

**Pure Land Buddhism in China:  
A Doctrinal History  
Author's Preface and Chapter One: A General Survey**

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE FOLLOWING IS THE first two sections of one of the most famous sources for the study of Pure Land Buddhist thought: *Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History* (*Chūgoku Jōdo kyōrishi*), by Shinkō Mochizuki (1896–1948). This work was originally published in 1942, and was translated by the late Leo M. Pruden in 1982. We wish to thank his estate for permission to publish this important work. Although the original is now quite dated, it remains a useful resource, for although many specialized studies have been made since that time, no similar, comprehensive work exists. We also want to thank Professors Masatoshi Nagatomi and Stanley Weinstein for their consultation and encouragement to pursue making this work publicly available. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the assistance of the late Rev. Philip K. Eidman in contacting the Pruden estate and gaining permission for this publication.

The typescript of Pruden's translation came to light in late 1994, when I was looking through a storeroom in the Institute's building in Berkeley. There on a back shelf, I found six boxes of papers, containing two copies of the translation. Once I realized the importance of this work, I felt impelled to try to see it published—not only for the sake of the work's inherent interest, but also in recognition of the many years that Pruden had been an active supporter of the Institute.

Our plan is to publish the entirety of the translation sequentially in the *Pacific World*. When this is finished, we plan to publish the work as

a whole, together with a select bibliography that will assist the reader in locating more recent publications. Editing of the typescript has been limited to attempting to improve the readability of the translation, and updating some of the terminology to accord with more contemporary use.

### AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This present book systemizes the notes of lectures that I gave on numerous occasions at Taishō University. As these notes are now being printed in book form, this book will be entitled *Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History*, which points to the major concern of this work: the development and changes that Pure Land doctrines have undergone in China.

However, religious doctrines are accompanied by faith, and this in turn carries within itself an impetus to dissemination and expansion. Therefore, while we are relating the changes and developments that Pure Land doctrines have undergone, we are at the same time narrating the historical facts of the faith's growth and expansion.

Buddhism in China has almost two thousand years of history behind it; moreover, China is vast in geographic extent, and the religious phenomena that have arisen within it from the time of its origins to the present day are innumerable. It would be almost impossible to study these phenomena one by one, and I believe that it would not be an easy task to bring together the data involved in such a history, regardless of the criteria adopted. In the present work, I have attempted, to the best of my abilities, to bring together as much relevant historical data as possible, and to delineate the antecedents and later ramifications of any given doctrinal theory in my exposition of that theory. However, when the final editing of this work was finished, I discovered several places where further revision was called for, and I am filled with remorse that in this respect the work remains incomplete. I sincerely look to corrections and the emendations which later generations of scholars will provide.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Shōkō Kanayama, Sojun Moroto, Jōkō Katsuki, Shūkō Tanaka, Denjō Ishida, Shōdō Takarada, and Kyōshun Tōdō, for the assistance these young scholars have rendered to me in the compilation and writing of this book.

Shinkō Mochizuki  
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## CHAPTER I: A GENERAL SURVEY

The Pure Land teachings (*ching-t'u chiao*) form a separate tradition within Mahāyāna Buddhism. In these teachings, the devotee believes in the existence of a large number of various buddhas, and in their heavens, or pure lands; through this faith the devotee obtains, in this life, the protection of these buddhas and desires to be born into one of these pure lands after death. All of the various Mahāyāna scriptures and commentaries speak of buddhas "in all of the ten directions, as numberless as the grains of sand in the Ganges River." Each one of these buddhas lives in his own individual pure land, and here he continues to preach and to teach to a multitude of the faithful who have obtained birth in this land. Despite these repeated references, very few scriptures speak of any of these buddhas or their pure lands in detail. It is only the Buddhas Amitābha (O-mi-t'o Fo), Akṣobhya (O-shu Fo), and Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yao-shih Fo) who have separate, independent scriptures devoted to describing them and their pure lands.

