Pure Mind, Pure Land
A Brief Study of Modern Chinese Pure Land Thought and Movements

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Master of Arts

Faculty of Religious Studies

McGill University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
July 26, 2007

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in the
Faculty of Religious Studies
of McGill University

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-51412-2
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-51412-2

DEDICATION

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitābha Buddha,
And be born in his Land of Ultimate Bliss.

When reborn in the Western Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exceptions these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all being.

---The Vows of Samantabhadra
Avataṃsaka Sūtra

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although I cannot list all of the people whose support and encouragement made this work possible, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Victor Sogen Hori, for his enlightening and compassionate guidance. Since I came to McGill, he has been supporting me through my academic studies and my spiritual practice. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Chris Byrne for his help in editing this work, and to Lara Braitstein, Marcel Braitstein and An Jing for translating the Abstract into French. Without them, this work would not have been possible. Also, I wish to thank my colleagues Joseph Markowski, Rowshan Nemazee, Leikuan Lai, and all those who helped and encouraged me through my study at McGill and contributed to the completion of this work. Besides those at McGill, I also wish to gratefully acknowledge the support of Xu Wanhua and those in my Pure Land practice group, the Amitābha Association of Montreal, whose devotion and compassion is the inspiration of this work. I owe all my achievements to the encouragement and help from my school colleagues and Lotus friends. Lastly, I would like to give credit to my family, my parents and my husband, the strongest support through this whole study and my life.

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ABBREVIATIONS

T Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新脩大蔵経

E.g. T11.310p91c02-p101c20 means Vol. 11, Text No. 310, Page 91, Section C, and Column 02 to Page 101, Section C, and Column 20.

CONVENTIONS

Regarding Romanization systems, there are the older Wade-Giles system and the more recent Hanyu pinyin system. In this work, pinyin is the primary system. However, there are several exceptions:

1) Geographical and organization names that are well-known (e.g., Taipei for 臺北 Taibei, Tzu Chi for 慈濟 Ciji, etc.);

2) Chinese authors who have published in English under their own Romanization of their names (e.g., Chan. Wing-tsit for 陳榮捷 Chen Rongjie);

3) Chinese words in quoted passages.

The conventional Romanization has been retained for these.

With Sanskrit terms, I have tried my best to ensure that they are romanized with correct diacritical marks. But there are some words that have become English words and I present them without diacritics (except in quoted passages). These words are "sutra," "Mahayana," "Hinayana," "nirvana" and "samsara."

ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine the modern Chinese Pure Land thought and movements, which are part of the general context of reforms that involved the whole Chinese Buddhist community starting from the beginning of the 20th century. In this study, I examine 1) the socio-political context of modern China when Chinese Buddhist communities began to re-think their traditions and reform monastic education, under the influence of socio-political chaos and Western culture; 2) Ven. Yinguang's (1861-1940) syncretism of Pure Land thought with Confucian ethical teachings, which promoted a more secular and lay movement in response to Western influence; 3) Ven. Yinshun's (1906-2005) critical Pure Land thought which went back to early Indian Buddhism to clarify some teachings which had been corrupted during the transmission of Buddhism to China; 4) modern movements influenced by their thought. According to Robert Bellah, there are two kinds of response of Asian traditional elites to modernization: neo-traditionalism and reformism. Based upon my analysis of modern Chinese Pure Land thought and movements, I argue that this dichotomy is not mutually exclusive; the two categories can overlap. Yinguang and Yinshun were both neo-traditionalist and reformist.

ABRÉGÉ

Depuis le début du 20em siècle, les communautés bouddhistes en Chine se sont soumises à des réformes extensives. Le but de cette étude est d'examiner en particulier les développements depuis le dernier siècle en Chine de la philosophie et des mouvements populaires parmi la communauté bouddhiste « Terre Pure ». Dans cette étude j'examine quatre points principaux:

1) Le contexte sociopolitique du chaos et de l'influence occidentale existant en Chine moderne qui ont poussé les communautés bouddhistes à repenser leurs traditions et à réformer l'éducation monastique.
2) Le syncrétisme de la pensée « Terre Pure » et des enseignements éthiques du Confucianisme de Ven. Yinguang (1861-1940) qui encourageait un mouvement plus séculaire en réponse à l'influence occidentale.
3) Les pensées critiques de Ven.Yinshun (1906-2005) sur « Terre Pure » qui retournaient au bouddhisme indien pour clarifier certaines études qui avaient été corrompues durant leur transmission en Chine.
4) Des influences modernes ont influencé leur pensée. D'après Robert Bellah, il y a deux types de réponses des élites asiatiques à la modernisation : le neo-traditionalisme et le réformisme. D'après mon analyse de la pensée et des mouvements « Terre Pure », je maintiens que cette dichotomie n'est pas mutuellement exclusive ; les deux catégories peuvent se chevaucher. Yinguang et Yinshun étaient tout deux néo-traditionalistes et réformistes.

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of the year 2005, I went back to China and had the opportunity to visit a Pure Land temple in northeastern China from June 25th to 30th. The temple is called Baiguo xinglong si Temple 百國興隆寺, whose name implies that people from all over the world (*baiguo*, a hundred countries) will come to the temple, located in Changchun 長春 of Jilin 吉林 province, to practice to make the temple thriving (*xinglong*, prosperous).

I arrived at the temple around four o'clock in the afternoon. When I stepped into the main gate, I heard the pure, delightful sound of people chanting Amitābha's name. First, I went to the Guest Department; there I was received by two young nuns. They gave me a brief introduction of the temple and the schedule of practice. They told me that the participants were divided into two groups, one that chanted from 3 a.m. to 9 p.m., and the other that chanted from 12 noon to 6 a.m., and that practitioners should not disturb each other in order to keep a peaceful and pure mind. I decided to do the day shift. They asked for my ID, issued me a robe, and assigned me a sleeping place, which was only 50 cm wide on the upper bunk. They also showed me the place for washing and brushing, a little wet hut, and the country-style toilet in the back-yard. It was very simple and crude, because there was no running water in the temple. At the beginning, I could not get used to the conditions, because I could not sleep well in the small space and could not take a shower.

Everyday, we got up at 3 a.m. After washing and brushing, I arrived at the Buddha Hall around 3:20 to join the Buddha-recitation practice. Participants from the other group were there already from the previous day. There were more than one hundred and twenty people practicing. The practice was almost the same as used to be done at the Lingyan Temple, as described in Holmes Welch's *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, except that they omitted any kind of sutra-chanting or liturgical hymn. For example, they circumambulated while chanting the Buddha's name keeping the pace and time on a hand-chime and wooden fish (Welch 1973: 90-100). The temple had been maintaining a 24-hour practice everyday for more than two years, chanting while alternating between circumambulating and sitting at one-hour intervals. Every day at 9 p.m., the practitioners dedicated their merits accrued during the daily practice to all sentient beings and wished

for all beings to vow to be born in the Pure Land. After that, some of the practitioners would go to bed, whereas others would keep chanting.

The most impressive thing, for me, was the people. Their sincere and honest attitude toward the practice really touched me. There were around thirty people with special tags on who were on a 100-day retreat. While they took vows not to speak, they kept reciting the Buddha's name. All participants, except the local people, came from different places throughout the country; some came from remote places like Western Ningxia municipality. They never chatted about things irrelevant to the practice, but just concentrated on the recitation of the Buddha's name. Even at mealtime, the participants would be divided into two groups to have meals in turn in order to maintain the continuous chanting practice.

Besides sincerely attending daily practice, they took care of the temple as their home, cherished the temple property, and treated everyone as a family member. They would voluntarily work in the kitchen or do some cleaning. For example, because there was no running water, everyday there had to be someone to carry the cold water from the well and the hot water from the refectory in the front yard to the washing hut. Similarly, someone had to take the excrement away three or four times a day on their shoulder with a pole. But they kept the places so clean; during my stay, even though it was summer time, I did not see a fly or mosquito around.

In the temple, at that time, there were nineteen young nuns, and the abbot was over seventy years old. All the clergy attended practice everyday. This is just the urban branch of the temple; there is a home temple in the mountains a hundred miles away, where more than eighty young nuns are practicing. The condition of the temple and the sincere and pious practitioners could be seen, for me, as a sign of the revival of Pure Land Buddhist practice in China. The revival of the Pure Land tradition may be traced back to the late Imperial and the Republican time.

Since the Pure Land teaching was transmitted into China, it has been believed that there are various Buddhas and their individual Buddha realms, or pure lands. The faithful, through their efforts and the vow-power of the Buddhas, may obtain birth in these lands. Of the huge volumes of Mahayana literature, there are scriptures and commentaries dedicated specifically to these Buddhas, such as Amitābha (*Amituo fo* in Chinese, Amita Amida

in Japanese), Akṣobhya, Bhaisajyaguru, and Maitreya and their realms. When passed on to China, devotional practice to all these four Buddhas and their pure lands were transmitted to China. However, for the Chinese Pure Land sect, started from the White Lotus Society founded by Huiyuan 慧遠 (337-417) at Mount Lu 廬山, its practices have been exclusively devoted to the Buddha Amitābha.

As one subdivision of Mahayana Buddhism, Chinese Pure Land tradition experienced the same vicissitudes of all Chinese Buddhism. It survived the Huichang Persecution in 845 A.D., which brought permanent damage to Chinese Buddhism. Moreover, the Pure Land tradition, underwent some important developments of its thought and practices, and finally, has become an indispensable element in all schools of Chinese Buddhism. With its transmission to Japan and Korea, the Pure Land School has also become the most popular Buddhist tradition in East Asia today.

Scholarship on Modern Chinese Buddhism

Beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, when it faced a chaotic political and social crisis, the corruption of clergy, the degeneration of the Buddhist practice itself, and the challenge of the West, Chinese Buddhism encountered the secularizing influence of modernity and criticisms of its doctrines, practices, and institutional forms. As a result, various leaders within the Buddhist circle struggled to defend their religious traditions to respond to the challenges posed by the West. Under these conditions, Chinese Pure Land Buddhism experienced an intense revival. "The revival came about gradually and through the sincerity and devotion of a countless number of literate and illiterate Buddhists" (Chan 65).

However, scholarly works on Chinese Pure Land Buddhism are far from adequate compared to Japanese Pure Land studies. As Charles Jones notices, there has been "a longstanding dissatisfaction... [with] the dominance of a particular historical narrative which takes Kamakura-period Japanese Pure Land Buddhism as either the norm or the telos (or both) of all Pure Land Buddhism" (Jones 1999: 2). Especially after Shinran (1173-1262), there is significant scholarship on Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, but there is very little historical scholarship on Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. It is as if Pure Land

Buddhism was transmitted from China to Japan and came to full flower with Shinran, and as if there were no further developments in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism.

Moreover, even though there are some studies on historical figures in the Chinese Pure Land tradition, such as studies on Huiyuan by W. Liebenthal and Leon Hurvitz, on Tanluan 曇鸞 (476-542 CE) by Roger Corless and Hsiao Ching-fen, on Daochuo 道綽 (562-645 CE) by David Chappell, on Zhuhong 袾宏 (1532-1612 CE) by Chün-fang Yü, among others, there are remarkably few studies on modern Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. To date, there are only two major works in English that deal with modern Chinese Buddhism: Holmes Welch's *Chinese Buddhist Revival* and Don Pittman's *Towards a Modern Chinese Buddhism*. Sadly, I was struck by the absence of discussion of modern Chinese Pure Land movements in both of these works. As far as I know, Charles Jones is one of the few scholars working on Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. In his *Buddhism in Taiwan*, he spends one chapter outlining Yinguang's and Yinshun's Pure Land thought, and in *Buddhism in the Modern World*, he writes the essay "Transitions in the Practice and Defense of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism" dealing with modern progress of Chinese Pure Land tradition. Stefania Travagnin is another scholar, in "Master Yinshun and the Pure Land Thought," dealing with Yinshun and his Pure Land thought. Because there are very few studies in Western languages, the main sources of the present study are works in Chinese.

(TRAVAGNIN REF.)

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The purpose of the present research is to give a brief study on modern Chinese Pure Land thought and movements, which were influenced by both Asian traditional values and modern Western culture. I will focus on two representative monks and scholars, Yinguang 印光 (1861-1940 CE) and Yinshun 印順 (1906-2005 CE). Their thoughts have been directly influencing the religious lives of millions of Chinese people, and modern Chinese Buddhist movements, such as the Pure Land Learning Center (Jingzong xuehui 淨宗學會), which focuses on Pure Land practice, and the Compassion Relief Foundation (Tzu Chi/Ciji, 慈濟功德會), which advocates socially engaged and humanistic Buddhism.

Robert Bellah, in his essay "Religion and Progress in Modern Asia", summarizes that there are

> two major alternatives of traditional elite groups in responding to the modernization process: reformism and neotraditionalism. "Reformist" movements advocated substantial changes, often expressed...in terms of "a return to the early teachers and text, a rejection of most of the intervening tradition, [and] an interpretation of the pristine teachings...as advocating social reforms and national regeneration". Furthermore, such movements necessarily entailed an "intense self-criticism of tradition". Neotraditionalism, on the other hand, is "an ideology designed to keep the change to a minimum and defend the *status quo* as far as possible." (Bellah quoted in Lai 3)

With reference to this conceptual framework, I will scrutinize the position of Yinguang, who is considered more conservative, and Yinshun, who is seemingly a reformist.

Jones, in his "Transitions in Pure Land Buddhism," cites Joseph Kitagawa's and Don Pittman's lists of elements specific to modern Chinese Buddhism. I will borrow these lists to discuss the condition of modern Chinese Buddhism using the forementioned cases of Pure Land movements.

> According to the former [Kitagawa], three factors have emerged as hallmarks of modern religion. The first factor is a search for the meaning of human life in and of itself as a quest more urgent than the search for ultimate and universal truths. Second, modern religion tends to emphasize a this-worldly soteriology, affirming that salvation (however conceived) is to be sought and found within this world, and not in an escape from it to a better realm. The third factor is that modern religion emphasizes freedom over order; that is, it no longer accepts the present natural and social orders as divinely mandated or given in the nature of reality, but sees them as mutable, and, above all, improvable through human efforts undertaken in freedom. (Jones 2003: 127)

Scholars have refined the concept of modernity as applied to Chinese Buddhism. Pittman's list proposes five further factors explicit to the situation of Buddhism in the modern world. For him,

> Modern Buddhism (1) entails an "inner-worldly asceticism," ... which signifies the impulse to remake the world; (2) is marked by rationalism, or the attempt to present Buddhism as reasonable and consistent with the findings of modern sciences (though not coextensive with it); (3) sees itself as part of a restoration, by which he [Pittman] means a denial of innovation on the part of modernizers, preferring instead to consider itself as recovering Buddhism's original intent and spirit so as to face the future more faithfully; (4) is ecumenical and global in scope, seeking to embrace all of humanity and transcend any provincialism or sectarianism; and (5) reveals a dynamic interplay between Buddhism as a religion and Buddhism as a means to an end that, once achieved, obviates the need for Buddhism itself. (Jones 2003: 127-8)

To better understand that how the Chinese Pure Land movements react to the modern world, I would like to bring in the crucial distinction between "modernity" and "modernism" introduced by Bruce Lawrence.

> "*Modernity*," according to Lawrence, "is the emergence of a new index of human life shaped, above all, by increasing bureaucratization and rationalization as well as technical capacities and global exchange unthinkable in the premodern era. *Modernism*, " on the other hand, "is the search for individual autonomy driven by a set of socially encoded values emphasizing change over continuity; quantity over quality; efficient production, power, and profit over sympathy for traditional values or vocations, in both the public and private spheres." (Lawrence quoted in Kippenberg 233-4)

In addition to Lawrence's fundamental delineation, Gustavo Benavides "conceives of modernity as a self-conscious distancing from the past—a break different in the domain of knowledge than in the domain of morality or aesthetics." Therefore, "since modern reflexivity is self-referential, the separation of these domains" has led to religious "reflexive ordering and reordering" (Benavides quoted in Kippenberg 222).

Given these lists of characterization, I will argue that Yinguang and Yinshun and their legacy, qualifying as neo-traditionalists and reformists, participate in modernity but resist embracing modernism.

Content of the Study

In approaching Yinguang and Yinshun's contribution to the development of Pure Land thought, it will be necessary first of all to survey the general historical development of the tradition in China. In this connection, in Chapter 1, I will summarize the basic content of the fundamental Pure Land scriptures, which are regarded as the sacred texts of the tradition. Along with the description of the Sutras, I will give a brief study of Pure Land patriarchs who have been regarded as the forerunners and authorities of traditional Chinese Pure Land thought.

Before taking up Yinguang's and Yinshun's philosophies directly, it may be helpful to summarize the historical background of their lives, which provides the context of their thoughts. In the second chapter, I will briefly give an overview of the immediate context of Yinguang's and Yinshun's thought: the chaotic political and social situation in the late Imperial and Republican China, the responses of Chinese Buddhists toward that situation and the impact of Western science, culture, and religion. The thought of the famous

Buddhist reformer, Master Taixu, on Pure Land Buddhism will be briefly discussed. In this connection, my purpose is to see Yinguang's and Yinshun's thoughts against the background in which they stood.

In Chapter 3, I offer a biographical outline of Yinguang's career as a Buddhist master, from his introduction to the religion to his eventual status as the most famous Pure Land practitioner, recognized as the thirteenth Patriarch of the Pure Land sect in modern China. I will examine the traditional sources of Yinguang's thought and present a synopsis of his teachings about the Pure Land tradition. Based upon this analysis, I will also offer some reflection on how his teaching responded to modernization and westernization.

Chapter 4 will study Yinshun's Pure Land thought as a critical Pure Land teaching. Yinshun, an eminent scholar in modern Chinese Buddhist history, did not focus on Pure Land Buddhism as transmitted by the Chinese Pure Land patriarchs but instead, tried to verify its Indian origin from scriptures and treatises. In this chapter, I will analyze how Yinshun attempted to understand Pure Land Buddhism against its historical and cultural contexts, his modern method of Buddhist studies, and the reason why he promotes humanistic Pure Land Buddhism.

Based on the analysis of Yinguang's and Yinshun's Pure Land thought, I will examine the importance of Yinguang's and Yinshun's thought on the Pure Land tradition today and their continuing spiritual authority on Chinese Pure Land movements. I will introduce several modern Chinese Buddhist international movements, initiated by their legacy, such as Li Binnan, Ven. Jingkong, and Ven. Zhengyan.

In the concluding chapter, I will discuss how these movements adapt to the new technologies, modernization, pluralism, and globalization, as well as how they relate the Buddhist Pure Land teaching to modern people's daily lives.

I think it is time for Buddhist scholars to re-conceive the entire field of modern Pure Land Buddhist studies. It is hoped that this study will help to widen the focus of Pure Land Buddhist Studies to include developments in Modern Chinese Pure Land Buddhism.

CHAPTER I
A GENERAL SURVEY OF CHINESE PURE LAND BUDDHISM

Although the Chinese Pure Land tradition is rich and varied as I mentioned in the introduction, popular Western assumptions treat the Japanese Pure Land tradition as the dominant form of Pure Land Buddhism. In order to understand the complexity of the Chinese tradition, which, unlike Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, demands self-effort, precepts, and *nianfo samadhi,* it is necessary to examine the historical development of Chinese Pure Land thought and practices, its sacred texts, patriarchs, and sectarian branches, in comparison to Japanese Pure Land Buddhism.

1.1 The sacred texts

As in the Japanese Pure Land tradition, the three sutras dedicated to the Amitābha Buddha, the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyuha Sūtra* (T12.360, the *Sutra of the Buddha of Infinite Life*, Ch., *Wuliangshou-jing*; hereafter, the *Larger Sutra*), the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyuha Sūtra* (T12.366, Ch., *Amituo-jing*; hereafter, the *Smaller Sutra*), and the *Amitāyur-dhyāna Sūtra* (T12.365, *The Contemplation Sutra of Buddha Amitayus*, Ch., *Guan jing*; hereafter, the *Contemplation Sutra*), form the doctrinal foundation of the Chinese Pure Land School.

The term *Sukhāvatī* literally means "possessing ease or comfort, full of joy or pleasure;" *vyuha* means "orderly arrangement of the parts of a whole." In compound, *Sukhāvatīvyuha* refers to the Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha (Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 1221b-c, 1041a). The name of the Buddha Amitābha or Amitāyus means infinite light or infinite life.

The *Larger Sutra*

The *Larger Sutra* has been preserved in several ancient translations. In the Chinese Buddhist Canon, there are five extant translations by different translators from different times. They are *Wuliangshou rulai hui* 無量壽如來會 (T11.310) translated by Bodhiruci (fl. 693-713), *Fo shuo wuliangshou jing* 佛說無量壽經 (T12.360) translated by Saṃghavarman 康僧鎧 (fl. 252), *Fo shuo wuliang qingjing pingdeng jue jing* 佛說無量

清淨平等覺經 (T12.361) translated by Zhi Loujiachen (fl. 167-186 CE), *Fo shuo Amituo sanye sanfosalou fotan guodu rendao jing* 佛說阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經 (T12.362) translated by Zhi Qian (fl. 222-253), and *Fo shuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan jing* 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴經 (T12.363) translated by Faxian (?-626). The most popular one in modern times was translated by Saṃghavarman (Gómez 126-131).

