

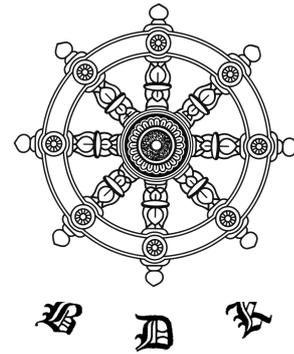
# MAHĀPIṬAKA

## Newsletter New Series No. 23

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE of  
the ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
of the CHINESE TRIPITAKA  
Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai  
(Society for the Promotion of Buddhism)

Editor: Kenneth K. Tanaka



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## Publishing Schedule

### Published in 2017:

#### **1. THE COLLECTION FOR THE PROPAGATION AND CLARIFICATION OF BUDDHISM Volumes II**

(弘明集 *Gumyōshū*, Taishō 2102)

Translated by Harumi Hirano Ziegler

#### **2. THE BRAHMĀ'S NET SUTRA**

(梵網經 *Bonmōkyō*, Taishō 1484)

Translated by A. Charles Muller and Kenneth K. Tanaka

#### **3. THREE SHORT TREATISES BY VASBANDHU, SENGZHAO, AND ZONGMI**

A MAHAYANA DEMONSTRATION ON THE THEME OF ACTION

(大乘成業論 *Daijōjōgōron*, Taishō 1609)

Translated by John P. Keenan

ESSAYS OF SENGZHAO

(肇論 *Jōron*, Taishō 1848)

Translated by Rafal Felbur

TREATISE ON THE ORIGIN OF HUMANITY

(原人論 *Genninron*, Taishō 1886)

Translated by Jan Yün-hua

### Forthcoming titles:

#### **\*BODHISATTVA TEXTS**

THE SCRIPTURE OF THE MERITS OF THE FORMER VOWS: MASTER OF MEDICINE, BERYL RADIANCE TATHĀGATA

(藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經 *Yakushirurikōnyorai-hongankudokukyō*, Taishō 454)

Translated by IYANAGA Nobumi

THE SUTRA OF THE GIRL CANDROTARA

(月上女經 *Gatsujōnyokyō*, Taishō 480)

Translated by Rolf Giebel

#### **THE DISCOURSE TO PRINCE CANDRAPRABHA**

(月燈三昧經 *Gattōzanmaikyō*, Taishō 639)

Translated by MURAKAMI Shinkan

Review:

**THE COLLECTION FOR  
THE PROPAGATION AND CLARIFICATION OF BUDDHISM  
Volumes I, II**

Translated by Harumi Hirano Ziegler  
(BDK English Tripiṭaka Series, published in 2015 and 2017)

ITŌ Makoto  
Toyo University

The publication of the second volume of *The Collection for the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism* (*Hongmingji*, 弘明集, hereafter *Collection*) in the BDK English Tripiṭaka Series, translated by Dr. Harumi Hirano Ziegler, is a cause for applause. It completes the English translation of this essential work of early Chinese Buddhism together with the first volume published in 2015. The *Hongmingji* in 14 fascicles, compiled by the Vinaya master Shi Sengyou (CE 445–518), is a collection of essays, correspondences, written appeals, decrees, etc. related to various topics of discussion on Buddhist teachings and practices of the time. The *Collection* includes the first eight fascicles in volume 1 and the rest in volume 2, with a Translator’s Introduction explaining the historical background and characteristics of the *Hongmingji*, with detailed footnotes referencing works of solid academic research such as the *Gumyōshū Kenkyū* by Kyoto University’s Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, *Eon Kenkyū* by KIMURA Eiichi, and translations of Classic Chinese texts by James Legge, etc. (plus a glossary, bibliography, and index). Compiling important works including Mouzi’s *Elucidation of Delusions* (*Lihuolun*, 理惑論), Huiyuan’s *Discourse on Why Śramaṇas Do Not Bow to the Sovereign* (*Shamen bujing wangzhelun*, 沙門不敬王者論), *Discourse on the Immortality of the Spirit* by Zheng Daozi and related documents (*Shen bumielun*, 神不滅論), and Shi Sengyou’s Afterword at the end of the volume, the *Hongmingji* is widely regarded as an essential source for exploring the developments of early Chinese Buddhism and Daoism; hence an English translation of the entire compilation has been much awaited.