However, an extremely large number of scriptures are devoted exclusively to Amitābha. These either describe his making of vows and his cultivation of religious practices while he was yet a bodhisattva, or they describe the adornments and the physical features of his pure land, the Western Land of Sukhāvati (*chi-lo*, "possessing extreme happiness"). The large number of scriptural texts devoted to Amitābha and Sukhāvati attest to the fact that, from the very earliest period, the pure land of the Buddha Amitābha was regarded as the best of all the pure lands of the buddhas. Consequently, the belief in Amitābha's Pure Land grew in India. In such works as Nāgārjuna's *Daśabhūmivibhāṣa* (*Shih-chu pi-p'o-she*), Sthiramati's *Ratnagotra vibhāga* (*Chiu-ching i-ch'eng Pao-hsing lun*), and Vasubandhu's *Commentary on the Amitāyus Sūtra* (*Amitāyus Sūtra Upadeśa*, *Wu-liang-shou ching Yü-p'o-t'i-she*) we find the authors vowing to be born into Sukhāvati. Similarly, such scriptural texts as the second volume of the *Ta-p'ei-ching*, the first volume of the *Ta-fa k'u ching*, the *Wen-chu shih-li fa-yuan ching*, and the sixth volume of the *Ta fang-teng Wu-hsiang ching* record that a variety of people vowed to be born in Amitābha's Pure Land. These include such figures as the bhikṣu Jivaka (Chi-p'o-chia), the young man Leṣya (Li-ch'e) "whom all the world delights in seeing," the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and "Queen Increase" (Ts'eng-ch'ang Nü-wang). When the Pure Land faith spread to China, it attracted many tens of millions of devotees, both clerics and laity, and the faith eventually spread to all the countries of the Far East, where it became the major faith of a vast majority of the populations of these lands. For this reason, although when we speak of

the Pure Land teachings, this term may be used to refer to the teaching that every buddha has a pure land, in light of the above, we shall employ this phrase in the sense of belief in the Buddha Amitābha. The rest of this work will concern itself with narrating the history of the dissemination of belief in Amitābha.

There are a variety of theories concerning the first introduction of the *buddhadharma* into China. The *Preface to the Sūtra of Forty-two Sections* (*Ssu-shih-erh chang ching*), Mou-tzu's *Li-huo lun*, volume two of the *Ch'u-san-tsang chi-chi*, and volume one of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* all place the first introduction of Buddhism during the reign of the Emperor Ming (reigned A.D. 57–75) of the Later Han Dynasty. According to this account, the Emperor Ming dreamt of a golden-colored man, and when he awoke, he dispatched Ts'ai Yin to the countries of Central Asia to search out the teaching of this golden-colored man. Ts'ai Yin returned to Loyang with the monk Kāśyapa-mātaṅga and here in Loyang, Kāśyapa-mātaṅga translated the *Sūtra in Forty-two Sections*, sometime during the Yung-ping period (A.D. 58–76). Based on this account, volume two of the *Li-tai San-pao chi* places the first introduction of Buddhism into China in the tenth year of Yung-ping (A.D. 67), during the reign of the Emperor Ming. However, it is well known that the *Sūtra of Forty-two Sections* was composed in China at a much later date. Further, since there is no basis to believe that Kāśyapa-mātaṅga ever actually came to China, this account, with all of its details, must have been fabricated by a later hand.

Another account is given in the first volume of the *Li-tai San-pao-chi*, and in the last volume of Fa-lin's *P'o-hsieh lun* (composed in the T'ang Dynasty). According to this account, some eighteen worthies arrived in China, headed by "the foreign śramaṇa Shih Li-fang," sometime during the reign of Ch'in Shih-huang-ti (ruled 246 to 210 B.C.). Shih Li-fang brought Buddhist scriptures with him, and preached the teaching to the Emperor. Ch'in Shih-huang-ti did not believe in these teachings, and he imprisoned Li-fang and the rest of the group. However, that very night, a Vajrayākṣa in the form of a man appeared, broke open the prison, and released the monks. Seeing this, the Emperor became terrified and prostrated himself to the monks, begging their forgiveness. The account ends with the statement that this incident is found recorded "in the *Scriptural Catalogue* of Shih Tao-an and Chu Shih-heng." We do not know if Tao-an's catalogue actually carried this account, since this catalogue has not been preserved for us. In a Japanese work, the *Tōzai kōshōshi no kenkyū* by Toyohachi Fujita, the author points out a statement in volume six of the *Shih-chi*, in an entry dated "the thirty-third year of the reign of Ch'in Shih-huang-ti" (214 B.C.), that "the temples of *pu-te* were prohibited" (*chin pu-te ssu*). The word *pu-te*