The *Larger Sutra* starts with Śākyamuni Buddha answering Ānanda's question after he perceived the Buddha's extreme delight, "Why did the World Honored One present this august radiance?" Then Śākyamuni Buddha told Ānanda the story of the Bodhisattva Dharmakara (*Fazang* 法藏).

According to the story, the Bodhisattva Dharmakara, from his great compassion, vowed to establish a land of bliss where all sentient beings could be born, away from all kinds of afflictions, and finally attain Buddhahood in one lifetime. In the story, the Bodhisattva Dharmakara, after eons of practice and effort, realized enlightenment and established a pure land based on his vow-power. The Sutra describes the characteristics of Amitābha Buddha, such as his infinite life and radiant light, and the splendor of his land, the Land of Bliss, where all beings are born in lotus flowers and the trees, the water, and the music preach the Dharma to help the inhabitants attain enlightenment. The Sutra also teaches that there are three types of practitioners who desire to be reborn in the Pure Land: persons of superior faith, of middling faith and inferior faith. No matter what level of faith they have, they will "resolve to attain unsurpassable awakening [*bodhicitta*], and exclusively bring to mind the Buddha of Measureless Life" (Gómez 187-8).

The forty-eight vows of Amitābha Buddha can be seen as the core of the Sutra. Without these vows, Dharmakara could not create the Pure Land. In addition, these vows have become the basis for the later development of Pure Land Buddhism. "Particularly those Vows which declared the nature of the Buddha, the way of salvation, and the future destiny of believers become of paramount importance in the doctrinal systems of later teachers" (Bloom 2).

For example, the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows relate to the methods used in attaining birth into the Pure Land:

> (18) May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe should single-mindedly desire to be reborn in my land with joy, with confidence, and gladness, and if they

> should bring to mind this aspiration for even ten moments of thought and yet not gain rebirth there. This excludes only those who have committed the five heinous sins and those who have reviled the true Dharma.
>
> (19) May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe resolves to seek awakening, cultivates all the virtues, and single-mindedly aspires to be reborn in my land, and if, when they approached the moment of their death, I did not appear before them, surrounded by a great assembly.
>
> (20) May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe hear my name, fix their thoughts on rebirth in my land, cultivate all roots of virtue, and single-mindedly dedicate this virtue desiring to be born in my land, and yet they do not attain this goal. (Gómez 167-8)

Moreover, in the course of the historical development of the Pure Land tradition, the Eighteenth Vow has been regarded as the central vow, or the primal vow, and it figures prominently in Japanese Pure Land thought.

Here, there is a difference in the Japanese and Chinese Pure Land traditions. For example, Shinran (1173-1263) discovered the theoretical source of faith in the Eighteenth Vow. Shinran distinguished three spiritual attitudes in the Eighteenth Vow. They were the Sincere Mind, Trustfulness, and a Desire for Rebirth into the Pure Land. He believed that "the chief feature of Amida Buddha's endeavor to achieve salvation for beings lies in his utter sincerity and trustfulness from which he never deviated for even a single second" (Bloom 39); furthermore, it is this mind or attitude which firms the practitioners' trust and faith in the Buddha. Shinran asserted that "faith within men is the achievement of Buddha nature." Shinran also related the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Vow to the three Sutras. For him, the Nineteenth Vow manifests the *Contemplation Sutra*; the Twentieth Vow represents the *Smaller Sutra*, and the Eighteenth Vow exemplifies the *Larger Sutra*.

Shinran followed Daochuo's teaching about the degenerate age of the Dharma (*mofa*, 末法), totally denying the possibility of a person doing good deeds. For him,

> whatever good deed he [the person] appeared to do on the finite level was still evil, because it was done with a calculation in mind and was ultimately intended to redound to his benefit. Thus all good deeds performed by individuals were seen as essentially self-centered and involved in the entire web of passion. (Bloom 30)

Shinran deemed that no sentient being can attain salvation through his or her own practice. Therefore, Shinran "shifted the attention away from practice to attitude," and

act of faith itself the essential basis of salvation, and the act of faith was not made by the individual, but by the Buddha in that person" (Bloom 31).

Regarding the practice, although in line with Shandao and Hōnen's (1133-1212) teaching, Shinran "realized that not all vocal recitations were of same character, and he proposed the distinction between True and Provisional Pure Land teaching" (Bloom 35). According to Shinran, the "provisional" practice refers to the practice of various roots of good, employed by the self-assertion attitude, such as the thirteen contemplations, the three types of meritorious behavior and the nine grades of beings taught in the *Contemplation Sutra of Buddha Amitayus*; whereas the "true" teaching refers to the *Nembutsu* or *nianfo* practice (chanting the name of Amitābha Buddha) of Amitābha's Vow. Shinran's view of the Provisional teachings is to encourage and guide self-power practicers to enter the Primal Vow. For him, "salvation is by faith alone, and nothing more is required of the believer than awareness of his sin, a strong faith and a sense of gratitude to the Buddha" (Bloom 36).

Overall, salvation for Shinran is a gift of the Amitābha Buddha's powerful vows, whereas in the Chinese tradition, "it never has denied the necessity or effectiveness of self-power, of human moral striving and spiritual cultivation. While recognizing the need for reliance on the 'other-power' of Amitābha" (Jones 2003: 2), the achievement of rebirth is always the fruit of the combination of the individual's efforts and the Buddha's vow-power. Although the Chinese Pure Land masters also emphasize the importance of faith, faith is not the only thing; one also needs to vow to be born in the Pure Land and practice hard.

Chinese Pure Land thinkers tried to understand the dual power of self and the Buddha by applying the ancient Chinese concept of *ganying* 感應 or *xiangying* 相應, which means "putting one's mind 'in tune' with the Buddha's [mind], and the more that one engaged in *nianfo* 念佛, the stronger and more enduring this resonance became....The 'resonance' brought Amitābha's power into play in cooperation with one's own, creating the cooperation of self-power and other-power" (Jones 2003: 6).

The *Smaller Sutra*

The next important text in the Pure Land tradition is the *Smaller Sutra*. There are two translations in the Chinese Buddhist Canon. The popular one was translated by Kumārajīva (344-413 CE), and completed around 402 CE (Gómez 125-6); the other one was translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664 CE) in the Tang Dynasty. Kumārajīva's elegant and brief translation has made this text a widely-used classic. It has been included in the texts of evening worship, recited in most monasteries in China.

In the Sutra, Śākyamuni Buddha describes in detail the nature of the Pure Land. It says:

> In that land you will always see many flocks of rare and exquisite birds of many colors—white egrets, peacocks, parrots, shari and *kalavinka* birds, and those birds called 'Living-Together.' ... Their voices proclaim the tenets of the Buddha's teaching—for instance, they sing of five spiritual faculties, of the five spiritual powers, of the seven aspects of awakening, of the Eightfold Path that is followed by those spiritual nobility, and of many other aspects of the Buddha's Dharma. When the living beings in that Buddha-field hear such song, they all immediately enjoy thoughts of the Buddha, of his Dharma, and his Order, and keep these three in mind incessantly.
>
> ...a subtle breeze blows, swaying the rows of jeweled trees and the jeweled nets, so that they emit an exquisite sound, like that of hundreds of thousands of diverse kinds of musical instruments playing together at the same time. All those who hear this sound enjoy spontaneously and immediately thoughts of the Buddha, of his Dharma, and his Order, and keep these three in mind incessantly, bringing to mind the Buddha ...the Dharma ... the Order. (Gómez 146-7)

Although the features of the Land glorify the Land of Bliss, it means not that the inhabiting beings should indulge themselves in all kinds of sensual joys, but that all these features are created to provide a perfect environment for all inhabitants; they are skillful means of Amitābha Buddha to transmit the Dharma anytime, anywhere in the Pure Land.

Śākyamuni Buddha also explained the meaning of the name Amita Buddha in the sutra. He says,

> Why is this Buddha called 'Amita'—'measureless'? Shariputra, this Buddha's beaming light is measureless. It shines without obstruction into Buddha-fields in the ten directions. Therefore, he is called 'Amita.'
>
> Furthermore, Shariputra, this Buddha's life-span, and the life-span of the human beings in his Buddha-field as well, has a duration of measureless, boundless, countless, cosmic ages. For this reason too he is called 'measureless,' 'Amita.' (Gómez 147-8)

With infinite life, Amitābha Buddha can help all beings at all times; with infinite light, he can enlighten all beings in all directions. The explanation of the name of the Buddha reveals the two attributes which signify his compassion and wisdom.

The *Contemplation Sutra*

The *Contemplation Sutra* is the third main text of the Pure Land tradition. It is sometimes abbreviated as *Guan jing*. This sutra was translated into Chinese during the Liu-Song dynasty by the Tripitaka Master Kālayaśas from Central Asia between 424 and 442 CE (Pas 36).

It starts with one of the best known stories in Buddhism, regarding the Prince Ajātaśatru and his mother Queen Vaidehī. The prince listened to the wicked counsel of Devadatta and arrested King Bimbisara, his father. Queen Vaidehī was driven to desperation by the evil deeds of her son. She did homage to Śākyamuni Buddha and asked for help. She expressed her dissatisfaction about this world of depravities and sufferings, pleading to the Buddha to show her some places where she might not hear the voice of the wicked and see any wicked person. With the Buddha's guidance, Queen Vaidehī visualized different Buddha realms and finally chose the Sukhāvatī of Amitābha Buddha in the West, out of numerous Pure Lands in all directions shown by Śākyamuni. Then, before the Buddha taught her how to practice to be born in the Pure Land, he told her three conditions of virtue for attaining birth in the Pure Land.

> Whoever wishes to be born there should practice three acts of merit: first, caring for one's parents, attending to one's teachers and elders, compassionately refraining from killing, and doing the ten good deeds; second, taking the three refuges, keeping the various precepts and refraining from breaking the rules of conduct; and third, awakening aspiration for Enlightenment, believing deeply in the law of causality, chanting the Mahayana sutras and encouraging people to follow their teachings. These three are called the pure karma. (Inagaki www.fodian.net/English/Contemplation_Sutra.htm)

These three conditions correspond to the three levels that beings may be reborn into, namely human beings, *pratyekabuddha*s, and bodhisattvas. That is to say, if one can fulfill the first condition, then he or she will attain rebirth as a human being; the second condition corresponds to rebirth as a *pratyekabuddha*, and the third to a bodhisattva. Furthermore, Śākyamuni Buddha emphasized that these are the right and true causes of all Buddhas in the past, present and future. This teaching later became the important doctrinal foundation in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism which syncretizes Confucian teaching of filial piety and emphasizes the humanistic aspect of the tradition.

Next, the Buddha gave her a detailed description of the Pure Land and showed her the way to be reborn in Sukhāvatī by means of sixteen kinds of contemplation (*guan* 觀).

The sixteen contemplations, or methods of visualizing practices, include contemplations of the external splendors, such as the setting sun, the water, the ground, the trees, the ponds, and the general view of the Pure Land, and the internal splendors, such as the lotus-throne, the images of Amitābha Buddha, and bodhisattvas, the true body, the two Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and so on, which consist of the first thirteen contemplations. After that, Śākyamuni Buddha expounded the high, middle and low levels, and high, middle and low rank in each level, that is, nine grades of rebirth, which are dependent on individual spiritual achievement (Pas 46-50).

Other Important Texts

These three sutras are the fundamental Pure Land texts for both Chinese and Japanese traditions. However, in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, besides the above three texts, there are other two texts included as sacred scriptures. They are the *Puxian xingyuan ping* 普賢行願品 (T9. 278_P781b05-P788b02, *Chapter of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's Practice and Vow*) from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 華嚴經 (T9.278), the *Dashizhi nianfo yuantong zhang* 大勢至念佛圓通章 (T19.945, p0128a21-p0128b06, *Chapter of the Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta's Perfect Nianfo Samadhi*) from the *Surangama Sūtra* 楞嚴經 (T19.945). These texts together are called *Jingtu wu jing* 淨土五經 (*Five Sutras on Pure Land*).

The *Chapter of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's Practice and Vow* was included as a sacred scripture by layman Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) during the reign of Emperor Xianfeng 咸豐 of the Qing dynasty. This is the last fascicle of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, in which Bodhisattva Samantabhadra and his fellow bodhisattvas utter the Ten Great Vows. One of the Vows is that they will all strive to gain rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha, in order to realize Buddhahood. This shows that even a highly accomplished bodhisattva like Samantabhadra sought rebirth in the Pure Land; therefore, the Pure Land practice is not only for ordinary people as is implied in the Japanese tradition.

The *Chapter of the Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta's Perfect Nianfo Samadhi* was added to the Pure Land canon by the Thirteenth Patriarch Yinguang. For him, although the three sutras had contained the fundamental teaching of Pure Land Buddhism, this

chapter was the most profound teaching about the *nianfo* practice (remembrance of Amitābha Buddha, the *nianfo samadhi* is a state of concentration developed through the practice of *nianfo*). Yinguang believed that if the individuals could really follow the teaching of Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta, restraining themselves from the six consciousnesses and keeping their mind pure and uninterrupted, then the practitioners would see the Buddha in front of them and attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and *Surangama Sūtra* are two of the most revered scriptures in Chinese Buddhism; the two chapters from them served as evidence of support for the Pure Land practice as the most extraordinary and profound teaching.

1.2 Patriarchs and Lineage

The branches and patriarchical lineages of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism are more complex and comprehensive than in the Japanese tradition. According to Shinran, the patriarchs of the Japanese Pure Land tradition are Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu of India, Tanluan, Daochuo, Shandao of China, and Genshin, Hōnen of Japan (Bloom 7). However, among the Chinese masters, Tanluan, Daochuo and Shandao only represent one branch of the Chinese Pure Land tradition.

The first book trying to establish the Pure Land lineage was *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類 (T47.1969A, *An Anthology on the Pure Land*) written by the Tiantai monk, historian Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214) around 1200 in the Song Dynasty. He stated in the preface that, since the establishment of Huiyuan's White Lotus Society, the practice of *nianfo* had prevailed and had become very popular in the Song. He collected and read through works about Pure Land belief since Jin and Tang, and thought it was worthy to share this marvellous teaching with other Buddhists. The *Lebang wenlei* had five volumes, fourteen categories (*men* gate), including sutras, mantras, and poetry. In the work he listed six patriarchs as follows:

1. Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416 CE)
2. Shandao 善導 (613-681 CE)
3. Fazhao 法照 (fl.785 CE)
4. Shaokang 少康 (d. 805)
5. Shengchang 省常 (959-1020 CE)
6. Zongze 宗賾 (fl. 1105 CE).

Another Tiantai monk Zhipan 志磐 (fl. 1258-1269 CE) compiled *Fozhu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (T49.2035, *Chronicle of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs*). Based upon Zongxiao's record, he added Chengyuan 承遠 (712-802) and Yanshou 延壽 (904-975) to the list and removed Zongze 宗賾 without explaining the reason (T49.2035, p0260c19- p0260c26). From then on, the first seven patriarchs were set as follows: Huiyuan, Shandao, Chengyuan, Fazhao, Shaokang, Yanshou and Xingchang (Shih Heng-ching, 142). There was no big change to the list until the Qing Dynasty. Monk Wukai 悟開 (?-1830), in his *Lianzong jiuzu zhuanglue* 蓮宗九祖傳略 (*Brief Biographies of the Nine Patriarchs of the Pure Land Sect*), added Lianchi 蓮池 (1532-1612) and Sheng'an 省庵 (1686-1734) to the list (Shi Wukai 19337-19398).

Up to the republican period, Master Yinguang compiled *Lianzong shierzu zansong* 蓮宗十二祖讚頌 (*Verse in Praise of the Twelve Patriarchs of Pure Land Sect*), in which he added Lianchi, Ouyi 藕益 (1599-1655), Xingce 行策 (1626-1682), Sheng'an, Chewu 徹悟 (1740-1810) as the Eighth to Twelfth patriarchs (Yinguang, vol. 2, 469). After Yinguang's death, in order to commemorate his accomplishments, the Pure Land Buddhists regarded Yinguang himself as the Thirteenth Patriarch. Thus, the recent version of Chinese Pure Land Patriarchs is: 1) Lushan Huiyuan; 2) Guangming Shandao; 3) Chengyuan; 4) Fazhao; 5) Shaokang; 6) Yanshou; 7) Shengchang; 8) Lianchi; 9) Ouyi; 10) Xingce; 11) Shengan; 12) Chewu; and the 13) Yinguang 印光. (See Table 1.)

If we examine the lists of the Pure Land patriarchs, we can see that, unlike other Chinese Buddhist schools, there is no master-disciple relationship between Pure Land patriarchs. For example, the date difference between Huiyuan and Shandao was almost two hundred years, whereas the dates of some patriarchs were very close, such as Lianchi, Ouyi and Xingce. Basically, they were selected on the basis "that the individuals identified as patriarchs followed the example of Huiyuan in establishing White Lotus societies, and that they and their societies were preoccupied with the beliefs and practices of Pure Land" (Getz 69).

	Japanese	Chinese			
Source		*An Anthology on the Pure Land*	*Chronicle of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs*	*Brief Biographies of the Nine Patriarchs of the Pure Land Sect*	*Brief Biographies of the Thirteen Patriarchs of the Pure Land Sect*
First	Nāgārjuna	Huiyuan	Huiyuan	Huiyuan	Huiyuan
Second	Vasubandhu	Shandao	Shandao	Shandao	Shandao
Third	Tanluan	Fazhao	Chengyuan	Chengyuan	Chengyuan
Forth	Daochuo	Shaokang	Fazhao	Fazhao	Fazhao
Fifth	Shandao	Shengchang	Shaokang	Shaokang	Shaokang
Sixth	Genshin	Zongze	Yanshou	Yanshou	Yanshou
Seventh	Hōnen		Shengchang	Shengchang	Shengchang
Eighth	Shinran			Lianchi	Lianchi
Ninth				Sheng'an	Ouyi
Tenth					Xingce
Eleventh					Sheng'an
Twelfth					Chewu
Thirteenth					Yinguang

(Table 1: Patriarchate of Japanese and Chinese Pure Land traditions)

Though all of the masters played similarly significant roles in the development of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism,[1] their philosophy and practice of Pure Land teaching differed greatly. Roughly, we can put the practices of Pure Land Buddhism into three categories: meditative *nianfo*, calling on the name, and syncretic Pure Land practice.

Meditative *nianfo*

[1] Some recent studies challenge this lineage. For example, Getz's study of Shengchang calls into question his reputation as a Pure Land Patriarch. See Getz, *Shengchang's Pure Conduct Society and the Chinese Pure Land Patriarchate*. We will use the above list for this study.

The best example of meditative *nianfo* is Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416 CE), the first patriarch of the Chinese Pure Land tradition. According to the traditional account, in the year 402 he gathered together one hundred and twenty-three fellow monks, hermits, and literati together on Mt. Lu and founded the White Lotus Society. The White Lotus Society dedicated themselves to the practice of the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi* according to the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra* (T13.0418, *Sutra on the Meditation to Behold the Buddhas,* hereafter, the *Pratyutpanna Sutra*) (Mochizuki 2001: 251).

It is said that the *Pratyutpanna Sutra* was the first text about the practice devoted to Amitābha Buddha translated into Chinese by Lokakùema and Zhu FoShuo in 179 C.E. (Mochizuki 2001: 241). The Sutra teaches that "by means of meditation, and concentration of mind, one is able to actually see the Buddha Amitābha of the Western Land" (Mochizuki 2001: 241). The *Pratyutpanna Sutra* is "the earliest datable literature reference to Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land," in which "the Buddha expounds a practice called *pratyutpanna samādhi* (*nianfo sanmei*) with which a practitioner can see the Buddhas of the ten directions standing face to face before him" (Shih Heng ching 30). The Sutra explicitly stresses that, if one is mindful (*nian*) of Amitābha Buddha for one to seven days, one will see the Buddha in front of oneself or be born in the Pure Land.

The practices of Huiyuan and his followers consisted of chanting the name of Amitābha Buddha and visualizing the Buddha and his Pure Land of the West. They also rigorously observed the precepts. Their aim was to retire from the world and be reborn in the Pure Land. They did not try to spread this teaching among the masses, and Huiyuan's group passed away along with its founders. However, it was to serve as an inspiration for later Pure Land practitioners and other groups going by the name of the White Lotus or Lotus Society in later times.

The practice of devotion to Amitābha Buddha also became a part of the Tientai School from its inception. The founder, Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597), made Pure Land Buddhism an integral part of his system of meditative practice. Zhiyi's major work, the *Great Concentration and Insight* 摩訶止觀 (T46.1911), describes four kinds of meditation practice: (1) constant sitting, (2) constant walking, (3) half-walking and half-sitting, and (4) neither walking nor sitting. The constant walking meditation practice was also based upon the *Pratyutpanna Sutra*. It consisted of recollecting and visualizing

Amitābha Buddha while circumambulating a statue of the Buddha and chanting that Buddha's name. Mochizuki suggests that Zhiyi might have been influenced by Huiyuan and his practice of *nianfo Samadhi*. But for Zhiyi,

> the term *nien* denotes both visualization and oral invocation, as the meditator is directed to construct a highly detailed eidetic image of the buddha while slowly and sonorously reciting the name. At the same time, the meditator is to realize the empty nature of the visualized Buddha as a manifestation of his or her own mind. (Jones 2001: 222)

Following Zhiyi, the practice of *nianfo Samadhi* came to be normative for the mainstream of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism (Mochizuki 1986:80).

