

Inherent Enlightenment (*hongaku shisō*) and Saichō's Acceptance of the Bodhisattva Precepts

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Saichō's rejection of the traditional precepts (*gusokukai* 具足戒) and establishment of the bodhisattva precepts of the *Fan wang ching* (*Bonmōkyō* 梵網經; T. 24, 997-1010) brought about momentous consequences for the role of precepts in Japanese Buddhism.

From the perspective of Japanese Tendai thought, on the other hand, Saichō's acceptance of the *Fan wang* precepts have further significant implications. This acceptance was an important factor whereby the concept of inherent enlightenment (*hongaku shisō* 本覺思想) became the central presuppositional basis of Japanese Tendai thought. Of course there were many reasons for this ascendancy of *hongaku shisō* in Japanese Tendai, but it is my contention that Saichō's acceptance of the *Fan wang* precepts was one of the more significant factors.

The importance of *hongaku shisō* in Japanese Tendai has been pointed out since the days of medieval Tendai scholars. Of the two major branches of Tendai Buddhism, the Eshin branch 恵心流 emphasized the idea of inherent or original enlightenment (*hongaku* 本覺), and the Danna branch 檀那流 emphasized the process of actualizing enlightenment (*shikaku* 始覺)² as central to their doctrinal standpoint. As time passed, the Eshin branch flourished, and with it its endorsement of the centrality of inherent enlightenment. Medieval Tendai tradition also taught that Saichō transmitted the teachings of inherent enlightenment from his Chinese master Tao-sui 道邃 (fl. 8th-9th century), and this became another factor in emphasizing the im-

¹ Translated by the editor from the Japanese. See Shirato 1979, pp. 17-32.

² The terms "inherent" or "original enlightenment" and the "actualization of enlightenment" are from the *Awakening of Faith* (T. 32, 575-83). Hakeka translates the central passage as follows: "Grounded on the original enlightenment is nonenlightenment. And because of nonenlightenment, the process of actualization of enlightenment can be spoken of" (1967, p. 38).

portance of the *hongaku* teaching. In modern times Shimaji Taitō (1977) has pointed out the importance and centrality of *hongaku shisō* in Japanese Tendai thought.

The concept of *hongaku shisō* refers to the nature of enlightenment inherent in all sentient beings. This concept was perhaps present from the beginning of Buddhism, but it was brought forth explicitly in the Mahāyāna sūtras. The texts which express this idea most clearly are, for example, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* which tells of the “Dharma-store of awakening” 覺法藏, Buddha-nature 仏性, the *tathāgata-garbha* 如来藏, and the (true) self 我 (T. 12, 407b), the *Ratnagotravibhāga* which speaks of the mind which is pure in itself 自性清淨心 (*prakṛtipariśuddhi*; T. 31, 825a; Takasaki 1966, p. 174), and the *Awakening of Faith* with its discussion of inherent and actualized enlightenment (T. 32, 576b). According to the *Awakening of Faith*, inherent enlightenment is characterized as “the essence of mind which is separate from (individual) thoughts 心體離念” and is identified with the “Tathāgata equal to the Dharma Body 如来平等法身.” Enlightenment which is to be actualized depends on this inherent enlightenment, and enlightenment needs to be actualized only because there is a state of non-enlightenment, or non-awakening 不覺 (T. 32, 576b15-16). The *Awakening of Faith* also refers to this inherent enlightenment as “true suchness” (真如 *tathatā*), the mind which is pure in itself, and the *tathāgata-garbha* (T. 32, 579a).

In China the first to take up the subject of inherent enlightenment as presented in the *Awakening of Faith* were Hua-yen scholars such as Fa-tsang 法藏 (643-712) and Ch’eng-kuan 澄觀 (738-838), who expanded on this teaching and thus greatly influenced subsequent Buddhist thought.

In Japan Kūkai, Saichō’s contemporary, had a high regard for the *Shih mo ho yen lun* 釈摩訶衍論 (T. 32, 591-668), an influential commentary on the *Awakening of Faith* attributed to Nāgārjuna, and he expanded on the interpretation of inherent enlightenment. Saichō recognized the *Shih mo ho yen lun* as a Chinese pseudopigrapha and thus did not refer to it, choosing to approach the concept of inherent enlightenment from a different angle.