is a transliteration of the word "buddha," and this entry would mean that Buddhist ceremonies and Buddhist institutions were banned as early as the Ch'in Dynasty. The Emperor Ch'in Shih-huang-ti believed in the spirits (*shen-hsien*), and he was involved in the search for an elixir of immortality. Perhaps he disliked the Buddhist teaching of impermanence, and so banned the religion. The word "buddha" was early transliterated into Chinese by a variety of characters, *fo-t'u* (浮屠, 浮圖), or *fu-to* 復豆 so that the characters *pu-te* 不得 would thus appear to be the oldest transliteration of this word. However, if the religion of the Buddha was banned as early as the reign of the Emperor Ch'in Shih-huang-ti, then this fact would surely have been recorded in Tao-an's catalogue.

The thirty-third year of the reign of Ch'in Shih-huang-ti (214 B.C.) corresponds to the eighteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Aśoka, who in his turn had dispatched Buddhist missionaries to the lands of Gandhara and Bactria. Therefore, we cannot say that by this time one such mission could not have arrived on Chinese soil. In any case, the Buddhist scriptures did not survive from this supposed first missionary attempt, and in fact, the teachings were almost immediately proscribed, so in one sense this mission cannot be regarded as the origin of the *buddhadharma* in China.

The first account of the *buddhadharma* in China must then be placed during the reign of the Emperor Ai (reigned 7 to 1 B.C.). The thirtieth volume of the *Wei-chih* contains a "Monograph on the Eastern Barbarians," the Wu-wan and the Hsiang-pi. Commenting on this work, the *Wei-chih* quotes a text called the *Wei-lueh* by Yu K'un. This in turn states that in the year 2 B.C. (during the reign of the Emperor Ai, a scholar (*po shih*) named Ching Lu, heard about a Buddhist scripture (*fo-t'u ching*) from Yin Tsun, an ambassador from the Yueh-chih kingdom in western Central Asia. We do not know what type of Buddhist scripture this was. However, the account continues with a description of the birth of Siddhārtha, the details of his parentage, who his mother and father were, what kingdom he was born in, etc., so the text in question was perhaps a *nidāna*, or an account of the early life of the Buddha.

This oral account of the life of the Buddha, told by a Central Asian ambassador to a Chinese scholar in the year 2 B.C., can be safely held to be the first undisputed appearance of the teachings of the Buddha on Chinese soil. Very soon, however, under the rule of Wang Mang, relations were severed with the Central Asian kingdoms in the year A.D. 9, only to be reestablished with the rise of the Later Han Dynasty (from A.D. 26 onward). From this time onward, we can see more clearly the introduction of various aspects of the *buddhadharma* into China.

In volume eighty-eight of the *Hou Han-shu*, in the "Monograph on Central Asia" (*Hsi-yu ch'uan*), it is recorded that "for the first time King

Ying of Ch'u believed in this teaching (i.e., Buddhism) and, because of this, the *dharma* spread rapidly thereafter." In volume forty-two of this same work, in the "Biography of the Ten Kuang-wu Kings," we are told that King Ying was very fond of the various wanderers who traveled around the country at this time. It says that he would greet them, entertain them in his palace, and listen to their teachings. We are told that in his old age he came to believe in the doctrine of Huang-Lao (the Yellow Emperor and Lao-tzu), that he followed the doctrines of the Buddha, and that he performed ceremonies replete with vegetarian feasts.

In the year A.D. 65, the Emperor Ming ordered a general amnesty throughout the Empire for all those under sentence of death, and at this time the Emperor received presents from those to whom he had granted amnesty. King Ying sent a messenger with thirty rolls of silk cloth as a present to the Emperor, begging an amnesty for himself. The Emperor is recorded to have stated that King Ying recited the words of Huang-Lao, that he worshiped at the temple of the Buddha, and that he kept a vegetarian fast for three months as a vow to the spirits (*shen*). We are told that the Emperor said, "We find nothing odious, nor doubtful, in this." The Emperor returned the rolls of silk and ordered that these be used in feeding *upāsakas* and *śramaṇas*.