Pure Land Buddhist practice quickly became a major feature of just about all forms of Chinese Buddhism. After the persecution of Buddhism by the Emperor Wu in 845 in the Tang Dynasty, the Pure Land School continued to flourish in China. However, the Pure Land Buddhism that survived the persecution of 845 and that attained mass appeal throughout East Asia was not, however, the Pure Land Buddhism of the *Pratyutpanna Sutra*, championed by Huiyuan or Zhiyi. Rather, it was the form of Pure Land Buddhism inspired by the three *Pure Land Sutras*. This form of Pure Land Buddhism de-emphasized the visualization of Amitābha Buddha and the Land of Bliss in the West and instead put much greater emphasis on the Eighteenth Vow, or the Original Vow, and the chanting of the name of Amitābha Buddha.

Calling on the Name

Tanluan 曇鸞 (476-542 CE), Daochuo 道綽 (562-645 CE) and Shandao 善導 (613-681 CE) of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism in particular should be noted because they provided the major source of inspiration for the Pure Land movement of Hōnen and Shinran in Japan. Hōnen and Shinran followed exclusively the teaching of Tanluan and Daochuo, who advocated the practice of *nianfo* and reliance on other-power.

Tanluan wrote a very influential commentary on Vasubandhu's *Wuliangshou jing youposhe yuansheng ji* 無量壽經優波提舍願生偈 (T26.1524, *Discourse on the Amitāyus-sūtra with Stanzas on the Resolution To Be Born [in Sukhāvatī]*, hereafter *Discourse on Rebirth* 往生論), a two-volume *Wuliangshou jing youposhe yuansheng ji zhu* 無量壽經優波提舍願生偈注 (*Commentary on Discourse on Rebirth* 往生論注).

In Nāgārjuna's *Daśabhūmivibhāsā śāstra*, it is said that there is a difficult path of attaining non-retrogression through self-cultivation and an easy path of attaining non-retrogression by thinking of and calling upon the names of the Buddhas in ten directions. Devotion to Amitābha Buddha was one of the easy paths (Mochizuki 2000: 149-151).

Based upon this teaching, Tanluan extended this idea by emphasizing that the calling on the name of Amitābha Buddha is the only easy path. For him, only when blessed by Amitābha Buddha's vow-power, sentient beings can be born in the Pure Land, hence attaining non-retrogression. So he underlined reliance upon the other-power of Amitābha Buddha as opposed to reliance upon limited self-power.

Tanluan's emphasis on the importance of Amitābha Buddha's vow-power is based upon the aforementioned *Larger Sutra.* He specifically pointed out the eighteenth, eleventh, and twenty-second vows of the Forty-eight Vows to verify that it is the Buddha's vow-power that guarantees birth in the Pure Land and then attainment of non-retrogression. Basing himself on the *Discourse on Rebirth*, in order to attain rebirth, Tanluan stressed the necessity of religious practices, which are: prostrations, singing praises, making vows, insight meditation, and transfer of merit. He interpreted the five teachings in the *Discourse on Rebirth* as 1) one should always think of rebirth in the Pure Land and make prostrations to Amitābha Buddha; 2) one should recite the name of Amitābha Buddha with a single-pointed mind and definitive faith; 3) one should vow to be born in the Pure Land and stop doing evil deeds; 4) one should visualize the adornments and marks of Amitābha Buddha with right thought; and 5) one should dedicate one's merit accumulated through these practices to all beings and bring all sentient beings to the Pure Land. Moreover, he taught that one must generate the "unsurpassed awakening (*bodhicitta*)" in order to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

For Tanluan, the name of Amitābha Buddha constitutes the essence (*ti* 體) of the *Larger Sutra* and contains myriads of merit, which fulfills the aforementioned practices. Based upon the eighteenth vow in the *Larger Sutra* and the description of the lowest rank of the lowest grade of rebirth in the *Contemplation Sutra*, Tanluan taught that ten continuous recitations of the name of Amitābha Buddha (*shi nian xiang xu* 十念相續) would cause rebirth in the Pure Land. For him, *nian*, or calling on the name, means

calling to remember the Buddha Amitābha, not just oral invocation of the name as taught in the Japanese Pure Land tradition (Mochizuki 2000: 152-162).

Daochuo, inspired by Tanluan's teachings at age forty-eight, considered himself a disciple of Tanluan even though the latter had passed away long before Daochuo was even born. In particular, he was the first Pure Land thinker to proclaim the times to be the period of degeneration and extinction of the Buddha-Dharma (Ch. *mofa*, Jp. *mappō*), and he advocated that Buddhist practice should correspond to different temporal conditions. According to him, the period of degeneration had already begun, so the difficult way of self-cultivation was no longer a viable practice for people. Instead, people should turn to the easy way of practice, confessing and chanting the name of Amitābha.

Similar to Tanluan, Daochuo in his *Anle ji* 安樂集 (T47.1958, *A Collection on Sukhāvatī*, composed in the first half of the seventh century) stressed that *bodhicitta* is the original source of the Pure Land, and *nianfo samadhi* is the key practice for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land. He emphasized that the *nianfo samadhi* can remove the three poisons of desire, anger and ignorance and can also remove all obstacles in the past, present and future. Therefore, he advocated it exclusively. In addition, his *nianfo samadhi* consisted of both oral invocation and visualization practice (Mochizuki 1986: 70-75).

Shandao 善導 (613-681) was the direct disciple of Daochuo and came to enjoy even greater esteem than his master. After he "discovered by chance the liberating 'gate' of the Pure Land," he continued "his strenuous efforts in Amita contemplation and ascetic life" (Pas 82-4). He wrote the *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, which would have an enormous impact on Pure Land Buddhism and reflect the fundamentals of Shandao's Pure Land thought. According to the commentary, Vaidehī's story inspired him to realize that the desire to be released from samsara and be reborn in the Western Land is the fundamental core of Bodhicitta. In addition, he claimed that all beings born in the nine grades were common people (*fanfu* 凡夫), not saints and sages, and they were reborn in the Pure Land based upon the power of the Buddha. This teaching helped him make Pure Land practitioners confident of their practice. In his commentary, Shandao divided practices into correct (*zheng* 正) and supplementary (*zhu* 助) practices. The correct practices include the five main activities which would bring about the rebirth in the Pure Land: worshipping the Buddha, praising the Buddha, meditation and contemplation on

the Buddha, sutra chanting, and invoking the name of Amitābha Buddha. Shandao then selected the practice of chanting the name of Amitābha Buddha as the primary one and classed the others as supplementary practices.

Shandao also expounded the three kinds of faith discussed in the *Contemplation Sutra* as essential for rebirth: sincere faith, deep faith, and the faith with which one aspires to be reborn in the Pure Land. Shandao confirmed that these three faiths are the correct causes (*zhengyin*) for birth in the Pure Land. He especially emphasized that these three faiths are the most important and that practitioners should be sincere, exclusively practice Pure Land practices and keep practicing in their whole lifetime. Shandao's promotion of calling on the name as an easy and direct practice made Pure Land the most popular belief and made "Namo Amituofo" a symbol of Chinese Buddhism (Mochizuki 1986: 92-100).

Syncretism of Chan and Pure Land

Besides the two branches of Chinese Pure Land praxis aforementioned, meditative *nianfo* and calling on the name, there is another one in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, which advocates the syncretism of Chan and Pure Land practice (*Chanjing shuangxiu*). The representatives in the patriarchate are Yongming 永明 (904-975 CE), Zhuhong 袾宏 (1532-1612 CE) and Ouyi 藕益 (1599-1655 CE).

After the Huichang Persecution in 845, the Pure Land tradition and Chan existed side-by-side as the main Buddhist practices. At that time, there was a popular view that saw the Chan practice as the only true practice, whereas other practices were false because they were "conditioned dharma." Cimin 慈愍 (680-748) criticized this view in his *Jingtu cibei ji* 淨土慈悲集[2] (T85. 2826, *Collection on Compassion of the Pure Land*) (Mochizuki 1986:135). He advocated not only the syncretism of Chan and Pure Land but also the syncretism of Chan and the doctrine-oriented schools and the syncretism of the *vinaya* (the Discipline School) and Pure Land. Quoted by Yongming, Cimin stressed that: for the practitioner,

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[2] Compiled by Cimin, also called *Lue zhu jin glun nianfo famen wangsheng jingtu ji* 略諸經論念佛法門往生淨土集. It had 3 vols, but only Vol.1 is existent, rediscovered in Korea.

> Proper meditation means to concentrate the mind on one object continuously in one's thought.... He must not discard any of the myriad practices. He must dedicate all activities of his practice toward the birth in the Western Pure Land. If a practitioner of meditation can practice like this, his meditation becomes harmonious with the holy teachings. He becomes the eye for sentient beings, and all Buddhas will approve of him. All Buddha dharmas are equal and comply with suchness, leading to perfect enlightenment. (Shih Heng Ching 50)

Thus, Cimin conveyed that all Buddhist practices were means and were all equally effective in aiding practitioners to reach the final goal of becoming a Buddha. Cimin's thought was adopted by Yongming, later passed down to Zhuhong, Fazhao, and finally Ouyi.

Yongming is one of the most influential figures in the history of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. The syncretic nature of his thought can first of all be seen from his daily practices. He syncretized all kinds of different practices. For example, everyday, he recited mantras and sutras – such as the *Heart Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra*, meditated, preached, practiced *nianfo*, and offered food to hungry ghosts, and he dedicated the merit generated through all these kinds of practices to all sentient beings to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

In his *Wanshan tonggui ji* 萬善同歸集 (T48.2017, *Myriad Virtues Return to the Same Source*), Yongming set forth his Pure Land thought based on his Chan and Huayen background. His view of the Pure Land can be termed "Mind-only Pure Land" (*weixin jingtu*, 唯心淨土), in contrast to the physical and objective Western Paradise (*Xifang jingtu*, 西方淨土).

> For several centuries in China there had been two competing ways of thinking about Pure Land practice. The first was "Mind-Only Pure Land" (*weixin jingtu*), which held that the Pure Land appears when the mind is purified; or, to put it another way, that the transformation of the mind that comes with the attainment of Buddhahood also purifies one's surroundings. This style of thought has its roots in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and was further developed by the Tiantai School in its exposition of Pure Land practice. The opposing stream was "Western Pure Land" practice (*xifang jingtu*), which held that the Western Paradise of Amitabha Buddha was a real, concrete destination, and that the goal of Pure Land practice was to attain rebirth there after death. (Jones 1999: 118)

For Yongming, "the Pure Land is a projection of the Mind, that is, the Pure Land is the Mind alone" (Shih Heng Ching 160). As the *Vimalakīrti Sutra* stated, the purity of the Buddha's land reflects the purity of his own mind. Therefore, one only needs to purify

one's mind, and then one can realize the Pure Land here and now. Yongming's viewpoint of "Mind-only Pure Land," obviously, harmonized with Chan thought.

Yongming stressed that *nianfo* samadhi is a state of no-thought and no-word. For him,

> The practice of *nien-fo* is taught for those who do not believe one's mind is the Buddha and thus seek for the Buddha outside [of the Mind]. Those of medium and inferior faculties are expediently taught to concentrate their scattered thoughts on the physical features of the Buddha. Relying on the external in order to manifest the internal, one will be able to gradually awaken to One-mind [single-minded]. But those of superior faculties are taught to contemplate the true form of the body of the Buddha. (Yongming quoted in Shih Heng Ching 150)

Therefore, Yongming provided two approaches to *nianfo*. One is the meditative *nianfo* with "the mind of concentration" (*dingxin* 定心) for those with superior capability. The other is the oral invocational *nianfo* with "the mind of single devotion" (*zhuanxin*, 專心) for those with inferior capability. These methods are all means of training for internal realization (Shih Heng Ching 151-2).

As a successor of Yongming's syncretic thought, Zhuhong (1532-1612) also stressed the teaching of One-Mind, but when he commented on "reciting the name of the Amita Buddha wholeheartedly without confusion" (*zhi chi ming hao, yi xin bu luan* 執持名號 一心不亂) in the *Smaller Sutra*,

> Borrowing from Hua-yen terminology, Chu-hung distinguished two levels of "one mind" resulting from Buddha invocaton (*nien-fo*); the one mind of particularity (*shih i-hsin*) and the one mind of universality (*li i-hsin*)... While the first might be shallow, the second was profound, for it was not different from absolute reality (*shih-hsiang*) itself. Chu-hung used this concept to justify his syncretic approach to Buddhism in general and to prove the identity between Pure Land *nien-fo* and Ch'an meditation in particular. (Yü 5)

What makes his thought different from Yongming's is that Yongming treated the Pure Land and Chan as two separate practices for people with different capabilities, whereas in Zhuhong's thought Pure Land and Chan were not two.

Another point necessary to mention about Zhuhong is his successful promotion of lay Buddhism. During his time, "lay Buddhist associations grew increasingly popular, while the monastic order lost both prestige and vitality because of lack of discipline and the effects of secularization" (Yü 6). The rise of lay Buddhist movements in the late Ming shows "an increasing emphasis on self-enlightenment through a practical methodology

and a growing openness toward Confucianism and Taoism" (Yü 65). Zhuhong and his followers made many efforts to present to the educated literati-officials as well as to the common people a "sinicized Buddhism," which "put as much emphasis on civic virtue and filial piety as it did on compassion and wisdom" (Yü 6).

As the contemporary of Zhuhong, Ouyi was another famous monk in the late Ming advocating syncretism within Mahayana Buddhism. But for him, Chan (or meditation), the Teaching Schools (or the Dharma), and the Vinaya School come from one origin. Meditation is the mind of the Buddha (I think, the Buddha here means the Dharmakaya), the Dharma is the Speech of the Buddha, and the Vinaya is the practice of the Buddha. They are one practice instead of three separate things. Because people did not really understand this, they separated them into three schools.

Just like Zhuhong, Ouyi based his understanding of *nianfo* on the teaching that the mind, the Buddha, and all sentient beings are not different. He even went further to point out that the Pure Land practice of chanting the name of Amitābha Buddha, the Tiantai's meditation and four kinds of Samadhi, and the Bodhidharma's "pointing to the mind" all could be called *Nianfo* practices. For him, there are different practices of *nianfo*. There is first, *nian ta fo* 念他佛 (being mindful of the other Buddha). This is concentrating on the recollection and visualization of Amitābha Buddha. When practitioners reach the state of single-mindedness without confusion, they attain the *nianfo Samadhi* and hence, can be reborn in the Pure Land. The practice of Huiyuan of Mt. Lu is an example. The second type is *nian zi fo* 念自佛 (being mindful of the self Buddha). This is meditating on one's own mind, contemplating on the idea that this mind is identical with all Buddhas in the ten directions. Through this practice, the practitioners can be suddenly enlightened. Chan and Tiantai belong to this practice. Finally, there is *nian zi ta fo* 念自他佛 (being mindful of both self and other Buddha). This is that understanding that the mind, the Buddha and all sentient beings are identical; sentient beings are sentient beings in the mind of the Buddha; and the Buddha is the Buddha in the mind of the sentient beings. Practitioners can contemplate the features of the Buddha and his land and then manifest practitioners' own mind. Yongming and his followers belong to this practice.

In his famous commentary on the *Smaller Sutra*, Ouyi also stressed the importance of maintaining the faith, vow and practice and reciting the Buddha's name single-

mindedly all the time. But different from Zhuhong, who thought the Pure Land and Chan are identical, Ouyi emphasized that the Pure Land has Chan of the Pure Land, and Chan has the Pure Land of Chan, that is, Chan and Pure Land overlap. They should not be confused.

1.3 Reflection

The above description of the Chinese Pure Land tradition presents its historical development since the teaching was transmitted into China. Interacting with Chinese philosophies and culture, Chinese Pure Land Buddhism demonstrates variety and complexity. Unlike the Japanese Pure Land belief, which is a distinct institutional and autonomous entity, the Chinese Pure Land tradition always exists alongside with various Buddhist practices, becoming an integrated element functioning within all Chinese Buddhist schools (Getz 2002: 477).

Again unlike the Japanese tradition that only stresses faith in the Buddha and promotes the exclusive practice of oral invocation of the Amitābha Buddha's name, the Chinese Pure Land tradition syncretizes with Chan, the Teaching Schools, and the Vinaya School. Roughly, there were three branches of Chinese Pure Land thought and practice: 1) Huiyuan's meditative *nianfo*; 2) Shandao's calling on the name; and 3) Yongming's syncretic practice. Though there was a different focus in each branch, it is evident that, 1) all branches of practice emphasized the importance of self-effort of the individual; 2) all branches stressed the necessity of observing the precepts; and 3) all practices were based upon the idea of attaining *nianfo Samadhi*, not just oral calling of the name.

Compared with Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, where Shinran completely devaluated individual's capacity of making an effort which led to "licensed evil", thus negating the efficacy of ethics, "all Chinese Pure Land thinkers maintain that human moral efforts, such as ethical living, taking and keeping precepts, and making vows, are integral to Buddhist practice; they never question the need for them as essential elements of the Buddhist path" (Jones 2003: 4).

All these historical developments of the Pure Land teaching have provided a rich background to modern Chinese Pure Land movements. In the next chapter, I will give a

brief introduction about the immediate context, from which Yinguang's and Yinshun's Pure Land thought emerged: modern Chinese Pure Land Buddhism and its reform.

CHAPTER II

SUDDEN AWAKENING: CHINESE BUDDHISM ENCOUNTERS MODERNITY

There is a tendency to think that Chinese Buddhism reached its heyday during the Tang Dynasty and that Chinese Buddhism has declined after the Tang, because "no new sutras were being translated, no new doctrines were being formulated, and the sangha as a whole was of a qualitatively low caliber" (Yü 4). Especially in the late Qing (1840-1911) and Republican periods (1911-1949), because of socio-political chaos caused by warfare, economic problems, the confrontation with Western culture and science, and governmental corruption, Chinese Buddhism was encountering a big challenge for survival. Thus, in this chapter, I will examine the immediate context of modern Chinese Buddhism, the crisis Chinese Buddhism faced and the response of the Chinese Buddhist circle.

2.1 External Impact on Chinese Buddhism

Warfare and its Aftermath

From the time of the Opium War (1839-1842) up to the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), China was defeated in all its wars with other foreign forces. As a result, foreign forces imposed a series of unequal treaties on China and came to control areas of China as the establishment of foreign communities with extraterritorial privileges increasingly undermined Chinese sovereignty. These unequal treaties did much damage to the Chinese economy.

> China's military defeat by Great Britain and the subsequent infusion of western personnel and ideas into the country had created a piercing awareness of a fundamental disequilibrium between civilizations that had to be addressed. Not only had China's sovereignty been compromised, but the previously confident self-perception of the Chinese people had been seriously challenged. (Pittman 13-4)

In addition, the Manchu's[3] rule was also increasingly challenged from within. Civil rivalry erupted throughout the empire. For example, the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) led by Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814-1864), lasted for twenty years and brought

[3] A Tungusic people who originated in Manchuria, in the seventeenth century, they conquered Ming Dynasty and founded the Qing Dynasty, which ruled China until its abolition in 1912.

devastating consequences to Chinese Buddhism. Influenced by Confucian utopianism and Protestant Christianity, Hong Xiuquan declared that he was the son of God and younger brother of Jesus. Justified by their Christian background, the Taiping army roared northward through the central Yangzi valley to Nanjing and destroyed almost all Buddhist temples and statues in that area, which almost wiped out Buddhism from the Jiannan area, where the center of Chinese Buddhism was (Shi Dongchu 64-66).

Thus, humiliated by foreign powers and frustrated by peasant uprisings, Chinese literati and officials started to look for solutions and means to strengthen Chinese national power. For example, Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) suggested that traditional Chinese learning should be maintained as the essence and foundation of education and that Western learning could be studied for practical functions and applications, "*zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong* 中學為體, 西學為用."

In order to improve the school system to strengthen China militarily and industrially, Zhang proposed a program to confiscate monastery buildings for schools and monastery farm-lands in order to pay teachers' salaries. He suggested that "70 percent of the temples in China should be confiscated" (Welch 1968: 11).

Actually, this was just the beginning of a long struggle between Buddhists and non-Buddhists over monastic property. Confiscation kept occurring. For example, "during the period of warlordism, which intervened between the establishment of the Republic in 1911 and the triumph of Kuomintang in 1927, and during the divisions which continued even after this date" (Blofeld 23), land and other monastic properties were confiscated by the local governments to establish schools, hospitals, offices, and barracks. Partly because of the reasons mentioned above, many monasteries suffered a decline in their economy, which threatened their operation.

