

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

IMPRESSIONS OF CHINESE BUDDHISM

PREFATORY

In the following pages the author attempts to give an account of his impressions of Buddhism in China, where he spent several weeks of the early summer last year (1934). These impressions, being of a more or less superficial traveller's whose knowledge of things Chinese is not at all thorough, especially in connection with the present state of things in China, must be far from being accurate and complete. A traveller's description of things and events he happens to observe in a strange land is always inevitably coloured with his subjectivism and limited by his amount of knowledge, or ignorance. China and her Buddhism are well known to all the Japanese Buddhists as far as their historical book-knowledge is concerned. But this kind of book-knowledge and the present actualities are two altogether different matters—indeed very frequently the former interferes with an adequate survey of the latter. With this thought in mind, the reader is asked to follow the observations of the writer whose pilgrimage in China this time covered only a very small portion of her extensive territory.

Incidentally, the facts may be mentioned that the writer was somewhat concerned in the beginning of his trip that an antagonistic attitude, though perhaps not actively, might be taken by the Chinese people toward him because of the political troubles between the two nations and that for this reason he might not see so many friends as he wished. But this was to a great extent unwarranted, for many fine opportunities were afforded to him while travelling through the neighbouring country. For this he tenders hearty thanks to all his friends Buddhist and otherwise.

The first question all the Japanese Buddhists are apt to ask of a recent traveller in China is this: "How does Buddhism fare in China these days?" This is quite a natural one, seeing that there are many things common to Japanese and Chinese Buddhism. In fact, the decline of Buddhist thought and practice in the one country is sure

to affect the other. If the cultural unity of Far-eastern civilisation along the line marked by Buddhism is to be firmly maintained in order to make it stand against the modern spirit of scientific and economic materialism, the Buddhists of the two great nations of the Far East are to be solidly aligned.

What was most disastrous to Chinese Buddhism in recent years was the truculent and most barbarous conduct of the T'ai-p'ing rebellion, which "for fifteen years (1850-65) devastated sixteen provinces, destroyed six hundred cities," and, according to a historian, cost the lives of at least twenty million men and women. One Christian missionary adds that "the waters of the Yang-tze carried seaward the ruins of thousands of temples and fragments of broken idols." From this one can imagine what devastation the "long-haired Christians" wrought out in these ancient districts of Wu and Yüeh where Buddhism had once been in a most flourishing condition, i.e., in the days of their Buddhist kings. The havoc is still remembered by the Buddhists, even after the lapse of over a half century, and still observable in the ruined pagodas and scattered tiles and bricks which we came across in our trip. There is no doubt that it will take many a year yet for Chinese Buddhism to recover fully from such disheartening consequences of the disaster. Especially when this is considered in connection with the modern trends of thought and culture which are somewhat against religious feeling generally, the Chinese Buddhists, I am sure, will have to put forward all the psychic energies in their possession to resuscitate the spiritual activities of the olden time. To do this, it goes without saying that an intellectual and affectional understanding and co-operation between the two great oriental nations, China and Japan, are imperative.

My observations this time will be limited to these subjects: 1. Putai Ho-shan who is regarded by the Chinese Buddhists as incarnation of Maitreya; 2. Kwannon Bosatsu (or Kuan-yin Pusa in Chinese) and its relationship to Amida; and 3. The Nembutsu (*nien-fo*) in relation to Zen.

I. PU-TAI¹

What most strikes the Japanese visitors to the historical

¹ Or Pu-tei, 布袋.

Buddhist monasteries in southern China is that all their buildings are symmetrically arranged and enormously large. Compared with Japanese architecture, all the Chinese works are to be measured with a scale of another denomination. Look at the Great Wall, for instance: such a conception would never have entered into the Japanese head, much less its execution. For the Chinese architects, however, it was a natural thing to construct it—and indeed apart from its strategic effectiveness; and for the same reason it was natural for the Chinese mind to design those gigantic Halls in which Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, gods and Arhats, are enshrined such as we see at the T'ien-Tung, the Ling-yin, the Pu-tsai, etc. To the Japanese who are used to their small, dainty houses, these enormous structures are really highly imposing. It is true that Japan too is not without great specimens of her stately architecture such as are exemplified by the Hongwanji halls in Kyoto; but is it due to their sweeping roofs spreading out too low that they somehow do not impress with a sense of grand elevation? A quiet solidity is there, a deep meditative mood is felt; and this is perhaps where Japanese Buddhism stands strongest. But they fail to create a sunny cheering atmosphere which is partially felt in China. Are her people characteristically happily disposed? Is their outlook of life more optimistic?

As the buildings are large and high, so are the figures enshrined. They are generally three or four times as large as life-size. They are gilded with gold or otherwise richly coloured, their expressions are realistic and not at all idealistic; while the gods in fantastic and theatrical postures are threatening enough to drive evil spirits away from the monastery. These latter figures are not so familiar to the Japanese as the first ones. What corresponds to them in Japan will be a pair of the Vajra gods guarding the entrance gate to the Buddhist temple.

One of the figures that greet us first as we enter the Hall of the Guardian Gods, which stands in front of all

other buildings, is Maitreya in one of his incarnated forms as Pu-tai. This figure presents an interesting aspect of Chinese Buddhism in various ways to the foreign visitor. In the first place, he is not like the other Buddhist figures we encounter in the Hall. The four guardian gods are fantastic, the arhats are saintly, but Pu-tai has ordinary human features familiar to us all. He assumes an easy posture with a protruding stomach, leans against a huge bag, broadly smiling and generally impressing us as the owner of a benevolent disposition and geniality of character. How did this secular figure come to occupy this significant position in the Hall of the Gods? His presence here does not seem to be in keeping with the entire environment. He is too near us to be enshrined with the warrior-gods and other super-worldly spirits. What has the "Laughing Buddha" to do with the protection of Buddhism? When did the legend start that he is an incarnation of Maitreya who is considered the "Buddha to come" when the world enters into another cycle? The following is what we know about his life on earth.

The record of his life appears first in the *Sung Biographies of Eminent Buddhist Priests* (compiled ni 982-998), and then in the *Transmission of the Lamp* (completed in 1064).¹ The following translation is from the *Transmission*:

¹ *Sung kao-sêng chuan*, fas. XXI; and *Chuan-têng-lu*, fas. XXVII. There is another story of Pu-tai Ho-shang much fuller in contents because of its later compilation. It appears in the supplementary section (Case XIX, fas. 5) of the Kyoto Manji edition of the Chinese Tripitaka. The date of its compilation is not exactly known but must be later than 1282 A.D., of Yüan. The author is Tan-ê (曇噩), former abbot of Kuo-ch'ing monastery at T'ien-tai. It evidently went through several editions. The Ming edition by Kuang-jou (廣如) contains still more additional material in the form of an "epilogue". From this we can readily gather that the cult of Pu-tai has been steadily gaining its popularity in China. One may ask why Han-shan and Shih-tê failed to appeal so strongly to the masses as Pu-tai, although the first two have succeeded in capturing the imagination of the Zen artists. One reason at least is that Pu-tai, as I have explained in the text, has more elements in his traditional personality embodying the social ideals of the Chinese people.

"It is not known to what family Pu-tai the priest, of Fêng-hua Hsien, Ming-chou, belonged. He called himself Ch'i-tz'ü.¹ His form was short and fat, he had wrinkles between the eye-brows, and his stomach was protruding. He talked irregularly, and slept wherever it pleased him. He used to carry a cloth-bag over his stick, in which he kept everything that belonged to him. When he entered shops or markets or villages, anything he saw he begged for; whether it was salted meat or fish, he put it into his mouth as soon as it was handed to him, while a small portion of it was thrown into the bag. He was known to the people by the name of Chang-t'ing-tzü and Pu-tai Shih.²

"Once he laid himself in the snow while snowing, but it did not at all wet him. This was thought by people to be very unusual. Sometimes he would ask of people to give him their goods, which he sold. He told them of their fortune good or bad; when the time came it never failed so to happen. When it was about to rain, he put on a pair of wet straw-sandals and quickly walked the streets. When it was to be dry, he wore high clogs and slept on the bridge with his knees raised. The people inhabiting the neighbourhood thereby knew what to expect of weather.

"A monk once walked ahead of the master, and the master touched his back. The monk looked back. Said the master, 'Be pleased to give me a cent.' 'If you could say a word, I would give you a cent.' Whereupon the master set the bag down and stood with his hands folded [over his chest].

"Pai-lu the priest asked, 'What is your cloth-bag for?' The master without delay set the bag down. The priest asked again, 'What is the meaning of setting down the bag?' The master put it over his shoulder and went away.

¹ It is difficult to know what this exactly means. *Ch'i* is "to agree," "to be in accord with;" *tz'ü* is "this." Does Pu-tai wish to mean by this to signify that his life is in agreement with "this," that is, "suchness"?

² "Long-beach-one," and "Cloth-bag-master."

"Pao-fu the priest asked, 'What is the basic teaching of Buddhism?' The master set the bag down and folded his hands across his chest. Said Pao-fu, 'Is that all? or anything further on?' The master put the bag over his shoulder and went away.

"The master was standing in the street when a monk asked him, 'What are you doing here, sir?' The master said, 'I am waiting for him.' 'He's come, he's come!' Said the master, 'You are not the man.' 'Who is the man then?' The master said, 'Give me a cent.'

"He had a song:

" 'Only this mind, mind, mind, which is the Buddha;
It is the most spiritual thing in the world [which fills]
the ten quarters;
It functions in a mysterious and winning way, up
and down, right and left;
Nothing compares to the verity of the mind.

" 'How lively! how free! there is nothing it does not
achieve;
How leisurely is the monk who has attained the limit!
When you see the Way, true and great, extending
itself before your eyes,
You notice not an iota of thing [disturbing the mind]
—how very strange!

" 'There are no such multiplicities designated as the ten
thousand things, nor is there a discriminating
mind;
What is the use then of troubling yourself with the
study of the sutras?
It is in the nature of the king-mind that it transcends
mere erudition;
The wise only are able to elucidate the stage of non-
learning.

" 'It is not saintly, not vulgar—neither has anything to
do with it;
It does not ask for discrimination; lonely is the spirit
of one who knows;
The mind-gem is priceless, perfect by nature and
immaculate;

The ignorant see things differently, and falsely call them a nothing.

“ ‘It is people who propound the Way, and the Way [in itself] is perfectly clear;
Beyond measure is its purity, its altitude, when you gain the Way;
Carrying the staff, it is like going up your native country's road;
Cease your worrying, for wherever you go you hear the voice.’

“ ‘He had another gāthā:

“ ‘One bowl is filled with rice from one thousand houses;
A solitary traveller wanders about ten thousand miles;
With kindly eyes he surveys, but meets few people;
Enveloped in white clouds, he knows not where the path is.’