We know from this account, then, that by the year A.D. 65 King Ying had converted to Buddhism and was widely known as an *upāsaka*, as well as being noted for his vegetarian feasts. If this account is factual, then we can safely say that Buddhism had spread widely throughout China even before the Yung-ping period, and that the tale of the Emperor Ming dreaming of a golden-colored man, and receiving the *dharma* from the West, is merely a reflection of this historical fact.

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The first appearance of what was to develop into Pure Land teachings was the translation in A.D. 179, during the reign of the Later Han Dynasty Emperor Ling, of the *Pratyupanna-samādhi Sūtra* (*P'an-shou san-mei ching*) by Lokakṣema. This translation was soon followed by the work of Wu Chih-ch'ien and the Western Chin Dynasty monk Chu Fahuo, who translated the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*. Also the *Ping-teng-ch'üeh ching* was translated by Kumārajīva (of the Yao-Ch'in Dynasty). In addition Pao-yun and Kālayāśas, both of the Liu-Sung Dynasty, translated the *O-mi-t'o ching*, the *Shih-chu pi-p'o-she lun*, the *Wu-liang shou ching*, and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. In this way, different texts appeared one after the other, and found greater numbers of devotees within the ranks of both the clergy and the laity.

The first person recorded to be seeking rebirth in the Western Pure Land was Ts'e, Duke of Ch'ueh (Ch'ueh Kung-ts'e, a person of the Western Chin Dynasty), and from this time onward larger and larger numbers of persons are described as longing for rebirth. The most renowned of such persons was the Eastern Chin Dynasty scholar-monk, Hui-yuan. With Hui-yuan, the Pure Land doctrines found their first eminent master, and the later Pure Land lineages in China regarded him as their first patriarchal master. It is with him that the Pure Land movement begins to be a significant religious movement.

Hui-yuan founded the White Lotus Society (*Pai-lien she*) on the southern Chinese mountain, Mt. Lu (Lu-shan). This society was a meditation group whose members would meditate on the form of the Buddha Amitābha in an attempt to realize *nien-fo san-mei* (*buddha-anusmṛti-samādhi*), a *samādhi* based primarily on the above-mentioned *P'an-shou san-mei ching*. If a devotee was able to see the form of the Buddha, this was a guarantee that he would eventually be reborn in the Pure Land. It is this emphasis on meditation that came to be normative in Chinese Buddhism, and is the form of Pure Land teachings stressed in Japanese Tendai until the Kamakura period.

From the period of the Liu-Sung Dynasty onward, the Pure Land faith spread widely throughout China: lectures on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* came to be frequently offered, and many images of the Buddha Amitābha were constructed. Bodhiruci translated Vasubandhu's *Amitāyus Sūtra Upadeśa* in the reign of the Emperor Hsuan-wu of the Northern Wei Dynasty. Soon thereafter, T'an-luan composed a commentary on it, and in this commentary adopted the theory of the division of the *buddhadharma* into an easy path and a difficult path (first taught in the *Daśabhūmi-vibhāṣa*). T'an-luan also stressed the power of Amitābha's fundamental or original vows (known as "other-power"), a teaching which came to be stressed by subsequent writers in the "exclusivist" tradition of Pure Land thought. In northern China, in the area of Ping-chou, many followers of the Pure Land doctrines are likewise recorded.

Serious textual studies of the various Pure Land scriptures began in the Chou and Sui Dynasties. This period also saw the composition of many commentaries on both the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* by such famous monks of other Buddhist traditions as Ching-ying Hui-yuan, Ling-yu, Chi-tsang, and Fa-ch'ang. Other masters composed works or essays on various problems of Pure Land teachings, masters such as Chih-i (the founder of the T'ien-t'ai tradition), Tai-chi, Chih-yen (of the Hua-yen tradition), and Chia-ts'ai. These works discussed the precise nature of the buddha's body (*kāya*) and the nature of his pure land. At this time, too, the *Ti-lun* (*Daśabhūmi-*

*vyākhyā*) was a popular object of study, and many scholar-monks whose primary orientation was this text appear to have been deeply interested in Pure Land doctrines, and to have counted themselves as Pure Land followers.

