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TATHĀGATAGARBHA THOUGHT
A BASIS OF BUDDHIST DEVOTIONALISM IN EAST ASIA

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Purpose, Rationale and Approach

The historical approach to Zen in Heinrich Dumoulin's major work, *A History of Zen*, published over twenty years ago, broke new ground in Western Zen studies. Up to that time Zen publication in the West dealt primarily with interpretive accounts of Zen and translations of Zen or Zen-related texts. I follow here an alternate approach to Zen and seek to place it in the context of one or another aspect of Mahāyāna tradition. One might read Zen in the perspective of Indian Mādhyamika or Yogācāra, or in terms of the Chinese *prajñic* or Hua-yen doctrinal development. But I would like to place it within the perspective of Tathāgatagarbha thought.

Perhaps the most illustrious treatment of the Buddha nature in all of Zen appears in Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*, where an entire book is specifically devoted to the subject (T. 82, number 2582).[1] Western scholars and Japanese authors writing in English have already dealt with this particular book (Abe 1971; Grosnick 1979) in terms of the history of Zen. My aim here is rather to provide a broad background on Tathāgatagarbha thought itself.

Although it is an important aspect of Mahāyāna thought, research on the subject of Tathāgatagarbha thought has tended to be overshadowed by Mādhyamika and Yogācāra studies. Even among eminent Japanese Buddhologists, it was not until 1974 that a comprehensive study on Tathāgatagarbha appeared when Takasaki Jikidō's *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei* was published. Prior to this work Takasaki had also published *A Study on the Ratnagotra-*

vibhāga in 1966.[2] Of all the important works on Tathāgatagarbha thought published by prominent Japanese Buddhologists—among them Hanayama Shinshō, Kumoi Shōzen, Nakamura Zenryū, and Ogawa Ichijō—Takasaki's work, at least in my opinion, stands out as the most comprehensive. Most of the others are devoted largely to textual studies. European and American Buddhologists commanding respect on the subject are E. Obermiller's *Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* (1930), David S. Ruegg's *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra* (1969), Alex Wayman's *The Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmāla* (1974). This is not the place to review all of this research in detail. Rather, let me briefly indicate the problematics involved in an investigation of the historical development of Buddhist thought so that we might be able to understand the significance of Tathāgatagarbha thought within that context.

Although Buddhism originated in India, it underwent a domestication in China and Japan, accommodating concrete historical needs and circumstances in those countries. According to a remark of Edward Conze, the late British Buddhologist, the limitation of not knowing Chinese and Japanese "is not as serious as it sounds. Most creative work was done in India. . ." (Conze 1962). While there are no doubt those who would agree with him, those of us who have access to Chinese and Japanese sources know better. New dimensions of thought and certainly "creative work" emerged from the minds of the Chinese and Japanese in the course of Buddhism's domestication. There is simply no way to understand the transmission of Buddhism through this historical process without taking seriously a comparative philological study of Buddhist texts extant in Sanskrit and Pāli and in the Chinese and Tibetan translations, as well as contemporary Japanese Buddhological works based upon such philological studies. But caution is required here, for, even though a comparative philological study of this kind enables us to expose errors in the translating of technical terms and the interpreting of ideas in their transposition from the original Indian sources, it would be imprudent to challenge the validity of a given religious tradition simply on the basis of textual orthodoxy. A tradition, after all, represents a living reli-

gion that has inspired those living within it, in spite of the fact that they may lack the benefits of a modern philological discipline. Quite the contrary, they may even have been more deeply inspired precisely because they were graced with not knowing about modern philological methods. In a word, skill-in-means has always marked the transmission of the Dharma.

The term "skill-in-means" does not mean "anything goes." It is an ability to implement insight (into emptiness, *śūnyatā*) at the level of secular reality. It presupposes an understanding of the principle of the inseparability of emptiness and co-arising, of truth and practice, a matter of which we shall have more to say later. The domestication of Buddhism in East Asia, as in other cultural environments, owes much to this skill-in-means in its propagation of the Dharma. The significance of Buddhism in East Asia, then, begins with the fact that it is a living religion, not simply a philological or philosophical asset monopolized by an intelligentsia dedicated to a critical examination of the noetic contents of Buddhist thought and the philological validity of its expression. Buddhism has established deep roots among the masses and within their culture quite apart from all the philological errors committed during the process of domestication. And most important of all, it is a tradition that has survived the overwhelming pressures of modernization.

The trouble with Buddhologists today is that they have become specialists in a given set of texts within a particular lineage or in a given system of thought. As a result, the issue of the relevance of those texts or that system of thought to the culture and thought of the people who were influenced by them seems to have eluded their attention. I make this point because Tathāgatagarbha thought provides one of the most significant bases for the development of popular living schools of Buddhism like Zen and Pure Land.

This leads us to examine two questions, one historical and the other doctrinal: whether Tathāgatagarbha constituted an independent school of thought in India or not, and whether it is a form of monism or not. After examining these two issues, I will attempt an interpretation of Tathāgatagarbha thought from a Mādhyamika

perspective and then turn to a discussion of Tathāgatagarbha thought as a basis of Mahāyāna Buddhist devotionalism in East Asia. In conclusion I will take up the question of the identity of the *tathāgata-garbha* and the *ālaya* consciousness, which some Mahāyāna texts propose without explanation. My comments on this particular issue are highly speculative, but I find it a matter that must eventually be faced in order to gain a clear understanding of the significance of Tathāgatagarbha thought.