“ ‘In the third month of the second year (916 A.D.), *ping-tz'ü*, of the Ting-ming era, of Liang, when the master was about to pass away, he sat quietly on the flat rock at the eastern porch of Yüeh-lin Ssü, and uttered the following gāthā:

“ ‘Maitreya, true Maitreya,
Dividing his body into hundreds of thousands of kotis,
Shows himself from time to time to people of his time,
But people of his time know him not.’

“ ‘When the gāthā was finished he passed away in tranquillity.

“ ‘Later on, there were people in other districts who saw the master carrying his cloth-bag on his shoulders. Thereupon the four classes of people vied with one another in sketching his likeness. At present his whole body is still to be seen in the shrine east of the Main Hall of Yüeh-lin Ssü.’”¹

¹ Miss Helen B. Chapin has her translation of Pu-tei in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 53. No. 1, pp. 47-52. Mine is independent of hers.

As we can see from this short biographical sketch of Pu-tai Ho-shang, he was an actually living person about a thousand years ago, and after his death his figure became one of the popular subjects of painting for Chinese artists. Especially with the Zen artists he was a favourite character as is illustrated by Liang-kai's "Dancing Pu-tai".² His life was full of Zen colouring as it were, and reminds us of those of Han-shan and Shih-tê, both of whom are also the most favourite models with Zen people. But as we find him enshrined in modern Chinese monasteries, Pu-tai plays quite a different rôle in the psychology of the Buddhists. What attraction he had to the genuine Zen followers of ancient days lay in his detached, unworldly, and "lunatic" attitude towards the world. With the Chinese generally, however, this Zen side is now forgotten. For he is here no more as ugly as he might be, and no more looks unconcerned with life. On the contrary, he is smiling, appears happy in the worldly sense of the word, his stoutness betokens his satisfaction with things earthly rather than unearthly. Contrast Liang-kai's "Dancing Pu-tai" with the rock-cut figure at Ling-yin Monastery. The latter is of course far from being sensuous in its specific sense, still he is not so transcendental if I may say so. As to most Pu-tai figures we come across in the monasteries nowadays, they appear gross, betraying a materialistic interpretation of the original character.

Now the question is, how did this mundane figure, so to speak, come to take its place as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Maitreya among the Buddhist figures here? The Buddhas are serene, dignified, and supramundane, while the guardian gods or the protecting gods are forceful and threatening, thoroughly indicative of their mission. They are all in harmony with the purpose of the building. But Pu-tai with his easy posture, leaning against a cloth-bag of enormous size, broadly smiling, and with a stomach swelling like a gourd—he is by no means an appropriate figure here,

² *Zen Essays*, Series III, p. 348.

especially to take up the most significant place in front of all the other figures. Why is he the first one to greet the visitor to the Buddhist temple or monastery in China. In what relation does he stand to the signification of Chinese Buddhism? That he is a favourite character with the Zen artist is easily understood from the description in the *Chuan Têng Lu*. But how did he come to play this new rôle as a good jolly old fellow, apparently worldly and human?

As I take it, the presence of Pu-tai in this capacity in the Chinese monastery is accidental from a strictly Buddhist point of view. He has been grafted into the system of Buddhist iconography from the original Chinese stock of old popular beliefs and superstitions. Every nation or race has all kinds of beliefs which have grown out of their primitive psychology and experience. These beliefs often called superstitions are not as a rule organised, until a highly developed religion takes them up to its own system by giving them a conceptual interpretation. The cult of Pu-tai is one of these primitive beliefs.

As these aboriginal beliefs lie unorganised deeply in the unconscious of the people, their expressions are spontaneous, that is, beyond intellectual control. But they are always ready to get attached to a system of beliefs already more or less philosophically prepared, because the human mind has the innate tendency to see all its contents interpreted. All the desires and aspirations, instincts and inclinations, that enter into the composition of the psyche, are to be brought to light. Pu-tai did not in the beginning have anything to do with the primitive unconscious beliefs of the Chinese people; he only came to be used by them later on as a symbol expressive of one of their strongest aspirations. That is to say, the Chinese people see in Pu-tai one of their most primitive and therefore most deeply-rooted desires reflected. What do they then read in Pu-tai?

There are two distinct currents of thought and feeling in China: the one is represented by Lao-tzu and his follow-

ing, and the other by Confucius and his school. The Chinese temperament on the whole turns more decidedly towards Confucianism than towards Laotzuanism. Kung (for Confucius and his school) is more realistic and materialistic, Lao is more idealistic and world-flying or world-denying; Kung's ideals are more in the assertion and discipline of life with all its impulses, while Lao aspires more to stand away from life-activities thereby to preserve life in its purity or, as it were, abstracted from all its complications. The thought and feeling behind the "Dancing Pu-tai" is more Laotzuan, whereas Pu-tai as the "Laughing Buddha" approaches more to Confucian modes of feeling.

To speak more concretely, in "the Laughing Buddha" as he is enshrined in the Hall of the Guardian Gods (*t'ien-wang-tien*) the Chinese see such life-ideals of theirs incarnated as the desire for material possessions (*lu*), a life of blessedness (*fu*), longevity (*shou*), large-heartedness (*tai-tu*), sympathy (*shu*), etc. The big bag containing every imaginable article that Pu-tai fancied in his wandering life, represents wealth amassed. His broad smile and approachability are virtues very much admired by the eastern people and symbolic of sympathy, benevolence, generosity, unselfishness, etc. His protruding stomach takes in what is bad as well as what is good, nothing is thrown out; once in, things find their proper places; as a Chinese passage reads, which I found somewhere in my recent trip hanging on one of the entrance posts, his huge stomach has room enough for things which are ordinarily rejected as impossible in other people's life. "He swallows up what is clear and also what is murky"—this undifferentiated state of affairs, this vague indeterminateness is characteristic of the mystic type of mind, and the East is endowed with a great deal of it.

Pu-tai's attitude of swallowing down everything, good or bad, lovable or unlovable, is expressed in the following gāthā, which is found in Tan-ê's edition of the *Life of Pu-tai Ho-shang*:

"Right and wrong, love and hatred—how full of
 them is the world!
 Weigh the matter carefully and see how you are to
 behave here:
 Increase your abdominal capacity¹ so that you can
 always practise humility;
 Release the rays of a cheerful sun so as to melt off
 [the chilly hardness of the human heart].
 When you see friends treat them as friends;
 Even when enemies are encountered let your as-
 sociation be harmonious.
 What is essential is to keep your mind free from
 obstructions,
 For then you will naturally attain the realisation
 of the six Pāramitās."

Lastly, the easy reclining posture assumed by Pu-tai
 differs very much from those we see generally in the Bud-
 dhist figures. It is indicative of spiritual contentedness in
 which every muscle and every nerve is completely relaxed.
 Satisfaction with the world at large is best expressed by
 this reclining reposeful attitude of Pu-tai. Every trace of
 stiffness and resistance has vanished; the line is drawn
 gracefully and undulatingly towards the earth showing that
 it perfectly knows where its ultimate destination is. This
 line of self-contentment and absolute restfulness is also shown
 in the portrait of Shōichi Kokushi.² When the line lies
 horizontally on the ground, it symbolises Nirvana. As long
 as there is life, and when this life goes well with its entire
 surroundings, it is best represented slantingly as in the
 figure of Pu-tai.

Taking all in all, the Pu-tai in the Chinese Buddhist
 monastery embodies the Chinese aspirations, worldly and
 moral, harmoniously blended with a sense of religious con-

¹ That is, keep your mind enlarged to its fullest capacity so as
 to absorb all the petty emotional differences in the world, enabling
 you to practise patience and forbearance. In Japan as well as in
 China the abdomen is generally associated with large-heartedness.

² *Zen Essays*, III, Plate IV.

tentment offered by Buddhism. And this is the reason I think why his statue is discoverable with the background at first sight incongruous with the idea suggested by him. Inasmuch as Buddhism has firmly struck its root in the religious consciousness of the Chinese people, it must absorb into itself all the popular beliefs essential to the welfare of the people. By doing this, Buddhism ceases to be a foreign importation; it is now embraced by the Chinese as one of the cultural works created by themselves.

In Japan Pu-tai has lost all his functions except that of giving bliss to his followers. He is known as Hotei which is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese characters "cloth-bag," and is not at all connected with Buddhism, for he is one of the seven gods of bliss. His form is retained, showing that when he was introduced to Japan, very likely by some of the Zen monks who visited China during the Sung, Pu-tai had not yet been made to perform the part as he has at present in the Chinese monastery. It is only at the Ōbaku monastery in Uji that he is enshrined as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Maitreya as in China; for this was established by Yin-gen, of China, in exact imitation of his native monastery.

Pu-tai at the Ling-yin Ssū, of Hang-chou, is attended by Arhats, proving his original character as Maitreya. But popularly, these saintly attendants are transformed and become children¹ playing about Pu-tai who would give them things to play with. His association with children is significant in China, where a large family is regarded as one of the worldly blessings her people most covet. China is one of the countries where a man can divorce legitimately his wife who gives no birth to children. To continue the family line unbroken so that the ancestors would not be lacking in their worshippers, is the essence of filial piety,

¹ In Tan-ê's edition, we have this insertion: "There were ten children respectfully following him, although nobody knew where these children came from."

and filial piety is the highest virtue in China her social life demands of every one of her children. When a Chinese gentleman finds himself surrounded with material possessions, worldly honours, and especially with a large family consisting of his own children and grandchildren and if possible great grandchildren, he is blessed with the highest happiness he can enjoy while alive.¹ Added to this, let him be endowed with a broad, genial, ever-expanding heart which like the spring sun good-naturedly smiles on all vegetation vying with one another in the assertion of its vitality, and he is a morally ideally superior man. Is not Pu-tai a kind of expression of such idealism as it is? Here we observe what concession Buddhism has made to one of the deepest primitive aspirations of the Chinese soul.

II. THE CULT OF KWANNON

In the Japanese Zen monasteries there is just one central figure occupying the altar in any kind of hall. When there are other figures, they assume positions of decidedly secondary importance. But in China the Hall of the Guardian Gods enshrines, besides the central figure of Pu-tai, another figure at his back, facing the opposite side of the front entrance, that is, facing what may be called the back entrance. This Buddhist figure at the back entrance may be said to be subordinate in importance to the front one. But as long as they occupy the central altar they are to be regarded as in a way complementing each other, which

¹ From the Tan-ê edition: When Pu-tai was about to pass away, his friend surnamed Mahā because of his daily reciting the Mahā-prajñāpāramitā, was asked if he would like to be rich and honoured. Mahā said, "There is no permanency in being rich and honoured. I would rather wish for a long continued line of my descendants." The master then handed him a cloth-bag within which innumerable small bags were found together with a box and a string. He said, "This is then my parting present to you which concerns your posterity." Mahā failed to understand the idea, but after several days the master appeared again and said, "Do you understand my idea?" When Mahā expressed his inability to understand it, Pu-tai said, "I only want to see your descendants as symbolised by them."

means that what is wanting in the one is supplanted by the other, in this sense, they are equally significant in the general design of the Chinese monastery.