The publication is all the more significant for two reasons; many of the documents are interrelated and should be read in relation to each other, making a complete translation of the collection essential to fully appreciate the significance of the topics discussed. Additionally, given the complexity of both the structures and content of some of the texts and the often variant usage of key terms, the original Chinese text in the Taishō Tripiṭaka is arguably a tough read. A new, lucidly readable English translation will no doubt be a helpful tool for exploring this complex and voluminous work as well as offering a fascinating reading experience to a wider readership.

As Dr. Ziegler has noted in the Translator’s Introduction, the compiler Shi Sengyou lists in his Afterword an array of doubts harbored by non-Buddhists (vol. 2: 290) including criticisms that the

Buddhist teaching is only a recent creation or that the ideas in the sacred texts are preposterous and unverifiable, and most of the texts in the *Hongmingji* try to provide answers from the Buddhist perspective (others are texts from anti-Buddhist camps essential in understanding the points of contention). Among the topics, two seem to have especially captured the attention of contemporary Chinese and hence that of Shi Sengyou, namely the question of whether the spirit transmigrates in the three periods of birth and death and the debate concerning the relationship between the monastic community and the state. Although they are both summed up in Huiyuan's critical essay, the *Discourse on Why Śramaṇas Do Not Bow to the Sovereign* (which has been translated into English and included in the *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 1, ed. W. T. De Bary, for example), Huiyuan's arguments are results of extensive earlier debate as discussed in various other texts in the *Hongmingji* and should be understood from a comprehensive perspective.

As stated in one of the footnotes (no. 367) in Huiyuan's above essay, Huiyuan's argument is a response to two earlier texts: *Report to the Throne Regarding the Issue that Śramaṇas Should Not Bow [to the King]*, and the *Imperial Decree on Behalf of Emperor Cheng of the Jin Dynasty* (vol.2: 193, 194). Thanks to a detailed table of contents (in contrast to the somewhat perfunctory one in the *Kokuyaku issaikyō*, for example), the development of the debate after Huiyuan's essay can be closely followed in the exchange of rebuttals between the short-lived dictator Huan Xuan (reigned CE 403-404) and his Secretariat Director Wang Mi in nine intriguing correspondences (vol. 2: 201-216), in which we see Director Wang presenting a more comprehensive view of the lofty aims and the Chinese acceptance of the Indian religion, as opposed to the dictator's strongly traditional China-centric views. Following three letters between Huiyuan and Huan Xuan, the debate culminates in the dictator's bold *Imperial Decree to Allow Buddhist Monks Not to Bow [to the King]* (vol. 2: 217-223). However, despite the triumph of Huiyuan and his Buddhist ideals documented so vividly, we find immediately afterwards Huan Xuan's decree to tighten regulations on the monastic community as, contrary to the Buddha's "cordial intention" of "cutting off desire," a considerable number of monks had "fallen into decadence," "having an extravagant life," resulting in the loss of the tenets of "*wuwei*, or nirvana" (vol. 2: 227). The brilliant editor Shi Sengyou invites the readers to a cynical chuckle or two (or an exasperated sigh) reminding them of the more "human" natures of the monastic community. In view of this, it is interesting to see that monks' conduct ranging from table manners to monastic attire were also objects of curiosity and doubt in the early days of Buddhist transmission<sup>1</sup> and the texts in the *Collection* discussing the topic (vol. 1: 190-196; vol. 2: 188-193) will easily attract the interests of modern readers.