Some scholars have pointed out (Shioiri 1960) that the seeds of *hongaku shisō* in Japanese Tendai are already present in the thought of Saichō, such as in his interpretation of the Buddha-body in his commentary to the *Sūtra of Innumerable Meanings* 註無量義經 (T. 56, 203-226; DDZ 2, 553-675). In this article I will discuss the proposition that Saichō’s rejection of the traditional precepts in favor of the *Fan wang precepts* was an important factor in the assimilation of *hongaku shisō* into Japanese Tendai.

The Essence of the Fan Wang Precepts

The *Fan wang precepts* are described in the second half of the tenth *chuan* of the *Fan wang ching*. The essence of these precepts is explained as follows:

The Buddha said, “. . . I preach the single precepts 一戒, the precepts which are a bright and diamond-like treasure 光明金剛宝戒, which I constantly recited during my aspiration for enlightenment in my Mind which is inherently that of the Buddha Vairocana. These (precepts) are the fundamental source 本源 of all Buddhas, the fundamental source of all bodhisattvas, the seeds of the Buddha-nature 仏性種子. All sentient beings have the Buddha nature. All things with consciousness, form, and mental activity, all sentient (beings) with mental activity, are all included within (the purview of) these Buddha-nature precepts 仏性戒. . . The fundamental source of precepts for all sentient beings is pure in itself 自性清淨 (T. 24, 1003c21–28).

In other words, the *Fan wang* precepts are identified with the Buddha-nature, and are the proper precepts to be followed by those whose mind is inherently pure. Since all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature and are one with the eternally-abiding Dharmabody of the Buddha, their consciousness and mental activity is naturally inclined toward these “Buddha-nature” precepts. This is a significant interpretation worthy of careful consideration.

The Fan wang ching and the Jen wang ching

The *Fan wang ching* is believed to be a text composed in China around the middle of the fifth century A.D. The *Jen wang ching*, or *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra of the Benevolent Kings* 仁王般若經 (T. 8, 825–33 and 834–44), also appears to be of Chinese origin.³ There are many similarities between these two texts, and it is likely that they were composed on the same philosophical basis. Their similarities include the following points:

(1) The *Fan wang ching* has as its central Buddha “Vairocana of the Lotus Pedestal Matrix Realm” (*padma-garbha-loka-dhātu*). Both versions of the *Jen wang ching* present the same cosmological structure with Vairocana in a central position.

(2) The *Fan wang ching* advocates the emptiness teaching in its first half, and in the second half it approaches the position of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* by emphasizing the Buddha-nature precepts. The *Jen wang ching* also advocates emptiness while emphasizing the ideas of “eternity, bliss, selfhood, and purity” 常樂我淨 as also found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. Both also appear to be heavily influenced by the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.

(3) The precepts of the *Fan wang ching* consist of ten major prohibitions and forty-eight minor restrictions, while the *Jen wan ching* contains

³ The two extant versions of this text are ostensibly translations attributed respectively to Kumārajīva and Amogavajra, and they will be referred to in this way with the understanding that they are in fact later Chinese compositions.

reference to the six major precepts and twenty-eight offenses pertaining to the laymen (*upāsaka*). Both texts emphasize the lay life, though the precepts presented in the *Fan wang ching* are applicable by both monks and lay people.

(4) The *Fan wang ching* divides the bodhisattva stages into four levels of patience and forty states of mind 四忍四十心, while the *Jen wang ching* divides the same into five levels of patience and forty-one states of mind. The general classification of the bodhisattva stages are very similar in the two texts.

(5) An unusual technical term not found in many sources, “the bliss of emptiness” 樂虛, is employed by both of these texts.

(6) During the explanation of the first minor precept in the *Fan wang ching* it is said that if a high government official accepts the bodhisattva precepts upon assuming his position, the spirits and gods will assemble to protect him. The *Jen wang ching* also explains that the spirits and gods are in disarray when the country is in disarray, but that these spirits and gods come and protect the country when all the monks practice the perfection of wisdom. Both texts support the idea that the gods protect the country when its leaders follow the right path, such as when the rulers accept the bodhisattva precepts or the monks practice the perfection of wisdom.

There are additional similarities, but the above are sufficient to show that these two texts were compiled on a common philosophical basis. It is likely that these were both composed in China in the fifth century, the *Fan wang ching* to establish the bodhisattva precepts, and the *Jen wang ching* to promote the idea that the acceptance of Buddhism would lead to a spiritually sound and protected country.