Impact of Western Culture

With the Western military conquest of China, Western influence enjoyed the highest esteem. Encountering Western religion, Chinese Buddhism could not remain unaffected. When they appeared in China, Christian missionaries wrote a lot of commentaries and records in which Chinese and Chinese Buddhists suffered humiliation by the Christian missionaries. However, as Welch stated,

> What did trouble the Buddhists was their inability to compete with the Christians materially. They did not have the unlimited funds that seemed to be available to missions...nor did they have the extraterritorial privileges that made it possible for missionaries to offer converts protection from Chinese law. Particularly resented was the fact that the 1929 Regulations for the Supervision of Monasteries and Temples applied to Buddhist and Taoist institutions, but not to Christian ones, which were of course exempt by "extrality [extraterritoriality]." (Welch 1968: 185)

Not only did Western missionaries regard Chinese to be inferior, some Chinese scholars who had received Western education also felt that the ancient Chinese legacy was out of date and that science was omnipotent and could solve all problems of life. They led a movement of cultural reassessment, which brought in its wake a crisis for the Buddhist Sangha.

For some intellectual leaders who emerged during the second and third decades of the twentieth century, all religions and ancient Chinese culture were conservative and had hindered China from modernization and from being a great power in the world. Therefore, the old literary, religious, political, and philosophical traditions should be entirely discarded. "Their aversion to religion was reinforced by another development in 1920's—the introduction and subsequent widespread popularity of Marxist ideas. The Marxist condemnation of religion very naturally included Buddhism as its target" (Ch'en, 455). These two anti-Buddhism sources -- war and Western culture-- brought about a number of discriminatory measures.

2.2 Internal Decline

Besides the exterior influences of warfare and Western culture, the most serious cause of decay of Chinese Buddhism was the degeneration in the morals and learning of monks within the Buddhist order. In the popular image, Chinese Buddhism was superstition and idolatry. The clergy was ignorant and corrupt. For many Chinese, the only thing they knew about Chinese Buddhism was the performance of rites for the dead.

> The main occupation of Chinese monks and nuns has been performance of rituals for funerals and other occasions. ... There can be no escape from the unpleasant fact that the sangha (Buddhist order) is a congregation of ignorant and selfish people to whom religious observance has no spiritual significance. (Chan 80)

The main reason for this sad state was the type of people who entered the Buddhist community.

During the Tang and Song dynasties, if an individual wanted to enter the monkhood, first one had to undergo a period of training before presenting an application. There were regulations for turning down an applicant. For example, if one had committed a crime or if one was a fugitive from the law or if a boy was under nineteen and a girl under fourteen years of age, then one would not be accepted (Ch'en 245).

However, in the early 20th century, according to Blofeld, it seemed that all kinds of people could become a monk no matter what their capacities were.

> The Order includes all sorts of people, many of them uneducated, such as those who prefer the security of monastic life to the effort of making a living for themselves, peasants who come to the temple as children in search of a livelihood, deserters from the army, runaway criminals, and only comparatively few who wish to renounce the world on moral or religious grounds. (Blofeld 27)

Most of the novices did not seek ordaination for spiritual reasons. In his interview with thirty-nine monks, Welch classified their reason for entering the sangha into seven categories: 1) escape from the world; 2) illness; 3) orphaned; 4) persuaded by relatives; 5) liked monastic atmosphere; 6) interested in Buddhism and 7) other reason. Though it was not a big sample, it did show that only 10 percent of monks entered into the monastic life because they were interested in Buddhism and an additional 15 percent because they enjoyed the monastic life (Welch 1973: 258-68).

In Chinese Buddhism, unlike the Japanese tradition, tonsure and ordination are different. One had to shave one's head, tonsure, before ordination, taking the precepts. In ancient times, candidates had to pass the ordination examination, which could include memorizing texts, lecturing on the scriptures, meditating and composing and commenting on a passage. "If the candidate were successful, he or she would be granted a certificate by the official in charge; then he went to his master for the tonsure and ordination" (Ch'en 246). However, since the Song, the sale of monk certificates was practiced on a large scale. In addition, the ordination examination was cancelled in the Qing dynasty. Thus, there was no more control to testify if one was qualified to be a monk.

After the ordination, theoretically, novices were supposed to spend the first five years in study of the monastic rules. Only after one fulfilled the Vinaya study, one could start to listen to Buddhist doctrine and take part in meditation. However, in fact, very few monks or nuns spent the first five years in a Vinaya center (Welch 1973: 304).

It might be safe to say that there was no formal Buddhist education after monks entered into the sangha in the modern period, because political and financial pressure on the monasteries and monks made it impossible; thus, they had no thorough understanding of Buddhist scriptures and did not do any practices. What they could do was perform funeral ceremonies to make a living. This might be a main reason for the degeneration of the Sangha.

The decline might also have been caused by the popularity of Chan practice. Based on Bodhidharma's gatha, "A separate transmission outside (scripture) teachings, not founded on words and letters, point directly at the human mind, see one's nature and attain Buddhahood," Chan postulates that "all knowledge gained from external sources is harmful in that it does not leave the mind free to grasp the 'intuitive knowledge' which can only be obtained through the practice of meditation" (Blofield 27). For example, the Sixth Patriarch Huineng is portrayed as an illiterate person from the South, who, nevertheless, received the true transmission of the Dharma. The legend of Huineng seems to exemplify the idea of "not founded on words and letters." However, when the teaching was misunderstood to mean that words and letters were of no use at all, young monks neglected the study of scriptures and the observance of the precepts. Without a deep understanding of the scriptures and with a decline in morality of the monks, the whole sangha, all Buddhist communities, declined.

2.3 Response of Chinese Buddhism

However, with decline and decay, a religious revival might be expected. The impact of the West, circuitously, led to the demand to establish Buddhist seminaries and to engage in social action as Buddhists.

> New publishing houses and bookshops were founded to give Buddhist literature a wider circulation. Schools were set up to provide a better education for monks and to train them how to spread the doctrine. Laymen organized Buddhist clubs, partly for social and charitable purposes (like a YMCA), and partly to hold sermons and worship (like a church). Ecumenical contact began with Buddhists abroad. At the same time, monks were trying to unite all the Buddhists of China in a single, national association. (Welch 1968: 1)

Buddhist Seminaries

To forestall confiscation, Chinese Buddhists tried to reform their traditional system of monastic education. "As of 1936 forty-five [Buddhist seminaries] were reported to be in operation" (Welch 1968:107).

> Since the most common reason for confiscating it [a monastery] was to start schools, monks decided to "get the jump" on the confiscators by starting schools for their own. These seminaries also served to give young monks a better knowledge of Buddhist doctrine and some acquaintance with science, history, and other modern subjects. (Welch 1976: 167)

For example, the seminary founded by Dixian at Guanzong si in Ningbo was divided into four sections: 1) the elementary section where monks learned not only monastic rules, but also received a primary education in Chinese history, Confucian classics, and arithmetic; 2) a preparatory course of Confucian literature and basic Buddhist texts; 3) the research center for exclusive Buddhist study; and 4) the dharma propagation center where monks learned how to lecture and teach (Welch 1968:108). Though most of the schools were forced to close from economic pressure, the programs did help to prepare properly trained leaders.

Social action

Inspired by Christian missionaries, Chinese Buddhist monks started to engage in all kinds of social welfare activities. The first instance was orphanages. According to J. B. Pratt's visit to some orphanages,

> The children of these institutions...are well cared for, carefully educated in the usual elementary subjects with modern methods, and in addition each is taught a trade. Daily worship in the Buddhist shrine is required and the fundamentals of the Buddhist religion—especially the Five Precepts—are inculcated. (Welch 1968: 124)

In addition to founding orphanages, the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) brought the sangha rescue teams into being. For example, in the August battle of Shanghai, the sangha rescue teams took part in transporting wounded soldiers and refugees from disaster areas to various receiving stations around the city.

> The war also gave monks the opportunity to play their more traditional role in offering asylum to people in distress.... In the four months following the rape of Nanking at the end of 1937, Ch'i-hsia Shan is said to have housed and fed thirty thousand persons. Those who could not be accommodated indoors were housed in tents. The monastery used up its own stores of grain and then borrowed grain from others. (Welch 1968: 128-9)

Moreover, promoted by Taixu, the program of prison visiting was also carried on by Buddhist monks.

2.4 The father of the revival

One of the most important effects of Western culture was to stimulate movements of reform and reorganization in the local religions. When talking about the various developments in modern Chinese Buddhist circle, the first important figure was the layman Yang Wenhui (1837-1911), "the father of the revival" (Welch 1968: 2). In 1866, he and other people who shared the same interest in Buddhism believed that the circulation of sutras was the only hope for people in the age of the decay of dharma. However, many Buddhist libraries had gone up in flames in the 1850's, and many scriptures were destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion. In order to replace these texts, he set himself the task of re-printing and distributing Buddhist scriptures. Yang and his comrades started to set up the Jinling Scriptural Press (Jinling, now Nanjing). In 1874, he built a building to store the wooden print blocks. "Thereafter, though Yang himself was away for long periods, the cutting and printing never halted" (Welch 1968: 4).

Yang Wenhui published the Chinese Tripitaka and distributed more than a million copies of Buddhist writings. His efforts to republish Buddhist texts led a current of publishing and circulating Buddhist texts all over the country.

> In the first years of the Republican a devout Buddhist in Shanghai reproduced the Japanese 卍 Tripitaka (Kyoto, 1902-5) of 8,534 *chüans* (parts) in forty volumes. In 1923 lay Buddhist intellectuals, notably Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Chiang Wei-ch'iao, Wang I-t'ing, together with Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei and other scholars, published in 720 stitched volumes the Hsu tsang-ching ("Supplement to the Tripitaka"), consisting of some 1,750 commentaries and subcommentaries; this was first published in Kyoto in 1905-12. In 1933-36 lay leaders Chu Ch'ing-lan and Yeh Kung-ch'o reproduced the 1238-1310 edition of the Tripitaka of 6,362 *chüans* in 570 stitched volumes. In 1934-35 many volumes of books in the Tripitaka were published by the Institute of Inner Learning under the series title *Tsang-yao* ("Important Works of the Tripitaka"). In 1935 forty-five works of the Sung Tripitaka were published in 120 stitched volumes by the San-shih Hsueh-hui of Peiping and the Sung Tripitaka Society of Shanghai under the title of *Sung-tsang i-chen.* A substantial part of the Ch'ing edition of 1735-38 was also republished. (Chan 60)

During two periods in London with the Chinese embassy, Yang Weihui was able to acquaint himself with modern science as well as with the work of such orientalist scholars as Max Müller. "He enjoyed the opportunity to investigate science and scholarship in different parts of Europe" (Welch 1968: 5). He studied English, politics and industry,

"and was so impressed with the importance of what he learned that he urged the Manchu government to send more of his compatriots abroad for study" (Welch 1968: 5). From his observations, Yang concluded that Buddhism was the religion most compatible with modern science and that the task of Chinese Buddhists was to introduce Buddhism to the Western world. To fulfill this mission, for Yang, it was necessary, first, for Chinese Buddhists to appreciate the significance of modern science and to see its relationship to Buddhist thought; and second, for Chinese Buddhists to be trained for the missionary task which lay ahead. To this end he opened a school, Jetavana hermitage (*Zhihuan jingshe*), for the training of Buddhist leaders in 1908. It was attended by a small group of young laymen and clerics, such as Dixian 諦閑, Yuexia 月霞, Yuanying 圓瑛, Taixu 太虛, Zhiguang 志光, Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無 among others.

> The twenty-four students enrolled (twelve monks and twelve laymen) were taught Buddhism by Yang himself, while other teachers (all laymen) gave the courses in English and Chinese literature. The only monk on the faculty, Ti-hsien, was dean of students (*hsüeh-chien*). In Buddhist studies, particular emphasis was given to the Dharmalaksana school, which Yang now felt to be the most compatible with science. (Welch 1968: 9)

Unfortunately, because of financial problems, the school shut down after one year. Nonetheless, the school provided monks with modern education and trained them to lecture in public. All the programs tried to help monks to be familiar with secular knowledge so that they could better defend the Dharma and their material properties. "Some of the monks who studied or taught in them [Buddhist seminaries] were to establish successor institutions that were far more permanent" (Welch 1968: 13).

In 1893, Yang met Anagarika Dharmapala, who founded the Mahabodhi Society in 1891 with the goal of restoring Buddhist places of pilgrimage in India and promoting a revival of Buddhism. Dharmapala first came to Shanghai hoping to gain support of Buddhists in China. Unfortunately, because of the chaotic political and social conditions, the monks refused to do anything for him. Then British missionary Timothy Richard (1845-1919), who had known Yang Wenhui nine years earlier, referred Dharmapala to Yang. Yang was impressed by Dharmapala's determination and sincerity in restoring Buddhism in India and spreading westward.

Another contribution of Yang Wenhui to modern Chinese Buddhism is that "he started the revival of interest in the

Dharmalaksana School" (Welch 1968:10). Yang's interest in the Dharmalaksana school created a movement of Dharmalaksana studies (*weishi xue*, eg. the Mind-only school), which became a common practice in Chinese intellectual circles. For example, Ouyang Jingwu, Taixu, Xiong Shili (1882-1968) and other scholars all engaged in the studies and applications of *Weishi xue*. The reason for *Weishi xue* being so popular was that *Weishi xue* was chosen by Chinese intellectuals to be the counterpart of Western philosophy and science (Li Mingyou 62).

2.5 Reformer Taixu

Another name that must be mentioned when we talk about modern Chinese Buddhism is Taixu (1889-1947). Taixu, called "the St. Paul of Chinese Buddhism" (Tsu quoted in Chan 56), was one of the monk students in the Jetavana Hermitage. Like his teacher Yang Wenhui, whose career "exemplified the early phases of the Buddhist revival, its middle and later phases" can be seen through the career of Taixu (Welch 1968: 15).

As a religious reformer, Taixu believed that Chinese Buddhism must take on the challenges from the ever-changing world. In 1913, he proposed "a threefold 'revolution' in Buddhism, through the regeneration of the clergy, the rededication of Buddhist properties for the benefit of the people, and the reconstruction of Buddhist doctrines" (Chan 56).

In China, there were two kinds of monasteries. One kind was called public monasteries, which housed most of the elite, perhaps five percent of the sangha. The other kind was the hereditary temples, which were unique to China. They were privately owned by a "family" of monks, composed of masters and disciples whose relationships were based on tonsure (Welch 1973: 129). Taixu suggested that some hereditary temples could be converted into public monasteries. "He believed that Buddhist land holdings were the common property of all followers of the religion and should be dedicated to the promotion of social welfare, particularly education" (Boorman quoted in Pittman 75).

To reform Chinese Buddhism, Taixu advocated a "new Buddhism." For him, the "new Buddhism must be (1) humanistic, (2) scientific, (3) demonstrative, and (4) world-wide" (Chan 56). In Taixu's sense, "new" did not mean "western," "foreign," or "anti-

traditional," but meant "the true, original essence of Chinese Buddhism, which needed to be rediscovered" (Pittman 89). For him, "History had shown that neither western humanism nor western religion could adequately support the creation of a global culture. Yet Mahayana Buddhism...could provide the foundation for a lasting world peace that would be an Asian gift to the rest of the world" (Pittman 89).

> He firmly believed that the propagation of that modern form of Buddhism held the keys not only to the salvation of his country but to the emergence of a just and peaceful global civilization. Accordingly, he recommended to the Mahayana community an ethical form of piety that centered bodhisattva practice not on exercises of religious philosophy, sitting meditation, or ritual observance but on expressions of enlightened social responsibility within the world. (Pittman 62)

Encountering western science, unlike other religions which were challenged by scientific discoveries, Taixu found Buddhism to be confirmed by science. Taixu stated that,

> Buddhism...holds that science does not go far enough into the mysteries of nature and that, if it were to go further, the correctness of the Buddhist doctrine would be even evident. The truths contained in the Buddhist doctrine concerning the real nature of the universe could make a real contribution to science and tend to bring about a union between it and Buddhism. (Taixu qoted in Blofeld 177)

For example, Taixu claimed that "modern astronomy agreed with the Buddhist theory of vast and many universes," and that "Einstein's theory of relativity confirms the Buddhist philosophy of Wei-shih [Mind-Only]" (Chan 88-9).

Furthermore, for Taixu, the foundation of a new Buddhism was "new" monks. He formulated "The Reorganization of the Sangha System." In his plan,

> T'ai-hsü divided up the sangha into departments, each with its own specialty. For example, according to one of his later schemes, China was to have ten thousand scholar monks, who earned academic degrees in four grades according to the number of years they spent at study. The highest grade would consist of eight hundred monks with the Ph.D., each of whom had studied for nine years. Twenty-five thousand monks were to engage in good works (nine thousand teaching Buddhism, seven thousand running hospitals, orphanages, and so on). Finally, a small number of elders would run sixty centers of religious cultivation, at which a thousand monks would meditate and recite Buddha's name. (Welch, 1968: 52)

Although this plan has never been put into practice, it is evidence that Taixu had an ideal image of the sangha system, in which monks and nuns were well-selected, educated, and living a truly serious religious life. In order to get monastic and lay support for his controversial proposal, he founded the Wuchang Buddhist Institute, the Minnan Buddhist Institute, and the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist College; he set up the Bodhi Society (*jue she*,

which later changed its name to *Haichao yin*, the Voice of the Sea Tide, a very successful Buddhist periodical), whose primary goal was "to publish research, edit collected works, sponsor lectures on Buddhism, and encourage religious cultivation" (Taixu quoted in Pittman 91).

According to this plan, stimulated by Christian organizations, Taixu suggested that Buddhists should be socially engaged, demonstrating a truly religious life.

> There have been lectures, study groups, scripture classes, libraries, museums, evangelistic meetings, Young Men's Buddhist Associations, Red Cross work, first aid during the war, hospitals, orphanages, famine and flood relief, collection and distribution of clothing, visits to prisons, caring for and liberating living creatures, and so forth. (Chan 82)

With this movement, there was a movement from other-worldliness to this-worldliness in Chinese Buddhism, which became the most important element of its humanistic manifestation, which Taixu called "the Buddhism for human life" (*renshen fojiao*) (Pittman 169).

To propose a "Buddhism for human life" or "Buddhism for the living" was in response to a kind of misunderstanding of Chinese Buddhism. In appearance, Chinese Buddhism seemed to be an ugly mixture of superstition, idolatry and corruption. Monks and nuns had no true understanding of the scriptures and of Buddhism itself, because most of them came into the order for any kind of reason, such as poverty, family trouble, even crime, all except for spiritual pursuit and faith. The main occupation had just been performance of rituals for the sick and the dead, which made people think that Buddhism was just a religion concerning life after death and other-worldliness.

The theoretical foundation of Taixu's proposal of Buddhism for the living was Buddhist. He argued that,

> The reason that common people criticize Buddhism as having nothing to do with human life or ethics is because they know only about the ways of escaping the world according to the Dharma of the three vehicles, and they do not understand the significance of the Mahāyāna teachings and the Dharma common to the five vehicles,[4] which explain human morality and instruct humans how to cultivate good thoughts and actions. (Taixu quoted in Pittman 172)

Venerable Yinshun, a student of Master Taixu, explained Taixu's approach as follows:

> Venerable Master Taixu... revealed that the real purpose of the Tathāgata's appearing in this world [was] to teach people to enter the Buddha-way from human lives. Thus, the method

[4] The five vehicles are the realms of human, the heavens, the sravakas, the pratyekabuddhas, and the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. The three vehicles are the sravakas, the pratyekabuddhas, and the buddhas and bodhisattvas

> for beginners emphasizes both practicing the ten good deeds (without abandoning the worldly affairs of daily life) and following the right deeds of the Human Vehicle to enter the Buddha Vehicle, instead of emphasizing practices of renunciation such as mindfulness of death. (Pittman 173)

Taixu not only emphasized the importance of the teaching of the bodhisattva's compassion, he also pointed out that Buddhism is to teach the truth and to respond to the needs of sentient beings. To state the truth is the essence of Buddhism (*ti* 體) and to help all beings is the function of Buddhism (*yong* 用). He stated that "practitioners must comprehend both the essence of Buddhist teaching as well as the variety of doctrinal and ritual expressions that have developed as Buddhists have responded to changing human and circumstances" (Pittman 174-5).

Therefore, Taixu highlighted the necessity and importance to be a perfect human in this world in order to attain enlightenment; and for him, being a perfect human was the core of the "Buddhism for the living." Later this teaching was taken by his student Yinshun, who "preferred '*renjian* 人間 (Buddhism for the human realm)' over '*rensheng* 人生 (Buddhism for human life)' to give even more emphasis to the fact that Buddhism should not just focus on the living but participate actively in human society" (Chandler 43). Furthermore, this teaching has become the doctrinal foundation of today's Taiwanese Buddhist movements, which I will discuss in a later chapter.

Given the brief description of modern Chinese Buddhism from 1840 to 1949, it was within this disordered background that the decline and revival of Chinese Buddhism happened simultaneously. Indeed, this period created an intricate and difficult context that challenged all Chinese Buddhists within and without Buddhist communities. It was in this context that Yinguang, the most influential Pure Land teacher in modern China, and Yinshun, a talented monk-scholar, emerged.

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF YINGUANG

Pic 2: Ven. Yinguang (1861-1940). Taken on his eightieth birthday.