There also developed an early Yogācāra tradition centered on the study of the *She-lun* (Asaṅga's *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*). A number of masters from this tradition came to hold the view that the Pure Land teaching of the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching* that ordinary persons (*pṛthagjana*) could attain rebirth was a teaching "whose purport lay in a specific period of time" (*pieh-shih-i*). That is, the basic teachings of the Pure Land scriptures were an expedient teaching, designed to lead the simple to faith in the Buddha and further developing their religious consciousness. This would lead them to Yogācāra philosophy or, in any case, out of purely Pure Land teachings. Because of the sophistication of this Yogācāra teaching, and because this school of thought placed the Pure Land teachings in a subservient, but still meaningful, relationship to the rest of Buddhism, the Pure Land movement underwent an intellectual decline for a number of decades.

In the T'ang Dynasty the Pure Land movement saw the appearance of the monks Tao-ch'ō and Shan-tao. Both of these men became the inheritors of the tradition of T'an-luan, and in their writings stressed the power of the fundamental vows of Amitābha. These men were also the first to introduce the concept of *mo-fa* (*J. mappō*) into Chinese Pure Land thought. The theory of *mo-fa* divides Buddhist religious history into two, or three, periods: the first period is that of the True Dharma, the second period is that of the Counterfeit Dharma, and these two are then followed by the period that sees the total Extinction (*mo*) of the Dharma (*fa*). In their writings, they taught that the Pure Land teachings were the teachings specifically designed by the Buddha to fit these historical conditions. Shan-tao most especially spelled out the Pure Land doctrines in the mold originally set by T'an-luan and Tao-ch'ō. Presented in his *Commentary on the Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* (the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching Shu*), his exegesis set a standard that was widely read and followed by many subsequent generations of Chinese Pure Land thinkers.

In this work, Shan-tao refuted the theories of a number of other masters, and laid a firm foundation for subsequent Pure Land thought. In Japan, Shan-tao and his *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching Shu* became very popular due to the emphasis placed on them by Hōnen and by Hōnen's disciples. To the Japanese, Shan-tao came to be by far the single most important Chinese Pure Land writer.

Contemporary with Shan-tao were such masters as Chih-shou, Ching-mai, Hui-ching, Yuan-ts'e, Tao-hui, Tao-yin, and Huai-kan, all of whom were active in the capital city of Ch'ang-an. Each of these masters



wrote commentaries on the *O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. Also quite important were the Korean scholar-monks of Silla, the masters Chajang, Wŏnhyŏ, Ŭisang, Bŏpwi, Hyŏn'il, Kyŏnghŭng, Ŭijŏk, Taehyŏn, and Dunryun. Each of these masters wrote commentaries, or carried out studies in the various Pure Land scriptures. It was clearly at this period—the early years of the T'ang Dynasty—that Pure Land studies reached a high watermark in the Far East, due in large measure to the influence of the flourishing state of Buddhist studies in general.

The monk Hui-jih returned to China from his sojourn in India during the K'ai-yuan period (A.D. 713–741) of the T'ang Dynasty. At roughly this same time the emerging Ch'an school began an attack on the Pure Land teachings. They taught that the Pure Land teachings were fit only for the ignorant, for they were an *upāya*, or expedient teaching, designed to lead ignorant persons to something higher, and were ultimately “a lie and a delusion.” This attack generated a furious counterattack from the ranks of the Pure Land followers, which led to the gradual formation of a separate sect of Pure Land teachings within China. Pure Land scholars became self-conscious of their tradition in the ensuing debate with the Ch'an school. The Pure Land polemic was continued by such monks as Ch'eng-yuan, Fa-chao, and Fei-hsi, who held theories which appeared to reconcile Ch'an with Pure Land thought. These masters held that the *nien-fo san-mei* constituted an unsurpassed, most profound and marvelous meditation teaching (*ch'an-men*). However, in their writings, Pure Land masters heaped much abuse upon the heads of the followers of the Ch'an tradition. Despite this, there were in the Ch'an ranks monks who appear to have reconciled these two traditions.