There are also other related Buddhist texts such as the *Ying lo ching* 嬰珞經 (T. 24, 1010–1023) and *Hsin ti kuan ching* 心地觀經 (T. 3, 290–331), which need to be examined with regard to their influence on Japanese Buddhist thought. The *Awakening of Faith* is also one of these related texts.

Inherent Enlightenment in the Jen Wang Ching and Awakening of Faith

A section in the *Jen wang ching* (translation attributed to Amogavajra) on inherent enlightenment says,

I (the Buddha) constantly say to all sentient beings, “Only sever the ignorance of this triple world; this is called becoming a Buddha. That which is pure in itself is called the nature of inherent enlightenment. This indeed is the universal wisdom of all Buddhas. This is the basis 本 for attainment (of Buddhahood) by sentient beings, and the basis for

practice by all Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Therefore the bodhisattvas practice on this basis (T. 8, 836b29–837a4).

In other words, that which remains after one completely exhausts one's worldly ignorance is "pure in itself." This is none other than the nature of inherent enlightenment, the wisdom of the Buddha, and it is on this basis that sentient beings can "attain" enlightenment. One can realize enlightenment because this pure nature of enlightenment is originally inherent in all sentient beings.

It is said that the nature of enlightenment is realized through the severing of ignorance 無明. This is the same idea expressed in the *Awakening of Faith* by the terms "inherent enlightenment" and "actualized enlightenment." It is also a further development of the inherent enlightenment idea in the sense that it identifies the nature of inherent enlightenment with Buddha-wisdom 仏智 and discusses the fundamental nature of sentient beings. The *Awakening of Faith* identifies inherent enlightenment with the Dharmabody of the Buddha, but does not go so far as to identify it with Buddha-wisdom.

The translation of the *Jen wang ching* attributed to Kumārajīva uses the term "the nature of the realization concerning universal wisdom" 覺薩婆若性, utilizing the transliteration of *sarvajñā* instead of the term "inherent enlightenment." The phrase "this is the basis for attainment (of Buddhahood) by sentient beings" in Amogavajra's translation is rendered by Kumārajīva as "(this is) the basic karma 本業 of sentient beings . . ." The character 覺 could mean either specifically Buddha-wisdom or a more general realization of knowledge or spiritual wisdom. Amogavajra apparently understood it to mean the latter, and rephrased this passage to read "inherent enlightenment." However, even if the "*sarvajñā* nature" is understood to mean Buddha-wisdom, if this is the "basic karma" of sentient beings then the original and inherent nature of sentient beings is that of realization or enlightenment. Of course all of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas also enjoy this inherent enlightenment and proceed with their practices on this basis,⁴ in order to reveal and make manifest their wisdom which is pure in itself.

The phrase "basic karma of sentient beings" in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Jen wang ching* is best understood as referring to the nature of enlightenment, the universal wisdom of a Buddha which is pure in itself. However, Amogavajra's translation of this section is clearer and refers explicitly to human nature as inherently enlightened. This standpoint is the same as that of the *Fan wang ching*, which identifies the source of the precepts in the Buddha-nature of human beings. The precepts of the *Fan wang ching* are said to be pure in themselves, and in the words of the *Jen wang ching* they could be described as precepts based on human nature as inherently enlightened.

⁴ In his commentary to the *Jen wang ching* (DDZ 4, p. 86) Saichō notes that this phrase refers to *sarvajñā*, but does not comment on the meaning of realization/enlightenment.

Saichō's Understanding of the Fan Wang Ching Precepts

Let us now explore Saichō's understanding of the essence of the *Fan wang* precepts by examining four texts: the biographical *Denjutsu isshinkaimon* 伝述一心戒文 (T. 74, 634-660; DDZ 1, pp. 523-649) by Saichō's disciple Kōjō 光定 (779-858); the *Jubosatsukaigi* 授菩薩戒儀 (DDZ 1:303-33), an ordination manual for the bodhisattva precepts; Saichō's commentary to the *Sūtra of Innumerable Meanings* (DDZ 3:553-675), and Saichō's major work on the precepts, the *Kenkairon* 顕戒論 (DDZ 1:25-198)

1. THE *DENJUTSU ISSHINKAIMON*.

According to Kōjō, on the occasion of his submitting the request for Imperial approval of the establishment of the Ekayāna precepts platform in the third month of Kōnin 13 (822), the letter which he read to the court was one originally written by Saichō himself before his recent death. Kōjō says,

This is a letter written in his own hand by our former master (Saichō). This letter says, "The precepts which are pure in themselves and immobile (or unchangeable) like space; the meditation 定 (*samādhi*) which is pure in itself and immobile like space; the wisdom 慧 which is pure in itself and immobile like space; I wish to transmit these precepts" (DDZ 1:580).