Wing-tsit Chan, in his *Religious Trends in Modern China*, declares that Chinese Buddhism, in the last several hundred years, had "been finally reduced to the Pure Land . . . [and] become pure formalism without meaning or vitality. It was high time for a revival" (Chan 65). He also noticed that several religious trends emerged in modern Chinese Buddhism,

> (1) in understanding, from the T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen philosophy to Wei-shih Idealism, (2) in experience, from Pure Land formalism to pietism, (3) in practice, from the Disciplinary and Meditation Schools to the Mystical School, (4) in literature, from Chinese to Pali and Tibetan, (5) in attitude, from ritualistic performance to religious demonstration, (6) in leadership, from the clergy to the layman, and (7) in objective, from the other world to this world. (Chan 62)

For him, Master Yinguang is the best representative of the new Pure Land pietism. Though most people would consider Yinguang a definite conservative for his deep faith, devotion and pure religious life (Ch'en 460), according to Bellah's definition of different responses to the modernity, Yinguang, undoubtedly, belongs to neo-traditionalism, for he consciously defended traditional Chinese cultural values as a superior. In this chapter, I will examine Yinguang's Pure Land thought in relation to his historical background and his own life experience. In doing so, I would argue that Yinguang was a reformative neo-traditionalist.

3.1 Yinguang's Life

Early Years

According to Dongchu 東初, Yinguang was one of the venerable monks who possessed both wisdom in mind and virtue in action (Shi Dongchu 761). He was born on the twelfth day of the twelfth month in 1861, in Shanxi province, and was originally surnamed Zhao. Yinguang had two older brothers. As a youth with his elder brother in Chang'an (now Xi'an), he devoted himself to an intensive study of Confucian classics. At

that time, he read a lot of Cheng-Zhu 程朱[5] books, and agreed with the argument against Buddhism of Han Yu, Ouyang Xiu and other Confucian literati, who tried to defend and protect Confucianism for political reasons by denouncing Budhhism as a foreign and inferior religion.

Soon after he was born, he developed an eye illness. In his teenage years, because of his severe illness, he realized that this painful experience was a result of his bad karma, and that it was foolish to believe in the arguments against Buddhism. Thus, he decided to leave the householder life. When he was twenty-one years old in 1881, he took refuge at Lianhuadong Temple 蓮花洞寺 on Zhongnan Mountain 終南山 under the Ven. Daochun 道純.

According to his letter to the devotee Shao Huiyuan 邵慧圓, in the three months after he became a monk, his elder brother tricked him into going home. Yinguang managed to escape from home after staying for more than eighty days. He was afraid that his elder brother would come to catch him again, so he decided to leave the Lianhuadong Temple.

Itinerant Period

He first went to Lianhua Temple 蓮花寺 in Hubei province. Because he was not ordained yet, he had to offer to do the hardest work in order to get accommodation. His hard work and honesty won him respect and trust; the next year he was asked to take charge of the storehouse. During that time, while he was airing books in the sun, he happened to read the *Longshu jingtu wen* 龍舒淨土文 (T47.1970, *Longshu's Article on Pure Land*) by Wang Rixiu 王日休(d. 1173), which initiated his Pure Land belief (Yinguang 5: 499-501). Based upon his understanding after reading the *Longshu jingtu wen*, he realized that the Pure Land practice was the essential path to help people become liberated from *samsara*, the cycle of life and death.

Later Yinguang received full ordination from the Monk Yinhai 印海 at Shuangxi Temple 雙溪寺 in Xing'an 興安 County of Shanxi province. During the ordination period, due to his nice calligraphy, Yinguang was asked to take charge of writing things of all

[5] Cheng Hao 程顥, Cheng Yi 程頤, and Zhu Xi 朱熹, the founders of neo-Confucianism.

kinds, which made his eye disease flare up again. He began to chant "Amituofo" in his spare time. He was so diligent in chanting that even though there was a lot of work, his eyes became well by the end of the ordination period. This personal experience gave him confidence in the inconceivable power of the Pure Land teaching.

After his full ordination, Yinguang became an itinerant monk again. During this period, his experience staying at Mt. Hongluo 紅螺山 laid a foundation for his Pure Land thought and practice. On the mountain, there was the Zifu Temple 資福寺, a center for Pure Land practice established by Jixing Chewu 際醒徹悟 (1741-1810), the Twelfth Patriarch of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. Chewu was originally a Chan monk, but devoted himself exclusively to the Pure Land path in his middle age. Chewu advocated that one should generate *bodhicitta* (*putixin* 菩提心), the unsurpassed awakening, and develop faith and vows before he or she starts to practice *nianfo*. He listed four states of mind: a mind of shame, a mind of joy, a mind of great sorrow, and a mind of gratitude. He believed that if one can develop even one of the four minds, one's pure karma would be fruitful. Chewu was not concerned about the methods of *nianfo*, either oral recitation or mental visualization and recollection, but emphasized that one should hold the name of Amitābha in one's mind all the time (Jones 2000: 43-52).

When Yinguang arrived at Hongluo Mountain, Chewu had died. But it was evident that Yinguang was deeply influenced by Chewu. According to his biography in "The Recorded Sayings and Acts of Master Yinguang" (*Yinguang dashi yanxinglu* 印光大師言行錄), Yinguang read and followed the teachings in the "The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Chewu" (*Chewu chanshi yulu* 徹悟禪師語錄) and never stopped even in his old age. Later when Yinguang recompiled *Jintu shiyao* 淨土十要 (The Ten Essential Texts of Pure Land Buddhism), he attached the *Recorded Sayings* to the book. During his four-year stay at Zifu Temple, besides practicing the recitation of the Buddha's name, Yinguang was also in charge of the incense and lamp, dorm management and other posts (*Yinguang dashi quanji*, vol. 5, 2269-70).

In 1893, due to his outstanding spirituality, Yinguang was invited by Monk Huawen 化聞 to accompany him back to the Fayu Temple 法雨寺 of Putuo Mountain 普陀山.

When he arrived at the temple, Yinguang settled down in the library. From then on, he remained at the Temple for thirty years, reading through the Chinese Buddhist Canon.

In the summer of 1897, unable to refuse the masses' request, Yinguang preached on *Mituo pianmongchao* 彌陀便蒙鈔 (Comments on the Smaller Sutra). After that, he isolated himself for *nianfo* practice for six years. In order to attain *nianfo* samadhi, Yinguang focused on the Pure Land practice of recitation of the Buddha's name day and night. Obsessed with the practice, he did not even want his name to be heard but called himself "*Chang cankui seng* 常慚愧僧" (the monk who always feels ashamed).

In 1911, when the devotee Gao Henian 高鶴年 (1872-1962) went on a pilgrimage to Putuo Mountain, he happened to get some copies of Yinguang's writing and published them on the *Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報 (Newspaper of Buddhist Collections) under the name of "Changcan 常慚 (always feels ashamed)." His writing received a lot of attention from the Pure Land practitioners, and this initiated Yinguang's preaching career. In 1918, Xu Weiru 徐蔚如 (1860-1937) and other lay people collected more of Yinguang's letters and articles and compiled the *Yinguang Fashi Wenchao* 印光法師文鈔 (Writings of Venerable Yinguang). With more writings compiled and published, more and more readers and practitioners were enlightened by Yinguang's clear, sincere, and inspiring teaching. After that, Master Yinguang's teaching and reputation spread all over the country, even to the South Sea Islands (Yinguang 5: 2272-3).

Last Ten Years

With his increasing reputation, there were more and more Buddhists who came or wrote to him to get instruction and advice on their Buddhist practice. In order to get more time for his own practice, Yinguang decided to find a quiet place so that he could concentrate on practice. In 1930, Yinguang shut himself in at the Baoguo Temple 報國寺 in Suzhou. During this time, Yinguang set up the rules and regulations for the Lingyan-shan Temple 靈嚴山寺 to establish a place for Pure Land practice at Mt. Lingyan 靈嚴山 in Suzhou, which later became an influential Pure Land temple for thousands of Chinese Buddhists. In the winter of 1937, due to the critical situation of the Sino-Japanese War,

Yinguang moved to Lingyan-shan Temple. Three years after, he welcomed his death at the Temple.

At the end of his life, he still taught monks that the Pure Land practice was nothing unique but simply required the practitioner to be sincere; if one could fulfill this requirement, one could certainly be received by Amitābha Buddha and be born in the Pure Land. The cremation ceremony was held a hundred days after his death. There were different kinds of relics left, which were collected and worshiped at the temple. The Lingyan-shan Temple followed his teachings, becoming a center preserving the Pure Land practice, and continuing to teach and spread the Pure Land belief (Yinguang 5: 2366-7).

After Master Yinguang passed away, his works plus the memorial articles of his followers were collected, and published as *Yinguang dashi quanji* 印光大師全集 (The Complete Works of Master Yinguang), in seven volumes in total. This collection is an indispensable source of Master Yinguang's life and thought, on which this study is based.

Master Yinguang is seen as the most successful and influential monk in spreading Pure Land practice in modern China. As Master Taixu had praised, "up to the end of Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republican period, the one who devoted his whole life to carry on the responsibility of spreading the Pure Land tradition, and who was perfect in both understanding and practice was Master Yinguang" (Yinguang 7: 4). He was credited by the Ven. Hongyi as the only worthy in three hundred years of contemporary history.

3.2 Yinguang's Pure Land Thought and Teaching

Yinguang emphasized Pure Land's practicality and applicability for ordinary people in the degenerate stage of the Dharma. He stated that,

> There is no difference between expensive and cheap medicine, but the one that cures the disease is better; there is no difference between good and bad dharma, but the one that fits the situation is more skillful. In the past, people were of high capacity, and there were a lot of good teachers around; therefore, one could get enlightened by practicing any kind of practice. However, in the present, people are of low capacity. There are very few good advisors who can teach; therefore, if one abandons the Pure Land practice, there is no way to get enlightened. (Yinguang 1: 357; author's translation)

For Yinguang, to practice Pure Land Buddhism was the best choice in order for all beings to be liberated from the suffering world. He considered the people in the

degenerate age to have less wisdom and more evil karma. It was very difficult for them to be freed from *samsara* and to attain enlightenment through their own abilities or through any means other than the Pure Land practice.

Yinguang believed that the Pure Land tradition is one branch of Mahayana Buddhism; hence, to be born in the Pure Land, one not only needs to observe the precepts and develop deep belief and vows, but one also needs to generate *bodhicitta*, the mind of enlightenment. This is because, for Yinguang, Amitābha Buddha's power, on which a Pure Land practitioner must depend, is Amitābha Buddha's *bodhicitta* to save all beings in *samsara*. Therefore, a practitioner must develop *bodhicitta* and compassion for the sake of all sentient beings.

The Pure Land practice also includes both self benefit and the benefit of others. From Yinguang's point of view, one has to benefit oneself first, and then he or she can truly benefit others. He indicated that "if one cannot benefit oneself, it is impossible for him or her to really benefit others. The two should not be separated. However, benefiting others is one of the vows; benefiting oneself has to be done with a full purpose" (*Yinguang dashi quanji*, Vol. 1, 357; author's translation). Yinguang's stress on self-benefit was obviously different from Shinran's thought about individual incapability. Though Yinguang acknowledged the individual's dull faculty, self-effort, for him, was necessary and essential. In addition to emphasizing the recitation practice, Yinguang underlined comprehending the law of causation and retribution and encouraged people to observe the five precepts and the ten good deeds.

Syncretism with Confucianism

Yinguang's thought might be summarized under two aspects. The first is giving importance to human relations, putting forth the utmost effort to fulfill one's duties and general obligations (敦倫盡分), keeping out depravity and fostering sincerity (閑邪存誠). This shows the influence of Confucianism. The second aspect is having deep belief in the law of cause and effect (深信因果), and concentrating on the practice of recitation of the Buddha's name with deep faith and desire (信願念佛).

It is obvious that much of Yinguang's thought has its source in Confucianism. For Yinguang, Buddhism includes Confucianism. Both traditions were established by saints

to help people discover their inherent essence. They have a similar substance, but regarding means and goals, there is a difference between the two religions. Yinguang stressed that,

> [a]lthough the principles of Confucianism and Buddhism are similar,...at a deep level, there is great disparity like the distance between heaven and earth. Why do I say so? Sincerity is the root of Confucianism; attaining enlightenment is the goal of Buddhism. Sincerity is the original, untarnished human nature; sincerity is the rise of understanding and realization. Understanding, in turn, extends sincerity. When sincerity and understanding become one, it is called realizing original nature. Enlightenment includes original enlightenment and initial enlightenment; the original enlightenment is the rise of the initial enlightenment, the initial enlightenment causes one to realize the original enlightenment, when these two enlightenments become one, it is called attaining Buddhahood. The original enlightenment corresponds to sincerity, and the initial enlightenment to understanding. According to this, Confucianism and Buddhism have no difference....Regarding the method, extent, and sequence of the practice, although Confucianism and Buddhism are the same in essence, what they realize and attain are greatly different. Can a Confucian's recognition of original human nature be the same as the Buddha's perfect breaking off from the three delusions[6] and the complete possession of merit and wisdom? Or can it be the same as a *dharmakāyamahāsattva*'s [7]gradually destroying ignorance and seeing Buddha nature? Or can it be the same as a *Śrāvaka* or a *Pratyekabuddha*'s[8] extinguishing the delusions arising from incorrect views and thoughts? ... That's why I say that the essence is the same, but the results and goals of the practice are different. (Yinguang 4: 1612; author's translation)

According to this, Yinguang suggested that Buddhism and Confucianism can be syncretized mutually. If one fully understands Buddhism, then he or she would know that Buddhism has its own ethical teaching, which is in line with Confucian ethics and its advocacy of filial piety and benevolence, but the Buddhist teaching of the law of cause and effect can deepen the understanding of the Confucian ethical teaching. In response to the popular interpretation of Buddhism, in which Buddhist monks leave their households without fulfilling their duties as a normal family member, Yinguang argued that

> one should know that Buddhism is a common practice for the ten dharma realms. No one should not practice, and no one cannot practice. That someone considers Buddhism a tradition of abandoning human relationships and destroying the Path, is like a blind statement by one who cannot see color. Why do I say so? When listing the good words and admirable conducts of the conventional world, Buddhist teachings state detailed

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[6] In Tiantai teaching, the three delusions are: delusions arising from incorrect views and thoughts (*jiansihuo* 見思惑); delusions which hinder knowledge and are as numerous as the number of grains of sand in the Ganges river (*chenshahuo* 塵沙惑); and delusions which hinder knowledge of reality (*wuminghuo* 無明惑). The first type of delusion is dealt with by followers of Hinayana as well as Mahayana. The latter two types are destroyed only by bodhisattvas. See Soothill & Hodous, 見思惑, 塵沙惑, 無明惑.

[7] One who has freed himself from illusion and attained the six spiritual powers

[8] Śrāvaka, that of the hearer or obedient disciple; Pratyekabuddha, that of the enlightened for self; these are described as Hinayana because the objective of both is personal salvation. See Soothill & Hodous, 聲聞, 緣覺.

> admirable conducts of the conventional world, Buddhist teachings state detailed explanations of their past causes and present effects and present causes and future effects. Thus, when talking about loving-kindness, filiality and so on, Buddhism is the same as Confucianism. However, the Buddhist teaching of the causation of the past, present and future life is not heard of in Confucianism. (Yinguang 1:31; author's translation)

Furthermore, Yinguang emphasized the importance of the Confucian ethical teaching for one's Buddhist practice. For him,

> to practice Buddhism, one first should try one's best to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of a human being, and then one can aim for Buddhist practice. Buddhism includes all dharmas of worldliness and other-worldliness. Thus, with a father we talk about loving-kindness; with a son we talk about filial piety. Buddhism asks everybody to fulfill his or her mundane duties. Then one can practice other-worldly dharma. For example, if one wants to build a lofty tower, first one must firmly construct the foundation and dredge a channel. Then, the tower can be built up and will never fall apart. Otherwise, if the foundation is not secure, the tower will crash into pieces before it is done. (Yinguang 4: 1640; author's translation)

Thus, Yinguang treated the Confucian teachings of filial piety and sincerity, among others, as the fundamental conditions of the Pure Land practice. He discussed this idea several times in his writings. For Yinguang,

> A person who was unfilial and who failed to fulfill the duties implicit in his or her social role would have a much harder time perfecting his or her practice and attaining rebirth in the Pure Land. Filiality constituted the root of all morality, and the unfilial son or daughter could not enter the path. (Jones 1999: 118)

Yinguang also took the Confucian teaching of sincerity and reverence into Buddhist practice, making it a special requirement for Pure Land practitioners.

> Although Buddha Recitation is simple, it is very deep and encompassing. The most important thing is to be utterly sincere and earnest, for only then will your thoughts merge with those of Amitabha Buddha and will you reap true benefits in this very life.... Nowadays, there are quite a number of scholars who study Buddhism. However, almost all of them simply read the words of the sutras and commentaries seeking arguments and rationalizations to prove that they are versed in the Dharma. Those with the sincerity and devotion to cultivate according to the Dharma are few indeed! ... One-tenth of reverence and devotion annihilates one-tenth of afflictions and evil karma, and increases merit and wisdom by one-tenth—and this applies to two-tenths, three-tenths to total reverence and devotion. Conversely, the more lax and disrespectful you are, the more obstructions and evil karma you develop, resulting in a corresponding decrease in merit and wisdom. (Yinguang 2003:24; Thich Thien Tam's translation)

To the full extent, Yinguang syncretized Confucian ethics into Buddhism, making it a prerequisite stage of Buddhist practice.

Although this was not Yinguang's original idea, this syncretism of Confucian ethics and Pure Land belief might be seen as Yinguang's *upaya*, or means, to prevent the populace from going astray in the chaotic contemporary context, in which Buddhism was challenged by Western science, culture and religion. By advocating Confucian ethics which had long been accepted as a social norm, Yinguang attracted believers and mainstream literati to make an effort to pursue the religious goal of being reborn in the Pure Land.

Law of Cause and Effect

Yinguang laid overwhelming stress on the teaching of the law of cause and effect. For Yinguang, "this teaching can solve superficial and fundamental problems. Following the teaching, the beginners can rectify their wrongdoings and practice good deeds; the experts can break off delusion and realize the truth" (Yinguang 4:1551; author's translation).

Moreover, the national and personal crisis encountered in contemporary China, for Yinguang, was just retribution for people's wrongdoings. If people had understood the law of cause and effect, and if they had followed the traditional ethical teaching to live their lives, they would not have experienced this. Thus, Yinguang emphasized familial education, because the family is where people first learn ethics. For him, a successful familial education, which teaches a child filial piety, brotherly friendship, loyalty, honesty, industriousness, thriftiness, gentleness and so on, would prepare the child to be an ethical individual and thus help build a peaceful and well-functioning society.

Furthermore, Yinguang emphasized the importance of having a good familial education for a daughter. For him, first there must be a virtuous mother, and then there will be a sage who is taught by the virtuous mother. Because the mother, through fetal development, cultivates the child at the very beginning, the child is expected to develop good roots in accordance with his or her original nature (Yinguang 4: 1647).

Yinguang also paid attention to social education of the law of cause and effect. In his lectures and writings, Yinguang particularly advocated refraining from killing, unwholesome sexual conduct, the releasing and saving of living beings, as well as keeping vegetarian eating style. He founded the *Honghua she* 弘化社 (Society of

Promoting and Spreading Buddhist Teaching) to spread Buddhist teachings through book distribution. About four or five million books, such as *Anshi quanshu* 安士全書 (The Complete Work by Anshi) and *Liaofan sixun* 了凡四訓 (The Four Lessons of Liaofan) which Yinguang thought were basic textbooks about the law of cause and effect were distributed. Under his influence, many monks and lay practitioners went to jails to teach prisoners the principles of causation and retribution, and the Pure Land dharma gate. Many prisoners were reclaimed and converted.

Yinguang's Traditionalism

Yinguang's Pure Land thought, on one hand, propounded the importance of the Confucian ethical practice. On the other hand, it followed the traditional doctrines as transmitted by the Chinese Pure Land patriarchs.

For Yinguang, Pure Land Buddhism was taught by Śākyamuni Buddha and the Buddhas in all ten directions. The Pure Land tradition was advocated by Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Nāgārjuna, as well as by ancient masters such as Zhizhe, Shandao, Yongming, Zhuhong, Ouyi, among others. In the Buddhist Canon, there are three Pure Land sutras, and the *Flower Ornament Sutra* and *Lotus Sutra* teach the Pure Land practice. These are all proof of the authenticity of the Pure Land tradition. Thus the teaching must be given credit.

