

HAKAMAYA Noriaki 袴谷憲昭, *Hongaku shisō hihan* 本覚思想批判 [Critique of the thought of inherent enlightenment]. Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1989. 420 pages, no index. Hardcover, ¥5,800. ISBN 4-8043-0517-3 C3015.

The naive and stereotyped description of Japanese Buddhism (even Japanese religion in general) has it, in a favorable sense, emphasizing harmony with nature, absolute immanence, an uncritical acceptance of phenomena, the interdependence or identity of kami and buddhas, love of peace, and so on. And on the negative side it is said to be lacking impetus for social-ethical concern; having a weak idea of justice and social injustice, and so making people easy prey to political propaganda and social pressures to conform; encouraging an irresponsible “hands-off” disposition that contributes to pollution, reckless use of natural resources, littering, and destruction of public property; and providing no basis for making ethical judgements. These may be no less an over-simplification of the Japanese religious ethos than attempts to characterize the environmental destruction of the last century as a result of the Biblical passage in Genesis instructing people “to subdue the earth.” But it is just this kind of ethos that Hakamaya is challenging in this provocative book.

On the surface, Hakamaya is attacking *hongaku shisō* (theory of inherent enlightenment), the Japanese Buddhist idea of the presence of a Buddha-nature in all things, that not just sentient beings but all phenomena (mountains, trees, rivers, stones) are endowed with Buddhahood. This, again at the risk of over-simplification, is really the dominant religious ethos of Japanese religion as a whole, though Hakamaya does not say this in so many words. He does come right out and claim that *hongaku shisō* is not Buddhism at all. In fact he proceeds to make the further outrageous claims that Chinese and Japanese Zen is not Buddhism, that the Kyoto school of philosophy is not Buddhism, and that even the teaching of non-dualism in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the famous Mahāyāna text, is not Buddhism. And as a specialist in Yogācāra, he hopes eventually to write an article about the idea that Yogācāra is not Buddhism!

What, then, is Buddhism? In a substantial introduction to what amounts to

a collection of his articles on this subject, Hakamaya lays out three defining characteristics of Buddhism as a rule by which to measure what is and what is not Buddhism (pp. 9–10):

1. The basic teaching of the Buddha is the law of causation (*pratītya-samutpāda*), formulated in response to the Indian philosophy of a substantial ātman. Any idea that implies an underlying substance (Hakamaya uses the word “topos” [*basho* 場所] and any philosophy that accepts a “topos” is called a “dhātu-vāda,” following the lead of Matsumoto Shirō, who first used the term to criticize tathāgatagarbha thought), such as the ātman concept in India, the idea of “nature” 自然 in Chinese philosophy, or the “inherent enlightenment” idea in Japan, runs contrary to the basic Buddhist idea of causation.
2. The moral imperative of Buddhism is to act selflessly (anātman) to benefit others. Any religion that favors the self to the neglect of others contradicts Buddhism. The *hongaku shisō* idea that “grasses, trees, and land have all attained Buddhahood; that sentient and non-sentient beings are all endowed with the way of the Buddha,” (or, in Hakamaya’s words, “included in the substance of Buddha”) leaves no room for this moral imperative.
3. Buddhism requires faith, words and the use of the intellect (wisdom) to choose the truth of *pratītya-samutpāda*. The Zen allergy against use of words is more Chinese than Buddhist; and the ineffability of “thusness” 真如 claimed in *hongaku shisō* leaves no room for words or faith.

The paradigm for these three characteristics, Hakamaya insists, is to be found in the thought and enlightenment experience of the Buddha himself. Śākya-muni realized (Hakamaya prefers the word “chose”) the truth of causation under the Bodhi tree, resisted the temptation to keep the truth and bliss of enlightenment to himself and instead shared it for the benefit of others, and preached his philosophy with words, appealing to people’s intellect as well as their faith.

Although basically a collection of essays on this subject from the past few years, Hakamaya adds some additional comments at the end of each article to correct or expand some points in the articles. Otherwise the work appears as it was originally published. This helps to trace the development of Hakamaya’s reasoning as he has struggled to work out what seems to have been an early inspiration. The articles are not limited to Buddhist doctrine; there are chapters on Motoori Norinaga’s critique of Buddhism in the 18th century (4 and 6), on the religious ethos which gave rise to discrimination in Japan (5), on Buddhism and the Japanese kami (8), and thoughts against the idea of the unity of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (15). Aside from this, Hakamaya works mostly within the area of Buddhist studies, and the work is often highly technical, doctrinal, and textual. The chapters begin in the first section with an analysis of *śūnyatā* (1) and continue with a critique of the *Awakening of Faith* (2), on

*pratītya-samutpāda* and *tathatā* (3), a critique of *catuṣ-pratīsarāṇa* (7), a critique of the non-duality idea in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (9), a critique of the idea of faith in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* (10), and a critique of the philosophy of topos (11). Most of part two deals with Dōgen (12–19).

This is not an easy book. It is not only very technical and full of detailed textual analysis, but it is also unhibitedly confrontational and controversial. Hakamaya's style is feisty. If he disagrees with his colleagues he shows no hesitation to name names and point out what he believes is wrong, a not very common trait in Japanese scholarship. In fact Hakamaya alludes in his introduction to an incident in which an article of his was denied publication by a certain academic journal in Japan—one assumes because of its controversial content—a quite unusual occurrence in Japan where editors hardly dare to correct even obvious grammatical errors in a scholar's contribution.

There is certainly room for disagreeing with Hakamaya, either with his assumptions, method, or conclusions, and certainly many Japanese scholars do disagree. In sociological terms it is obvious that Japanese Buddhism is Buddhism—it is part of the ever changing and evolving religious phenomenon which is East Asian Buddhism. But these are not the terms in which Hakamaya is thinking. He is a specialist in Yogācāra Buddhism of impeccable academic credentials, a professor at the prestigious Komazawa University affiliated with Sōto Zen, a part of the Buddhist establishment in Japan; yet he is also a follower, and consciously so, of Dōgen's legacy, with the intent to recover the meaning of Dōgen's teaching. Ultimately he is concerned with discovering the true meaning of the teaching of the Buddha, and he is acting as a gadfly against his own tradition to criticize it. Hakamaya is not alone; he is joined in this quest by some of his colleagues at Komazawa such as Ishii Shūdō (a specialist in Chinese Zen history) and Matsumoto Shirō (a specialist in Mādhyamika Buddhism, to whom Hakamaya attributes much of his inspiration; see ISHII 1987 and MATSUMOTO 1989).

Again, this is not just a book about Buddhist doctrine—it questions the wider assumptions which have dominated religious and social attitudes for much of Japanese history. The old clichés concerning Japanese religion can never again rest so comfortable or unquestioned. The academic world in Japan needs more books like this.

#### REFERENCES

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