Saichō wished to transmit precepts which would be applicable to the three fundamental categories 三学 of Buddhist life, that of precepts, meditation, and wisdom. These are described (Mahāyanistically) as "pure in themselves and immobile." This description is based on the commentary to the *Fan wang ching* attributed to Tao-hsüan 道璿 (702-706), an early transmitter of the precepts to Japan from China who had ordained Saichō's teacher Gyōhyō 行表 (d. 797). The *Isshinkaimon* explains further:

Master Tao-hsüan comments on the *Fan wang ching* text, "I (the Buddha) have already for a hundred *kalpas* cultivated this state of mind as taught in the *Fan wang ching*, so I am called by the title 'Vairocana'." The T'ien-t'ai master⁵ explained that "cultivation" refers to the cultivation of (the realization that) all dharmas neither arise nor perish, are neither eternal nor completely annihilated, neither one nor differentiated, neither come nor go, constantly abide in a single manner like space, transcend verbalization, and are pure in themselves. This is called cultivating (enlightenment). In this way the practitioner, in his mind

⁵ It is not clear as to who is referred to in this passage as "the T'ien-t'ai master." One immediately thinks of Chih-i, but this seems doubtful because although Tao-hsüan relies on "the T'ien-t'ai master" for his interpretation of "cultivation," there is no record of Chih-i ever using the technical term "pure in itself." Also, the commentary to the *Fan wang ching* attributed to Chih-i (T. 40, 563-580) contains no exposition at all on this passage, let alone an explanation of the term "cultivation."

which is pure in itself, does not break any of the precepts. This is indeed (the keeping of) precepts which is immobile like space. Also, a mind which is pure in itself, steady and immobile like Mt. Sumeru is indeed the (state of) meditation (*samādhi*) which is immobile like space. Also, a mind which is pure in itself and has penetrating insight into all dharmas, and is unobstructed and free, is indeed the wisdom which is immobile like space, and is called the Buddha Vairocana (DDZ 1:618).

Tao-hsüan's commentary to the *Fan wang ching* is not extant, and this passage is known only from it being quoted in the *Isshinkaimon*. In this passage Tao-hsüan presents the "mind which is pure in itself" as the basis for the precepts, meditation, and wisdom. Another passage in the *Isshinkaimon* refers to the commentary on the *Fan wang ching* by Fa-chin 法進 (Jpn. Hōshin, 678–778), a disciple of Chien-chen 鑑真 (688–763), which repeats Tao-hsüan's interpretation and adds that Chih-i's comments on "Paying Homage to the Self-natured Triple Categories 普礼自性三学" in the *Kuo-ch'ing pai-lu* 国清百录 (T. 46, 793–824) refer to the same idea. This commentary by Hōshin is not extant either, and in fact the section on Chih-i's instructions for paying homage to the Buddhas in the *Kue-ch'ing pai-lu* does not make reference to the "self-natured three categories." Instead this section reads,

I pay homage to all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future in the ten directions, to the Buddha Vairocana who is the store of the precepts which are immobile like space.

I pay homage to all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future in the ten directions, to the Buddha Vairocana who is the store of meditation (*samādhi*) which is immobile like space.

I pay homage to all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future in the ten directions, to the Buddha Vairocana who is the store of wisdom which is immobile like space (T. 46, 795b5–7).

This passage refers to the three categories as "immobile like space" but makes no reference to them being "pure in themselves." This illustrates a difference in interpretation between Kōjō and Chih-i, of which Kōjō apparently was not aware in his presentation of the three categories of precepts, meditation, and wisdom as "pure in themselves." It is safe to assume that this understanding by Kōjō is an extension of Saichō's understanding. Saichō's understanding of the precepts includes an aspect not found in the thought of Chih-i, namely the idea of inherent enlightenment which is pure in itself. Saichō may have acquired this interpretation from Tao-hsüan's commentary to the *Fan wang ching* and developed it further.