Moreover, Yinguang emphasized that the very reason for Śākyamuni Buddha's emerging in this world was to teach all sentient beings to realize ultimate reality as a Buddha does. However, due to the different capabilities of all beings, some of them cannot be liberated solely on their own. Therefore, the Buddha revealed that the Pure Land belief teaching *nianfo*, which relies on the great vow-power of Amitābha Buddha, can help beings of all three capacities (i.e. high, medium, and low capacities) to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

Yinguang inherited traditional Chinese Pure Land thought and emphasized that the Pure Land practice, *nianfo*, is the essential way that can liberate all beings from the cycle of life and death. There are four kinds of *nianfo*: 1) *shixiang nianfo* 實相念佛, which is contemplating on the ultimate reality and repeating the Buddha's name; 2) *guanxiang nianfo* 觀想念佛, which is contemplating Amitābha Buddha in the mind and repeating his

name; 3) *guanxiang nianfo* 觀像念佛, which is contemplating the image of Amitābha Buddha and repeating his name; and 4) *chiming nianfo* 持名念佛, which is holding the name. However,

> sentient beings in the Dharma-Ending Age [*mofa*] have agitated discursive minds. Visualizing subtle realms with such coarse minds is certainly difficult to accomplish! Therefore, the Great Sage [Buddha Sakyamuni] took pity and specifically recommended the practice of holding the name, because it is easy to attain continuous single-mindedness by reciting the name. (Yinguang 2003: 197; Thich Thien Tam's translation)

From Yinguang's writing and teaching, it is evident that he held Master Shandao in high esteem. Following Shandao's teaching, Yinguang, too, advocated the exclusive practice of holding the name.

> The Pure Land Patriarch Shan Tao ...did not advocate the mystical and sublime but merely emphasized everyday, ordinary realities. His teachings on Exclusive Practice and Sundry Practices are extremely useful. Exclusive Practice consists of the body bowing exclusively to Amitabha Buddha, the mouth exclusively repeating the Buddha's name, and the mind focusing exclusively on the Buddha's name. Out of ten thousand cultivators who practice in such manner, ten thousand are assured of rebirth in the Pure Land. Sundry Practices entail engaging in various methods of cultivation while dedicating the merits accrued toward rebirth in the Western Land. Since the practitioner's mind is not focused or single-minded, it is difficult to accumulate merits. Thus, only one or two out of [one] hundred, three or four out of [one] thousand can hope to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land. These are true, golden words of advice, immutable throughout the ages. (Yinguang 2003: 90-1; Thich Thien Tam's translation)

Master Ouyi's teaching is another important source of Yinguang's Pure Land thought, especially those in Ouyi's commentary on the *Smaller Sutra*, which emphasized that faith and vows are the decisive factors of being born in the Pure Land. Yinguang praised the commentary as a "work by Amitābha Buddha." For Yinguang,

> merely reciting the Buddha's name, without Faith and Vows, falls in the category of self-power. Without Faith and Vows, the practitioner cannot merge with the vow-power of Amitabha Buddha....Elder Master Ou I has said: "To achieve rebirth in the Pure Land or not depends entirely upon Faith and Vows; the grade of rebirth (high or low) depends on whether one's practice of Buddha Recitation is deep or swallow." This is a true statement not subject to change. (Yinguang 2003: 132-3; Thich Thien Tam's translation)

The Practice of *Nianfo*

Concerning the practice of *nianfo*, Yinguang suggested that in addition to recollecting the Amitābha Buddha in one's mind, one also needs to make use of his or her body to worship and of oral invocation as accessorial practice. "This is because body,

speech and mind reinforce one another. ...Ordinary beings often have lethargic, scattered minds. If they are not assisted by their bodies and mouths, it is difficult for them to achieve one-pointedness of mind" (Yinguang 2003: 130; Thich Thien Tam's translation).

In his letters to devotees, Yinguang taught the morning Ten Recitations Method, established by Master Ciyun 慈雲 (964-1032) for rules and officials, to help them to keep practice regular even when they are busy in their daily lives. That is, in the morning, standing straight, one should join one's palms and single-mindedly recite the name of Amitābha Buddha as many times as one can in one breath, each breath counting as one recitation. This method is good for focusing one's mind. One should recite thus for ten times (Yinguang 2003: 61-2; Thich Thien Tam's translation). However, the morning Ten Recitation Method was not good for long-time practice, because it would harm the practitioner's body and make him or her sick.

Thus, in order to help ordinary people to achieve single-pointedness, Yinguang concluded his Ten Recitations Method from his own experience of many years practice. He expounded as follows,

> if you experience difficulty in reaching one-pointedness of mind, you should focus your mind and recite with care. The main criteria of such concentration are utter sincerity and earnestness. It is very difficult to achieve one-pointedness of mind without utter sincerity. However, sincerity is not enough. You should next listen attentively to the recitation. Whether or not recitation is performed aloud, it should originate from the mind. It then proceeds from the mouth and enters the ears (even if you recite silently, the marks of oral recitation still exist in the mind). With mind and mouth reciting clearly, the ears hearing clearly and the mind thus concentrated, deluded thoughts will cease by themselves. (Yinguang 2003: 52; Thich Thien Tam's translation)

This method was practiced by Yinguang himself. Along with the morning Ten Recitation Method, Yinguang thought both methods were skillful ways to subdue the deluded mind. The ten-*nian* practice could be practiced in any kind of situation all the time. The practitioner could adjust his or her pace according to the surrounding conditions and recite aloud or silently.

From the above analysis, we can easily see out that, due to his own life experience and the social, cultural context, Master Yinguang not only carried on the Chinese Pure land tradition, he also adopted the Confucian ethical teaching to expound the essence and practice of the Pure Land tradition.

3.3 Yinguang's Response to the West

According to Jones, Yinguang's "main contribution may well lie in the zeal with which he defended Pure Land thought from its detractors and resolved doubts as to its efficacy" (Jones 1999: 119). Yinguang's Pure Land thought, which syncretized the Confucian ethical teachings into Buddhist practice, makes Buddhism practical to both worldly and other-worldly life, becoming an applicable devotional system.

Although Yinguang and Master Taixu are considered the two most influential monks of the Republican era, obviously, they both influenced modern Chinese Buddhism in different ways. Unlike Taixu, Yinguang did not seem to want to be connected with political issues. The period, from his "leaving home" to his death, was the most troublesome time in modern China, but there is little account of it in his life record. In addition, in his correspondences, he hardly mentioned any political or other worldly matters. Even when Yinguang remarked on the chaotic and catastrophic life of Chinese people, he explained it with the Buddhist teaching of the law of cause and effect; taking advantage of the disastrous example, he encouraged the practitioners to concentrate on their Pure Land practice to be saved from this suffering world. It seemed that he was a traditional Buddhist monk, focusing only on religious practice and totally ignoring the Western impact.

As Taixu noticed, Yinguang also acknowledged that the Chinese sangha was corrupt. However, different from Taixu's advocation of reform of monastic education, Yinguang held that the quality of the people who wanted to become monks was not satisfactory, that they did not enter the monasteries for spiritual pursuit, and that Buddhism could also be practiced by lay people. Therefore, in his own life, he insisted that he would not be anyone's tonsure master and did not receive any disciples. In contrast, he propagated Buddhist teaching to the populace through publishing and distributing Buddhist texts. In other words, he created a lay-oriented, secular form of Buddhism by emphasizing the Pure Land tradition and Chinese traditional values, which made Yinguang's Pure Land movement a part of a larger secularization movement in Chinese Buddhism.

In his essay, "Transitions in the Practice and Defense of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," Jones lists Yinguang as "a tireless denouncer of modernist interpretations of

Pure Land" (Jones 2003: 128), and as "one of the most important Buddhist reformers" (Jones 2003: 115). This might be the best description of Yinguang's position. Yinguang was traditionalist in content, for he defended the traditional Pure Land teaching in particular and ancient Chinese culture in general; but meanwhile, he was modernist in style, because he brought more secular and more lay-oriented Pure Land Buddhism into being. According to Bellah's conceptual framework of different attitudes toward modernity, namely reformist and neo-traditionalist, Yinguang's position was neo-traditionalism because of his effort to "keep the change [of Pure Land teaching] to a minimum and defend the *status quo* [of Pure Land teaching] as far as possible" (Bellah 213). But he was also reformist, because he constructed a modernist version of the Chinese Pure Land tradition.

CHAPTER IV
YINSHUN'S PURE LAND THOUGHT AND ITS CHALLENGE


Pic 3: Ven. Yinshun (1906-2005)

Yinshun (1906-2005), as a student of Master Taixu, has become a representative figure in modern Chinese Buddhism. His thought of *Renjian fojiao* (Buddhism of the Human Realm) has become the mainstream teaching of contemporary Taiwan Buddhism and Chinese Buddhist movements. In this chapter, we will look at the background of his thought and his life and his attitude toward Chinese Buddhism as a whole. Then we will examine his critique of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. By doing that, I will argue that, though he appeared to be a reformist, Yinshun actually was a neo-traditionalist.

4.1 Yinshun's Life

Early Years

Venerable Yinshun was born in the third month of 1906, in Haining County of Zhejiang Province. His lay name was Zhang Luqing (張鹿芹). He was born prematurely and suffered numerous illnesses in his life. In 1911, the first year of the republican period, his father took him to the town where he worked to get preliminary education for his son. Although being very shy, "he proved to be an exceptional student especially skillful in writing" (Pittman 265). Through this newly discovered talent, Yinshun could comfortably express his thoughts. With this talent, he later devoted his life to philosophical and religious writings.

Yinshun's life took another turn when he graduated from middle school. He stumbled upon the subject of immortality. Three years later, he took up a teaching position in the primary school from where he himslef had graduated. During this period, he extended his knowledge by reading books on philosophy and religions, like Daoism, Confucianism and Christianity. After critically speculating on these philosophies and

religions, he finally turned to Buddhism, which he thought was "reasonable, comprehensive, and helpful" (Pittman 266).

According to Yinshun's own record, the reason he decided to become a monk was that he was dissatisfied with the gap between the actuality of Chinese Buddhism and the real Buddhist Dharma and wanted to propagate authentic Buddhism and the real truth.

> When I was in my hometown, occasionally, I heard about Buddhism. However, Buddhism in my hometown had declined; unlike in Taiwan, the priests there were only interested in doing funeral and memorial services. After I was aware of the existence of Buddhism, I tried to read a couple of scriptures and treatises. And I had two kinds of sentiments. On the one hand, the theories of Buddhist dharma are so profound, the essence of the Dharma is so significant; on the other hand, the Dharma is one thing, the current Buddhism is another thing. Like the Buddhist priests in my hometown, it seemed that there was a relatively remote distance between the Dharma in scriptures and the reality of current Buddhism. (Yinshun 1993: 5: 62; author's translation)

Because of his dissatisfaction with actuality, Yinshun started looking for monastic education. He was tonsured in 1930 by the monk Qingnian 清念 at Fuquan Monastery 福泉庵, and received full ordination in 1931 at Tiantong Monastery 天童寺 under the Ven. Yuanying 圓瑛.

Searching for the Dharma

In addition to understanding what Buddhism was about, Yinshun also desired to find out how and why the profound and significant teachings of Buddhism had become a kind of folk belief and custom. Since Buddhism had been transmitted to China for many centuries, he wondered whether the corruption occurred because Buddhism had been affected by Chinese culture or because it was already corrupted in India (Yinshun 1993: 5: 5). Based upon his own reading and understanding, Yinshun concluded that Buddhism had become corrupted during its transmission from India to China. Therefore, he attempted to recover and spread the original Buddhist teaching. In 1931, Yinshun went to Minnan Buddhist Seminary 閩南佛學院 in Xiamen to pursue systematic Buddhist education. At that time Ven. Master Taixu was the president of the institute. Durign his time in the Seminary, *Sanlun* 三論 (Mādhyamaka) and *Weishi* 唯識 (Mind-only) were popular. Recognized as a gifted student, Yinshun soon started to lecture at the seminary.

Unfortunately, because of health problems, he had to leave for recuperation. From 1934 to 1937, except for half year at Wuchang Seminary 武昌佛學院 and half year at Minnan Seminary, Yinshun spent three years reading through the Chinese Buddhist Canon at Putuo Mountain 普陀山.

> Yinshun records that he did not absorb much of what he read, since he was racing through seven or eight fascicles each day. But he did gain an appreciation for the breadth and variety of Buddhist teaching, which he now saw extended far beyond the boundaries of Mādhyamaka and Consciousness-Only thought. He became impressed with the persistent encouragement in the Mahayana scriptures to practice for the sake of all sentient beings, while at the same time he found a dose of realism in the sutras of the Dīrghāgama and the stories in the *vinaya* that counteracted the often fantastic imagery of the Mahayana texts. (Jones 1999: 125-6)

During his stay at Wuchang Seminary, Yinshun mentioned, he read the *Yindu zhexue zongjiaoshi* 印度哲學宗教史 (The History of Indian Philosophy and Religion) edited by Japanese scholars Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866-1945) and Kimura Taiken 木村泰賢 (1881-1930), *Yuanshi fojiao sixianglun* 原始佛教思想論 (The Treatise on Original Buddhist Thought) written by Kimura Taiken and another book about the history of Consciousness-Only teaching also written by a Japanese scholar Yūki Reimon 結城令聞 (1902-?). These books were his first encounter with the Western method of historical study, which inspired his method of Buddhist study, making his approach closer to "the Japanese and western hermeneutics than the classical Chinese methodology" (Travagnin 272). After that, he thought that to correctly understand the difference between the Buddhist teaching and the reality of the Chinese Buddhist community, we have to trace the beginning and evolution of Buddhism from a certain historical and social context (Yinshun 1993: 5: 17). This idea determined the direction and methodology of his Buddhist studies.

During the chaotic next fourteen years from 1938 to 1952, Yinshun's thought about Chinese Buddhism took shape. He considered this to be his most productive period. In 1941, he wrote the *Fo zai renjian* 佛在人間 (The Buddha in the Human Realm), *Fojiao shi wushenlun de zongjiao* 佛教是無神論的宗教 (Buddhism Is an Atheistic Religion), and *Fahai tanzhen* 法海探珍 (Searching for Treasure in the Ocean of Dharma),

which all advocated Buddhism of the human realm against deification and tried to probe the essence of Buddhism, getting rid of out-of-date expedience (Yinshun 1993: 5: 13).

Also in this period, he met Ven. Fazun 法尊 (1902-1980), whom Yinshun called his extraordinary friend. Yinshun stated that Fazun was one who had profound and extensive understanding of Buddhism. At that time, Fazun had just finished his studies in Tibet. He contributed a lot by translating Tibetan Buddhist texts into Chinese. Yinshun often had discussions and debates with Fazun, which were very helpful for Yinshun (Yinshun 1993: 5: 11-2).

In 1947, Yinshun finally went back to Zhejiang province, where he received the news of Master Taixu's death. He spent one year there compiling the *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書 (The Complete Works of Master Taixu). According to Yinshun, there were two people who influenced him a lot in his understanding of Buddhism: one was Fazun with whom he discussed Buddhist philosophy and the other was Taixu from whom he read and learned.

Move to Taiwan

In 1949, Yinshun moved to Hong Kong. In 1952, responding to an invitation issued by his old teacher Daxing, he relocated to Taiwan (Jones1999:126).

After he settled down in Taiwan, Yinshun first stayed at the Shandao Temple as a mentor. Experiencing some latent power conflicts with the people in the Temple, in 1953, Yinshun left the temple and set up the Fu Yan Hermitage 福嚴精舍 for practice. After that point, Yinshun focused on personal practice and the development of a Buddhist education program. In 1957, he set up the Xinzhu Buddhist Seminary for Female Practitioners, where nuns and lay women could receive Buddhist teachings. In 1960, he established the Huiri Teaching Hall 慧日講堂. Through lectures and discussion, attendees were encouraged to study the authentic Buddhist teachings.

Yinshun was also invited several times to Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia, in 1954, 1958, 1968, and 1977, to spread Buddhist teachings to the populace. Moreover, he was the first monk to teach in a university in Taiwan. In 1969, his work *Zhongguo chanzong shi* (History of the Chinese Zen School) won him a Ph.D. After that, he spent

all his time writing. For Yinshun, writing was the way to express his gratitude toward Buddhism by spreading the true, original teachings.

Yinshun got sick in 1990. Maybe he felt the end was coming, so he compiled his autobiography and went back to mainland China to visit old places where he used to stay. He passed away in May of 2005 when he was 100 years old.

Yinshun left a huge volume of works. His studies of Buddhism, such as *Rulaizang zhi yanjiu* 如來藏之研究 (A Study of the Tathāgatagarbha) and *Chuqi dacheng fojiao zhi qiyuan yu kaizhan* 初期大乘佛教之起源于開展 (Origins and Development of Early Mahāyāna Buddhism), among others, have brought the study of Chinese Buddhism into a new stage; his works themselves have been studied by many Chinese and a few Western scholars.

4.2 The Problem of Chinese Buddhism

Through his intensive self-criticism, Yinshun saw several problems within Chinese Buddhism. First, he recognized that the distortion of Buddhism, though affected by Chinese culture, had long been in existence in India and was getting worse and worse. Yinshun established his own *panjiao* 判教 (sutra classification system), in which he declared "authentic" Buddhism to be composed of original Buddhism (*yuanshi fojiao* 原始佛教, Buddhism during the time of Śākyamuni Buddha and the first hundred years after his death) and early Mahayana Buddhism (*chuqi dacheng fojiao* 初期大乘佛教, Buddhism in the first and second century CE). For him, the original Buddhism was based upon the four Āgamas 阿含經, the Hinayana scriptures, which emphasized the path of liberation through the practice of vinaya, meditation and wisdom, whereas early Mahayana Buddhism focused on Prajñā sūtras 般若經 and related works by Nāgārjuna, which proposed the theory of emptiness and the identity of this world and nirvana (Yang Huinan 483-4).

However, according to Yinshun's understanding, all things are related and mutually dependent and are constructed through context. Without the context, even the Dharma is abstract and meaningless. Therefore, we have to take many related, dependent conditions into account. That is to say, Buddhism in any period will be affected by its social and

cultural context. Thus, there may not be any single "authentic" Buddhism but rather many authentic forms of Buddhism that fit their contexts. For him, that form of original Buddhism and early Mahayana Buddhism, which emphasized self cultivation and the bodhisattva ideal of saving all beings, would fit in the modern context.

Second, from his reading of the Buddhist Canon,

> He [Yinshun] suggested that the positive transformation of Chinese Buddhism required a critical reassessment of its fundamental teachings, indicating that the crisis faced by the tradition in terms of institutional design and religious praxis had its genesis in the erroneous interpretation of doctrine. (Hurley 2004: 29)

However, in any event, we should keep in mind that Yinshun could not read Sanskrit, Pali or Tibetan. His main source of study was the Chinese Buddhist Canon, which itself was made up of translations and interpretations of foreign and Chinese masters, and which would be influenced by the interpreters' cultural background and stage of Buddhist practice.

Third, according to Yinshun's understanding, Buddhism also uses expedient means. In some periods, certain means were appropriate; but in other times, they might not be suitable. Thus, methods that do not fit the particular condition should be abandoned (Yinshun 1993: 5: 68-9).

Based upon his perception, Yinshun agreed with Master Taixu. He stated in his *Youxin fahai liushinian*,

> As for the reforming movement promoted by Master Taixu, I fully agree with its founding principles, but I also retain that it is not easy to realize successfully. After entering the monkhood, I discovered that the problem of the Buddhist world was a problem of thought. I am not like Master Taixu, who promoted the reform of the teachings, but I preferred a better understanding of the teachings, in order to make Buddhist thought clearer. (Travagnin 289; note 68)

He preferred to study the Buddhist texts and clarify its teachings and thought, because he thought the fundamental reason for the decline of Chinese Buddhism was misunderstanding and wrong thought (Yinshun 1993: 5: 6-8). This shows that Yinshun was not a complete reformist like Taixu, but a neo-traditionalist, according to Bellah's definition, who would return to the original form of Buddhism and keep the change to a minimum.

According to Travagnin, Yinshun explained that "Taixu based his reform on Chinese Buddhism (i.e., the thought and work of Chinese Patriarchs), while Yinshun

based his interpretation of Dharma on Indian Buddhism (i.e., the original Buddhism)" (Yinshun quoted in Travagnin 275). According to Yinshun, his thought was quite influenced by Taixu. After Taixu came back from his European journey, Yinshun claimed that Taixu presented a shift of position from Chinese traditionalism to internationalism. Aimed at the Chinese tradition emphasizing life after death, Taixu's advocacy of *Rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教 (Buddhism of Human Life), which gave more attention to human beings' present life, exemplified Taixu's penetration into Chinese Buddhism while it also went beyond the Chinese tradition. Receiving this guideline from Taixu, Yinshun stressed the importance of studying Indian Buddhism, the origin of all Buddhism; thus, the study of the historical evolution of Indian Buddhism became a starting point to link different varieties of Buddhism worldwide (Yinshun 1993: 5: 101).

Yinshun also recognized his difference from Taixu's "Buddhism for Human Life (*Rensheng fojiao*)." Taixu advocated *Rensheng fojiao*, which was positioned against Buddhism for the dead or for ghosts; but Yinshun extended *Rensheng fojiao* (Buddhism for Human Life) to *Renjian fojiao* (Buddhism for Human Realm), Buddhism for Human Realm, which was also positioned against Buddhism for heavenly beings. He claimed that Buddhism should focus on human beings in this world, and not on ghosts or spirits, nor on celestial beings. For Yinshun, Chinese Buddhism had been in a plight caused by its teaching of *upāya*, or skillful means and its inclusiveness of traditional Indian and Chinese values, such as the influence of pursuing the joy of heavenly life from Hinduism. Thus Buddhism focusing on the human realm was the true meaning of the Buddhism that Śākyamuni Buddha taught.