IS TATHĀGATAGARBHA AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL?

Takasaki's *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei* and Reugg's *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra* are of great importance for understanding the history of the development of Tathāgatagarbha thought. Takasaki tentatively establishes the mainstream of evolution of Tathāgatagarbha thought by beginning with the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, proceeding to the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvānirdeśa* and the *Śrīmāladevīsiṃhanādasūtra*, and moving down to the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. Reugg, by contrast, deals with Tathāgatagarbha thought from the *Ratnagotravibhāga* to the post-*Ratnagotravibhāga* texts of Tibetan composition. Takasaki's work is of particular interest here because it is in this context that he uses the term *tathāgatagarbhavāda*, a Tathāgatagarbha school (1974, p. 11). He identifies this term in the *Laṅkavatārasūtra* and claims that it is used in contrast to Ātmavāda (a school which affirms the reality of self), thus treating it on the same level as the Śūnyavāda (Emptiness School) and the Vijñānāvāda (Mind Onlyness School), the two major schools of Indian Mahāyāna. Elvin Jones, however, refutes such a classification, that is, identifying Tathāgatagarbhavāda as an independent school of Indian Buddhist thought, arguing:

> Takasaki presumes the existence of a Tathāgatagarbha School as a third Mahāyāna school in India in addition to Yogācāra and Mādhamika, but, Takasaki . . . has not really posed the question of whether or not such an independent school ever existed in India (1978, p. 41, n. 9).

It should be pointed out here that Jones makes reference only to Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga*. Since Jones does not read Japanese, it is obvious that he has not read Takasaki's *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei*. I do not intend, however, to make reference to Takasaki's earlier work, since the latter is more comprehensive on the issues under discussion. The crux of the problem, however, lies in the definition of the term *vāda*. Does it refer to a system of thought or to an independent school of thought? Monier-Williams simply defines the term as "a thesis, proposition, argument, doctrine . . . " (1951, p. 939c). I do not know precisely how the term was used in ancient Buddhist India, but if we take Monier-William's definition at face value, it seems to me that the term does not distinguish between a system of thought and an independent school of thought. I should think that Takasaki takes it to mean the former. At any rate, the fact that Takasaki identified the term *tathāgatagarbha-vāda* in the *Laṅkavatārasūtra* definitely establishes that it was employed in India about the 4th or 5th century, and perhaps even earlier.

Jones goes on to raise two intriguing questions: "Who were the *ācāryas* of Tathāgatagarbhavāda?" and "Why did Tathāgatagarbha theory become the common property of both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika (if Tathāgatagarbha were an independent school)?" (1978, p. 41, n. 19) As to whether the *ācārya* lineage points to a distinct system of thought, we ought to ask ourselves who the Indian *ācārya* of the *Gaṇḍavhyha* or the *Sukhāvatīvhyha* traditions were according to the Indian tradition. What Jones obviously has in mind is to employ the *acāryā* lineage as the basis to judge the existence or non-existence of a "*vāda*." This is reasonable, if we are referring to an independent school developed by *śāstra* writers in India, whose identity is known to us. But it is unreasonable if we are referring to a tradition developed by *sūtra* writers whose identity is unknown. The fact that the identity of *sūtra* writers is unknown does not of course leave us free simply to ignore these texts. They are an integral part of a particular tradition, whether or not that tradition developed into a system of thought or an independent school of thought. Unfortunately, the history of early Mahāyāna in India is not so clear as one might wish.

Regarding Jones' second question, if we were to claim that Tathāgatagarbha is not an independent school simply because "it became the common property of both Mādhyamika and Yogācāra," then, by the same line of reasoning, we could argue that Mādhyamika is not an independent school (which is clearly wrong) since its major tenet, co-arising, became the property of the Yogācārins, who reformulated it as *paratantra-svabhāva* (the other-dependent nature of consciousness), the principle underlying the Yogācāra *āśryaparāvṛtti* (mental transformation). Indeed, would not consistency oblige us to the false conclusion that there was no Mādhyamika school at all simply because all Mahāyāna schools have incorporated the *madhyamā pratipad* (middle path) doctrine of Mādhyamika? In short, an arbitrarily established criterion, ignoring the historicity of development of Buddhist thought, leads to more confusion than clarification. It is true that Tathāgatagarbha, as we know it today, is not regarded as an independent school (*tsung* 宗), either in India and Tibet, or in China and Japan. Nevertheless, it was recognized as a distinct system of thought with its own set of canonical sources of a common literary genre, and this is true not only in China and Japan, but perhaps also in India, as Takasaki claims.

Jones' view, as I see it, is shaped by the classification scheme of the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra*, the "three turnings of the Wheel," in which Tathāgatagarbha is not included. It is not my intention to criticize the doctrinal content of that *sūtra*, which one can hardly fail to acknowledge for its major doctrinal significance in the development of Yogācāra thought. But it must be said that any kind of a *p'an-chiao* (判教) system tends to be ahistorical and subjective, based as it is on the arbitrary judgment of an author convinced of its truth. The "three turnings of the Dharma-wheel" is considered significant by those who endorse such classifying schemes to advance the supremacy of a doctrine that scheme is intended to promote. But we are under no obligation to adhere to such a scheme in reconstructing the history of development of Indian Buddhist thought. As Jones rightly points out, "the possible existence of a distinct *Tathagatagarbhavāda* in India is likely to be a point of controversy among Buddhologists for some time to

come" (1978, p. 41, n. 19). It is the reasons he offers to refute Takasaki that I cannot endorse. Sufficient reasons need to be based on a careful historical study of the development of Tathāgatagarbha literature, extant in Sanskrit and in the Chinese and Tibetan translations, not on an arbitararily selected text or an established *p'an-chiao* system, nor upon a known *ācārya* lineage, and certainly not upon whether a given school or system of thought has become a property of another school or system of thought. Most important of all, we must remind ourselves that even within the limited context of Indian Buddhism, Buddhist thought has constantly been reformulated along with, or perhaps because of, changes in historical circumstances. Buddhism in India is not simply a group of fossilized systems of thought that particular *p'an-chiao* systems portray it to be. The same is true of Buddhism in other countries.