2. THE JUBOSATSUKAIGI.

The first part of this text contains the following passage:

These are the single precepts of the Tathāgata, the diamond treasure precepts. They are the precepts which are (based on) the eternally abiding Buddha-nature, the foundational source of all sentient beings, pure in itself and immobile like space. Therefore by means of these precepts one manifests and attains the original, inherent, eternally abiding Dharmabody with its thirty-two special marks (DDZ 1:304).

This explanation goes another step beyond the interpretation found in the *Fan wang ching*. It makes a complete identification of the “eternally abiding” Buddha-nature with the so-called single precepts, the “diamond treasure precepts.” It claims that this is of the same essence and the foundational source of sentient beings, and that it is through these precepts that sentient beings can realize the inherent, eternally abiding Dharmabody. In other words, it is through these precepts, whose essence is equivalent to the inherent nature of sentient beings, that the unmanifested yet innate Dharmabody can be revealed and made manifest. These are also called “the precepts which are pure in themselves and immobile like space,” a phrase probably borrowed from Tao-hsüan’s commentary.

3. THE COMMENTARY TO THE SŪTRA OF INNUMERABLE MEANINGS.

In this commentary Saichō writes,

As one sentient being is inherently endowed with the nature of enlightenment 三仏陀性 (*saṃbuddha*), so all sentient beings are thus (endowed). Those who already manifest (this inherent enlightenment) are Buddhas, those in whom it is not yet manifest are (ordinary) sentient beings, and those in whom it is partially manifest are bodhisattvas. The term “precepts” is also called “the body of precepts” 戒身, which refers to the precepts which are immobile like space within the body of the Buddha. It is also called “the single precepts, the diamond treasure precepts,” and also (the three categories of) precepts against indulging in evil activity (*shō ritsugi kai* 摂律儀戒), precepts encouraging good activity (*shō zenbō kai* 摂善法戒), and precepts encouraging activity which will benefit others (*shō shujō kai* 摂衆生戒). The term “meditation” is also called “the body of meditation,” which refers to the (state of) meditation (*samādhi*), immobile like space, within the Buddhbody. This is also called “the meditative state in which all passions are destroyed” 首楞嚴定 (*śūraṅgama samādhi*), “the diamond-like meditative state” 金剛三昧 (*vajra samādhi*), and “the meditative state in which one has complete command of innumerable teachings” 無量義處定 (*ananta nirdeśa-pratiṣṭhānaṃ nāma samādih*). The term “wisdom” is also called “the body of wisdom,” and refers to the wisdom, immobile like space, within the Buddhbody (DDZ 2:583).

First of all, it is significant that Saichō’s concept of inherent enlightenment

here is that all sentient beings are innately endowed with the nature of enlightenment (*sambuddha*). The definition of the precepts as the "precepts immobile like space within the Buddhbody" implies that the keeping of the precepts is in harmony with the essential nature of sentient beings, and indicates the universality of these precepts. Sentient beings have the nature of enlightenment inherently and originally innate within them, and thus following the precepts should be a natural course. The phrase "immobile like space" is an analogy for the universal and absolute nature of the precepts.

4. THE *KENKAIRON*.

Saichō expresses his conception of the precepts in verses found at the beginning of the *Kenkairon*. It is not certain whether these verses were originally a part of the text or were added later, but in either case they are relevant to our discussion. At first glance they appear to be of an esoteric nature, but a closer inspection shows that they are not irrelevant to Saichō's conception of the precepts.

I bow down to the triple-bodied Buddhas of eternally abiding inner enlightenment,
 Who constantly send forth light in the ten directions.
 And to the honorable Mahāvairocana, the manifestation of great compassion,
 Whose Enjoyment Body 実報 expediently appears in this world. . .
 The two types of transmigration by all sentient beings
 Hinders the cessation of evil and the protection of the seed of Buddhahood.
 The awakening of the one mind to the fundamental nature of dharmas
 Means experiencing the joy of the dharma and cavorting in the quiescent light (of the truth) (DDZ 1:25).

The phrase "eternally abiding inner enlightenment" of the Buddhas is consistent with the theme that all sentient beings are endowed with the nature of enlightenment as expressed in Saichō's commentary to the *Sūtra of Innumerable Meanings*, and the idea that "by means of these precepts one manifests and attains the original, inherent, eternally abiding Dharmabody" as expressed in the *Jubosatsukaigi*. Also, the Mahāvairocana of esoteric Buddhism, "the manifestation of great compassion," is one and the same as the Buddha Vairocana the *Fan wang ching*. Kōjō's *Isshinkaimon* has this to say about Vairocana:

I pay homage to the store of the single-minded precepts of all Buddhas who permeate Vairocana's Dharma-realm of Eternal Light . . . the single-minded precepts of Vairocana. . . Mahāvairocana, the Dharmabody for the Sake of Self-Enjoyment 自受用法身, and the Buddha Vairocana, the Dharmabody for the Sake of the Enjoyment of Others 他

受用法身, are ultimately one and the same (DDZ 1:634).

