Reflecting Mirrors

Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism

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INTRODUCTION

The third patriarch of the Huayan tradition, Fazang 法藏 (643–712), is said to have built a Mirror Hall for Empress Wu 武 (r. 684–705) as a pedagogical device to illustrate the cardinal tenets of Huayan philosophy, the mutual interdependence and mutual interpenetration. According to later descriptions eight mirrors were placed in the four cardinal directions and four secondary directions, and one on the top, and one on the bottom. In the middle of the ten mirrors facing to one another, a Buddha statue was installed, along with a lamp or a candle to illuminate it. This setting produced an infinite number of Buddha reflections in the mirrors. When I visited the Huayan monastery on Zhongnanshan in the outskirt of Xi'an a few years ago, I was disappointed to see that the temple which collapsed sometime during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) consists of only a small building, and only the abbot with his disciple live there. However, the recounstructed *stūpa*s of Huayan patriarchs, Du Shun 杜順 (557–640) and Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839), can be seen in the yard of the monastery, preserving some glories of the past. The enthusiastic abbot showed me his reconstruction of Mirror Hall, a small building housing ten metal plates (as substitutes for mirrors) and a Buddha image in the center. Lighting up the the candle, infinite Buddha images became reflected on the metal plates. In this volume Huayan Buddhism is in the center, and the articles arranged around this topic reflect it from different aspects providing various perspectives for the viewers to discern it, hence the title *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism*. The reader can get an insight into the development of Huayan Buddhism from the compilation of its base text, the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* through the establishment of Huayan tradition as a special form of East Asian Buddhism to its visual representations.

The book consists of five chapters: 1. State of Field 2. *The Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* 3. Huayan in China 4. Hwaŏm/Kegon in Korea and Japan and 5. Huayan/Hwaŏm/Kegon Art. The first chapter gives a summary of the main results of research in the field of Huayan Buddhism in the West, Japan and China. Although the first publication on Huayan in the West, Garma C. C. Chang's book titled *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality* (1971) is rather unreliable, several studies have appeared which shed light on various aspects of Huayan Buddhism. Joerg Plassen in his article shows the main trends of the research focusing on the early history of the tradition. Robert Gimello's

unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, *Chih-yen* (1976) has remained the best study on the early history of Huayan and the religious and philosophical background of the formation of Huayan. Francis D. Cook and LIU Ming-wood contributed to our knowledge of the thought of Fazang who is said to have systematized Huayan philosophy. Fazang's historical role in Tang society is clarified by the works of Antonino Forte and Chen Jinhua. Peter Gregory's book, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (1991) is certainly a milestone in Huayan studies in the West. It provides a very deatiled survey on the Huayan system of classification of teachings (*panjiao*), Huayan practice based on the cosmological implication of *Dasheng qixin lun*, and Huayan's relationship to other Chinese philosophies. Recently, Imre Hamar has published several works related to Chengguan's life and philosophy, to whom Zongmi is greatly indebted.

Scientific investigation of Huayan Buddhism started very early in the last quarter of 19th century in Japan, thus a huge amount of Huayan studies have been accumulated. It is no wonder that Western scholars primarly look for Japanese secondary sources, once they decide to explore one aspect of Huayan Buddhism. Given the great number of related articles and books on this topic, KIMURA Kiyotaka had to confine himself to introducing the major publications of some excellent scholars from different periods. First, he discusses the works of YUSUGI Ryōei, KAMETANI Seikei, SUZUKI Sōchū, TAKAMINE Ryōshū, KAMEKAWA Kyōshin who lived between the last quarter of 19th century and the first half of twentieth century. After 1950's Huayan research enters upon a new phase with such eminent scholars like SAKAMOTO Yukio, ISHII Kyōdō, KAMATA Shigeo and KIMURA Kiyotaka. Finally, he mentions scholars of next generation who worked under his guidance, including ITŌ Zuiei, NAKAMURA Kaoru, YOSHIZU Yoshihide and ISHII Kōsei. All these works Kimura listed in his article became the classics of Huayan studies, which are now indispensable handbooks for studies of any kind in this field. Kimura's article is supplemented by an appendix of the bibliography of Japanese articles on Huayan Buddhism in the past fifteen years. The abundance of publications clearly shows that the Japanese intensive interest in this form of Buddhism has not weakened.