IS TATHĀGATAGARBHA A MONISM?

Obermiller's attempt to identify Tathāgatagarbha as a form of "monism" is intriguing. Of course, the employment of Western philosophical terms to discuss Buddhist concepts entangles us in complexities. Even among Western philosophers, the term "monism" is not defined with any degree of consistency. Bradley, for example, conceived of it as the "absolute," while Spinoza's concept of *deus sive natura* is seen as a "substantival monism" and Leibniz' concept of "soul" as an "attributive monism." In short, in Western philosophy "monism" can be interpreted as an eternal substance, a principle, or an attribute of that principle.

Now the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and other Tathāgatagarbha-related texts claim that the Tathāgata dwells in the body of sentient beings, but Buddhologists are divided on whether this kind of Tathāgata represents the "Absolute" or not. What makes the definition of *tathāgata-garbha* (the embryo or seed or womb of a Tathāgata) difficult—not so much in terms of its literal translation but in terms of rendering a translation that would adequately convey the essential meaning of the concept—is that these texts

describe *tathāgata-garbha* in a variety of synonyms and metaphors which obscure attempts to define the term with some degree of consistency. More concretely, we face the problem of whether we should interpret the term literally as a physical entity (a substance), or symbolically as a potential (a principle). Even among respected Japanese Buddhologists, there is no unanimity as to whether *tathāgata-garbha* represents the "Absolute" or not. For example, Nagao Gadjin cautiously notes: "The *tathāgata-garbha* seems to me to occupy a supreme position—a position akin to that of Brahman or Ātman, or other 'Absolute Being'" (1978, p. 81, n. 35).

On the other hand, the late Yamaguchi Susumu summed up the *Ratnagotravibhāga* by analyzing its contents in seven thematic categories: 1) Buddha, 2) Dharma, 3) Saṃgha, 4) *dhātu* (body, realm or element, but here the term "element" is most proper), 5) *bodhi* (wisdom), 6) *guṇa* (merits), and 7) *karma* (act). He argued that *dhātu* is the "cause," and *bodhi, guṇa,* and *karma* the "conditions" that empirically reveal the three jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha" (1955, p. 4). This means that the wisdom, merits, and practices of a bodhisattva constitute the "conditions" that "cause" the three jewels. And because the Buddha is of the foremost importance among the three jewels, we can rephrase the above expression as "the wisdom, merits, and practices of a bodhisattva constitute the conditions which 'cause' the Buddha." The term "Buddha" here refers to the Buddha-element, that is, *buddha-dhātu,* which means *tathāgata-garbha.* The term "cause" does not refer to a first cause but to a set of conditions or co-arising, technically called *pratītyasamutpāda.* Thus what I have previously referred to as a "potential" for enlightenment is something empirically caused under a specific set of conditions, namely, wisdom, merits and practices. Simply put, in the context of the *Ratnagotravibhāga,* the potential of *tathāgata-garbha* is revealed through bodhisattva practices. In sum, I wish to conceive *tathāgata-garbha* as a potential and assume that potential to be empirically revealed through the principle of co-arising. And this is an issue that requires elaboration.

When we speak of insight in Mahāyāna Buddhism, we are speaking of an insight into emptiness. Emptiness is the basis of all forms of phenomenal existence. To say this, however, does not mean that existence as such is void. It means that phenomenon, or more specifically, phenomenal change is possible because a phenomenon in itself is empty of its own essence, of a sovereign entity. This statement does not negate existence *in toto*. What it says is that existence is in flux and hence devoid of its own essence. Otherwise phenomenal existence would be permanent and change would be impossible. Two things should be noted here: phenomena are brought about by a set of conditions (co-arising), and things that co-arise are relative, like seed and sprout. The notions of "I" and "you" are also relative. The Buddhist concept of co-arising represents a theory of relativity. For a phenomenon is measured relative to another phenomenon, as modern physics knows so well. The implication of this theory is that we--"you" and "I"--are all on the same boat, the boat called *saṃsāra*, and there can be no self-enlightenment without the enlightenment of others. Mahāyāna soteriology articulates collective salvation based on the supposition of the contingency of existence. The *tathāgata-garbha* is a metaphorical expression of the potential inherent in humankind which realizes the principle of relativity and implements that principle on the level of secular reality to bring about collective salvation. Let me add a brief word on what some Japanese Buddhologists have to say about the notion of *tathāgata-garbha*.