This identifies the precepts as the “single-minded precepts” of the Buddha Vairocana. Vairocana is none other than Mahāvairocana, the Dharmabody with the twofold aspects of enjoying the bliss of enlightenment itself and providing this enjoyment for others, hence the slight difference in name. In other words, the *Fan wang* precepts, which were identified at the beginning of this article as the “single-minded precepts” of the Buddha Vairocana, are the precepts of the Dharmabody Mahāvairocana. In the *Isshinkaimon* these precepts are given an esoteric interpretation, saying that the mind which is pure in itself is identical with the symbolic meaning of the Sanskrit letter “A” 阿字門, and originally neither arises nor perishes 本不生際 (DDZ 1:634). Saichō says the same thing in his *Ehyō Tendai gishū* 依憑天台義集 (DDZ 3:343-65):

If one abandons all vain disputation one will arrive at (the position that dharmas) originally neither arise nor perish. This “original non-arising” is the mind which is pure in itself, the (symbolic) meaning of the letter “A” (DDZ 3:359).

The *Isshinkaimon* has received its interpretation from Saichō’s esoteric thought. In this way we can perceive that the *Isshinkaimon* faithfully continues Saichō’s conception of the precepts, and that the opening verses of the *Kenkairon*, though couched in esoteric terminology, are consistent with Saichō’s basic philosophy. It can even be said that the esoteric flavor of this introduction to a discussion of the precepts underscores Saichō’s understanding of the *Fan wang* precepts as based on the inherent enlightenment of all beings.

We have seen, through examining passages from Kōjō’s *Isshinkaimon* and Saichō’s comments in the *Jubosatsukaigi*, *Commentary to the Sūtra of Innumerable Meanings*, and *Kenkairon*, that Saichō considered the essence of the *Fan wang* precepts to be precepts based on the idea that human nature is “pure in itself,” that the essence of these precepts are innately present in sentient beings, and that if sentient beings follow the precepts which are rooted in their basic foundational nature, then they can realize and make manifest their already enlightened nature which is within them but as yet unmanifested. This is the position of “inherent enlightenment.” It is a concept which is closer to the “inherent enlightenment” concept than to the concept of “actualized enlightenment” in the *Awakening of Faith*. This was the accepted position long before the meaning of “inherent enlightenment” was elaborated on by medieval Tendai scholars.

Saichō and Previous Interpretations of the Fan Wang Precepts

Finally let us examine some earlier interpretations of the *Fan wang ching* to

better understand Saichō's concept and interpretation of this sūtra. Saichō quoted from many commentaries to the *Fan wang ching* in his works, and I would like to examine the more significant of such quotes which concern the essence of the *Fan wang* precepts.

1. The *P'u sa chieh ching su shan pu* 菩薩戒經疏刪補 (ZZK 59:437-484) Chih-i's commentary on the *Fan wang ching* edited by Ming-k'uang 明曠 (ca. -777-).

This sub-commentary by Ming-k'uang expands on Chih-i's commentary to the *Fan wang ching*, and its interpretation of the precepts was strongly influenced by the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. For example, the commentary says:

(The keeping of) the precepts as cause for entering (the stages of advancing to Buddhahood) from the first aspiration 發趣 to enlightenment equivalent to the Buddha 等覺 is called "cause," "enlightenment," and "result." This (keeping of the precepts) is both cause and result because the Buddha-nature is eternally abiding, and the Buddha's vow and activity (to save all sentient beings) never perishes. This is called "the Buddha-nature as both cause and result, the ever-abiding store (of enlightenment)" (ZZK 59:481b5-7).

This passage interprets the precepts as taught in the *Fan wang ching*, and the causal implications of keeping these precepts, in light of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra's* teaching of the eternally abiding (i.e., inherent in all beings) Buddha-nature. Another passage reads:

The Buddha-nature which eternally abides is forever the direct cause (for attaining enlightenment). The essence of the Dharma is all-pervasive, therefore one should know that this nature is non-dual (i.e., the same) whether one is completing one's practice or beginning one's practice (ZZK 59:482a5-7).