The other central figure turning its back towards Pu-tai and facing the rear entrance is sometimes Wei-t'o-t'ien¹ who is the protecting god of Buddhism, and sometimes Kwannon (*kwan-yin* in Chinese) in the rock-cave of Potalaka. Wei-t'o-t'ien is the leader of the celestial generals who vowed allegiance to Buddhism, and often has his separate place somewhere in a Buddhist monastery as protector of the sacred grounds. He is also looked up to as a god who sees to it that the monks do not suffer from a shortage of food supply in the monastery. If this is the case, with Pu-tai in front and with Wei-t'o-t'ien at the rear, all the Chinese Buddhist halls are comfortably looked after. Our concern here, however, is with the presence of Kwannon at the back of Pu-tai. Instead of Kwannon's occupying by himself the whole of the centre of the Hall, how has he come to share the honour with Pu-tai? Of course, there are many halls in the Chinese monasteries which are exclusively devoted to Kwannon. But in this case, if I remember right, Kwannon is a *bona-fide* male figure in dignity and general features. The Kwannon facing the rear entrance of the Guardian Gods' Hall is distinctly feminine in the attitude of giving her ready help to her devotees.

Avalokiteśvara² the Bodhisattva (considered to be the original pattern of Kwannon) has come to become in China

¹ When it is written 韋駄天, the original points to "Vedadeva." But according to the Sanskrit scholars of Japan and China 韋 is the ancient scribe's mistake for 建, and 韋駄 properly stands for "Skandha." Skandhadeva is one of the thirty-two guardian gods, especially of the monastery buildings and the Saṅgha brotherhood.

² According to some Japanese authorities, the original Sanskrit form of Kwannon must have been Avalokita-svara, "Viewed-sound," that is, the owner of sounds contemplated (viewed) by all beings. The idea of regarding Kwannon as Iśvara is considered to be a later development when the cult of Kwannon, as is proved by history, grew up to be increasingly popular not only in India but in central Asia.

quite a different type of personality, though as far as his functions as Mercy incarnated are concerned, they remain the same even after he became Kwannon, because they are just as described in the sutra bearing his name and forming a chapter in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*. Was it due to the notion most of us have that Mercy is more of the feminine quality than of the masculine, and, therefore, that Kwannon may more appropriately be represented as such, that is, as Goddess of Mercy than anything else? And thus does he appear in the history of Chinese Buddhism more in the feminine form than in any other forms, though he is told to take any form that he thinks fit for the occasion in order to lead people to a state of emancipation? He has as we all know a far gentler expression than an ordinary male god; in his pictures and statues as enshrined in a rock-cave, and, indeed, in his so-called thirty-three forms of incarnation, his character appeals to us more in its feminine quality than otherwise. In fact, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, in regard to their sex if this is to be ascribed to them, are neither male nor female, they are neutral; that is to say, they combine the best qualities we find in femininity and masculinity and raise them to a height infinitely greater than that of their original owners. But the Buddha in meditation, or Amitabha in the preaching posture, or the Bodhisattva on an elephant has decidedly the male characteristics; whereas Kwannon as he is popularly depicted is a goddess and not a god. Frequently he is avowedly feminine. So we can say that Kwannon has two personalities in the Buddhism of China and also of Japan: as Kwannon the female and as Avalokiteśvara the male, or as Kwannon in the popular mind and as Kwannon doctrinally conceived, in which latter case Kwannon is Avalokiteśvara the Bodhisattva. The Kwannon we see enshrined in the rock-cave of Potalaka¹ is the Bodhisattva in his capacity somewhat reminding one of "eternally feminine."

¹ Potalaka, according to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, is situated near the

Now let us ask why we find this Potalaka Kwannon figure complementing Pu-tai Ho-shang. The first thing we must acknowledge here is that Kwannon is now a creation of Chinese religious consciousness just as much as Pu-tai. The original model is Avalokiteśvara and the conception is no doubt based on the sutra bearing his name.¹ Whatever traditional qualities which were ascribed to the original character as an Indian god belonging to Buddhism were dropped except those of Mercy. Kwannon to the Chinese Buddhists is the Goddess of Mercy who can take any form to carry out her design effectively. Pu-tai embodies the inmost aspirations moving in the heart of an individual Chinese as social unit, while Kwannon appeals to the religious feelings of the Chinese as one of mortal beings suffering vicissitudes of the mundane existence. Pu-tai is more of moral significance, and Kwannon points more to spiritual struggles. The religious mind fails to be satisfied with Pu-tai; it wants something more penetratingly sinking down into the very basis of the human soul. Moral character, however perfect and deep, lacks a certain spiritual quality, and Kwannon must come to supply this deficiency.

Why does not Amitābha fill this office—the office of giving a devotional colouring to one's moral character? Does not Amitābha give enough satisfaction to the religious cravings of the Chinese mind? Why Kwannon? This too to a certain extent can be said of Japanese Kwannon.

I must dwell a little on the difference between Kwannon

sea-shore in the south-western part of India. There are many island-mountains in the sea, which are made of all kinds of precious stones, and this is where the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara has his abode. In China the Chou-shan archipelago near Ningpo is regarded as being inhabited by Kwannon.

¹ Properly it forms one of the chapters in the important Mahayana sutra known as *The Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* ("the good law of the lotus"). But it is usually extracted from the mother text and goes under the name of the *Kwannon-gyō* (*Kuan-yin Ching*). The influence morally and religiously exercised by this sutra quite independent of *The Lotus* has been remarkable throughout the East.

(Kuan-yin) and Amitābha or Amida (Omito). What Kwannon does for all beings is told in detail in the *Kwannon Sutra* (*Kuan-yin Ching*), while what and where Amida is is recounted in the *Amida Sutra* and also in the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* and in the *Meditation Sutra*. Kwannon is one of the attendant-Bodhisattvas to Amitābha Buddha, and with Mahāsthāmaprāpta the three make a most popular trinity wherever the Pure Land teaching prevails. But in our case Kwannon is to be treated as an independent Bodhisattva and performing his functions as described in his sutra.¹

In comparing the *Kwannon Sutra* and the three sutras of Amida devotion, especially the *Sukhāvativyūha*, we notice these peculiarities in Kwannon: Kwannon manifests himself in this world (*sahaloḥka*) and saves people from varieties of calamities and sufferings they are likely to undergo while living on earth. Although Kwannon can manifest himself everywhere in all the worlds in the ten quarters, his chief work seems to be on this earth; he appears to us in various forms including the Buddha-body, the Pratyekabuddha-body, the Śrāvaka-body, the body of the Brahma king, the body of a great celestial being, and also all forms of human-kind, man and woman, rich and poor, noble and lowly, young and old. His principal mission consists in delivering us from all sorts of earthly tribulation, and this by means of his name which is pronounced by the devotees. His mission is also positive when he bestows on us multitudes of blessings as we appeal to his incomparable sovereign power of mercy by repeatedly pronouncing his name thus: "Na-mu kwan-ze-on dai-bosatsu" (in Chinese: "Nan-wu kuan-shih-

¹ The conception of Kwannon as attendant Bodhisattva to Amitābha is considered by some authorities to be a later development in the history of Buddhism. Originally Kwannon was an independent Bodhisattva. For instance, the portion of the gāthā in the "*Samantamukha-parivarta*" (Chapter XXIV of the *Puṇḍarīka*), where Kwannon is mentioned in association with Amitābha, is lacking in Kumārajīva's Chinese translation.

yin ta-pu-sa'''). To sum up, he is the bestower of worldly blessings, he does not promise to take us to the other land where a better state of things than in this world prevails.

With Amida this is different. All his promises are for the Pure Land where he has his abode. He listens to every one of his devotees who will devotedly pronounce his name as in the case of Kwannon; but Amida is not necessarily concerned with the miseries and calamities which are innate in this world; instead of subduing them or delivering us from them, he carries us out of it when we die and transport us into quite a different realm, known as the Land of Bliss and Purity. All the sufferings we suffer here are due to our previous karma and ignorance. We are unable with our own resources moral and intellectual to escape the outcome of what will inevitably come upon us. This is in our own being. The only way to avoid the curse of karma is to call upon Amida by single-heartedly reciting his name. Amida tells us to accept what may befall us while living here, promising us the future bliss. He does not manifest himself to us in various forms as Kwannon does. In all this, we can at once discern how Amida is differentiated from Kwannon while both are working for the benefit of all beings. Their work does not collide, they supplement each other. Kwannon is of the world and in the world working for sentient beings, whereas Amida is above the world and outside the world. Amida's working power is more subtle and secret, while Kwannon does his work, as it were, more personally and directly and in an earthly manner.

The best way perhaps to illustrate the activity of Kwannon is the vision which Shinran Shōnin (1173-1262), the founder of the Shin school of the Pure Land in Japan, is said to have had while offering earnest prayers at Rokkakudō in Kyoto. His prayers were offered to Kwannon and not to Amida though he was a devoted follower of Amida. And it was this Kwannon who appeared to him in a vision pro-

missing to become his wife,¹ for to lead a married life was his previous karma even though he were a Buddhist monk. Amida accepts, so to speak, karma, and because of this he vows to take sentient beings into a world where karma is no more effective. But we human beings are such rebellious creatures as to awaken the desire to rise above our own karma even while in this life. And because of this rebellious spirit we pray and Kwannon listens to this prayer. Without Kwannon perhaps there is no prayerful life with us. Amida is near enough, it is true, to all of us, and yet he has his own Land of Purity in the Western quarter where we are invited to join him. He seems to be too great to mix himself up in our daily trivialities while he pities us because of our being so inextricably involved in them. Kwannon on the other hand is ever willing to share human fates by becoming one of us and intimately entering into our lives. This is why Kwannon finds his place at the rear of Pu-tai in the Chinese Buddhist monastery. And this is also why there are so many followers of the Kwannon cult also in Japan.

Further distinctive features of Kwannon as contrasted to Amida may be recounted as follows:

The one great attribute ascribed to Kwannon which makes him intimately related to his devotees is that he is ever ready to listen to their cry for help. That is, sufferers of every kind can offer prayers to him. Life is full of sufferings; however short our earthly lives are, none of us can ever expect to enjoy an unbroken succession of blessings; we are indeed so destined to bear tribulations in this world of patience, which is known as *sahaloka* in the Buddhist sutras. And we do not always know why we are to bear these sufferings, most of which quite frequently seem to be beyond the measure of the theory of karma. No doubt

¹ Kwannon is conceived in Japan also to be the Goddess of Mercy and not a god. He generally plays the rôle of a woman in the history of Japanese Buddhism.

we are taught by the Buddha to face them with a philosophical frame of mind and we endeavour to fortify ourselves against the assailants. But we are not after all very strong, being limited in knowledge, moral strength, and spiritual penetration; we long for a powerful help; we pray for what may be termed "supernatural" agency. We are prayerful creatures. As long as we remain finite beings we pray for what relieves us from this imperfection, even while living in this world, *sahaloka*. And these prayers offered by suffering mortals are heard by Kwannon, and not by Amida.