The handling by Shi Sengyou of the second major topic, transmigration of the spirit, is somewhat more confused. In addition to Huiyuan's and Zheng Daozi's essays mentioned earlier, other important documents can be found such as *Discourse to Clarify Buddhism (Mingfolun, 明佛論)*, vol 1: 49-89) and *Discourse on the Extinction of the Spirit* with exchanges of criticism and rebuttals (*Shenmielun, 神滅論*,

vol. 2: 48-77) among others. We also find Huiyuan's *Discourse on the Clarification of Reward and Retribution* (*Ming baoyunghun*, 明報応論) and *Discourse on Three Periods of Reward and Retribution* (*Sanbaolun*, 三報論, vol. 1: 196-202, 202-206) following his *Discourse on Why Śramaṇas Do Not Bow to the Sovereign* and another text on monastic attire. Among these, the *Mingfolun* by Zong Bin was authored after and under the influence of Huiyuan's discussions of the transmigration of the spirit, and Huiyuan's own three works were created in the order of *Sanbaolun*, *Ming baoyunghun*, and lastly, the discourse on the monks' refusal of bowing to the Emperor (contrary to the order in the *Hongmingji*)<sup>2</sup>. This is bound to confuse the readers if they hoped to follow the development of the discussion on the topic through the above texts.

The *Hongmingji* was originally a ten-fascicle compilation which was later edited to form 14 fascicles with additional documents and some changes in the order of the texts, but Huiyuan's three related works were compiled in the present order from the beginning. To take full advantage of being able to read the translation of these texts together in the *Collection*, footnotes pointing the readers to related texts in appropriate order (especially in the case of Huiyuan's three texts) would have been helpful. Additionally, documents in the *Hongmingji* that discuss the transmigration of spirits are sometimes difficult to comprehend as we find variant usage of similar key terms such as 'spirit of the dead' (*hunpo*, 魂魄), 'spiritual being' (*guishen*, 鬼神), and 'spirit' (*hunshen*, 魂神, *gui*, 鬼). In the case of *Elucidation of Delusions* (*Lihuolun*), all these terms appear on one page (vol. 1: 17. The Chinese characters are not given in the translation). Here, too, additional footnotes on etymological or contextual meaning of these terms could have facilitated the modern readers' understanding and offered seeds for thought to expand upon. Other terms translated as 'change/mutation' (*hua*, 化, equated with the spirit's transmigration of birth and death) and 'vapor' (*qi*, 氣), fascinating as they may be, are no doubt sources of headaches both for the readers and the translator.

The Buddha is said to have expounded his teachings through dialogues with interlocutors both monastic and lay, Buddhists and non-Buddhists. Similarly, the *Hongmingji* is a compilation of a rich variety of documents in dialogue with each other (literally and contextually) and Shi Sengyou's interests are by no means restricted to the topics and works the present review has focused on. The *Collection* offers an accessible way for a wide range of modern readers to engage in dialogue with intriguing ancient texts that not only illuminate the early days of Buddhism in China but also present topics relevant to us today.

- 1 WEN Jinyu, in MATSUMOTO Hideshi, "Ganmonsō Eon oyobi sono hōgaishisō," *Higashi-ajia Bukkyō Kenkyū* 13 (2015): 32–36.
- 2 FURUTA Kazuhiro, "Hō-ōron to Shinfumetsuron," *Ōtanidaigaku Kenkyū-nenpō* 31 (1979): 138, 103.
- 3 ŌTA Teizō, in the explanatory notes to the translation of *Hongmingji* in the *Kokuyaku issaikyō, Wa-kan senjutsu bu, Gokyōbu* 1 (1936): 3–5.

**Report:**

**The 18th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies,  
Tokyo, June 30 – July 2, 2017**

**Theme: “Self-Benefit and Benefit for Others in Pure Land Buddhism”**

Kenneth K. Tanaka  
Musashino Univ. & for President of Int. Assoc. of Shin Buddhist Studies

After the opening remarks by Dr. Teruma Nishimoto, the President of Musashino University, and myself as the President of the Int. Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, the conference began with a symposium panel entitled “The Future of IASBS.” The panelists included some of the senior members of the Steering Committee of IASBS as well as younger members representing the European District, the North American District and the Japan District.