4.3 Yinshun's Thought on Pure Land Buddhism

I will base the discussion of Yinshun's Pure Land thought on his "New Treatise on Pure Land" (*Jingtu xinlun* 淨土新論), presented in his *Pure Land and Zen* 淨土與禪 (*Jintu yu Chan*), given in the winter of 1951 at Qingshan jingye she 青山淨業社 in Hong Kong.

Works on Pure Land

This *Jingtu xinlun* has nine parts. They are "The Meaning of Pure Land in Buddhism 淨土在佛法中的意義 [*Jingtu zai fofai zhongde yiyi*]," "Classifications of Pure Lands 淨土的類別 [*Jingtu de leibie*]," "General Conditions of Pure Lands 淨土的一般情況 [*Jingtu de yiban qingkuang*]," "The Maitreya Pure Land 彌勒淨土 [*Mile jingtu*]," "The Concept of Pure Land Centered on Amitābha 彌陀中心的淨土觀 [*Mituo zhongxin de jingtu guan*]," "The Buddha Realm and the Human Realm 佛土與衆生土 [*Fotu yu Zhongshengtu*]," "Adorning the Pure Land and Seeking A Rebirth in the Pure Land 莊嚴淨土與往生淨土 [*Zhuangyan jingtu he wangsheng jingtu*]," "Calling the Buddha's Name and the Practice of Recollection 稱名與念佛 [*Chengming yu nianfo*]," and "The Easy Path and the Difficult Path 易行道與難行道 [*Yixingdao yu nanxingdao*]." Besides this, there are other writings important for reference, such as *Origins and Development of Early Mahāyāna Buddhism* 初期大乘佛教之起源于開展 [*Chuqi dacheng fojiao zhi qiyuan yu kaizhan*], *The Way to Buddhahood* 成佛之道 [*Cheng fo zhi dao*], *A History of Indian Buddhism* 印度佛教思想史 [*Yindu fojiao sixiang shi*] and so on (Travagnin 277).

Yinshun's New Interpretation of Pure Land (*Jingtu*)

Yinshun provided a critical and renewed interpretation of Pure Land Buddhism. From the theoretical perspective, Yinshun's thought of *renjian jingtu,* Pure Land in the human realm, complements the traditional Pure Land thoughts, making it a complete practice of Pure Land Buddhism. Emphasizing both this- worldly and other-worldly practice fulfills the purpose of attaining Buddhahood for the sake of sentient beings. Indeed, this was the reason that Yinshun asserted the importance of creating the Pure Land in the human realm (*renjian jingtu* 人間淨土).

Right at the beginning of *New Treatise on Pure Land*, Yinshun states clearly that the Pure Land belief is one of the most important practices in Buddhism. Yinshun explained that "*jing* 淨" has two aspects. One is the purity of sentient beings (*zhongsheng de qingjing* 衆生的清淨), which is the direct reward (*zhengbao* 正報)[9] generated through

[9] *Zhengbao* and *Yibao* are the dual reward. *Zhengbao* refers to one's direct reward, his body or person based on one's karma; *Yibao* is the material environment, on which one depends, resulting from his karma, e.g. country, house, property,

one's practice of realizing wisdom (*xiu zhihui* 修智慧) to get rid of all kinds of afflictions and delusion; the other is the purity of the world (*shijie de qingjing* 世界的清淨), which is the dependent reward (*yibao* 依報) caused by one's accumulating virtue and merits (*xiu fude* 修福德). In Mahayana Buddhism, to become a Buddha means to realize the perfection of the eternal and ultimate body, Dharmakāya (*fashen zhuangyan* 法身莊嚴), and the perfection of the Pure Land (*jingtu zhuangyan* 淨土莊嚴), which requires purification of one's body and mind, and the adornment of the surrounding environment as well. This makes Mahayana Buddhism a tradition encouraging the joint practice of wisdom and merit (*fu hui shuangxiu* 福慧雙修).Therefore, for Yinshun, the Pure Land teaching is the core of Mahayana Buddhism. It is indispensable in Mahayana Buddhism; without the Pure Land teaching, there is no Mahayana Buddhism (Yinshun 1988: 4-6).

However, agreeing with Taixu's opinion, Yinshun believed that the Pure Land sect should not be an independent school, because the Pure Land practice is a common practice in all Chinese Buddhist schools. Thus, Yinshun tried to understand the Pure Land teaching from a panoramic perspective, which made Yinshun stand in a different position from the traditional Chinese Pure Land masters who exclusively advocated the Amitābha Pure Land practice (Yinshun 1988:1-5).

To prove that the Pure Land is the ideal realm common to all human beings, Yinshun first classified Pure Lands into three categories: 1) the Pure Land common to the Five Vehicles (*Wucheng gongtu* 五乘共土); 2) the Pure Land common to the Three Vehicles (*Sancheng gongtu* 三乘共土); 3) the Pure Land distinctive to the Great Vehicle (*Dacheng bugongtu* 大乘不共土). The Five Vehicles are human beings, devas, *śrāvaka*s, *pratyekabuddha*s and bodhisattvas. The *Wucheng gongtu* is the realm into which all beings in the five Vehicles desire to be born. Yinshun identified the northern of the four inhabited continents, Uttarakuru[10], as a *Wucheng gongtu*.). The Three Vehicles refers to *śrāvaka*s, *pratyekabuddha*s and bodhisattvas[11]. For example, the Tuṣita Heaven is a *Sancheng gongtu*, where the future Buddha Maitreya preaches the Dharma to all

[10] In Buddhist cosmology, there is Mountain Meru in the middle of this world, surrounded by four continents in four directions. Uttarakuru is the northern continent.

[11] Śrāvakas are hearers of the Four Truths and limited to that degree of development. The pratyeka-buddhas are enlightened in the twelve fold Dependent Origination. The bodhisattvas make the six forms of transmigration their field of sacrificial saving work, and of enlightenment.

Sancheng gongtu, where the future Buddha Maitreya preaches the Dharma to all bodhisattvas at the inner court of Tuṣita. The Amitābha Pure Land, the Akṣobhya Pure Land and the Medicine Buddha Pure Land are in this category. For Yinshun, the *Sancheng gongtu* and *Dacheng bugongtu* are Pure Lands where Buddhists desire to be born, but the existence of the *Wucheng gongtu* proves that the idea of the Pure Land is not distinctive to Buddhists.

Moreover, Yinshun considered "Amitābha" to stand for "infinite light," and "became the starting point of a further investigation on the relationship between Amitābha Buddha and the Hindu (and Indo-Iranian) Solar worship" (Travagnin 299). Thus for him, the belief of the Pure Land was not an original Buddhist idea, but a heretical teaching from Indo-Iranian influence. This argument brought about the most critiques from traditional Chinese Pure Land practitioners, because they thought it devalued the Amitābha belief.

In addition, Yinshun claimed that the Pure Land "can appear in different forms according to the different inner natures of each human being and the surrounding social culture... and consequently the [Buddhist] Pure Land absorbed the features of Indian culture and thought" (Yinshun quoted in Travagnin 292-3). Yinshun then introduced the general conditions of the Pure Lands to support his argument.

First, he explained the general conditions of the Pure Lands in two aspects. One is about the natural world (*ziranjie* 自然界). Observing the natural world described in the Pure Land scriptures, Yinshun listed four features, which, he thought, reflect the ideal world as pictured in Indian culture. These features are "level (*pingtan*), tidy (*zhengqi*), clear (*jiejing*), and rich and sumptuous (*fuli*)" (Travagnin 293). This is one proof, for Yinshun, which shows Buddhism was developed in the area of the flat Gangetic plain and of the influence of Indian culture. In contrast, people, who lived in the mountains or on islands, might depict the Pure Land as the Penglai Immortal Island 蓬萊仙島 or the Gushe Immortal Mountain 姑射山, where Chinese immortals are supposed to live. Another proof of Indian perspective is the tidiness of the Pure Land. Yinshun stated that Indian culture is fond of symmetry and balance, one feature of the Pure Lands,

which Yinshun thought that it is different from traditional Chinese conception of natural beauty. For example, Chinese-style painting aways depicts unevenly and irregularly (Yinshun 1988:10).

Another aspect of the general conditions of the Pure Lands is the purification of sentient beings, which includes economy, community, and (individual) body and mind (Yinshun 1988:12-15). From these three aspects, Yinshun listed some features of a Pure Land, which make the Pure Land the ideal world for all human beings. For example, in a Pure Land, he stated that,

> capital goods do not belong to any individual or group of human beings, but everything belongs to the social community and is commonly enjoyed and shared by all its members...there is [no] familia[l] unit: the family, based on the union of man and woman, which facilitates the private accumulation of material goods...The Buddhist Pure Lands does not have any color or racial differentiation. The narrow nationalism and racism belong to the impure world and do not have anything to do with the Pure Land...The Pure Land is the ideal environment for the Buddhist practitioners to continue and improve their personal cultivation. (Yinshun quoted in Travagnin 294; notes 86-88)

Yinshun's attempt to prove that the Pure Land is an ideal realm for all kinds of human beings was in line with the traditional Pure Land Buddhism, for traditional Chinese Pure Land Buddhism held that all Buddhist sutras refer to the Amitābha Pure Land and that the Western Paradise is the final destination common to all sentient beings.

Criticisms of the Chinese Pure Land Tradition

Explaining the meaning of "Amita-" as "immeasurable," Yinshun claimed that, this notion makes Amitābha Buddha the representative of all Buddhas, therefore, special to Buddhist practitioners. However, the Western Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha is not the only one. There are also the eastern Akṣobhya Pure Land, the Pure Land of Medicine Buddha, and the Tuṣita heaven of the future Buddha Maitreya.

> The Buddhist Pure Land and the practice of recollection of the Buddha are not just limited to the Western Pure Land or to the practice of the invocation of Buddha's name. The special importance given to the Pure Land of Amitābha Pure Land and the practice of invocation of Buddha's name is peculiar to Chinese Buddhism. (Yinshun quoted in Travagnin 273)

For example, Amitābha Buddha and his Pure Land were known by everyone, but the eastern Akṣobhya Pure Land, which symbolized the practice of meditation and wisdom, had long been neglected. For Yinshun, this was a great loss to the Pure Land Buddhism. He explained that, just as the sun moves from the East to the West, in terms of the Bodhisattvas' path to the Buddhahood, the Pure Land in the East is the starting point of the path, the development of *bodhicitta*, while the Western Pure Land is the end, the complete achievement of Buddhahood (Yinshun 1988:26-30). However, some Pure Land practitioners just wanted to be born in the Pure Land, but forgot that the Western Pure Land was created through Dharmakara's long-term practice and efforts. For Yinshun, practitioners should not only vow to be born in the Pure Land, but also make their efforts to adorn the Pure Land. Therefore, for Yinshun, leaving out other Pure Lands had misled the Pure Land practice from the joint practice of achieving wisdom and accumulating merit to the superficial calling upon the name to escape from this world.

Yinshun maintained that Pure Land practitioners seldom paid attention to the joint practice of wisdom and merit, and the work of benefiting oneself and others, which were supposed to be the foundation of the Pure Land practice. They always praised the beauty and greatness of the Pure Land, such as the ground made of gold sand, trees and buildings made of the seven jewels. Yinshun argued that, in fact, in the *Contemplation Sutra*, when Śākyamuni Buddha taught the sixteen methods of contemplation, he first underlined the three virtues as the right causes of the Buddhas' pure karma, which include pivotal practices for Pure Land practitioners to accumulate merit (see in Chapter I). For Yinshun, this should be emphasized in the Pure Land practice. From his reading of the Pure Land texts, Yinshun pointed out that generating *bodhicitta* was the prerequisite to being born in the Pure Land. However, for Yinshun, the Pure Land practitioners had totally forgotten it in his time. In fact, the importance of cultivating bodhicitta was emphasized by all Pure Land masters like Tanluan, Shandao, and Yinguang. For example, we can find in Yinguang's teaching that he always emphasized the importance of generating *bodhicitta*, which he identified as the fundamental and leading factor of the Pure Land practice.

Yinshun continued to examine some misunderstandings of the Western Pure Land. First, in Indian language, the West or the direction of sunset refers to the treasure of light, whereas in China, the West stands for decline and death. In *Jingtu anle ji* 淨土安樂集, for example, when explaining why Amitābha Buddha resides in the West, it says that the place where the sun ascends is called birth, and where the sun descends is called death. At the place of death, deities set in to help the dying beings, hence Amitābha Buddha vowed to be the Buddha in the West to receive all beings at their last moment. This misinterpretation makes the Western Pure Land a place for the dead, and thus, makes the study of Buddhism a study of how to die. This, for Yinshun, was a degeneration of the Pure Land teaching (Yinshun 1988:32).

Another misunderstanding was about the Easy Path and the Difficult Path. According to Yinshun, *nianfo* is just one of the Easy Paths, which also include the Ten Vows of Samantabhadra: worshiping Buddhas, praising Buddhas, making offerings and so forth. For him, the Easy Path is the path that is easy to follow and practice but does not necessarily mean an easy way to achieve Buddhahood (Yinshun 1988: 90). It is true that if one could be reborn in the Pure Land, it would be easy for one to practice in the perfect environment. However, Yinshun held that following the Easy Path makes it difficult to attain Buddhahood. He cited that Śākyamuni Buddha was practicing the difficult ascetic path whereas Maitreya was following the easy way, but Śākyamuni became the Buddha before Maitreya. This proved that the Difficult Path is faster than the Easy Path in order to achieve Buddhahood. The advocates of Pure Land Buddhism, for Yinshun, misunderstood the original intention of Nāgārjuna's teaching of the Easy Path (Yinshun 1988:70).

Furthermore, although Yinshun acknowledged that the practice of *nianfo* depended on self-power and other-power and is a special expedience of Buddhist practice, he disagreed that to be reborn in the Pure Land (*wangsheng* 往生) immediately equals being liberated from the cycle of life and death (*liao shengsi*了生死). For him, these are two things. *Liao shengsi* means to completely cut off the cycle of life and death, which requires one to get rid of all kinds of afflictions. When one is reborn in the Pure Land, however, he or she has not seen the truth and gotten rid of all afflictions. If one is reborn in the Pure Land and stays with all virtuous

people with all kinds of beneficial conditions, one can practice in full vigor to attain non-regression and finally will achieve the goal of liberation. Therefore, by being reborn in the Pure Land one can eventually achieve the goal of *liao shengsi,* sooner or later (Yinshun 1988:16-8). By saying that, Yinshun demonstrated that *wangsheng* ultimately can lead the practitioner to be liberated, *liao shengsi*; thus, they are not "entirely" two different things, but the former is a stage in the process to the latter, the goal.

Regarding the *nianfo* practice, Yinshun differentiated the practice of calling the name (*chengming* 稱名) from *nianfo*, which he thought Chinese Pure Land practitioners often mix up. He clarified that *nianfo* and *chengming* are two distinct practices. *Nianfo* is a kind of meditation, *nianfo* Samadhi, which is common to Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism. *Chengming*, originally, was not a Buddhist practice but the daily greeting ritual of Buddhists (Yinshun 1988:57-8).

Yinshun cited various Pure Land scriptures to verify that, *nianfo*, for instance, in the *Pratyutpanna Samadhi Sutra* is to concentrate on and visualize Amitābha Buddha and his land, a practice of meditation. In the *Larger Sutra*, *nianfo* also means to concentrate and meditate on Amitābha Buddha. Only in *the Contemplation Sutra*, the Buddha taught the practice of calling the name of Amitābha, because evil persons cannot contemplate at the last moments on their death bed (Yinshun 1988:61). Thus, for Yinshun, *chengming* is just a skillful means for someone who has no chance to practice *nianfo*.

Furthermore, *nianfo* is not limited to orally calling the name. For example, in the *Smaller Sutra*, "holding the name" (*zhichi minghao* 執持名號), was translated as "contemplating" (*siwei* 思惟) by Xuanzang. It is evident that *nianfo* not only indicates oral chanting but also implies mindful visualization and contemplation. Yinshun also noticed that the *nianfo* practice Yinguang advocated was in accordance with this connotation of contemplation (Yinshun 1988:109).

Yinshun's Pure Land thought emphasizing that the Pure Land teaching is the core of Mahayana Buddhism and that the Pure Land belief is not distinctive to Buddhism can be seen as a development of traditional Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. This is unlike Japanese Pure Land tradition, since Shinran, there was no new development of Pure Land

theology in Japan, for everyone thinks that Shinran's word is absolute and cannot be changed or surpassed.

4.4 Impact of Yinshun's Pure Land Thought

According to the above analysis, Yinshun tried to trace Pure Land belief back to the original sources and re-presented the real meaning of the Pure Land teaching to help practitioners follow the right practice. It is because the Pure Land practice has been the most popular form of Chinese Buddhism that, for Yinshun, correcting the popular mistaken understanding of the Pure Land tradition was one way to correct the corrupt image of Chinese Buddhism.

Jones indicates that Taixu and Yinshun and other leaders attempted to reinterpret and adapt the Pure Land teaching and practice for modern conditions. For Taixu and Yinshun, "its [Pure Land] literature and practice did indeed display a focus on deathbed and funeral practices designed to keep the devotee's mind focused on Amitābha and the Pure Land right at that pivotal moment" (Jones 2003: 129). Therefore, Yinshun gave more specific attention to transforming Pure Land teaching from an escapist other-worldly perspective to a humanistic, social engaged form.

While Yinshun found the scriptural evidence of his *Renjian fojiao* in Āgamas, "All Buddhas and world-Honored Ones emerge from the human realm; they do not attain buddhahood somewhere above the heavens" (*Āgama* quoted in Jones 2003: 133), he indicated that the historical Buddha was "leaving the narrow confines of family and clan and made his way into the world of humanity as a whole with its troubles and travails" (Yinshun quoted in Jones 2003: 133).

Therefore, from the practical perspective, the thought of *renjian jingtu*, because of its adaptability to modern social and humanistic surroundings has become the mainstream of modern Buddhist movements in Taiwan. One of the best known examples of Yinshun's *Renjian fojiao* is the Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation (*Ciji gongde hui* 慈濟功德會), a movement, originated by the Ven. Zhengyan 證嚴, that emerged in Taiwan in 1966 promoting "the practice of charity as a means to attain salvation" (Laliberté 245).

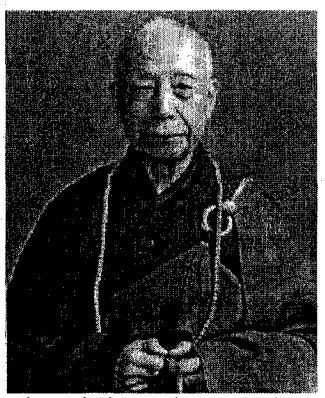
According to Bellah's notion previously mentioned, Yinshun may have expressed "a 'modernist' or 'reformist' version of traditional religion, in order to show that it is compatible with modernity and in fact that its 'essence,' when divest of historic perversions, is to further social and cultural modernization" (Bellah 201). Yinshun's reflection and criticisms of Chinese Buddhism made him go back to the Indian sources. His effort of trying to find an original and authentic Buddhism and his advocacy of Buddhism for Human Realm fits the reformist version very well. But, at the same time, it would also be proper to put Yinshun in the group of neotraditionalism, who "use modern ideas and methods to defend traditional cultural values, which are held to be superior to those of any other tradition" (Bellah 201), since it is evident that Yinshun did not deny the significance of the Western Pure Land, and that he did not really differ from traditional Chinese Pure Land thought. For example, his teaching about the significance of generating *bodhicitta* and his emphasis on self-cultivation of meditation and wisdom are both in line with the Chinese Pure Land patriarchs' teachings. But he was dissatisfied by the waning Pure Land practice which made practitioners indifferent and escapist. In fact, as a traditionalist, he even went a step further than Yinguang, going back to Indian Buddhism to look for scriptural evidence to maintain that Pure Land belief was part of the earliest Buddhist teaching. Therefore, Yinshun was a reformist, and at the same time, a neo-traditionalist.

CHAPTER V
MODERN CHINESE PURE LAND MOVEMENTS

In the previous two chapters, I have tried to deal with Yinguang and Yinshun in two dimensions: 1) biographical, going through their lives and careers; 2) ideological, discussing how they interpreted the traditional Pure Land teachings to address the challenge of contemporary conditions. Next we will look at these two figures in the institutional dimension, the legacy and shape of movements inspired by their thought.

As Jones states, Yinguang's Pure Land thought influenced thousands of Chinese Buddhists. With the transmission into Taiwan by his disciple Li Bingnan and other Pure Land masters from mainland China, Pure Land Buddhism became the main stream practice in Taiwan.

5.1 Li Bingnan 李炳南 (1890-1986)


Pic 4: Li Bingnan (1890-1986)

Li Bingnan (style name, Xuelu 雪廬; Dharma name, Deming 德明) was born in 1890 in Shandong province. In his youth, he was educated in classical Confucianism, and Chinese medicine. In 1930, he occassionally looked through the Collected Paintings of Saving Lives 護生畫集 by artist Feng Zikai 丰子愷 (1898-1975); he was impressed by the idea of saving lives and restraining from killing. Pursuing his interest in Buddhism, he was taught by Master Yinguang and took refuge under the master. After that, Li devoted his lifetime to practicing and teaching Pure Land Buddhism. In 1949, when he was 61, Li moved to Taiwan by himself. He settled down in Taizhong 台中, and began to advocate the Pure Land belief. Right up to the time he passed away in 1986, he was still preaching on the Flower Ornament Sutra (Shi Xiuchan 58).