It may be unreasonable to try to escape the consequences of our own karma if this is truly the principle that governs our moral world. But the human heart is so made as to long even for the betterment or attenuation of this condition, if such is at all practicable. This is prayer for mercy. Without mercy the whole world is a desert. Kwannon is the oasis. How can we live without the cult of Kwannon?

No prayers of this sort are offerable to Amida.

What Amida promises us is supreme enlightenment, and this in his Land of Purity. Amida is evidently in despair for the attainment of enlightenment in this life which is the stage for karma to play out its prescribed programme. The followers of Amida claim to be beings of "inferior endowments," and his teaching is meant only for them. But how many of us are really so well-matured for realising perfect enlightenment while living this life of dust and dirt? The present social and physical environment in which we are all placed is the outcome, according to Buddhism, of our past karma, and none of us can escape all that comes out of this environment. Being so conditioned we are all poorly endowed, we are truly "inferior beings," and we can never hope for enlightenment in this life. Amida is logically consistent when he wants us to be born in his Land of Purity and Bliss where all conditions are at once fulfilled for our final emancipation, i.e., enlightenment. We can conclude in a way that the reason why Amida has conceived

his own kshetra called Sukhāvatī is because he has altogether ceased from cherishing any hope for this world. He has no doubt a deep feeling for us suffering beings here and vows to save us from this miserable existence; but he does this by removing us from the conditions in which we are found. This is very fine, indeed. But we are unreasonable, we are like babes in many ways, we have an intense craving for deliverance from immediate sufferings, calamities, annoyances, difficulties, etc., even while living this life. We know this is the prayer going against the iron law of karma, and we have no power to rise above it. Hence the prayers are all offered to Kwannon who promises us to listen to them. Kwannon is the very Mahāsattva therefore meant for those unreasonable creatures called human beings. We may not obtain enlightenment through Kwannon, although this is the supreme end of this existence and every one of us ought to strive to have it in spite of every odd that is put up against us. Amida's all-merciful vows notwithstanding, we welcome Kwannon in the rôle of an "earthly" saviour.

Those who believe in Amida have their hopes thoroughly centered in the Pure Land. They expect to be born there after death, because it is only there that the possibility of enlightenment is brought to actuality. Insomuch that this is the world of forbearance (*sahaloka*), all kinds of hindrances are to be patiently endured while every preparation is to be made in the meantime for the world to come. Let this existence with all its shortcomings and consequent tribulations be accepted, if possible, gracefully, but if not, grumblingly though not so becoming to us sentient beings; for we cannot do anything with the conditions we find here, and Amida's vows, we may say, are not concerned with this side of existence so much as with the other side where is his own Land created by his vows. Amida is firmly convinced that enlightenment is not possible in this world, and, therefore, he wishes to take us up to the Sukhāvatī. The latter is not

necessarily a land of happiness designed for sentient beings to enjoy themselves in an earthly manner. It is the kshetra ("field" or "realm") which is in harmonious relationship with the body (*kāya*) of enlightenment. The *kāya* and the kshetra must go always hand in hand. Enlightenment is realised in the body when it becomes the fit vessel for it, and the body becomes fit for enlightenment when it finds itself in the proper environment (*kshetra*) created by Amida. Or the order of description may be reversed. The proper kshetra first comes into existence by Amida's enlightenment; sentient beings are born into it, that is, the *kāya* is brought up into the kshetra. The *kāya* being thus brought up to come in contact with the kshetra, it becomes the organ for enlightenment, while enlightenment is not possible so long as we remain in this *kāya* in this world of suffering (*sahaloka*). This is the reason of Amida's vows to see sentient beings born into his kshetra instead of maturing their enlightenment here on earth. In fact the *kāya* is the kshetra, and the kshetra is the *kāya*. Wherever there is enlightenment, there is the body (*kāya*) of enjoyment, i.e., the Kshetra of Purity and Bliss (*sukhāvati*). Amida's abode is, therefore, there and not here among us.

On the other hand, Kwannon lives among us. Whenever there is a cry for help because of unbearable pain he is sure to hear it and comes to us. He has innumerable times appeared on earth in accordance with his promises, and this is testified in the history of Buddhism. Amida's Pure Land stands vividly contrasted to this land of evils, and his efforts are directed towards the perfection of his own Kshetra. See how elaborately the miseries of this *sahaloka* are depicted in the *Sutra of the Buddha of Eternal Life* (*Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*), and again see how brilliantly and alluringly the scene of the Land of Bliss (*sukhāvati*) is painted. The Amida devotees may be said to be living on expectation or hopefulness. But most of us are not satisfied with that, because we are suffering intensely at this very moment from

the most excruciating pains from whatever causes originating here on earth. Where would they go? To nobody else but to Kwannon.

Amida is intent on enlightenment while Kwannon busies himself with relief work as it were. To achieve this end Kwannon is told to transform himself into any forms he thinks proper for the occasion. The sutra enumerates only thirty-three transformations, but in fact he can become anything and accomplish the particular work of mercy he has conceived at the moment. If his devotee desires to attain perfect understanding of Buddhism through the teaching of the Twelvefold Chain of Origination, he will himself become a Pratyekabuddha and teach his devotee to work up the course the latter specially chose. If an Asura desires to be delivered from his Asurahood, Kwannon will appear before him in the form of his kind and teach him in the way of deliverance and let him attain his desire. Kwannon thus dividing himself in an infinite way lives among us, works with us, and is really our friend and companion. When this attribute of his is added to his other attributes such as responding to a call of help by suffering beings, who may deserve in point of fact their sufferings severally, he is truly one of the most lovable Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist Pantheon. He is the embodiment of Mercy.

Amida is no doubt also merciful as indeed all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are. But he is more adored for his Pure Land than for his transformation-bodies (*nirmāṇakāya*). The Buddhists go to him when they conceive the desire for birth in his Land and to Kwannon when they are unable to extricate themselves from all kinds of entanglement and hindrance which befall them in their daily earthly occupations. Each of them, we may say, has his own field of operation.

The fact is that we sentient beings living in this world of cause and effect are constantly craving for miracles. The life chained to the law of origination is too prosaic and

tiresome, and we have an insatiable longing for something quite out of the way, that is, for miracles which defy the law. Human beings are by nature rebels. When the bounds are broken through somehow, for good or bad, their spirits are sure to breathe a relief. Kwannon is a great miracle worker. When a man is about to be beheaded, he pronounces the name of Kwannon and, behold, the sword is broken to pieces. When the Yakshas and Raksharas filling the trichiliocosm appear before a man in the middle of the night with the intention to annoy him, let him once invoke Kwannon the Bodhisattva-mahāsattva, and the evil spirits will not be able even to look at him with an evil eye. Is this not a most wonderful event in this flat, stale, and unprofitable day? Our humdrum life occasionally requires such shell-burstings.

Amida however is not seen working that kind of miracle. His goes into the deeper recesses of the religious consciousness. His is in truth the grandest of all miracles. For it makes his devotees at once transcend the whole course of karma by just invoking him for once and without necessarily accumulating on the part of his devotees any special amount of merit towards the event. Kwannon may change the course of karma temporarily, but not in such a general manner as does Amida. The devotees of Amida will experience a miracle just once and for the last time. This miracle is revolutionary in every sense the term implies; for thereby the whole tide of creation which has been steadily advancing up to this last moment is made completely to roll back; all the residues of sin or demerit which are still heavy enough to turn the scale away from the path of the Sukhāvati are now transferred on to Amida, and his devotees are securely taken into his arms and assured of their ultimate emancipation in the environment specially created for them. Is this not the grandest of all the miracles recorded in the annals of any religion?

Kwannon may in this respect be considered a handmaid

to Amida. While the stanzas 28–33 of the gāthās in the Chapter XXIV of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, are no doubt later additions, the reference to Avalokiteśvara (or Kwannon) as standing to the right or to the left of Amitābha (Amida) is significant. Traditionally, it is Kwannon who extends his merciful arms to a devotee at his last moment in order to carry him to the presence of Amida. Kwannon is nearer to us and worries over our physical and social tribulations. Amida is a great comforter when the whole problem of existence is involved, and no one can dispense with him. But for this reason Kwannon is not to be neglected or slighted. He is also a source of consolation when we realise how full of calamities this life is and how readily Kwannon will respond to our call for help. If the worship of Amida may be regarded as more idealistic and truly spiritual, the Kwannon cult tends more towards the social and materialistic conception of life. If Amida is super-realistic, Kwannon is earthly and sensuous. If Amida's Pure Land is beyond the grasp of the logical mind, Kwannon's Potalaka is accessible to every one of us supplied with all the bodily organs.

Compared with Amida, Kwannon is thus more socially and materialistically characterised and seems to be interested in the physical welfare of his devotees. It is true that he teaches the Dharma to all beings in order to lead them to enlightenment and that for this reason he is known as the Giver of Faith or Fearlessness (*abhayaṇāṭhā*). But the deepest image he leaves in the minds of his devotees as the most distinctive feature of Kwannon is not always this quality of his as Dharma-teacher or an agent of enlightenment, but his virtue of imparting to them a sense of fearlessness in the midst of the raging waves, in the burning flames of the pit, or when threateningly surrounded by demons, spirits, Nāgas, etc.

But compared with Pu-tai, Kwannon is a great miracle-worker highly coloured with religious feeling. Pu-tai re-

presents the social and individual values as conceived by the Chinese mind; and there is not much of religious mysticism in him. He stands before the Chinese Buddhists as a transformation-body of Maitreya, to which extent he exhibits an element of mystery. But in his case this association with mystery does not seem to impress us very deeply, for his moral characteristics shine out more overwhelmingly. The Buddhist heart longs to go far beyond this, that is, it craves for supernaturalism and no doubt the satisfaction comes from Kwannon in the rock-cave of Potalaka.

Having noted some principal points of differentiation between Amida and Kwannon and also between Kwannon and Pu-tai, we finish this section with this remark:

Chinese psychology as far as we can see in Chinese Buddhist arts is more inclined to sensualism than to idealism, it is more realistic and materialistic than purely symbolical as is Indian genius. So, Kwannon is most realistically represented against the background of a rock-grotto, with waves, palaces, devotees, etc. Pu-tai is the Chinese pattern of individual perfection in social environment; Kwannon is an object of devotion and prayer, he is appealed to by the human heart in affliction, more or less worldly. With the Chinese as with any sentient beings, the genuinely religious aspirations are to be satisfied by Amida, they must not stop with Kwannon. But when we have Kwannon among us, we feel restful. The Chinese Buddhists are, therefore, justified in having Kwannon share the altar back to back with Pu-tai.

Another remark. That the worshipping of Kwannon did not go against that of Amida, but that it was rather encouraged is shown by the following statement by Tz'u-min (慈恩, 680-748) of T'ang, who was, as is noticed later, one of the earlier advocates of the Nembutsu and Zen in the history of Chinese Buddhism.

