the Zen followers and at the same time to elucidate his own standpoint. He died at the age of sixty-nine in the seventh year of Hai-yüan 開元 in the reign of Hsüan-tsung, that is, in 748.

*On the Transmission of the Works of Tz'ü-min
and the Circumstances of their Loss*

During his lifetime as well as after his death, all his works were in circulation. In China, the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* was extant during the era of Chao-Sung (960-1279); this is evident from the fact that both Yen-shou 延壽 (904-975) and Tsan-ning 贊寧 (920-1001) quoted, in their works, some passages from the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi*; and this is especially the fact that Yüan-chao 元照 (1048-1116) had it

reprinted during the Sung dynasty. In Japan, it was extant till the middle of the Heian period (794-1192). This is known from the fact that we find the book mentioned in the "Catalogue of the Buddhist Scriptures Transmitted into Japan" 東域傳統目錄 compiled by Eicho 永超 in 1094.

In China, however, Yuan-chao's reprint of the book reawakened the hostile attitude of some Zen followers and owing to the protest of Pao-ying 寶英 of Ssu-ming, the secular authorities ordered the printing blocks to be destroyed and its circulation stopped. Since then the book has entirely disappeared there. (This circumstance is described in detail in the *Fu-tsu-ting-chi* 佛祖統紀, Successive Records of Buddhist Fathers.) In Japan the book was well read in the early days of Buddhism, but it was lost long before the Pure Land school was established as an independent sect by Honen. Fortunately enough, it was secretly transmitted in Korea, as I-t'ien, to whom Yuan-chao had sent a copy, had it reprinted in his own country.

As regards Tz'ü-min's other works, *Pan-chou-san-mei-tsan* 般舟三昧讚 and *Hsi-fang-tsan* 西方讚, they have come down to us in the form of quotations in the works of Fa-chao 法照, one of the disciples of Ch'eng-yuan 承恩, whose master was Tz'ü-min himself. The one volumed *Ching-tu-wu-hui-nien-fo-fa-shih-tsan* 淨土五會念佛略法事儀讚 contains the *Pan-chou-san-mei-tsan* and this was early introduced into Japan and still exists here. But the same author's *Ching-tu-wu-hui-nien-fo-sung-ching-kuan-hsing-i* 淨土五會念佛誦經觀行儀 in three volumes which contains the *Hsi-fang-tsan* never came over to this shore. It may be that this book was lost even before it became at all popular at the time of the persecution which the Emperor Wu carried out against Buddhism in the fifth year of Hui-chang 會昌 (A.D. 845; and accordingly even the existence of the book itself was never suspected in China and in Japan.

*The Recovery of the Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi
and the Hsi-fang-tsan*

By good chance, however, both of the books were recovered in succession. A copy of the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* which was probably one of those I-t'ien reprinted¹ was discovered in Ting-hua temple 桐華寺 in Korea, while I was searching for some books whose existence is known in history but which we were hitherto unable to recover; my idea is to incorporate them into the "Taisho Tripitaka." To my great regret, however, the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* thus discovered accidentally was not a complete copy; being only one of three volumes, of which the original edition consisted.

As regards Fa-chao's *Ching-tu-wu-hui-nien-fo-sung-ching-kuan-hsing-i* in three volumes, the last of which contains Tz'ü-min's *Hsi-fang-tsan*, was found in Professor Pelliot's collection of the Tun-huang manuscripts which are now kept in the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris. Several years ago, I noticed the title of the book mentioned in his catalogue of the manuscripts and the next spring I was fortunate enough to get its lithographic copy which was brought back to Japan by Mr. S. Akamatsu who was studying in Europe. This book is a valuable piece of literature to the students of the Pure Land doctrine. The recovered copy, however, was not a complete one; the first volume was still missing, as it consisted of three volumes. We hoped that the missing volume might be found in Dr. Stein's collection, but so far we have not been able to get it anywhere.