Among the numerous comments and proposals for expanding the association was that of holding a future conference in a new location. This would end up materializing as the association voted at the end of the conference to hold the next conference in Taiwan. (May 24 (Fri), 25th and 26th, 2019 at Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts. Non-members are also welcomed to attend. Please visit the IASBS website: <http://www.iasbs.org/about/>)

Prof. Fumihiko Sueki (Prof. Emeritus, U. of Tokyo and Int. Research Center of Japanese Studies) delivered the Keynote, entitled, “Self-power and Other-power in Shinra.” And during the rest of the conference, a total of 35 members presented papers over the nine sessions. Of these, three of the sessions were pre-organized panels, 1) “Who Benefits Whom? The Tathagata and Sentient Beings in Benefitting Others in Shin Buddhist Thought,” 2) “Aspects of Self-Benefit and Benefit for Others in the Pure Land Buddhism, and 3) “Benefitting Others’ in Modern Shin Buddhist Doctrinal Studies of the Otani-ha.” To provide a glimpse into the type of papers presented, allow me to mention the four presenters and their paper titles of the first panel mentioned above: Robert F. Rhodes (Professor, Otani Univ.) “Hearing to the Dharma: Finding Yourself in the Pure Land Narrative”; Jun Fujii (Associate Professor, Komazawa Univ.) “Regarding the Authenticity of Shinran’s Letters that Include the Term ‘Prayer’”; James C. Dobbins (Professor, Oberlin College) “D.T. Suzuki, Amida’s Benefit to Others, and the Problem of Karma”; Michael Conway (Lecturer, Otani Univ.) “Soga Ryojin’s Understanding of the Returning Aspect of Merit Transference.”

There was ample opportunity for the participants to socialize as dinner receptions were provided on both Friday and Saturday. At the general meeting, Prof. Mitsuya Dake (Ryukoku Univ.) was elected the 5th president of IASBS.

On a personal note, this was the second such conference held at Musashino University in Tokyo. The last one was in 2005. That was the conference at which I was elected President of this association. So, it was a fitting time and place for me to step down after serving in that capacity for 12 years since that 2005 conference. I will continue to be active in the association as the Head of the Japan District. I invite all who are interested in Pure Land Buddhism to join our association.

## Obituary:

### **NARA Yasuaki (1929-2017)**

Kenneth K. Tanaka  
Musashino University

We are deeply saddened to report the passing of Prof. NARA Yasuaki, Professor Emeritus of Komazawa University, who passed away due to liver cancer on December 10, 2017.

Prof. NARA was intimately involved with the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai (BDK) English Tripiṭaka Translation Project, serving on its Board from its inception in 1982. He also served as a member of the Board of Directors of BDK (from 1996 to his passing) and also as its Consultant (from 2001 to his passing).

In 2009, Prof. NARA became the recipient of the 43rd Culture Award (A) of the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai. The award was in recognition for his distinguished contributions to the study in the field of Cultural History of Indian Religions.

Born in Chiba Prefecture in 1929, he graduated from the Department of Indian Philosophy, the University of Tokyo, in 1953, received his Masters from the same department in 1956, and completed the Doctorate program in the Department of Comparative Languages at Calcutta University, India. Upon returning to Japan, he was conferred a Doctorate of Literature (D. Litt.) degree from the University of Tokyo in 1973 (main adviser being Prof. NAKAMURA Hajime), based on his dissertation that can be best rendered in English as “Religious Surface and Foundation in Ancient Indian Buddhism.”

He was a priest belonging the Soto School and since 2012 served as a high-ranking teacher at prestigious Soto School temples, including Eihei-ji. Professor NARA became professor at Komazawa University in 1961, President in 1994 and Chancellor in 2005.

Those of us involved with the BDK English Tripiṭaka Translation Project will miss Professor NARA’s presence at its board meetings, whose wise counsel, gentle smile and magnanimous heart oversaw its policies for 35 years from its inauguration in 1982. We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the years of unstinting support and leadership in the area of Buddhist research, management and propagation, including most of all in relation to our translation project.

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