We have established that *tathāgata-garbha* and Buddha-nature are synonymous. Tokiwa Daijō in his *Busshō no kenkyū*, refers to Buddha-nature as "*kakugo no honshō* (覺悟の本性)," that is, "inherent enlightenment potential" (1944, p. 4). The question is what do we mean by "enlightenment potential" (or "Buddha-potential")? Yamaguchi in his *Hannya shishōshi* says "co-arising is [the principle embodied in] *tathāgata-garbha*" (縁起即如来藏) (1955, p. 86). And Kumoi Shōzen in his *Shōmangyō* claims that *tathāgata-garbha* is "eternal, neither originating nor becoming extinct," and defines it as the womb from which the Tathāgata arises" (1976, pp. 256-257), a metaphorical statement to be sure. Apparently following the Sino-Japanese commentarial tradition, he

employs the term *tathāgatagarbha-pratītyasamutpāda* (如来藏縁起), the rising of the Tathāgata from the "womb" through the principle of co-arising. Essentially this means that the conventional world arises through the principle of co-arising, insight into which is derived from the Buddha-potential inherent in all sentient beings. Thus he defines the term "womb" as a symbolic representation of a potential, identifies this potential as Buddha-nature, and claims that the *tathāgata-garbha*, as Buddha-potential, does not exist apart from human existence (for what purpose would such a potential have apart from human existence?), and that this potential triggers sentient beings living in *saṃsāra* to seek *nirvāṇa*. As such, he distinguishes Tathāgatagarbha from such "monistic" concepts as *ātman, jīva, pudgala*, and so forth (Kumoi 1976, pp. 256-257). In his *Daijō kishinron* Hirakawa Akira also employs the term *tathāgatagarbha-pratītyasamupāda* (1973, p. 156, 181). And Takemura Shōhō treats it basically as a principle of co-arising in his expostiion of the same text in his *Kishinron nyūmon* (1953, p. 7). These views, as should now be apparent, all correspond to Yamaguchi's view that the *tathāgata-garbha* reperesents the embodiment of co-arising in the sense that the potential to realize the true reality of the relativity of all things is inherent in human consciousness.

Is Tathāgatagarbha thought then a form of monism? It is so only if we are to conceive monism as a principle. Whether co-arising can be construed as a primordial substance is another matter, because co-arising precludes the notion of a first cause.

Thus although *tathāgata-garbha* literally refers to the Tathāgatha embryo, the term implies something that is not readily perceived. It is hidden by ignorance (*avidyā*). It refers to a potential. While it is commonly said that *tathāgata-garbha* is hidden within sentient beings, what is actually meant therefore is that sentient beings, though covered by ignorance, are nevertheless embraced by the compassion of the Tathāgata who has the potential to enlighten others. The *raison d'être* of the non-enlightened one is the *raison d'être* of the enlightened one. The Buddha has no purpose whatsoever without the existence of sentient beings. Like the "I-you" relation, enlightenment and non-enlightenment are relative.

Enlightenment is not a primordial substance. If enlightenment and non-enlightenment are relative, if enlightenment is not a primordial substance, and if enlightenment here refers to *tathāgata-garbha*, then *tathāgata-garbha* needs to be interpreted from a Mādhyamika perspective since the Mahāyāna concept of relativity is derived from Mādhyāmika.

A MĀDHYAMIKA INTERPRETATION OF TATHĀGATAGARBHA

Although we have said that *tathāgata-garbha* refers to a potential for enlightenment, it is not what Schleiermacher referred to as *guterlehre* because Tathāgatagarbha represents a system of thought based on the principle of co-arising, while Schleiermacher's idea is not. The rational basis of co-arising is emptiness. Thus Yamaguchi distinguishes between emptiness *per se* and the "practical implementation of emptiness in actual practice" (*laukika-vyavahāra*) (1955, p. 39). This idea merits elaboration because of popular misconceptions of Buddhism, most of which, I think, center on the concept of emptiness. For example, Franz G. Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, eminent psychiatrists, say, "Absorption with oneself--withdrawal from the world and society--is an unbridgeable gap between Buddhism and Western psychiatric thought" (1966, p. 26). But emptiness is not nihilism, as these learned men seem to think it is. On the contrary, it is characterized by a dynamic thrust toward empirical reality, which is what co-arising, the corollary of emptiness, is all about.

The popular *Heart Sutra* therefore says, "form is emptiness and emptiness is form" because form is conventionally established by the principle of co-arising which emptiness makes possible. Deriving many of his ideas from the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, Nāgārjuna says in his invocational statement in the *Mādhyamakakārikā*:

> I pay homage to the Buddha, the most supreme teacher, who has taught that [co-arising, which is] neither organization nor extinction, neither permanence nor impermanence,

> neither unity nor diversity, neither coming nor going, extinguishes meaningless argument (*prapañca*) (T. 30, number 1564, p. 1).

Emptiness is described here through a series of negations. Its function is to extinguish "meaningless argument" based on the notion of a duality notion that fragments the world into concepts by making the self the measuring stick of the world and to enable one to understand that the true nature of existence is co-arising. Thus the *Bodhicittaśāstra* cautions us "not to remain submerged in the realm of emptiness and become stagnated in the realm of tranquility" (T 32, number 1665, p. 574c). It is also interesting to note that the *Awakening of Mahayana Faith* uses the word emptiness as a verb, that is "ko-k'ung" (可空) (T. 32, 1666, p. 576b), to "*śūnyatize*." In my view, this "*śūnyatizing*" process, which is designed to extinguish "meaningless argument" and to understand reality properly, forms the rational basis to what Yamaguchi speaks of as the "implementation of theory in practice," that is, the "practice of emptiness." Conventionally, the practice of emptiness refers to the revelation of insight into emptiness. The experiential rather than the ontological aspect of emptiness is emphasized here because of its relevance to Tathāgatagarbha thought. In this connection, Herbert Gunther tells me that he would translate *tathāgata-garbha* as "thrust-toward-being." Even though not a literal translation, I appreciate Gunther's rendition of the term, an effort to give a positive tone to emptiness of which *tathāgata-garbha* is an embodiment.