"Those who, turning their thoughts towards the Pure Land wish to be born there, should with due decorum directly face the West and fix their thoughts on Amida

Buddha. Let them thinking of him constantly, without interruption, pronounce his name whether walking or standing, sitting or lying. Let them always think of him and pronounce his name. Let them also think of Kwan-shih-yin (i.e. Kwannon). They should once every day recite the *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* and the *Amida Sutra*. As to liquor, meat, onions, and spices, they should avoid them even unto death, they should not touch them even as medicine. They should with due respect observe the fast days and the precepts, and be thoroughly pure in their threefold action. Thinking of the Buddha and reciting the sutras, let their minds turn towards the Pure Land and desire to be born there in the highest realm of the first order."

III. NEMBUTSU AND ZEN

Japanese Zen travellers in China deplore the fact that there is no more Zen in China as it used to prevail in T'ang and Sung when so many able Zen masters followed one after another and when Zen was such a powerful spiritual influence especially among the intelligentsia. It is true that Zen Buddhism as it is practised in China at present has undergone phases of change since Sung and Yüan; and it is unlikely at least in the near future that Zen can be restored to its ancient glory. Unless the modern trends of thought and feeling are made to swing in another direction, the Chinese Buddhists may not be awakened to a fuller appreciation of their past work. But inasmuch as Zen is the native product of the Chinese mind after its intimate contact with the Indian thought as represented by Buddhism, the time will surely come when Zen will begin to assert itself in a new form of expression. There is the entire literature of Zen experience still well preserved in China. The practice of meditation goes on in the name of the Nembutsu. Some day a great Buddhist may rise from among these earnest followers of the Nembutsu and reinstate Zen to its proper seat of honour. We must know in the meantime how Zen

came to be, as it were, replaced by the Nembutsu and also how the latter is practised at present in China.

It was indeed due to Zen that the Sung philosophers were enabled to formulate what is known as Li-hsüeh (理學) or "system of philosophy." There are two periods in the history of Chinese thought when the Chinese mind reached its height of intellectual activity: the one is the ante-Ch'in and the other the Sung. All the original ideas native to Chinese genius were perhaps exhausted in the former, while the Sung thinkers showed what they could do with the ideas transplanted from abroad. In fact, really great philosophical minds are to be sought among the Buddhist scholars of Sui and T'ang, when Buddhism was such a stimulation to the Chinese intellectuals that all the great systems of Buddhist thought were then formulated. But it was not until Sung came to power that the Confucian philosophers began to work out their own methodology under the provocation of Zen mysticism; for mysticism in any form is always provoking, and this was the case with Confucianism in a most lively sense. The Laotzuan philosophy approaches mysticism and might have awakened the Confucians to the re-valuation of their own thought. But the Laotzuan mysticism somehow lacked the power to stir up the disciples of Kung to this effect, perhaps because Taoism was too world-flying and anarchistic and as a thought was not fertile and productive enough. It was different with Zen. Zen was comprehensive and all-embracing not only as a philosophy, but also as a religion. As a philosophy it covered Confucianism as well as Laotzuanism; as a religion it penetrated deeply into the basis of our practical life including all its various aspects. And in this latter respect the Confucians had great concern and could not ignore the claim of Zen to the practical philosophy of life.

When the Indian form of Buddhist mysticism was acclimatized, it became Zen; Zen is the Chinese adoption of Buddhism. Thus adopted, Zen was legitimatized into the

Chinese family of thought, and in turn gave birth to the Sung philosophy.

Zen in Sung influenced not only the world of thought but the world of art. Those Zen pictures that are preserved in Japan (being lost in their native land), bespeak eloquently of the extent to which the spirit of Zen has entered into the minds of the artists. This will readily be recognised by those who study such monk-painters as Mu-chi, Liang-kai, and others. Their works, I am told, are in a sense a departure from the tradition of orthodox Chinese paintings.

Indeed it is this kind of Zen when the Japanese critics refer to the fate of Zen in Chinese Buddhism of modern times. The Zen they have in mind is that of Sung and T'ang, because they know it best and it is this Zen that is still thriving in a way in Japan. But it may not be quite reasonable to expect of Chinese religious thought to remain stationary or rather stagnant all the time. Not only that, Zen as it was practised in Sung was prophetic of changes. While the development of the Koan exercise was unavoidable or rather the outcome of the natural course of Zen consciousness, it was destined to undergo another turn of fate. This was to take place more readily in China where no strong sectarian spirit is asserted, that is, where there is no differentiation of sects and consequently there is no growth of partisan rivalry and antagonism. For this reason, Zen and Nembutsu—the latter had been growing up steadily ever since the introduction of Buddhism in China—were to be merged instead of each marking its line of differentiation sharply and deeply against the other and defending it as it were at daggers drawn. Is it rather in consonance with Chinese psychology to keep things more or less in a chaotic state in which signs of inner differentiation are not allowed to develop too individualistically? As with the large family system which is the characteristic feature of Chinese communal life, so with Buddhism minor differences are absorbed within the main body to which they all belong. Thus, in-

stead of pursuing its own course Zen in Yüan and Ming turned towards the Nembutsu, the practice of which had then gathered great momentum among the multitudes. The Zen of T'ang and Sung disappeared, and what may be termed "Nembutsu Zen" came up to take its place.

As I pointed out in my *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Series II, there is psychologically a common ground covered both by the Koan exercise and the practice of Nembutsu. It was not against the nature of Zen discipline as it went on in Sung to adapt itself to the mentality of the Nembutsu practiser. Perhaps there was no need for Zen to take this step if it had an unobstructed path ahead of it. In point of fact, Zen appeals to a very limited number of people who are intellectually well trained¹ and at the same time endowed with an amount of devotional piety. The impossibility of keeping up this exclusiveness on the part of Zen made it turn towards the Nembutsu. Unless a Hakuin had been born in China about the time Shuko (Chu Hung) of Unseiji (Yün-ch'í Ssü) was flourishing, the tide could never have been any other way than actually took place. The growing prevalence of the Nembutsu naturally influenced Zen, and Zen was ready to unite its force with the Nembutsu, partly for self-preservation.

Syncretic movements have been going on for some time in China—of Zen with Buddhist philosophy, of Zen with Taoism and Confucianism, of Zen with Nembutsu, etc. The success of the movements is not so manifest except with regard to Zen and Nembutsu, which is practically demonstrated in present day Buddhism.

¹ This does not mean to be scholarly, or philosophically minded. In fact, I am unable to find a good English word to express what I have in mind. It is a certain kind of intuition that Zen requires, and this intuition is gained when all the intellectual efforts are exhausted, that is, when all the attempts to understand life dualistically come to a halt and are unable to open up a new path leading to a new interpretation of life. The psychological study of intuition has not yet been quite thoroughly carried out, especially from the Buddhist point of view.

Zen is iconoclastic and pays no respect to tradition and authority. This is because it is rebellious in spirit and fully realises all the dangers attendant to intellectual systematisation and conventional institutionalism. But for this very reason it is liable to ignore the limits naturally set for it and go all the length of liberatinism. This historical tendency has been observed ever since its inception in early T'ang. Tz'u-min who is one of the great Pure Land teachers of T'ang severely attacks the followers of Zen on this particular score. We read in his writing on the Pure Land, the fragments of which have been recently discovered in Korea by Dr Genmyo Ono:

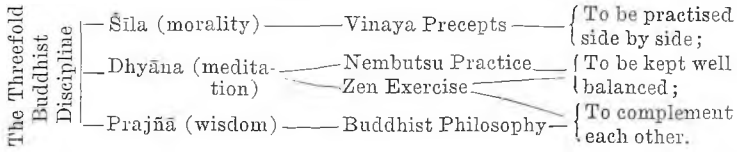
"To establish what is right we ought to put down first what is not right. Destruction must come before construction. . . . There are some Buddhists teaching 'purity,' which is absolute nothingness. Seeing that the world with all its multitudes is ultimately empty, they say that there is no reality, all is like horns of the hare or hair on the turtle; there are no goods which are to be practised, no evils which are to be avoided; whatever forms one gets attached to in mind, including the Buddha and his sutras, are to be kept away; only let the inner mind abide in emptiness, in the emptiness of all things; and you are a Buddha yourself, you have realised Zen, you have cut off the bond of birth-and-death, you will suffer no rebirth, and what is the use of exerting yourself and seeking for the ancient Buddha? There is no need of reciting the sutras, no need of saying the Nembutsu, which is not the way of deliverance. All the Paramitas, except devoting oneself to this kind of Zen practice, lead to birth-and-death; copying sutras, erecting statues, building shrines and pagodas, worshipping and paying reverence to holy figures, practising filial piety, serving teachers and elders, and many other deeds—they all belong to the *samskrita* and not to the *asamskrita*. As long as there are attachments, attainments, desires, and discriminations, all the exercises lead one to the path of birth-and-death; and

there is in them no final emancipation. This is what is claimed by followers of Zen. But the falsehood of this teaching is patent because the sutras teach otherwise, and are not the sutras the teaching of the Buddha? If so, we Buddhists have no right to run against his teaching. As facts stand, those Zen devotees devote a little time in the evening to the practice of Zen, and during the day they sleep or otherwise are riotous, paying very slight attention to the rules of life as bequeathed to us by the Buddha."

This is the way T'zu-min starts his discourse on the Pure Land doctrine. He then proceeds to dwell on the insurmountable difficulties which stand in the Zen way of attaining enlightenment. He regards on the other hand the teaching and practice of the Nembutsu as the best means to realise all that is desired by followers of the Buddha. Of the 84,000 ways of attaining enlightenment, the Nembutsu is the easiest, the most practical, the quickest and the most universal one; for thereby we can see the Buddha, escape the curse of birth-and-death, perfect the Dhyana discipline, attain emancipation and miraculous powers, realise the saintly life, and manifesting ourselves in the six paths of existence save all sentient beings from being drowned in the ocean of birth-and-death. Let us, therefore, devote ourselves to the practice of the Nembutsu most sincerely and whole-heartedly and untiringly even for this one life, and, as the Buddha teaches, we shall be reborn in the Land of Bliss and Purity, where all our aspirations will be thoroughly fulfilled.

T'zu-min was thus a strong advocate of the Nembutsu, and although he was vehemently against the followers of Zen as he understood it in his day, he was not against Zen itself; he wanted to practise it along with the Nembutsu in order to prevent Zen from going astray for the reason of its being too one-sided. His idea was to keep the threefold discipline of Buddhism in perfect balance so that the one would not be emphasised at the expense of the other two.