The Pure Land Doctrine of Tz'ü-min

Tz'ü-min was a man of virtue rather than a man of intellect, a man of practice rather than a man of learning.

¹ How I-t'ien came to reprint this in Korea is clearly stated in his letter to Yuanchao which is found in Ta-chueh-wen-chi 大覺文集, the complete collection of his literary works.

Though he studied the Buddhist philosophy in India for eighteen years and had a profound knowledge of the doctrine of Yogācāra (the Yuishikishu), he did not translate any Sanskrit sutra, nor did he write any commentaries on the Chinese translations. He devoted all his time to the practice and propagation of the Pure Land doctrine; all his literary activity was directed towards the encouragement of the nembutsu practice. He exercised great influence on his disciple, Ch'êng-yuan 承恩, of Nan-yo 南岳, known as Mi-to-ho-shang 彌陀和尙 or teacher of Amida, whose life and works may be regarded as the reflection of those of the master himself.

Now, let us ask, what attitude did he assume towards other sects of Buddhism, and what zeal did he exhibit in the advocacy of his own faith? In the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi*, he stood out against those scholars who neglect the practice of piety, though he was at the same time against Zen followers of meditation who disregard the learning of the sutras and so forth as altogether unnecessary. He maintains, without specially favouring any one of the divergent doctrines of Buddha, that learning, meditation, and morality should be pursued with equal force, so that any one of them should not be sacrificed for the sake of others: learning should be backed and strengthened by meditation; and the meditation, with the practice of nembutsu, and the nembutsu, with the observance of morality. He aimed at balancing the three fundamental disciplines of Buddhism.

Thus he founded a new sect on the basis of the following three principal tenets: (1) the harmonious practice of meditation and scholarship; (2) the sympathetic practice of Jōdo nembutsu and Zen meditation; and (3) the practice of the Jōdo nembutsu accompanied with moral deeds. Therefore, he did not object to the meditation practised by the Zen followers of his days, though he did not forget the importance of the nembutsu. He advocated all kinds of nembutsu and did not estimate one kind above the others. It is true that

he preferred the practical nembutsu to the meditative one, but it was for no other reason than that the former was easier to practise than the latter.

The following three manners of the nembutsu followers in their daily service are recommended by him in the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* whereby giving his idea of the nembutsu in a nutshell.

(1) One should be strict in deportment and direct one's mind towards the Pure Land of the West, and set one's heart upon Amitabha-Buddha, and invoke his name without interruption: One should always meditate on Amitabha-Buddha, and always invoke his name as well as the names of the two attending Bodhisattvas, Kwannon and Seishi, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

(2) One should recite, once a day, the Meditation Sutra and the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sutra.

(3) One should not take wine, nor meat, nor the five stimulating herbs, nor any drug; but keep Buddha's precepts and have the three ways of action purified. Meditate on Buddha and recite sutras; and thus, desire the first grade of rebirth, turning over one's own good works for the beneficence of other fellow-beings.

In short, Tz'ū-min's Pure Land doctrine was determined by his attitude towards the three fundamental disciplines of Buddhism. He insisted that these three should be practised with equal force, so that any one of them should not be sacrificed at the expence of other two. This attitude of his exercised great influence upon the thought of later Buddhists in China and in Korea.

The Pure Land Doctrine after Tz'ū-min

It is now generally acknowledged that the Pure Land doctrine originated in India first and then developed in China, and that, in this Chinese Pure Land doctrine, there were three main branches or currents, namely—

- (1) Hui-yüan 慧遠 branch,
- (2) Tao-cho 道綽 and Shan-tao 善導 branch,
- (3) Tz'ü-min 慈愍 branch.

Of these, the first one was founded by Hui-yüan (334–416). His nembutsu is regarded as to be based upon the teaching of the Pratyutpannasamadhi sutra 般舟三昧經. His doctrine later merged with the Chinese Tendai, and his nembutsu was transformed into the Jōgyōsammai nembutsu 常行三昧念佛 of the Tendai.