The monk Hsüan-shih, a disciple of the Fifth Patriarch of the Ch'an tradition, proclaimed the existence of a new tradition, the Nan-shan Nien-fo-men Ch'an-tsung, “the South Mountain Meditation Tradition of the Nien-fo Teachings.” Nan-yang Hui-chung, one of the disciples of the Sixth Ch'an Patriarch, Hui-neng, taught the simultaneous cultivation of “practice and understanding.” In this case, “practice” refers to *nien-fo* recitation, and “understanding” to the insight gained through Ch'an.

Yung-ming Yen-shou, a second-generation disciple of the Ch'an master Fa-yen, taught the principle of the mutual perfection of the truth of emptiness (in Ch'an), and of existence (in the Pure Land teaching). He taught that only an understanding of these two could bring about awakening. These masters, coming largely out of Ch'an ranks but also having their counterparts within the ranks of Pure Land masters, were instrumental in teaching widely the necessity of the dual cultivation of both meditation (Ch'an) and the recitation of the Name of Amitābha (Pure Land practice). Eventually, this tradition of joint cultivation came to assume the proportions of a separate sectarian trend within Far Eastern Mahāyāna.

The Sung Dynasty saw the appearance of a number of monks who were known for their cultivation of the Pure Land teachings, such monks as T'ien-i I-huai, Hui-lin Tsung-pen, Ku-su Shou-na, Ch'ang-lu Tsung-i, Huang-lang Ssu-hsin, and Chen-ko Ch'ing-liao. This period also saw, for the first time, the appearance of laymen who became renowned for their joint cultivation of Pure Land and Ch'an practices, laymen such as Yang Chieh, Wang Ku, Chiang-kung Wang, Wang Chen, and Wang Jih-hsiu. The fame of these laymen strengthened this tendency towards joint Ch'an-Pure Land cultivation.

The T'ien-t'ai tradition also produced a number of believers in Pure Land teachings, as well as a number of scholarly monks who worked in exegesis, among whom were the Sung Dynasty monks Hsing-ching, Ch'eng-yu, I-t'ung, Yuan-ch'ing, Wen-pi, Tsun-shih, Chih-li, Chih-yuan, Jen-yüeh, Ts'ung-i, Ts'e-ying, and Tsung-hsiao. All of these masters either composed commentaries on the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching* or the *O-mi-t'o ching*, or wrote works explaining various aspects of the Pure Land teachings. Chih-li's *Kuan-ching Shu Miao-tsung ch'ao* is the most famous of these works. Its salient doctrinal feature was the teaching of visualizing the Buddha Amitābha with respect to one's own mind. This teaching came to be emphasized within T'ien-t'ai circles, contributing much to the development of a doctrinal basis for the joint cultivation of Ch'an and Pure Land practices, and to the fusion of Ch'an and Pure Land theories within Chinese Buddhism as a whole.

Later, during the Sung, the monk Yuan-chao of Yu-k'ang, noted for his studies and writings on the Vinaya tradition (*Lü-tsung*), devoted the latter years of his life to propagating the Pure Land teachings. He composed a commentary on the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and in his own way set up a variant lineage and school within the broader Pure Land tradition. His disciples, Yung-ch'in and Chieh-tu, also wrote commentaries, and contributed to popularizing the philosophical views of their master. During the Southern Sung Dynasty, the Japanese monk Shunjō introduced the writings of Yuan-chao to Japan where, however, their circulation was initially limited. Thus it was that Pure Land thought developed during the Sung Dynasty.

At this same time, Chinese Buddhism also saw the rise of Pure Land lay societies (*chieh-she*), or lay organizations established to promote Pure Land belief and practice among their members. Such groups became especially strong in South China, and we know the names of the major leaders of such groups. Indeed, a large number of the most renowned scholar-monks of their day organized such groups, masters such as Hsing-ch'ang, Tsun-shih, Chih-li, Pen-ju, Ling-chao, Tsung-i, and Tao-shen. All of these masters organized laymen and clerics into societies for the purpose of cultivating *nien-fo* practices. In almost all of

these cases, the organizers considered themselves to be reviving the tradition of Hui-yuan's White Lotus Society on Mt. Lu, while also looking to the lives of Shan-tao and Fa-chao, themselves reputed to have formed such organizations, as precedents.