This idea may be illustrated in the following diagram:



Zen as it was practised in China since its early days tended to ignore the study of the sutras and their philosophy on the one hand and to despise on the other the various rules of morality and the religious observations traditionally set up for pious Buddhists. This antinomianistic tendency may be said to be inherent in Zen and will show it loudly when it is handled by unenlightened followers of Zen. The masters were, therefore, always giving warnings to their disciples not to misinterpret the true spirit of Zen. The undesirable effect became, however, already visible as early as in the days of T'zu-min. And no doubt this led him to become one of the first great syncretists of Zen and Nembutsu in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Fa-chao (法照) of T'ang, Yen-shou (延壽) of Five Dynasties, Yüan-chao (元照) of Sung, Chu-hung (株宏) and Chih-hsü (智旭) of Ming, and other syncretists may be all said to have followed the example of T'zu-min, and the Chinese Buddhism of modern times is the practical outcome of all these movements.

While visiting Su-chou, I had the good opportunity of interviewing Rev. Yin-kuang (印光), of Pao-kuo Ssü in the city of Su-chou. We talked about Zen and Nembutsu. His view of Zen was quite definitive. According to it, the realisation attained by the practice of Zen is not a final one, it does not go beyond mere intellectual understanding (解 *chieh*). To attain Buddhahood means to have a *chêng* (證), and not a *chieh*. *Chêng* is deeper and one's entire personality is involved; it is an experience in the inmost recesses of Buddha-consciousness; it is beyond our human understanding which has its own conditions and limitations as

long as we are beings belonging to the relative plane of existence. *Chêng* is possible only when these earthly conditions are dissolved. Zen is an experience we have while in this body, and, therefore, can never make us come face to face to the ultimate reality. We must, therefore, be born in the Land of Purity in order to attain Buddhahood which is *chêng*. In the Land of Purity, conditions are such as to allow us to have this transcendental experience. All we have to do in this life, or all we can do while here, is to practise the Nembutsu whereby it is made possible for us to effect a rebirth in Amida's realm. This is Amida's vow as told in the various sutras. Zen is really meant for those only who are rich in endowments and can go through all the difficulties incident to the discipline of Zen. Zen is too exclusive and aristocratic for common mortals who are heavily laden with all sorts of karma-hindrances gathered up in their previous lives. Reciting the Nembutsu with all the possible spiritual strength that is left to us in order to be born in the Pure Land, is all that is required of us here, and it is not so difficult as Zen and just the thing for us all.

This kind of view is generally held by the followers of Jōdo (*ching-t'u*, land of purity), and Rev. Yin-kuang is one of the great advocates of this view now living in China. Each not being able to speak the other's language, I had to desist from a further talk with this interesting reverend Buddhist scholar-monk. He was leading a secluded life known as *pi-kuan*, which means "frontier-gate closed," and we were only allowed to speak to him through a narrow window such as we see in a cashier's office or a post-office. It was due to his utmost kindness that he put himself from his practice of the Nembutsu aside in order to see us for a while.

When I talked about the Shin school of the Pure Land teaching in Japan, the followers of which, claiming themselves to belong to a class of sentient beings considered "low and inferior," are in the habit of leading a married life and

of eating meat, Rev. Yin-kuang at once responded, rejecting their claim as Buddhists. His idea perhaps was this: However "low and inferior" we may be, no Buddhist monks are to marry and eat meat. This is forbidden with utmost emphasis by the Buddha, and even so-called "low and inferior" beings who cannot take to Zen and therefore are to be Pure Land devotees, ought not to be so degraded as to contradict the Buddha's injunctions. To disobey the Buddha and yet to desire his help—this is the height of irrationality and indeed offering a grave affront to the Buddha.

Here is a great spiritual dilemma: To be so "low and inferior" as not to be able even to follow the Buddha's injunctions, and yet to be earnestly desirous of being saved by the power of the Buddha-dharma. Will the Buddha be so hard-hearted, as it were, not to mind those inferior beings? Will he leave them rolling in the mire of birth-and-death until their karma is exhausted? But if they are really inferior their karma will never have the chance to reform itself, as they will be piling one evil karma upon another all the time. But if the Buddha's mercy and compassion is infinite, it ought to reach those inferior beings incapable of being saved by their own efforts. The "other-power" ought to be made somehow to take in even those depraved ones. The Shin teaching is the response to this desperate cry on the part of the "unsavable," of the really "low and inferior." Will the Chinese devotees of the Pure Land School ever dare to listen to this kind of irrationality? A most elaborate system of Buddhist philosophy has developed in Japan about this spiritual irrationality. It may not be a mere waste of time for Chinese Buddhist scholars to study the Shin literature that has grown during these six hundred years around the doctrine of Amida's original vows.

The desire for immortality and the desire for the Pure Land are both derived from our innate longing for our own original birth-place. When we gain this birth-place, the kind of immortality we sought for while here may be

found to be altogether different from what we may have then. When we are reborn in the land of Amida, the body we shall then assume may be altogether different from the one we are supposed to leave behind when the time comes. However this is, we all wish to be back in our native place. For this life in the relative plane of existence seems to be something not exactly belonging to our inner self. We feel always constrained in it, we long for deliverance and freedom. In this Buddhism and Christianity are one.

The question is whether this returning is effected by self-power alone, or by other-power alone, or by their combination. Monergism¹ or synergism, theology may have much to discuss about; but as far as our practical life is concerned, each of us will settle it in his own way to his own satisfaction. I wonder what will be the future development of Chinese Buddhism, individually and as a whole, along this line of thought.

After reading some of the Jōdo-Zen literature which was published or reprinted in Rev. Yin-kuang's monastery, Pao-kuo Ssū, and which he was kind enough to let us have, I add the following quotations from it:

1. The Zen followers, according to the Jōdo or Ching-t'u, are depending solely on their self-power (*tzū-li*) to attain the end of their life, that is, deliverance from birth-and-death. But all that they can really have is a kind of intellectual insight into the reason of one's existence or, as they express it, "to see the nature" (*chien-hsing*) of one's being. This "seeing" is, however, no easy task, and moreover if "the nature" is at all seen, the seeing must be penetrating enough so that the root of all evil karma is completely cut off. The "seeing" is, therefore, not enough, it must be a realisation of the most thorough nature. If there is the least bit of evil karma left, or if there is the

¹ Not necessarily in its theological sense here but rather in its literal sense—"single-work" as equivalent to "self-power." In the purely theological sense monergism corresponds to the Shin Buddhist idea of "other-power" alone.

faintest shadow of obscurity in the intuition, this will hinder your deliverance from birth-and-death. Supreme enlightenment is something extremely hard to attain for most of us of these days.

2. Chao-chou (趙州) was one of the greatest Zen masters of China, and yet he had to pass his time in Zen pilgrimage until he was eighty years because he was not quite sure of himself. Chang-ching (長慶), another great Zen master, is said to have worn out seven cushions under his seat before he attained his enlightenment. Yung-ch'üan (涌泉) still remained unsatisfied with himself even after forty years of study. Hsüeh-fêng (雪峰) visited T'ou-tzŭ three times and climbed up to Tung-shan nine times to complete his training in Zen. Wu-tso Kai (五祖戒) was reborn as Su Tung-p'ô (蘇東坡) and T'sao-t'ang Ch'ing (草堂清) as Lu-kung (魯公) because the Zen attainment of both masters was not thorough enough. These examples in the annals of Zen are sufficient to prove the enormous amount of difficulties one has to overcome in order to attain the highest degree of "seeing," or to realise the clearest possible view of the entire scheme of reality. This is simply because the Zen masters are depending entirely on their self-power which excludes even the merciful mediation of a higher being such as the Buddha or Bodhisattva.

3. While going through this life of ignorance in which truth and error are confusingly mixed up, we confront all manners of situations rising at every moment of our living. It is like looking for the sun when the threatening clouds are sweeping across the sky. The thickly-gathered vapour may disperse for a while allowing us to see the sunlight, but when the weather is in this unsettled condition, who can ever expect anything of the midsummer day? Changes may take place quite suddenly, and all that we have been enjoying awhile ago may for ever vanish. Unless one is a great expert in this branch of knowledge, nothing definite can be prognosticated. In a similar manner, when a man is

struggling hard against all forms of mental confusion, emotional and intellectual, an evil spirit will find fine opportunities to exercise its influence over him, and his mind may go astray without his realising it. When this takes place, there is no cure for him. He is for ever lost. This is because he refuses to avail himself of another power.

4. It is a patent fact that Zen is not meant for everybody and further that even when it is practised by people most richly endowed and spiritually gifted, they may not always be able to attain final enlightenment (*chêng*) which will enable them to remove all the hindrances. What the Zen masters express themselves in words sound fine and enhancing and alluring too. But really they are no more than statements of metaphysical understanding, and the masters' inner life which they are actually living betrays all forms of karma-hindrances both intellectual and affectional. And because of this, they are still in the clutches of birth-and-death.

5. Those who are warmly clad and nourishingly fed may well say that they are not attached to things material. But are they really? The hungry ones who have not had a bowl of rice for some days may well declare that even if they see dishes filled with all kinds of tempting food spread right before them they would reject them as filth heaped; but this is no more than mere talk on their part, the declaration falls flat in the face of an eloquent fact. Followers of Zen too frequently commit this kind of fault.

6. On the other hand, the Ching-t'u is fortified with Faith (*hsin*), Will (*yiian*), and Work (*hsing*), and by virtue of these the devotees are reborn in the Land of Bliss and Purity. They do not have to purgate themselves of all the karma-hindrances that are to be left within them. The Faith is to believe in the original vows of Amitābha who assures his devotees of their rebirth if they accept his vows. The Will is to desire for his Land where all the conditions are provided for the full attainment of enlightenment by those

permitted there. The Work is to practise the Nembutsu (*nien-fo*) repeating "Nan-wu-o-mi-to-fo" with all the sincerity of heart in one's possession. This can be done by all people however "inferior" or "ordinary" their natural endowments are; for each of them finds his suitable place in the Pure Land.

7. What is required of the Ching-t'u devotees is first of all to have absolute faith in Amitābha and rely upon his power to take them under his saving arms. They have realised how inefficacious their self-power is for the achievement of a great deed known as "deliverance from birth-and-death." When this faith is fully established, the power of the Buddha is added to theirs, and sustains them throughout their lives and takes them into his realm even with all their karma-hindrances which are successfully removed once in the Pure Land. Faith awakens the will or desire to be born there, for this rebirth is the condition which enables the Ching-t'u devotees to attain what they want. The desire naturally moves over to work or the practice of saying the Nembutsu. The Nembutsu is really the expression of faith, that is, faith if it is a genuine one must terminate in work. To think of the Buddha, which is the literal meaning of Nembutsu, is in other words to see the Buddha. The thinking points to the seeing, and the seeing is the being born into the Buddha-field. From the first stage of faith up to the seeing of the Buddha, there is the constant working of the Buddha's power over his devotees, and the latter are saved from going astray as in the case of Zen in their upward course of spiritual development.¹

Considering all in all, the difference between Jōdo (Ching-t'u) and Zen is that of the attitude one takes by reason of one's psychology towards the fundamental teaching of Buddhism. The difference of "inferior root" (*hsia-kên*) and "superior root" (*shang-kên*) so much talked

¹ 1-7 are abstracts from Rev. Yin-kuang's "Sayings" called *Yin-kuang Chia-yen Lu*.

about by followers of the Jōdo is not at all that of qualitative valuation, but merely that of psychological type. "Superiority" does not necessarily mean superiority of mind in every aspect of its activity, and "inferiority" its reverse. The "superior" indicates the intellectual or philosophical type of mind, while the "inferior" the affectional or devotional type. The chief characteristic that distinguishes the philosophically inclined people is their spirit of inquiry. For whatever subject they approach they assume an inquiring attitude, wanting to find out what and why and how they are, etc. This is a philosophical habit of mind. The devotional type on the other hand is more subjective and reflective in the sense that it is more conscious of its own shortcomings and weaknesses. It is not quite sure of itself. It does not know whether the instruments available for use are exact enough for the purpose. Instead of examining these instruments scientifically it feels the weight of its "karma-hindrances" so called and is strongly impelled towards the desire to be relieved of the burden.