During his 30-year teaching in Taiwan, Li made great contributions to the propagation of Confucianism, Buddhism and Pure Land teaching as well as to education and charitable organizations. In 1950, Li established the Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society

台中佛教蓮社, the first lotus society in Taiwan, which holds as its purpose: 1) to preach Confucian and Buddhist texts to convert one's mind; 2) to invoke people to practice *nianfo* to gain enlightenment in one lifetime; 3) to launch cultural and charitable programs to promote a conventional and virtuous lifestyle (http://www.tcbl.org.tw).

Since 1950, with other devotees, Li founded the Ciguang Library 慈光圖書館 (1958), the first Buddhist library in Taiwan; Ciguang Protectory 慈光育幼院 (1959), the first Buddhist orphanage in Taiwan; Bodhi Ren'ai Senior Citizens' Home 菩提仁愛之家 and Bodhi Hospital (1963), the first Buddhist hospital in Taiwan; the Prajna Hermitage 般若精舍 and other related organizations in succession (Shi Xiuchan 67).

In addition to providing free social services for people, Li also paid special attention to education, which may be seen as the influence of his Confucian education. Aiming at different levels, from children and teenagers to college students, the Taizhong Lotus Society set up all kinds of programs to teach Confucian and Buddhist doctrines. For example, at the Lotus Society, every Wednesday and Thursday night, there are classes on Buddhist scriptures; every Tuesday and Friday night, there are classes that teach the *Analects*; on weekend nights, there are initiatory classes for children; on Sundays, there are almost two thousand families divided into fifty-seven classes practicing communal *nianfo*. Every summer and winter holiday, the Society runs the Minglun Buddhist Seminar 大專明倫講座 for college and university students. Li's student Zhou Xuande 周宣德 established the Chenxi Society 晨曦社 in Taiwan University. As the first Buddhist society in University, it symbolized the fact that Buddhist study had entered into university campuses. To promote the Dharma more effectively, the Minglun Society 明倫社 came into existence in 1960 and runs the Minglun Monthly magazine and the Qinglian Publishing House 青蓮出版社. Li also preached through mass media. Since 1973, his programs, such as Lianyou zhi sheng 蓮友之聲 (Voice of Lotus Friends) and Zhonghua wenhua 中華文化 (Chinese Culture) have been broadcast by the Guosheng broadcasting station 國聲電臺 (Shi Xiuchan 63-8; http://www.tcbl.org.tw).

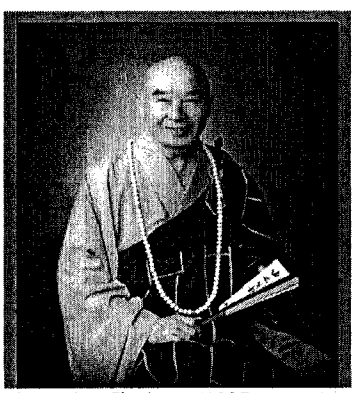
Li's Pure Land thought may be described as having the following three aspects. First, inherited from his teacher Yinguang, he treated Confucianism as the foundation for both worldly and other-worldly practice. Second, he proposed that Confucianism and

both worldly and other-worldly practice. Second, he proposed that Confucianism and Buddhism should be given equal attention. And last, he affirmed that the Western Pure Land is the final end of one's religious practice. Li believed that Confucianism is the kernel of Chinese culture, the basis of both mundane and spiritual practice.

Compared with Yinguang, Li seemed to elevate Confucianism to the same importance as Buddhism, whereas for Yinguang, Confucianism was just an instrument for a practitioner to cultivate his or her morality. Li always taught his students that as a lay practitioner, one should fulfill one's duties in family and society but not forget to cultivate bodhi mind in the mundane world; however, only focusing on Confucian cultivation is not enough, one should pay special attention to *nianfo*, harmonizing one's understanding and practice 解行相應, and vow to be born in the Pure Land (Shi Xiuchan 61-3).

It was clearly evident in Li Bingnan's practice of educational and social service programs that he thought that Chinese Pure Land Buddhism should be more humanistic and engaged into worldly life. From the Ven. Jingkong's 淨空 (1927-) Pure Land thought and practice, this idea is even much clearer.

5.2 The Ven. Jingkong 淨空 (1927-present)


Pic 5: Ven. Jingkong (1927-present)

Ven. Jingkong's secular name was Xu Yehong 徐業鴻. He was born in 1927 in Lujiang County of Anhui province and moved to Taiwan in 1949. For thirteen years thereafter, Jingkong spent his leisure hours studying Buddhism and philosophy under the guidance of Professor Fang Dongmei 方東美 (1899-1977), Master Zhang Jia 章嘉大師 (1889-1957), and Teacher Li Bingnan. During this period, he established a strong foundation for his future career. In 1959, Jingkong left the household life to become a monk at the Temple of Yuanshan, Taipei, where he received full ordination (Shi Xiuchan 155).

Like his teacher Li Bingnan, Jingkong also pays specific attention to Buddhist education. After he became a monk, he began to lecture extensively on the Buddha's teachings in Taiwan and abroad. For more than forty years, he has continuously been

giving lectures on the Five Sutras of the Pure Land School, *Diamond Sutra*, *Earth Treasure Sutra*, *Flower Ornament Sutra*, and many more (Shi Xiuchan 155).

Jingkong, with over forty years of experience in propagating Buddhism, also deeply understands that the Pure Land teachings are the foremost method for helping sentient beings. Since 1980's, through Jingkong's effort, more than fifty Pure Land Learning Centers 淨宗學會 (PLCA)[12] have been established in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, America, Canada and all over the world. These have successfully transformed the locally–based lotus society into an internationalized Learning Center (Ngai 11).

The guideline for fellow practitioners in these societies is to cultivate themselves according to the Five Pure Land sutras and Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Rebirth in the Pure Land.* Jingkong emphasizes that practitioners should carry out their vows in accordance with the Five Guidelines of the Three Conditions 三福, Six Principles of Harmony 六和,[13] Three Learnings 三學,[14] Six Paramitas 六度,[15] and Samantabhadra's Ten Great Vows 十大願 (Shi Xiuchan 161).

Jingkong especially promotes the Three Conditions, taught by Śākyamuni Buddha in the *Contemplation Sutra.* The first of the Three Conditions includes being filial and respectful toward one's parents, teachers and elders, being compassionate and not killing any living beings, and following the Ten Good Deeds. For him, filial piety and respect for teachers are foundations for all ethical teachings and Buddhist practices. With the observation of filial piety and purity of mind, law and order in a society will automatically be enforced; thus filial piety becomes a means to realize the teachings of the saints and spread universal love to all.

The second of the Three Conditions includes taking the Three Refuges, observing precepts, laws and customs, and conducting oneself in a proper and dignified manner. The

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[12] The Pure Land Learning Center (sometimes called Amitabha Buddhist Society) was first proposed after World War II by Xia Lianju 夏蓮居 (1883-1965), an eminent Buddhist teacher promoting the exclusive study and cultivation of the Pure Land School.

[13] The six points of reverent harmony or unity in a monastery: bodily unity in form of worship, oral unity in chanting, mental unity in faith, moral unity in observing the precepts, doctrinal unity in views and explanations, and economic unity in community of goods, deeds, studies, or charity. Soothill & Hodous, see 六和.

[14] Morality, meditation, and wisdom

[15] The six *pāramitās*: (1) *dāna*, charity, or giving, including the bestowing of the truth on others; (2) *śīla*, keeping the precepts; (3) *kṣānti*, patience and tolerance; (4) *vīrya*, zeal and progress; (5) *dhyāna*, meditation or contemplation; (6) *prajñā*; wisdom, the power to discern reality or truth. It is the last that carries one across from *saüsāra* to nirvana. Soothill & Hodous, see 六度.

third of the Three Conditions includes generating the awakened mind, deeply believing in the law of cause and effect, reciting and upholding Mahayana Sutras and encouraging others to advance on the path to enlightenment. These Three Conditions, for Jingkong, form the most important foundation of Buddhist practice; without them, no kind of practice can take effect.

The fundamental principle of his teaching is that a practitioner should cultivate his or her mind of sincerity, purity, equality, right understanding and compassion in order to see through phenomena, let go of all attachment, attain freedom, accord with conditions and be mindful of Amitābha Buddha.

In order to adapt to today's ideas of multiculturalism and pluralism, Jingkong also has made an effort to realize the concept of pluralism. Jingkong proactively works and interacts with local universities, government officials and religious leaders. For example, PLCA organizes the Multicultural Forum every Friday, propagating the universal love of all saints and deities of all religions. Jingkong also collaborates with Griffith University, Australia, in inviting retired professors to give classes on peace. He hopes to produce these classes on CDs for the public. In recent years, he has lectured at numerous universities, in Taiwan, Singapore, America, and Australia, to preach about pluralism (www.amtb.org.tw).

Like Yinguang, Jingkong attributes the natural and human disasters around the world to the loss in morals and ethics. For him, only through the purification of the human mind can these mishaps and antagonisms be dissolved, and this can only be achieved through the teachings of the saints like Confucius, Zhuangzi and other ancient masters. That is why nowadays he is promoting Chinese classical education all over the world, such as promoting the book, *Regulation to be a Disciple and Student* 弟子規, which was originally compiled from Confucian teachings to be a guideline for children in the Qing dynasty.

Jingkong makes use of radio and TV broadcasting, satellites, the Internet and other forms of modern mass media to propagate Buddhism in Taiwan and throughout the world. He has also sponsored the printing and free worldwide distribution of the Great Buddhist Canon, the Four Books, and the Five Classics of Confucius.

From Jingkong's teaching and practice, it is not difficult to find the trace of Yinguang and Li Bingnan's influence. For example, he takes the idea that Confucian ethics is the foundation of Buddhist praxis. Among other teachings, his focus is specifically placed on the promotion of filial piety and respect to teachers, which he thinks is the basis of being a human being.

According to Bruce Lawrence's definition of modernity and modernism, I think Jingkong's teaching of pluralism and the independent Pure Land Learning centers movement may be good examples, which embrace modernity by taking advantage of modern technology such as internet and other mass media, but reject modernism by keeping the continuity of Chinese Pure Land tradition.

5.3 The Ven. Zhengyan (1937-present)


Pic 6: Ven. Zhengyan (1937-present)

Zhengyan, the founder of Buddhist Compassion Relief (Tzu Chi Foundation), is "a popular figure dubbed by the island's media the 'Mother Teresa of Taiwan'" (Laliberté 245). She was born in 1937 and was called Wang Jinyun 王錦云 before she left home. After her father died in 1960, Wang started to think deeply about the truth of human life. In 1962, she shaved her hair by herself and began to practice Buddhism.

In 1963, when she went to Taipei to receive the precepts, she was refused because she had no tonsure master. When she happened to go to the Huiri Seminar 慧日講堂 to buy the *Complete Works of Master Taixu*, she met Master Yinshun and became his disciple. He gave her the dharma name of Zhengyan and the courtesy name of *Huizhang* 慧璋. Yinshun also gave her the great expectation of "doing all for the Buddhist religion and for all beings" (為佛教, 為衆生) (www.tzuchi.org). From then on, these six characters became the highest ideal for Zhengyan.

It is said that there are two events that inspired Ven. Zhengyan to use the power of Buddhism to help people in this world. The first was her discussion with three Roman Catholic nuns at Pu Ming temple 普明寺 in 1966. While the nuns admitted the profundity of Buddhist teachings, they noted that the Catholic Church had helped people around the

world by building schools and hospitals, whereas Buddhism had done little for society. Those words made her realize that Buddhism had to do more than just simply teach an individual to cultivate one's mind.

The other event occurred in the same year while she was on a visit to a hospital in Fenglin (鳳林). She learned that a Taiwanese aboriginal woman had a miscarriage, but because her family could not afford the eight thousand New Taiwan Dollars deposit, the pregnant woman was refused admission to the hospital. These events led Zhengyan to establish the Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation in 1966 and the first Tzu Chi Hospital in Hualien in 1986 (www.tzuchi.org).

At the beginning of Compassion Relief, Zhengyan encouraged her thirty followers to save fifty cents (at that time US$0.02) from their grocery money everyday, which was used to help fifteen families in the first year. From that beginning, Compassion Relief has formed branches in more than thirty-five countries. "In 1996, a survey by local media reported that Compassion relief had disbursed a total of US$58 million for domestic and overseas relief and emergency aid" (Laliberté 245). Moreover, its oversea branches "provide abroad a good image of Taiwan as a society with humanitarian values" (Laliberté 247).

Apart from building the Hospital in Hualian County, to meet the needs of nurses and to expand the ongoing medical mission, Zhengyan resolved to build the Tzu Chi College of Nursing. The college was founded in 1989 in Hualien. It was the first private nursing college in Taiwan to waive tuition for selected courses, in addition to providing full scholarships for qualified Taiwan aboriginal students.

Zhengyan's commitment to improving access to medical care was continued by the establishment of a Bone Marrow Registry and the Tzu Chi College of Medicine in 1994, which later grew into Tzu Chi University in 2000. By August 2005, Compassion Relief had registered more than 274,000 marrow donors and had matched close to one thousand recipients with compatible donors around the world.

Zhengyan has directed Compassion Relief to participate in numerous relief projects around the world, including distributing food, clothes and medicine to victims of natural disasters in the People's Republic of China for more than twelve years and sending teams

to Indonesia and Sri Lanka in the wake of the devastating 2004 tsunami as well as to Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake in their northern mountains (www.tzuchi.org).

In addition to material aid, Zhengyan launched the Da Ai (Great Love) Television Station in 1998. Its goal is to provide television that is free from violence, war, exploitation, and other negative things that pollute the human spirit. Today, Compassion Relief has become a great success as an international Buddhist charity organization (www.tzuchi.org).

Although it does not claim to be a Pure Land movement, the Compassion Relief Foundation is closely related to contemporary humanistic Buddhist thought. It is very interesting to notice that it has created a triad configuration called the "Sahā Triad" (*suopo sansheng* 娑婆三聖) depicting Buddha Śākyamuni flanked by the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin 觀音) and Kṣitigarbha (Dizang 地藏). This creation may be seen as the counterpart of the Triad of the Western Direction 西方三聖, which is the Amitābha Buddha flanked by the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Dashizhi, 大勢至) who preside over the Western Pure Land (Zhiru 83), because Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha were the most familiar bodhisattvas who had very close connection with beings in this world. The appearance of the Sahā Triad could be understood within the context of Humanistic Buddhism, and this iconic representation "deemphasizes mythology and icon worship, insisting that bodhisattvas and Buddhas are humanized figures, more to be emulated as models of behavior, than to be worshipped for miraculous efficacy" (Zhiru 86). The worship of the Sahā Triad and its stress on the teaching of humanism emphasize a meaningful human life and this-worldly soteriology, which teaches that people should be saved in this world right now and here, and should not escape to a better place like the Western Pure Land.

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter, I briefly surveyed the historical evolution of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. Although Chinese Buddhism had gone into a serious decline after the Tang Dynasty, the Pure Land tradition, which first emerged in India, has gradually become one of the most popular Buddhist practices in China. Especially in the modern era, Pure Land practice has been the most common practice for most Chinese Buddhist schools. No matter what sect a temple belongs to, there are always Pure Land elements practiced there. This is unlike in Japan, where a Pure Land temple would be distinct from a Zen or Tendai temple.

The crisis Chinese Buddhism faced became serious when it was confronted with internal social and political turmoil and the external impact of Western philosophy and culture. This made Chinese Buddhists start their self-reflection and the process of creating a new self identity. Inside the Buddhist community, people had become monks and nuns to make a living, not for spiritual or religious life. They were poorly educated or even illiterate, having no knowledge or understanding of the Buddhist texts. They had just memorized some scriptures and mantras for performing rituals for the dying and the dead. Outside the Buddhist community, years of wars with foreign countries and civil rebellions had brought in chaotic political and economic problems since 1840.

To deal with these problems within and without the order, reformist Taixu arose and initiated a Buddhist reform, promoting "a regeneration of the clergy, the rededication of Buddhist property for the benefit of the people, and the renewed study of Buddhist doctrines" (Ch'en 456).

Meanwhile, modern conditions, paradoxically, have actually strengthened traditional religion in many areas and among many groups. It is precisely that "religious ideas and attitudes characteristic of the traditional cultural elite have been spreading. Better public order and increased communication have provided the conditions for the spread of great tradition to lower-prestige groups and remote peoples" (Bellah 206).

The contemporary Pure Land revival initiated by Master Yinguang and other Pure Land teachers was an instance of this process. With great compassion, Yinguang preached "that salvation comes by faith alone—faith in Amitābha and faith in the

realization of the Buddha-nature within oneself" (Ch'en 460). As Reichelt stated, "to listen to him [Yinguang] when he expounds the mysteries of the living faith, that is something one never forgets" (Reichelt quoted in Ch'en 460).

> These efforts by Yin-kuang and his followers brought about an extensive revival of the Pure Land School. Lotus Societies, Nien-fo Societies, and others of a similar nature sprang up all over China, consisting of pious men and women who came to seek new meanings in the traditional practices, to elevate themselves into higher planes of religious experience, and to satisfy their genuine religious aspirations. Of the four million or so lay devotees of Buddhism in China during the 1930's, it is estimated that sixty to seventy per cent considered themselves to be followers of the Pure Land School. This was the harvest reaped by the reforms of Yin-kuang. (Ch'en 460)

Although Yinguang seemed to avoid the chaotic social-political context in his own life and his work, it is impossible for anyone existing in the modern world to completely neglect modernity and avoid being affected by it.

However, during the long historical vicissitudes of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, there were some things that were not originally Buddhist or unsuited to the modern context. These elements, which presented a waning expression of Chinese Pure Land tradition, were criticized and attacked. For example, Yinshun sought to show that the essence of Buddhism is a humanitarian ethical religion, and he criticized such phenomena as the rites for the dead and the low quality of the sangha, as a corruption of pure Buddhism. He traced Buddhism back to its Indian sources, trying to identify an "authentic" form of Buddhism which could be more compatible with the process of modernization.

According to Bellah's framework mentioned in the Introduction and discussion in Chapter Three and Four, which took Yinguang and Yinshun's interpretations of Pure Land Buddhism into consideration, we may conclude that both Yinguang and Yinshun were neo-traditionalist on one hand and reformist on the other hand. These two kinds of responses to modernity are not necessarily opposed to each other, but can be understood as parallels, which point to the same direction but employ different methods and present different social forms.

First, modern Chinese Buddhism presents itself as rational and in accordance with the findings of modern science. For example, Yang Wenhui and Taixu both claimed that Buddhism is consistent with science, which I have discussed in Chapter 2. They both promoted education for monks combining Buddhist studies and science.

Second, both Yinguang's and Yinshun's Pure Land thought have become more compatible with modern life. That is, they emphasize the importance of familial life and education. For example, in Taizhong Lianshe, the weekly *nianfo* practice is organized by family units. Their education programs serve different groups of people of different ages. Tzu Chi recently has paid more attention to environmental issues, encouraging its members to work to beautify their cities and environment. For example, every year, in Montreal where I am now staying, Tzu Chi volunteers go on the street to clean up the litter in Chinatown. These programs make the Buddhist movements more attractive to people living in modern society.

Third, Yinshun clearly stated that he was trying to go back to the "original" Buddhism, which provided him a new interpretation of Pure Land Buddhism. In the case of Yinguang and his legacy, although they do not declare that they are restoring the original teaching, the emphasis on meaningful and dutiful human life puts them in the same position as Taixu and Yinshun, by syncretizing ancient Chinese values into Buddhism to restore Buddhist teaching.

Fourth, all these Buddhist movements are "ecumenical and global in scope, seeking to embrace all of humanity and transcend any provincialism or sectarianism" (Jones 2003: 127-8). A good example is Tzu Chi's relief program work throughout the world, regardless of continent or country. Moreover, Jingkong's teaching about multiculturalism and pluralism guides fellow practitioners to maintain a good relationship with their different ethnic neighbors and religious groups.

All in all, we may say that all these movements are reacting to modern conditions and social change. However, none of the movements entirely matches Pittman's or Kitagawa's list of modern characteristics. Modernization is a process. To accomplish this process, there are different ways. At some point, these different methods may bring forth sometimes similar, sometimes different manifestations. Nevertheless, they are all means to fulfill the process of reinterpreting the tradition to fit in modern life. Both Yinguang's and Yinshun's Pure Land thought were different forms in response to the modernity.

In conclusion, both Yinguang's teaching of the Western Pure Land emphasizing the fundamental importance of human perfection, and Yinshun's promotion of *Renjian jingtu* emphasizing the realization of Pure Land as this-worldly, constitute one progressive step

in the long history of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. Their teachings adapt the Pure Land practice better to modern life and society. More important, there is one thing that remains in all kinds of Pure Land teachings: with a pure mind, there is the Pure Land.

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