Because of its character of "thrust-toward-being," modern Japanese commentators on both the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra* and *Awakening of Mahayana Faith* employ the term *tathāgata-garbha-pratītya-samutpāda* (如来藏縁起),[2] the co-arising of *tathāgata-garbha* (through a set of conditions), to illustrate this samsaric thrust. Curiously, the late Yoshito Hakeda observes in his translation of the *Awakening (Mahāyāna) Faith*, "this Mind as phenomenal (*saṃsāra*) is grounded on the *tathāgata-garbha*" (1967, p. 36), adding a note to the effect that "an almost identical expression can be found in the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādaśtra*, which is one of the

representative works on the Tathāgatagarbha thought: 'Oh, Lord, *saṃsāra* (birth and death) is grounded on the *tathāgata-garbha*'" (1967, p. 12). Unfortunately, his translation of "*saṃsāra* is grounded on the *tathāgata-garbha*" is not provided with an adequate explanation. It may be interpreted in two possible ways: 1) *tathāgata-garbha* lies beneath *saṃsāra*, which is simply a metaphorical expression requiring further explanation; and 2) *saṃsāra* is rooted in *tathāgata-garbha*, in which case *tathāgata-garbha* may be conceived as the primordial, a concept which also requires further explanation. In clarifying what the *Awakening of Mahayana Faith* and *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra* are saying, we must remind ourselves that discrimination, one of the distinctive features of *saṃsāra*, arises when ignorance is activated, when the mind distorts and misreads the world of co-arising and grasps what co-arises as an absolute. The world as so distorted and misread is what the *Awakening of Mahayana Faith* refers to as *saṃsāra*. This is why I maintain that to say that *saṃsāra*, the world of ignorance, is "grounded on *tathāgata-garbha*" (which is essentially the mind freed of obstacles to right understanding), requires further explanation. What the *Awakening of Mahayana Faith* actually means is that *saṃsāra* is "caused by ignorance which covers *tathāgata-garbha* and the realm in which ignorance ceases to exist is the realm of relevation of *tathāgata-garbha*." Simply put, delusion and non-delusion are both inherent within human consciousness. The realm of non-delusion is revealed by eliminating delusion. It simply involves what Nagao rightly refers to as "an arithmetical subtraction" (1978, p. 76).

The point I have noted for correction—my apologies to Hakeda, my learned colleague, if I have erred in my presentation of his translation, for it is no longer possible to provide him the opportunity to respond—is clarified by the metaphor of the water and waves mentioned earlier: the wind of ignorance (delusion) not the water (non-delusion) "causes" the waves. But here again caution is called for. Although we have said that the wind of ignorance "causes" the waves, we have also said that the waves represent the co-arising. Does this mean that ignorance "causes" co-arising? Surely not. What it means is that co-arising refers to the principle

of relativity. Delusion (the mark of ignorance) is not in itself marked by an understanding of the relative. On the contrary, it is marked by the lack of such understanding. But the important thing is that the rising of delusion is due to the principle of relativity. Delusion cannot exist without non-delusion. Hence, Hakeda's translation should read, I think, "Because of *tathāgata-garbha*, there is *saṃsāra*," or, better still, "*saṃsāra* is dependent on *tathāgata-garbha*" (依如来藏故有生滅心). This simply means that it is through *saṃsāra*, which produces human anxiety and the paradox of life, that the alll-embracing power of the Buddha, the embodiment of the True Dharma which is *tathāgata-garbha*, is realized. For without *saṃsāra*, there is nothing to enlighten; without a problem there is nothing to be resolved; and without sentient beings there is no need for any Buddha at all. Conversely, *saṃsāra* has a valid existential meaning because of *tathāgata-garbha*. The *Awakening of Mahayana Faith*, like all Tathāgata-garbha related texts, projects an existential message, albeit a Buddhist one that is a far cry from modern European existentialism. Tathāgatagarbha thought is not individuation, but articulates a collective salvation because of the presupposition that we are all on the same boat, adrift in the same sea of *saṃsāra*. Mādhyamika is the rational basis for the notion of collective salvation. At this point we may turn our attention to some of the major Mahāyāna texts in order to illustrate this kind of "thrust-toward-being."

Kumārajīva was a Mādhyamikan noted for having translated many Buddhist Sanskrit texts into Chinese, among them the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, the Lotus Sutra, and the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. In these texts the term "*tathatā*," the Mahāyāna concept of true reality, is frequently described as "*chu-fa shih-hsiang*" (諸法実相): all elements (phenomena) are, in themselves and as they are, the marks of true reality.[3] "*Chen-k'ung miao-yu*" (眞空妙有) is a convenient term to indicate what we mean by "true reality"--a realm of thought realized by denying supremacy (*paramārtha*) to phenomena, but affirming their conventonality (*lokasaṃvṛtti*), and thus gaining insight into the essential identity of the two. By "identity" we do not mean mathematical identity, but a correspon-

dence by means of which the ground of one is contingent on that of the other according to the principle of co-arising. But even this kind of definition throws light on only a small part of what the term represents. *Chen-k'ung miao-yu* points to a "twilight" language through which a new dimension of thought is revealed synergistically, a term which John Keenan aptly defines as "the joint and interdependent arising of two factors, whose result is greater than the sum total of these factors."[4] Thus the *Mādhyamakakārikā* says:

> What is dependent co-arising, we term emptiness. This serves as a designation, and is the same as the middle path (T. 30, number 1564, p. 33b).