The second one began with Bodhiruci's translation of the "Treatise of Pure Land" by Vasubandhu, and Tan-luan's 曇鸞 commentary on it. When Shan-tao wrote the commentary on the Meditation sutra, this school reached the height of its prosperity.

The third one is based on the doctrine of Tz'ü-min. It was founded, as was mentioned above, on the three principal tenets: (1) harmony between meditation and learning, (2) the reconciliation of Zen meditation and Jōdo recitation, and (3) the practice of nembutsu with morality.

The successors of the last branch are:

As direct ones:

Tz'ü-min—Ch'êng-yüan—Fa-chao—later Buddhism in China;

As collateral ones:

Yen-shou—Zen followers who practise nembutsu with meditation,

Yüan-chao—I-t'ien—The Pure Land doctrine in Korea;

P'u-chao—Korean Buddhism in the present times.

Those who are not in the line but whose views coincide with that of Tz'ü-min, are:

Chu-huang,

Chih-kiang.

Fa-chao 法照 (died in 777) was one of the disciples of Ch'êng-yüan, whose master was Tz'ü-min himself. He was thus of the direct line from Tz'ü-min, retaining many

of the characteristic features of Tz'ū-min's doctrine. It was due to the influence of the Tendai doctrine which he studied before he became a follower of the Pure Land doctrine, that he thought the ultimate end of the nembutsu corresponded with the right meditation on the Truth of the Middle Path. He went about in the city of Chang-an, the then capital of China, propagating the Pure Land doctrine. He also went up, Nanyu and Mt. Wutai. Afterwards he founded a temple called Ta-sheng-chu-lin-sū 大聖竹林寺 at the foot of the Chuang-tai in Mt. Wutai and decided to make it the central place of the Pure Land practice. He propagated the nembutsu known as Wu-hui-nien-fo, Nembutsu in Five Tones. His nembutsu was transmitted into Japan by Jikaku 慈覺 (794-864), a Japanese priest who went over sea to China in order to study Buddhism. Jikaku came back to Japan in 804 and established the Jōgyōsammaidō Temple on Mt. Hiei and founded there the Nembutsu of Jogyosammai which was the main spring of the various schools of the Japanese Pure Land doctrine of later days.

Yen-shou 延壽 (960-1127) was a Zen priest. Therefore, he did not criticise as Tz'ū-min did, but rather defended, those Zen followers of meditation who disregarded the learning of the sutras and such other works as altogether unnecessary. Nevertheless, he agreed with Tz'ū-min in that, the invoking of Buddha's name, the reciting of sutras, and observing of precepts, should be pursued together with meditation. To this effect, he composed the *Wan-shan-tung-kwei-chi* 萬善同歸集, A Treatise on the Oneness of All Good Works, in which he recommended the cooperation of philosophical meditation and practical works; that is, learning, meditation, nembutsu, and morality should be practised on equal terms. In this work, he quotes two important passages from the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* of Tz'ū-min. Thus he may be well regarded as one of the successors of Tz'ū-min. However, he put more stress on the nembutsu philosophically interpreted than on the practical one: he maintained that

the abler men should take up the philosophical nembutsu and attain to the Pure Land of Mind-Only, while the practical nembutsu is the means by which people of inferior capacity are enabled to reach the Pure Land. But it should be carefully recognised that the Pure Land of Mind-Only which he advocated was not that created by one's own mind but by the True Mind which comprises all Universes. He had, therefore, a different view on the Pure Land from those Zen followers of later days, who succeeded Tz'ū-min in encouraging the sympathetic practice of Zen meditation and Pure Land nembutsu, but who regarded the Pure Land as a creation of one's own mind.