At the beginning of the Southern Sung Dynasty, the master Tz'u-chao Tzu-yuan founded an organization now actually termed the White Lotus Tradition (*Pai-lien tsung*). In its teachings and organization, the traditions to which this group hearkened back were written down by the monk P'u-tu of the same Mt. Lu in a major compendium of this sect's teachings, the *Lien-tsung pao-chien*. In this work, we find a large amount of popular superstition and degenerate customs mixed with Buddhist doctrines. The work was banned on several occasions but, after each banning, the resentment of the masses became enflamed, leading to popular rebellions and local uprisings. The sect was often termed the *Pai-lien chiao-fei*, the White Lotus Teaching Rebels, in official documents.

With the founding of the Yuan Dynasty, the tendency toward the joint cultivation of Ch'an and Pure Land became even more pronounced. Several renowned Ch'an masters became noted for their devotion to the Pure Land faith: such masters as Chung-feng Ming-pen, T'ien-ju Weitse, Ch'u-shih Fan-ch'i, and Tuan-yün Chih-ch'e. Within the T'ien-t'ai tradition, a number of well-known monks wrote works in praise of the Pure Land teachings, such as Chan-t'ang Hsing-ch'eng, Yü-k'ang Meng-jun, Yin-chiang Miao-hsieh, and Yün-wo Shan-chu.

The Ming Dynasty (1368–1627) was a period characterized by large numbers of monks who taught the practice of the joint cultivation of Ch'an and the Pure Land teachings. Among such masters were Ch'u-shan Shao-ch'i, K'ung-ku Ching-lung, Ku-yin Ching-chin, I-yuan Tsung-pen, Yün-chi Chu-hung, Tz'u-po Chen-k'o, Han-shan Teh-ch'ing, Po-shan Yuan-lai, Chan-jan Yuan-ch'eng, Ku-shan Yuan-hsien, and Wei-hsiang Tao-p'ei. The most eminent of these was the master Chu-hung. During the Lung-ch'ing period (1567–1572), he went into retreat at an auspicious site in the Yun-chi Mountains in the area of Hang-chou, and there he cultivated the *nien-fo san-mei* (S.: *buddhānusmṛtisamādhi*). He composed a commentary on the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and several works extolling the joint cultivation of Ch'an and Pure Land teachings. His influence spread widely and gradually influenced all of Chinese Buddhism.

At this time, the T'ien-t'ai tradition also produced some eminent scholar-monks who wrote books elucidating Pure Land teachings from the standpoint of T'ien-t'ai thought. Among such masters were Wu-ai P'u-chih, Yen-ching Tao-yen, Chü-an Ta-yu, Yuan-hsi Ch'uan-teng, Ling-yueh Chih-hsü, and Ku-hsi Ch'eng-shih. The most eminent of these was the master Chih-hsü, who advocated the theory that "the

Three Learnings have One [Common] Origin.” Chih-hsü also stressed the necessity of upholding all three traditions—Ch’an, Pure Land, and Vinaya—as an exclusive reliance on any one of them would lead to the decay of Buddhism as a whole. Nevertheless, Chih-hsü believed that the most essential of these Three Learnings was the Pure Land tradition. Contemporary with these masters were the laymen Yuan Hung-tao and Chuang Kuang-huan, who also composed works extolling the Pure Land teachings.

During the Ch’ing Dynasty (1616–1911), the Pure Land teachings came to be advocated by an ever larger number of laymen. Active during the K’ang-hsi period were the laymen Chou K’o-fu, Yü Hsing-min, and Chou Meng-yen, who all wrote works encouraging the practice of Pure Land devotions. During the Ch’ien-lung period (1736–1795), the laymen P’eng Chao-sheng and P’eng Hsi-su compiled biographies of persons who had attained rebirth in Sukhāvātī. P’eng Chao-sheng composed an especially large number of works praising Pure Land teachings, and worked for the wider dissemination of these doctrines.