The term "designation" here refers to the realm of *miao-yu* (妙有), a new dimension of thought realized through a series of negations (the "*śūnyatizing*" process), a realm which has extinguished "meaningless argument" and hence has revealed the middle path synergistically. The *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra* describes emptiness as that which brings about co-arising, but this does not mean that emptiness is the *causal nexus* of co-arising. Emptiness, as the *Awakening of Mahayana Faith* metaphorically describes, is the water and co-arising the waves. One cannot exist without the other. *Tathatā*, that is *chu-fa shih-hsiang*, points to this kind of organic whole within which the opposites are conceived as complementary entities forming a harmonious whole, a sort of "ecological" totality. The *tathāgata-garbha* refers to that within human consciousness which gains insight into this kind of world.

TATHĀGATAGARBHA THOUGHT AS A BASIS OF MAHĀYĀNA DEVOTIONALISM

In many Mahāyāna texts, for example, the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, *Laṅkavatāra*, as well in Buddhist Tantric texts, the terms *niṣyanda-buddha*, *dharmata-niṣyanda-buddha*, *dharmata-niṣyanda*, and *dharmadhātu-niṣyanda* are frequently observed. The term *niṣyanda*,

as we find it in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, for example, refers to the outflow of the Dharma (T. 31, number 1594, p. 151c). Tathāgatagarbha related texts use the same term, but with a somewhat different meaning. In the former, the Dharma is objectified and assumed to possess the power to penetrate all quarters of the universe. In the latter, the Dharma is internalized and assumed to be inherent in all human beings, whence it flows out to penetrate all quarters of the universe. When I speak of an "internalized Dharma," I refer to the fact that the Dharma has become an integral part of a personality. I speak of Tathāgatagarbha thought as a basis of Mahāyāna devotionalism because acceptance of the proposition that the Dharma is internalized requires faith. Dharma here refers to *tathatā*, what texts such as the *Prajñapāramitā*, the *Lotus Sutra*, and the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, refer to as *chu-fa shih-hsiang*.

Now what Zen refers to as *kenshō* (見性, "seeing the true self") refers to "seeing" the internalized Dharma. Zen is *jiriki* (自力), to use a Pure Land distinction, while Pure Land is *tariki* (他力), particularly in the tradition inspired by Shinran, because of its emphasis on the saving power of Buddha Amitābha. The important thing to note here, however, is that Amitābha is the transformed body of Dharmākara who personifies *tathāgata-garbha*. In other words, Zen attempts to see the *tathāgata-garbha* within the person, directly through one's own effort, while Pure Land, employing skill-in-means, instructs its followers to surrender themselves to the grace of Amitābha. For Amitābha is the Buddha who, as Bodhisattva Dharmākara, has made the vow of universal salvation and now reigns in Pure Land as the ideal image of humankind. Yet, the supposition underlying both Zen and Pure Land is the same: the acceptance of *tathāgata-garbha* as the internalized Dharma. The difference between the two is that whereas the former is based on the proposition that the True Dharma (正法 *shōbō*) is always present, the latter is based on the proposition that the Final Dharma (末法 *mappō*) is always present. Pure Land is *tariki* because it believes that in the *mappō* era, *jiriki* (meditational practice and adherence to orthodox discipline) is meaningless. It is based on the supposition that humankind is inherently "wicked," deprived of the potential to realize enlightenment.

Hence it proposes skill-in-means, that is, faith in Buddha Amitābha. Faith in Amitābha requires the complete renunciation of self. The Pure Land theory of salvation requires a shift from bodhisattva practice (*jiriki*) to faith in Amitābha (*tariki*), a shift from the notion that humankind is subject to karmic transmigration to the notion of dependence on Bodhisattva Dharmākara's vow of universal salvation, a shift from "seeing" *tathāgata-garbha* within oneself to "seeing" it in Bodhisattva Dharmākara.

Despite these variations, Tathāgatagarbha thought is always based on the acceptance of the power of the Buddha, the "inevitable consequence" of the synergistic nature that characterizes the True Dharma. It is the same power, the same Dharma, that is described in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, and the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, all Mādhyamika texts. Here faith plays an important role inasmuch as it is directed to this kind of power, apart from whether we are talking of Zen or Pure Land because that power is a synergistic one, and the Dharma, the *tathāgata-garbha*, is beyond discursive thought. Prince Shōtoku's *Shōmangyō-gisho* is clear on this point:

> The reason [why *tathāgata-garbha* is beyond discursive thought] is because it remains hidden by delusion. But it does not exist apart from delusion. One who does not doubt (i.e. one who has faith) that *tathāgata-garbha* is hidden (and therefore not readily recognized) does not doubt the [empirically] revelatory nature of *dharmakāya*, [that is, *tathāgata-garbha*] (Saeki 1939, p. 54a).