Thus the *Fan wang* precepts are understood from the perspective of the "eternally abiding Buddha nature" and the non-duality of practice and attainment of enlightenment 修証不二. In other words, the *Fan wang* precepts are to be practiced and their purpose realized on the basis that the Buddha-nature is ever present and innate in all sentient beings. This nature is what assures fulfillment of the purpose of keeping the precepts, namely the attainment of enlightenment or Buddhahood. This is practically the same as interpreting the precepts in terms of inherent enlightenment (*hongaku*), without utilizing the term "pure-in-itself."

The *Shou p'u sa chieh i* 授菩薩戒儀 (ZZK 105:10-15) of Chan-jan 湛然 (711-782) arranges the precepts ordination in twelve steps, a practice also followed by Saichō. Chan-jan's approach to the precepts is informed by the *Awakening of Faith*.

It can be pointed out here that the interpretations of the precepts by

Chan-jan and Ming-k'uang are one step closer to that of Saichō than the original commentary on the *Fan wang ching* by Chih-i. According to the *Isshinkaimon*, Saichō used Ming-k'uang's edited version as his reference source.

2. The *Shou p'u sa chieh i* 受菩薩戒儀 (ZZK 105:1-10) attributed to Hui-ssu 慧思 (515-577).

The lineage for the transmission of the bodhisattva precepts as given in Saichō's *Naishō buppō sōjō kechimyakufu* 内証仏法相承血脉譜 (DDZ 1:199-248) reports concerning Hui-ssu that "he produced a manual for bodhisattva precepts ordination in one fascicle which was widely distributed in the world, and which relied on the *Jen wang (ching)*" (DDZ 1:232). The fact that Hui-ssu's ordination manual was so widely distributed reflects the great respect he commanded among the Japanese since the Nara period (710-794). Chien-chen's disciples had propagated the idea that Shōtoku Taishi was a reincarnation of Hui-ssu, and it appears that Hui-ssu's works were well known. According to the *Isshinkaimon*,

Master Buan 豐安 of the Ritsu (Precepts) School drew an image of Hui-ssu and placed it in a place of honor in the hall of Tōshōdai-ji. Respect was paid before this image during the morning and evening services. Believing in his (Hui-ssu's) virtue, Mater (Buan) let others know of this grace, and there was an outpouring of Hui-ssu himself, of the depths of his mind in accordance with conditions 隨緣心深義, of his pure-in-itself mind. Hui-ssu was born into the imperial family of this country of Japan as Shōtoku Taishi, as Hui-ssu's traces 垂迹 were made manifest in the womb of the Empress. Thus he wrote the *Commentary to the Lotus Sūtra* and lectured on the *Lotus Sūtra* at the Okamoto Palace, after which the Buddha-dharma prospered for a long time . . . (DDZ 1:548).

This passage is quite significant. It claims that Buan paid homage to an image of Hui-ssu in Tōshōdai-ji, that Hui-ssu was a previous incarnation of Shōtoku Taishi, and that the Buddha-dharma prospered in Japan for a long time after his "traces" were made manifest with the birth of Shōtoku Taishi. The expression that this was an outpouring "of the depths of his mind in accordance with conditions," and "of his pure in itself mind" are significant phrases in Saichō's philosophy, as we have seen above. It is difficult for us to accept the idea that Shōtoku Taishi's birth was a deliberate "outpouring" of Hui-ssu's originally pure mind, but it is undeniable that this concept influenced Saichō's thought.

The primary source of these ideas must be the *T'a ch'eng chih kuan fa men* 大乘止觀法門 (T. 46, 641-663) attributed to Hui-ssu. A reference to this text in early manuscripts (*Dainihon komonjo*, p. 536) show that it was

known in Japan at least by Tempyō 15 (744). According to this text,

This mind is the mind which is pure in itself. It is also called "thusness" (*tathatā*), the "Buddha-nature," "Dharmabody," and the "*tathāgata-garbha*." It is real and inherently enlightened, therefore it is called "mind," and therefore it is called the mind which is pure in itself (T. 46, 642a–b).

Both phrases "the mind which is pure in itself" and "inherent enlightenment" (*hongaku*) appear in this passage. Saichō undoubtedly was influenced by passages such as this.