Toward the end of the K’ang-hsi period (1662–1722), the monk Shih-hsien Ssu-ch’i, emulating the work of Chu-hung, organized a Pure Land society (*lien-she*) in Hang-chou. The influence of this society spread widely, and Ssu-ch’i came to be called “Yen-shou come again” (*Yung-ming tsai-lai*), and became the object of much popular affection and veneration. This period also saw the activities of the monks Hsing-ts’e, Hsü-fa, Ming-heng, Ming-teh, Ch’i-neng, Fo-an, Shih-ch’eng, and Chi-hsing. These monks were active in the K’ang-hsi and Ch’ien-lung periods in their cultivation of the Pure Land teachings. At a slightly later period the monks Shui-chang and Hu-t’ing continued to compile biographies of persons who had attained rebirth in the Pure Land. Slightly later, the monks Ta-mo and Wu-k’ai, and the laymen Chang Shih-ch’eng and Chen I-Yuan, wrote works extolling Pure Land practices.

From the time of the Sung Dynasty onward, Pure Land teachings especially flourished in southern China. However, with the founding of the Ch’ing Dynasty, the capital of China was moved to the north to the city of Yen-ching (re-named Pei-ching, meaning “the northern capital,” i.e., present-day Peking). At this court, the Tantric Buddhism of Tibet and Mongolia was especially honored, and so it happened that during this dynasty Pure Land doctrines and practices were largely limited to southern China. From the Ming Dynasty onward, Chinese Buddhism appears to have lost some of its vitality and much of its originality and creative genius, and this was evident too in the case of Pure Land literature. Much of the published Pure Land literature consisted of nothing more than excerpts from the writings and thoughts of the great masters of the past.

With the establishment of the Republic, Chinese Buddhism underwent a slight revival. However, with the advent of the Second World War and the subsequent socialist revolution on the Chinese mainland, much Buddhist work came to a halt. This work has been only slightly revived in the last two decades on the island of Taiwan, in Hong Kong, and in certain Southeast Asian centers.



history, aspired to rebirth in the Pure Land, whether conceived of in metaphorical or in literal terms. The Pure Land is both a world of ease and bliss as well as a place wherein one may easily progress along the Buddhist path unencumbered by physical and mental impurities. To those born in the Pure Land, final liberation is assured. Buddhism in China wrote commentaries to one or more of them. The wide variety of practices that went under the general rubric of nien-fo are to be found in the ritual manuals of all the principal liturgical traditions. Ta-hai is another figure about whom nothing is known. Mochizuki tries to identify him as the monk Hui-hai (541-609), who was known to have engaged in Pure Land devotions. Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History. Save to Library. by Natalie Quli. Magliola concludes with Buddhism's later re-reading of one of its principal tenets, namely dependent arising, as precisely the ongoing of thirst [craving], but thirst-taken-wisely, so it become absolute compassion. The following chapter provides a brief historical background to Maitreya and Tuá'ita in the life of Tsongkhapa, describes the context for the understanding of Tuá'ita Heaven as a buddha-field among Tsongkhapa's followers, and concludes with a description of the characteristics of Maitreya's field as a pure land. On Pure Land Buddhism and Chan/Pure Land syncretism in medieval China. Article. Dec 2002. Robert Sharf. Modern studies of Buddhism and Chinese religion often refer to an indigenous Chinese Pure Land 'school' that arose in the medieval period. This school is typically characterized as a distinct tradition with its own teachings and its own line of patriarchs, including Tan-luan (476-542), Tao-cho (562-645), and Shan-tao (612-681). [Show full abstract] change but a doctrinal one. The philosophies of these East Asian Mahāyāna schools and the Zhenyan tradition are described in the chapter. The traditions discussed include New Sanlun, Tiantai, Huayan, Pure Land, Chan, and Faxiang traditions. Read more. Pure Land Buddhism, also referred to as Amidism in English, is a broad branch of Mahayana Buddhism and one of the most widely practiced traditions of Buddhism in East Asia. Pure Land is a tradition of Buddhist teachings that are focused on the Buddha Amitābha. The three primary texts of the tradition, known as the "Three Pure Land Sutras", are the Longer Sukhāvataśśaha Sūtra (Infinite Life Sutra), Amitayurdhyana Sutra (Contemplation Sutra) and the Shorter Sukhāvataśśaha Sūtra (Amitabha Sutra).