The "revelatory nature of *dharmakāya*" refers explicitly to Tathāgatagarbha thought as a system of experiential philosophy, because this system requires practice as the norm for verifying the existence of *tathāgata-garbha*. To paraphrase Shōtoku's expression, empirical practice reveals the nature of *tathāgata-garbha*. But practice presupposes faith in what is conceived as truth, since truth in this instance refers to what lies beyond discursive thought. Just as the nature of a knife is known in actual cutting, so is *tathāgata-garbha* known in coping with the actual

problems of *saṃsāra*, not in fleeing from them. This is the basic position of Zen. It is also the basic position taken by Bodhisattva Dharmākara. The difference is that Zen is *jiriki* and Pure Land is *tariki*.

THE UNION OF TATHĀGATA-GARBHA AND ĀLAYA: A BUDDHIST IDEA OF PEACE

Although Takasaki has clearly identified "Tathāgatabarbha-vāda" in the *Laṅkavatāra*, we do not know under what historical circumstances Tathāgatagarbha thought developed. Historically, Buddhism has always been concerned with *karma*. But Mādhyamika seemed to have dismissed the subject with its doctrine of emptiness. (I assume that it recognizes *karma* as an idea related to conventional reality.) Yogācāra picked it up again, examined it within the context of *ālaya* consciousness, and emphasized meditative discipline to transform that human consciousness. For its part, Tathāgatagarbha thought does not require "transformation," but merely assumes that the Tathāgata potential is inherent in human consciousness and requires bodhisattva practices to be revealed. Still, the basic principle underlying both Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha is the same Mādhyamikan doctrine of the middle path. Both the Yōgācara concept of *paratantra-svabhāva* (the other-dependent nature which characterizes *ālaya*) and the notion of the *tathāgata-garbha* are based on this middle path doctrine. *Paratantra-svabhāva* is the Yogācāra version of the principle of co-arising. The crucial issue we face here is rather whether sentient beings are inherently "wholesome" or "unwholesome," "pure" or "impure." The dilemma is a deep one and not easily resolved. I am more curious at this point to know the historical circumstances under which the theory of the identity of *tathāgata-garbha* and *ālaya* developed, but in the same breath hasten to add that I do not feel prepared to commit myself on the subject. At any rate I am confident that it will come up for investigation by Japanese Buddhologists in the years to come and be examined through a comparative study of the history of development of

ālaya and *tathāgata-garbha* related texts. But without waiting to see how all of these studies turn out, I am still curious to know why such texts as the *Laṅkavatārasūtra* and *Awakening of Mahayana Faith*, to which Zen makes extensive reference, conceive of the *ālaya* and *tathāgata-garbha* synonymously. If I be permitted the liberty of a bit of free speculation, I should like to air my own comment on the issue. I will limit myself to the *Laṅkavatārasūtra*, which is commonly taken to be the model according to which the *Awakening of Mahayana Faith* was composed.

First of all, I am interested in the legend of Rāvaṇa, described in the *Laṅkavatārasūtra* , which was translated twice into Chinese, by Bodhiruci (the 10-*chüan* version) and by Śikṣānanda (the 7-*chüan* version). Rāveṇa is described in the *Rāmayāna* as a violent diety whom Brahamā directs Rāma to exterminate. But in the *Laṅkavatāra*, Rāvaṇa is described as a benevolent king who invites the Buddha to Laṅka. Worthy of note is the fact that in the Brahmanic tradition both Rāma and the Buddha are conceived as incarnations of Viṣṇu. The composer (or editor) of the *Laṅkavatāra* may have incorporated mythological personalities into the text in order to set up a situation in which traditional enemies (Rāma/Buddha and Rāvaṇa) join hands in peace. The addition of the story of Ravāna (in later *Laṅkavatāra* editions) produced a new horizon of thought--the introduction of a highly sophisticated Mahāyāna idea of non-duality--through this incorporation of folk religion: the integration of the Yogācāra concept of *ālaya* (Rāvaṇa), conceived of as basically "unwholesome," and the Tathāgatagarbhavāda's concept of *tathāgata-garbha* (Rāma), conceived of as basically "wholesome." Regardless of approaches (*ālaya* or *tathāgata-garbha*), the *Laṅkavatāra* presupposes the same goal, namely, the realization of a non-discriminating mind, a mind whose "wholesome" wisdom carries it beyond the realms of discursive thought. This kind of wisdom is not an instrument for knowing phenomena objectively, but a realization of "true self." That is, the Sutra attempts to clarify the nature of human consciousness, the apprehension of *prajñā* which is the rational basis of the doctrine of non-duality. It therefore asserts that phenomena are simply mental images, that the world is the construction of the

mind, that what is constructed is like the flickering of a flame, the image in a mirror, the happenings in a dream—all subject to change and ultimately destined to perish. Knowing refers to the mental discrimination of phenomena. The *Laṅkavatāra* therefore claims that what is known as subject and object, the "I" and "you," "wholesome" and "unwholesome," "good" and "evil," and so on, cannot be relied upon. The wisdom referred to by the *Laṅkavatara* transcends the subject-object dichotomy. It is realized by penetrating the realm of the inner self, the realization of the nature of one's own mind, what Zen refers to as "*kenshō*."