Also, Hui-ssu's ordination manual says,

All who have a mind are endowed with the Buddha precepts 仏戒. Each is perfectly complete and without defect. Question: if one is already (endowed with the precepts) in this way, then why proceed with ordination? Answer: One gradually loses sight of them, and by these matters they become progressively clarified. Thus know that all of mind is of the precepts, and all the precepts are of the mind (ZZK 105:1a16–18).

It is interesting that Hui-ssu had developed this interpretation of the precepts, if indeed this text is actually by Hui-ssu. In any case, Saichō's concept of the precepts is closer to this interpretation than to that of Ming-k'uang or Chan-jan. It is significant that, as the *Isshinkaimon* points out, this text was widely known in Japan at that time.

3. Tao-hsüan's commentary to the *Fan wang ching*.

This commentary is said to have been a very good one, but it is not extant. We can make reference only to the passages in the *Isshinkaimon* already quoted above. Here the *Fan wang* precepts are called "pure in themselves" and "immobile like space." This is based on Chih-i's phrase concerning "the store of the precepts which are immobile like space," to which the term "pure in itself" has been added. The *Isshinkaimon* says that this phrase is added in Fa-chin's commentary, and we may speculate that this was a generally accepted interpretation of the *Fan wang* precepts at that time. It is certain, in any case, that this interpretation was accepted and transmitted by Saichō.

Tao-hsüan, in addition to being a precepts master, was also known as an authority on meditation (Zen) and the Hua-yen tradition, so it is natural to assume that his philosophy was positively inclined toward the inherent enlightenment concept.

4. The "Eastern T'ang" commentary on the precepts.

The introduction to the *Ehyō Tendai gishū* mentions that "after Saichō went to southern T'ang to acquire this tradition, he listened to the commentary on the precepts through instructions in eastern T'ang (or 'learned from the com-

mentary on the precepts from eastern T'ang')” (DDZ 3:344). It is difficult to determine exactly what is meant by “southern T'ang” and “eastern T'ang,” and if this could be clarified it would go far in explaining the basis for Saichō's understanding of the precepts. If, for example, we understand “eastern T'ang” as referring to the eastern capital of Lo-yang, this passage could refer to the commentary on the *Fan wang ching* by Tao-hsüan, who was a monk from the Ta-kuang-fu ssu in Lo-yang.⁶ It is not farfetched to take “southern T'ang” as referring to Mt. T'ien-t'ai. If this speculation is true, then it serves to further emphasize the importance of Tao-hsüan's commentary for Saichō's understanding of the precepts.

Conclusions

As we have seen above, Saichō's acceptance of the *Fan wang* bodhisattva precepts served as a conduit for the assimilation of *hongaku* thought into Japanese Tendai. The *Fan wang* precepts themselves are basically conducive to inherent enlightenment thought. The basis for this philosophical development had already been laid in pre-Nara times, as seen in the ideas presented in the commentary to the *Fan wang ching* by Tao-hsüan and the *T'a ch'eng chih kuan fa men* attributed to Hui-ssu. Tao-hsüan's commentary is sure to have been available to Saichō through their intermediary Gyōhyō, and Saichō's training prepared him for his acceptance of the *Fan wang* precepts on the basis of inherent enlightenment thought. Of course Saichō's acceptance of the *Fan wang* precepts are also predicated by other factors such as the teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*'s chapter on “Practice for Peaceful Bliss” 安樂行品. However, “inherent enlightenment” is a central idea in Japanese Tendai and it is enlightening to consider Saichō's acceptance of the *Fan wang* bodhisattva precepts from this perspective.

ABBREVIATIONS

DDZ: EIZAN GAKUIN 叡山学院, ed.

1975 *Dengyō Daishi zenshū* 伝教大師全集 [Collected works of Saichō], 5 vols. Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai.

T: TAKAKUSU Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and WATANABE Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭, eds.

1922-33 *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [Newly revised Tripitaka of the Taishō era]. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō.

⁶ It is also possible to interpret “eastern T'ang” as referring to Chien-chen and his disciples, in which case this phrase would refer to the commentary to the *Fan wang ching* by Fa-chin.

ZZK: ZŌKYŌ SHŌIN 蔵経書院, ed.

1905–1913 *Dainihon zokuzōkyō* 大日本統蔵経 [The Japanese Buddhist canon, continued]. 150 volumes, Tokyo: Zōkyō Shoin.

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