Yüan-chao 元照 (1048-1116) was a Tendai priest like Fa-chao. He raised a cry against the view of those priests who were then quite influential and favoured the practice of meditation more than any other work. From the standpoint of the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* of Tz'ū-min which he reprinted, he insisted on the sympathetic practice of learning, meditation, nembutsu, and morality. But the nembutsu which he advocated strongly was not the philosophical one which was encouraged by Fa-chao and other Tendai followers. His nembutsu was the practical one—the sixteen kinds of nembutsu either in fixed or unfixed states of mind—which are described in the Meditation sutra. He was one of the benefactors of Korean Buddhism: that the Pure Land doctrine of Tz'ū-min branch spread in Korea as far as Hai-tung comes from the fact that he had sent a copy of the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* to I-t'ien, of Korea, who reprinted it there in his own country.

P'u-chao 普照, of Korea, was the restorer of modern Korean Buddhism. He was not of the direct line from Tz'ū-min; he rejected the practical nembutsu as the means of salvation for men of inferior intelligence. His central idea was the unification of the teaching of the Kegon and the Zen discipline, which is attained by the harmonious practice of learning and meditation. His attitude towards

Buddhism was somewhat similar to that of Yen-shou, and between his way of thinking and that of Yen-shou we can trace a line of connection. But the nembutsu by which he claims to realise the samadhi of Mind-Only differs from the nembutsu of Yen-shou. According to P'u-chao, the Mind-Only is our own mind and the nembutsu is to be practised in such a way as to get this mind united with tathatā or the suchness of things, that is to say the ultimate truth of existence. This is also the ideal of Zen Buddhism which aims to penetrate into the nature of Buddhahood. What now rules Korean Buddhist thought is this idealism of P'u-chao.

Chu-huang 株宏 (1535-1615) and Chih-kiang 知旭 (died in 1655), as in the diagram, do not belong to the direct line of successors initiated by Tz'ū-min. The former learned the Zen and the latter the Tendai and both upheld the Buddhist rules of morality and practised the nembutsu. In this, they may be said to be following Tz'ū-min's steps; the unification of Zen discipline and philosophical training and morality is the pivot on which their doctrine developed.

The Pure Land doctrine of Hōnen 法然 is believed to originate in the nembutsu which was practised at the Jōgyōdō Hall on Mt. Hiei. Therefore, from a certain point of view, he may be said to belong to the Tz'ū-min branch. When Hōnen came down from Mt. Hiei, leaving the head temple of the four schools, the Tendai, the Esoteric, the Zen, and the Ritsu (Vinaya), he propagated the Pure Land doctrine of Shantao 善導 which taught the sole practice of invoking Amida's name; the result was the separation of the Jōdo from the Zen, whereas in China and in Korea two schools are united, Jōdo nembutsu going on side by side with Zen practice. From this, we may say that the establishment by Hōnen of an independent Jōdo sect meant the separation of the Jōdo from the Tendai, but really Hōnen's line of nembutsu is derived from Tz'ū-min, as the line shows as in diagram represented before, thus:

Hōnen—Jikaku—Fa-chao—Ch'éng-yuang—Tz'ū-min.

In summary, as the result of the discovery of the *Ching-tu-ts'u-pei-chi* and the *Hsi-fang-tsan*, the following facts are established:

- (1) that the doctrine of Tz'ū-min which was not known accurately and in detail has now come to be assumed in a tangible form;
- (2) that Tz'ū-min is the direct father of Fa-chao, and accordingly the historical father of the Pure Land doctrine in Japan which separated itself from the Nembutsu of Jōgyōsammaidō Hall on Mt. Hiei, that is to say, Japanese Pure Land doctrine belongs to Tz'ū-min branch;
- (3) that Tz'ū-min was the founder of the doctrine which taught the unification of practical works and philosophical meditation and the harmonious practice of Zen meditation and Jōdo nembutsu.

Since the eighth century, the Zen and the Jōdo have ruled the Buddhist thought world of the Far East: especially the harmonious practice of these two has been its main current, Tz'ū-min himself was the founder of that doctrine.

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