Secondly, whereas the *ālaya* concept as we find it in the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* affirms the *gotra* theory, this theory is discussed in a slightly different light in the *Laṅkavatārasūtra*. Its description of *icchantika* is different. Though defined variously in different texts, *icchantika* generally refers to one who has severed "wholesome roots," to one deprived of enlightenment and thus eternally "damned." The *Laṅkavatāra*, however, identifies two types of *icchantika*: 1) the "compassionate" *icchantika*, and 2) the *icchantika* who has the potential to realize enlightenment but postpones this realization until all beings are saved, casting himself into the whirlpool of *saṃsāra*. With reference to the latter, the *Laṅkavatāra*, like the *Nirvāṇasūtra*, claims that he, too, would eventually be enlightened by the power of the enlightened one, who recognizes the practices of working for the enlightenment of others as enlightenment *per se*. The power of the Dharma--that enlightenment is the practice to enlighten others—is the power of the enlightened one. Faith is directed to this kind of Dharma as the unconditional acceptance of the proposition that enlightenment is the practice to enlighten others, even at the risk of casting oneself into the whirlpool of *saṃsāra*. The story of Rāvaṇa portrays this kind of Buddha in a dramatic manner, bringing to Laṅka a peace based upon non-discrimination, not a war based on discrimination. Regardless of what influence the Rāvaṇa legend might have had on the composition of the *Laṅkavatāra*, this sutra basically deals with the wisdom of non-discrimination.

In the third place, the *ālaya* and *tathāgata-garbha* apparently existed as two distinct concepts prior to the composition of the

Laṅkavatāra, where they were integrated. More than likely, Tathāgatagarbha thought was conceived by ancient Indian Mahāyānists as a means to emphasize the concept of "peace" derived from the doctrine of non-duality, and to articulate the concept of the "thrust-toward-being" revealed synergistically. For there is no doubt that Tathāgatagarbha thought developed during the period of reformulation of the doctrine of emptiness in India.

CONCLUSION

Let me now sum up my ideas on Tathāgatagarbha thought. Tathāgatagarbha is one of the most profound aspects of Mahāyāna thought: It is based on the Mādhyamika concept of non-duality; it articulates practice to realize this concept; it is a basis for Mahāyāna devotionalism—faith directed to an internalized Dharma. Of course, the dilemma of whether the human conciousness is "wholesome" or "unwholesome," "pure" or "impure," is not resolved in a convincing manner in any text or study related to Tathāgatagarbha thought. But, it should be noted that the Tathāgatagarbha approach presupposes that "thought" shapes "action," which is another way of saying that action (bodhisattva practice) reveals the inner quality of human consciousness. Zen refers to the realization of this kind of consciousness as *kenshō*; Pure Land sees it in the transformation of the personality of Dharmākara into Amitābha, who then becomes the object of faith. Tathāgatagarbha thought, at least in my opinion, forms the common basis of these two most popular living schools of Buddhism in East Asia.

Whether Tathāgatagarbha thought existed as a *vāda* in India or not is an interesting historical issue, but not a crucial doctrinal issue. By the same token, neither is it a crucial doctrinal issue whether or not Tathāgatagarbha thought represents a form of monism. Indeed, that term has so many shades of meaning that its original import has become lost in obscurity. What is crucial is that Tathāgatagarbha thought is a basis for Mahāyāna Buddhist devotionalism and is intended to bring about peace in this world and fellowship among all humankind by emphasizing a devotional

approach. I have attempted to describe Tathāgatagarbha thought within the framework of Mādhyamika philosophy because it is based on the Mahāyāna concept of non-duality; and because it emerged at the time of the reformulation of the Mahāyāna concept of emptiness, giving it a "positive ring." But as I have said, the history of the origin and development of Tathāgatagarbha thought in India is still far from clear. It was during the Sino-Japanese "domestication" of this tradition that its influence on the history of Buddhist thought became significant. I realize that I am breaking bew ground in the manner in which I have described Tathāgatagarbha. At the same time, I have no doubt whatsoever that it presents us with an important doctrinal basis for examining the popular living schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, such as Zen and Pure Land, issues which needs further investigation. It is my hope that this paper may encourage others to examine these popular schools from a new perspective.

NOTES

1. I believe the first one to point out that the terms *tathāgata-garbha* and Buddha nature are synonymous was Takasaki Jikidō. See Takasaki 1960, pp. 304-308.
2. This term is probably a concoction of modern Japanese Buddhologists. It does not appear in classical Buddhist texts. Prince Shōtoku's *Shōmangyō-gisho*, for example, does not use this term. But inasmuch as Chapter 13, "Pure Mind," which is the *tathāgata-garbha*, covered by *kleśa* though it is, is not *ātman, jīva* or *pudgala*," but, as Kumoi says, the principle of co-arising underlying the relationship between the "pure" and "defiled," its meaning appears to reflect Mahāyāna teachings authentically. See the *Shomangyōgisho* (a classical commentary on the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra* by Prince Shōtoku) (Saeki 1939, pp. 66-67). Nor does *The Awakening of Mahayana Faith* use the term. But since, as was in the case of the *Shōmangyō-gisho*, human consciousness is conceived as inherently "pure," even though covered by *kleśa*, the same principle of co-arising underlies the relationship between the "pure" and "impure." See *The Awakening of Mahayana Faith*, T. 32. 1666, p. 577b-c.

3. See Chapter 2 of the *Lotus Sutra*, for example. The term is also used in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (Chapter 17) and *Ta-chih-tu lun*, as well as in the *Mādhyamakakārikā* (Chapter 3), though here it is rendered as *dharmatā*, which I think is essentially the same as *chu-fa shih-hsiang*.
4. John Keenan: "Twilight Language and the Meaning of *Ekayāna* in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*." Unpublished manuscript, p. 17.

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