With the Zen type of mind, such characters¹ as *ming*, "to make clear"; *chien*, "to see into"; *chao*, "to illumine"; *wu*, "to awake to" or "to understand"; *ch'ê*, "to discern" or "to penetrate" are most frequently met with. They all show that the attitude of Zen towards its object is to have a kind of philosophical insight, to comprehend it intuitively. This inner perception is always aimed at by Zen. The devotional type is more concerned with its own weaknesses and sufferings. When it observes on the one hand how imperfect and iniquitous this world is and on the other how helpless it is to cope with this situation—not only with itself but with the whole environment, it is deeply impressed with the enormity of its karma-hindrances. This feeling makes the Jōdo followers flee from their self-power which is too feeble to achieve anything by itself, to the other-power which is strong enough to lift them up from the mire of

¹ 明. 見. 照. 悟. 徹.

finitude and imperfection. Zen is in one sense "monergistic," and Jōdo "synergistic."

The following further expresses Rev. Yin-kuang's idea of Jōdo:¹

"The teaching of the Nembutsu has a long history. The Mind (*hsin*) from which a thought (*nien*) is awakened is in its nature like the vacuity of space, it remains all the time unchanged. Although thus unchanged in itself all the time, it allows itself to function variously, in accordance with conditions. If it does not function according to the conditions of the Buddha-realm, it functions according to those of the other nine realms. If it does not function according to the conditions of the Triple Vehicle, it functions according to those of the six paths of existence. If it does not function according to the conditions of the human or the celestial world, it functions according to those of the three evil paths. Under this influence of those conditions variously graded in spiritual value pure or defiled, the reward each of us will enjoy betrays marked degrees of variation from a state of perfect happiness to that of utmost pain.

"While the Mind-substance remains forever unchanged, its indications and functions are considerably differentiated. It is like the sky. When the sun shines it is clear; when clouds are gathered it is dark. The sky in itself remains forever the same regardless of the sun shining or the cloud rising. But as far as its atmospheric indications are concerned there is a great difference between the blue sky and overcast cloudiness, no comparison is to be made between the two. This is the reason why the Buddha makes us all direct our thoughts towards him. So it is said that if we remember the Buddha and think of him we shall most assuredly come into his presence either in this life or in the one to come, for we are not far away from him; again it is said that all the Buddhas and Tathāgatas make up the Dharmadhātu-body and are in the minds and thoughts of all

¹ *Ibid.*

beings, and therefore that when we think of the Buddha in our mind, the mind takes a form with all the thirty-two marks and eighty minor marks of the Buddha-body. This mind becomes the Buddha; this mind is the Buddha; the ocean of all the Buddhas, of all the all-knowing ones grows out of one's own mind and its thoughts. This being so, when the mind functions according to the conditions of the Buddha-realm, this mind becomes the Buddha, and this mind is the Buddha. When it functions according to the conditions of the different realms of beings, this mind becomes all kinds of beings. When this reason is understood, who would not devote himself to the practice of the Nembutsu?

“The practice of the Nembutsu finds its principle in the august name of the Buddha, in which all the spiritual virtues are found embraced. For this august name is the truth of supreme enlightenment experienced by the Buddha as the fruit of his long life of spiritual discipline. When this spiritual fruit of enlightenment is taken into the cause-mind of the Nembutsu devotee, this cause-mind is made to hold in it the fruit-ocean of enlightenment so that the fruit will thoroughly permeate the mind of the Nembutsu devotee. It is like a man suffused with fine scent, his body is fragrant. It is again like the *lo-lo*'s hailing the *ming-ling*, after a long while the latter is transformed into a *lo-lo*. According to an ancient popular belief, the wasp called *lo-lo* causes a transformation in the body of the *ming-ling* (a larva) and adopts it as its own child. The transformation takes place by the *lo-lo*'s constantly addressing to the *ming-ling*, “Be my child, be my child!” for a period of seven days. In a similar way, when a man unceasingly thinks of the Buddha, he himself is transformed into the Buddha-body and becomes a Buddha. Thus, we can see that without changing the nature of an ordinary sentient being such as each of us is, he becomes a Buddha; those who were mere common people yesterday have turned into sages today. The work so

wonderfully efficiently accomplished by the practice of the Nembutsu really surpasses anything achieved by all the other teachings and doctrines and exercises recommended by the Buddhists.

“The reason for this wonder is explained in the following manner. While all the Buddhist teachings other than the Nembutsu are dependent on the devotee’s self-power whereby he exerts himself to cut off all the hindrances intellectual as well as affectional, to attain the realisation of the ultimate truth which is supreme enlightenment, and finally thus to see into the meaning of life and effect deliverance from the cycle of birth-and-death; the practice of the Nembutsu is the combination of the devotee’s self-power and the other-power of all the Buddhas. Because of this union, those who have successfully freed themselves from the hindrances of karma and knowledge are enabled instantly to realise the Dharmakāya; whereas even those who are still dragging the heavy load of karma and knowledge behind them are allowed with all these hindrances to be reborn in the Land of Purity and Bliss where they will attain to supreme enlightenment. This practice is perfectly ordinary and even people of really inferior endowments are able to follow it and reap all the spiritual advantages to be derived therefrom—all this is really beyond the conception of our understanding. Bodhisattvas of the highest order are not to go beyond the Nembutsu’s sphere of influence.

“Therefore, there is indeed no one who is unable to practise the Nembutsu; there is no one who is unable to achieve its end. In spite of its easy practice, the result it brings about is altogether incalculable in measure and quick as regards time. The Nembutsu is the most special teaching given out by the Buddha throughout his long life of missionary activities, it is not to be judged by the ordinary standard of Buddhist philosophy. We of these latter days are poor in merit and shallow in wisdom, heavily laden with hindrances and helplessly oppressed by karma; and if we

do not embrace this gladsome teaching of the all-merciful Buddha, what can we do to save ourselves from birth-and-death? Let us forever abandon the work of self-power which is beset with tens of thousands of difficulties untold."

IV. THE OLD MASTERS ON THE JŌDO

From these quotations we can see to a certain extent where the Jōdo teaching stands by itself and also against that of Zen. But as this is not the proper place to discuss the subject much longer or more fully, I quote passages from the old masters who are highly esteemed by the modern Jōdo devotees in China and from the sutra known as *Śūraṅgama*.¹ The sutra is generally classified as belonging to the esoteric school of Buddhism, but it is also much read by Zen people. It was translated into Chinese during the T'ang dynasty by a monk from Central India in the year 705. It also contains a chapter on Kwannon based on the "Samantamukha-parivarta" in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*.

1. Chih-hsü (智旭, 1599-1655), also known as Ou-i the Great Teacher, was a great master of Zen and Tendai and Jōdo at the end of Ming, the author of a great many books on various subjects relating to Buddhist philosophy, and one of the best-known syncretists of the seventeenth century.

²"Both Zen and Jōdo are the teaching of the most excellent Dharma. Only beings are variously endowed, and it will naturally be necessary to lead them according to their capacities and conditions. As to the highest teaching of Buddhism it is neither Zen nor Jōdo, and it is both Zen and Jōdo. When you even cherish a thought of inquiry [as regards the truth of Zen], you are forcing yourself to become an inferior being. If you are a man of character as you are, you will verily believe that this Mind becomes the Buddha and that this Mind is the Buddha. Let one thought

¹ There is another sutra bearing the same title translated by Kumārajīva; they are entirely different, and must not be confused.

² A freely translated abstract, from the seventh section of *The Ten Principal Treatises of the Jōdo* (Ching-t'u Shih-yao).

of yours deviate from the Buddha, you are not in the Nembutsu Samādhi yet. But when every thought of yours is on the Buddha and not at all separated from him, what is the use of troubling yourself about the one who inquires? Therefore, such exercises as [are practised by the Buddhists these days] the inquiring into the 'who' of the Nembutsu, or the collecting of thought or the regulating of the breath, are not the essentials of the Nembutsu practice. For what is most essential to it is that there is no Buddha outside your thought, for the Buddha is in the very thought that thinks of him; that there is no thought of yours outside the Buddha, for it is in him the very moment he is thought of.

"The Nembutsu is started simply, and you are not thinking of the four propositions, nor of a series of negations; for your entire being is poured into the Nembutsu. Then you see a ray of light issuing from one of the pores of the skin of Amida,—which is at the same time seeing all the innumerable Buddhas in the ten quarters. You are here born in the Buddha-field of Amida, his Land of Purity in the Western quarter—which is at the same time being born in all the Buddha-fields in the ten quarters. This is the highest passage open to the Nembutsu practisers.

"Intensely believing in this Jōdo teaching, make your will dependent on this faith, and begin your work dependent on this will. It is then that the Buddhas innumerable issue out of every thought of yours, and that you find yourself sitting in all the Buddha-fields as innumerable as the sands of the Gangā extending over the ten quarters, and further that you are revolving the great Dharma-wheel illuminating the past, present, and future."

2. Chu-hung (株宏, 1532–1612), known as Lien-ch'ih the Great Teacher, was quite an outstanding character in the latter part of the Ming dynasty. He was a great Zen master, and at the same time also a great advocate of the Jōdo teaching. He was a most influential leader in directing the course of Chinese Buddhist thought towards the practising

of the Nembutsu. As the eighth patriarch of the Jōdo teaching, he is daily paid homage to at the Chinese monastery. For this reason he is not liked by the Japanese Zen masters, especially by Hakuin (1685–1768) and his followers. But we can notice that in the following sermon¹ given by Lien-ch'ih the Great Teacher there is something of Zen psychology.

“False thought (*wang-nien*) is a disease and the Nembutsu (*nien-fo*) is the medicine. When a disease has been going on for a long time it is difficult for the patient to be cured of it by means of a few doses of medicine. In the same way, the accumulation of false thoughts can never be wiped off by means of the Nembutsu practised just for a short while. Do not mind how disturbingly your false thoughts may fly about, only let your Nembutsu come out of your sincere heart and be constant. Let each sound be distinctly pronounced, let each phrase uninterruptedly follow the other. When you hold on to it with all the power you can set forth, you are moving somewhat towards your objective. The accumulation of energy that has been going on for a long period of time, will one day all of a sudden come to a point of maturity and an explosion takes place. Like rubbing off a bat to make a needle out of it, or like striking an iron bar to turn it into steel, [a long patient working is needed], and the result will not deceive you. There are many ways to enter the path, but this [Nembutsu] exercise is the one shortest way possible. Never be negligent!”

3. The following is given in the *Daily Reciter*¹ simply as a sermon given to those who desire by means of the Nembutsu to be reborn in the Land of Purity, and the name of the teacher is not given. In this the Zen note is distinctly struck, showing that Chinese Buddhism of the present day is a kind of hybrid between Zen and Jōdo with something too of the Shingon.

¹ *Daily Reciter of the Zen Monastery* (*ch'an-mên jih-k'ê*), circulated in China.

“Those who are devoted to the practice of the Nembutsu (*nien-fo*) should know that the Buddha (*butsu=fo*) is no other than the Mind (*hsin*). Let them then inquire what this Mind is. It is required of them to ask where this Mind originates that practises the Nembutsu. It is also required of them to have an intimate sight of the one who does this seeing. After all who is this one? The practisers of the Nembutsu ought to have an illuminating understanding as regards this point. If otherwise, let them not seek for anything specifically mystifying. Nor need they flee from noise and confusion and shelter themselves in quietude. What is needed of them is to sweepingly clear themselves of all the learning, all the understanding they have acquired in their course of life, and to devote themselves single-mindedly to the holding-up of one phrase “*Namu-amida-butsu*” (*nan-wu-o-mi-t'o-fo*).

“*Nan-wu-o-mi-t'o-fo*—who is this one who practises the Nembutsu? Who is the one who does this inquiring? It is asked of you to look into the matter quietly and steadily, without letting it slip off your mind with no interruption. Go on like this in quietude, go on like this in noisy places. Let quietude and confusion come and go as they please, only your thought be resolutely and immovably applied to the object in view, and this without allowing yourselves to be interrupted. This is what I call the good practising of the Nembutsu. When you thus firmly hold on and not let your thought slide back, you will one day unexpectedly experience a state of great *satori*, owing to long accumulation of energy. You will then realise that there is no falsehood in the teaching that one's birth in the Pure Land is to be sought by means of the Nembutsu.”

4. Yen-shou (延壽, 904–975), of Yung-ming Ssü, is honoured as the sixth patriarch of the Jōdo teaching. He was a great Zen master and the author of the *Tsung-ching Lu* in one hundred fascicles and many other works. The following fourfold “reflection” or “consideration” sums up Yen-

shou's critical judgment over the relative merit of Zen and Jōdo in the attainment of the end of the Buddhist life. It is made very much of by adherents of the Jōdo in China.

"1. When Zen alone is practised without Jōdo,¹ nine out of ten are sure to fail [in the attainment of the end]; when visions of various kinds assail [the practiser], he will be carried away without a moment's deliberation.

"2. When Jōdo alone is practised without Zen, every one of the ten thousand will do well; for he will surely see Amida, and is this not enough even if he is not able to have *satori* (*wu*) ?

"3. When Zen and Jōdo go hand in hand, it is like the tiger furnished with a pair of horns. While in this world he is teacher of mankind; in the life to come he will even be a Buddha or a Patriarch.

"4. When a man has neither Zen nor Jōdo, he is destined for hell where the iron-bed and the bronze-pillow await him. For ever so many lives through tens of thousands of kalpas, there will be no one who will be of help to him."

5. Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Seishi in Japanese, and Shih-chih in Chinese), together with Avalokiteśvara (Kwannon, Kuan-yin), is one of the attendant-Bodhisattvas to Amida. He is not so well-known as Kwannon, but one of the important figures in the Pantheon of the Mahayana Bodhisattvas. He stands for wisdom as Kwannon does for mercy. According to the *Sutra of Meditations* (*Kwangyō*=*Kuan Wu-liang-shou Ching*), his body shines out in the colour of pure gold all over the world, which can be seen by anybody so qualified as to see him. When a ray issuing from one of the pores of his skin is seen, all the rays of light pure and undefiled issuing from all the innumerable Buddhas in the ten quarters will be seen. Hence this Bodhisattva is called Infinite Light. With the light of wisdom (*jñāna*) he illumines all beings

¹ That is, *ching-t'u*=Pure Land, meaning the practice of the Nembutsu.

and keeps them away from the threefold path. He has this unsurpassed power and for this reason he is known as Attainer of Great Energy.

“Mahāsthāmaprāpta, son of the Dharma-king, with his fifty-two Bodhisattva-friends rose from his seat, and after prostrating himself at the feet of the Buddha, said: As I think of my past lives, there was a Buddha called Infinite Light in a kalpa as far back as the sands of the Gangā. After him twelve Tathāgatas followed one after another in the same kalpa, the last of whom was called One Whose Light Surpassed That of the Sun and the Moon. It was under this Buddha that I was taught in the Nembutsu (*nien-fo*) Samādhi.

“It is like this. Suppose there were two persons one of whom was good in memory, while the other was forgetful all the time. If they happened to meet, it would be as if they never met; if they saw each other it would be as if they never saw. If, however, both of them were good in memory and each thought of the other deeply and sincerely, they would throughout their long and successive lives be like object and its shadow and would not be turning away one from the other.

“All the Tathāgatas in the ten quarters think of all beings as the mother does of her children. If the child runs away from its mother, what is the use of her thinking of it? If the child thinks of the mother as much as she does of the child, they will never be kept apart throughout their successive lives.

“When all beings remember the Buddha and fix their thought on him, they will surely see him not only in this life but in that to come; they will not be kept away from him; and, without resorting to any specific means, their minds will by themselves open [to the Dharma]. It is like a person steeped in a sweet scent, the scent radiates from his body; this is known as ‘decorating oneself with scented rays.’

“Originally while at the disciplinary stage, I entered into the Kshānti of No-birth (*anutpattikadharmakshānti*) by means of the Nembutsu-mind. Now in this world, I will take in all the people devoting themselves to the Nembutsu and make them return to the Land of Purity. The Buddha asks me about ‘perfect interfusion,’ but I have no choice. The main thing is to hold all our six senses together under control and by making pure thoughts succeed one after another enter into a state of Samādhi.”

A commentator adds: “That this Bodhisattva embraces all beings by means of the teaching of the Nembutsu and leads them to the Land of Purity, is in perfect accord with the disposition of all beings. When they are disciplined in this they are all enabled to attain deliverance. This Samādhi is known as the king of all Samādhis, because it holds in it all the Samādhis. Only it is required of them that they should keep their pure thoughts succeeding one after another without an interruption of even one moment given to the five worldly desires. This is the way to collect thought.

“Let your mouth repeat the Nembutsu, let your mind think of the Buddha, and let your ears and eyes exclusively and concentrately abide in the Buddha-field; and when your eyes see nothing else but the Buddha’s form, your ears listen to nothing else but the Buddha’s voice, and your body stands against nothing else but the Buddha’s field—when your Nembutsu comes to this, you are not far away from the Buddha. When the child is always thinking of its mother, mother and child will see each other throughout their successive lives. In a similar way, your mind now without resorting to any other means will open by itself and most assuredly see the Buddha.

“Of these six senses, the principal one is the *manovijñāna* (mind). When the *manovijñāna* becomes thoroughly pure, all the other senses are controlled by it, and no special regards are to be paid to any one sense. While practising the Nembutsu, your eyes are not to fall on form, but let

them carry on the Nembutsu; . . . your mind is not to seek for any attachment, but let it be the Nembutsu itself.

“When you thus apply yourself to the Nembutsu in your daily life, thinking only of Amida and desiring the Pure Land, constantly and uninterruptedly, this is called making pure thoughts succeed one after another. Such is the teaching directly in accord with the fundamental nature of the Mind; and as it surpasses all other teachings, it is the foremost teaching.”

6. The following story is also quoted from *The Lêng-yen Sutra* (*Śūrangama-sūtra*). I cannot surmise the motive of the compiler of the *Ch'an-mên Jih-k'ê* (*Daily Reciter of the Zen Monastery*) who has this particular entry in his work instead of the other stories in the Sutra, which are also equally available for Zen followers. It is interesting, however, to make it relate to the practical and social phase of Chinese mentality. While evidently the author of the story bases his conduct on an abstract metaphysical principle, would it be possible that the *Jih-k'ê* compiler thought only of its pragmatic bearing on the life of his Buddhist friends?

“The Bodhisattva Ch'ih-ti (Dharaṇidhara) then rose from his seat, and, after prostrating himself at the feet of the Buddha, said to him: I recall my having been a Bhikshu in my past lives when the Tathāgata P'u-kuang (Samanta-prabhasa) appeared in the world. Wherever I found the highways and the passages to the rivers too narrow or too steep or not so well constructed as they ought to be and causing damage to the carriages and horses, I levelled down the ground, or filled up the hollows; I also built bridges of all kinds; I carried sands and earth. I thus worked and laboured very hard, seeing [in the meantime] innumerable Buddhas appear in the world one after another. When I saw people carrying loads of luggage through the congested places, I helped them as far as their destination. The luggage was then set down for them, and I left them without demanding any price for [the labour].

“When the Buddha Viśvabhūka appeared in the world, there was a famine and people suffered much. I became a carrier, and carried things for people, and regardless of the distance I charged them just one cent. When I saw carriages and oxen deeply sunk in the mud, I exercised my supernatural powers and extricated the wheels from being entirely submerged. When the king of the time invited the Buddha to a meal, I made the ground even for the Buddha. The Buddha Viśvabhūka stroked me on the head and said: ‘You should make your own mind-ground even. When it is even, all the grounds in the world will be even.’

“My mind then opened and saw that the dust (*aṇurāja*) making up my body was the same with the dust which went into the composition of every part of the world, and that between the two there was no difference whatever. Further I saw that this dust was in its self-nature not a real and tangible object, nor could it be touched by any arms. I had an insight into the nature of the Dharma and attained the Kṣānti of No-birth, becoming an Arhat. Turning the mind towards [the Mahayana] I am now in the order of the Bodhisattva; and listening to the sermons of all the Tathāgatas in regard to the ground where the Buddha’s intuition rises as told in the *Puṇḍarīka*, I was the first one who testified to it; I stand at the head of all the Bodhisattvas.

“The Buddha asks us about ‘perfect interfusion.’ I consider this to be the first approach to the attainment of supreme enlightenment. To have an insight into the truth that between the dust making up this body and the dust entering into the composition of the world there is no difference, and that the idea of dust rises falsely from the Tathāgata-garbha, and that when the dust dissolves knowledge (*prajñā*) is perfected.”

DAISETZ TEITARO SUZUKI