Even though Japanese publications are quite numerous, the most important results are well-known, as they receive wide scholarly attention by referring to them. However, we know much less about Huayan studies in China, as they are seldom quoted in Western publications. ZHU Qingzhi's article, no doubt, fills in this gap by introducing studies of China in the past 25 years. Given the economic reforms in late 1970's, along with economy religious studies became very prosperous in Mainland China. However, up to the beginning of 1990's scholars of older generation, like REN Jiyu or FANG Litian focused on writing general histories of Chinese philosophy and Buddhism, and Huayan could be only a chapter of these comprehensive books. With the arrival of new generation of scholars specialized works started to appear. WEI Daoru wrote a comprehensive history of Huayan Buddhism in China which discusses the compilation of *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, the works of Huayan masters, and the impact of Huayan Buddhism on other schools and the literati. ZHU briefly introduces the works, mainly articles, of recent scholarship on various aspects of Huayan

Buddhism, i.e. Huayan theory, philosophy of Huayan masters, Huayan influence on other Buddhist schools, Neo-Confucianism and literature. Zhu also mentiones a few Ph.D. dissertations written on Huayan Buddhism.

CHOE Yeonshik introduces the main trends of Huayan studies in Korea. His article is also a very important contribution to this volume, as even Huayan scholars do not use Korean secondary sources unless they are Koreanists, thus the results of Korean research are not well-known. Although the Hwaŏm school as an independent school has not survived in Korea, it has become an important part of not only the monastic education but the Korean intellectual tradition, too. When the modern investigation of Huayan Buddhism began in the 60s, scholars tended to apply foreign methods in research, and focused on the philosophical writings of patriarchs instead of studying the *Huayan jing* and its commentaries. The Korean research on Huayan Buddhism can be divided into two parts: 1. study on the theoretical system of the Chinese Huayan tradition 2. study on the Korean Hwaŏm tradition. Choe lists the main publications related to these two areas.

As it is widely known, the Huayan tradition of East Asian Buddhism received its name from the Chinese translation of *Mahāvaipulya Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, *Dafang-guang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經. This is one of the most voluminous Mahāyāna *sūtra*, Thomas Cleary's English translation covers more than 1500 pages. This *sūtra*, which is thought to be preached right after Buddha's experience of enlightenment under the *bodhi* tree, is regarded as the highest teaching according to the classification of teachings by the Huayan tradition. Being the literary product of the relatively unknown Mahāyāna movement, this work is of uncertain provenance. As the original Sanskrit manuscripts of two Chinese translations are said to have been brought from Khotan, some scholars suspect that this *sūtra* was compiled here or somewhere in Central Asia. In Chapter Two, which includes three articles on this huge Mahāyāna *sūtra*, ŌTAKE Susumu in his article titled *On the Origin and Early Development of the Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* puts forward that *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* was actually known in India, thus he seems to argue for the Indian origin. He shows that Sanskrit equivalent for the Chinese term "*Huayan*" is not "*Gaṇḍavyūha*," as long surmised, but "*Avataṃsaka*". He provides a very clear explanation of the term "*Buddhāvataṃsaka*" which is the key element in the title of this Mahāyāna *sūtra*. According to the Sarvāstivāda tradition *Buddhāvataṃsaka* is a miracle that only Buddha can perform. In this miracle a large number of Buddhas seated on lotus blossom become manifested, and each of these Buddhas in turn manifest a large number of Buddhas seated on lotus blossoms. This multiplicity of Buddhas reach as far as the Akaniṣṭha heaven. Ōtake succeeded in finding some passages describing this kind of miracle in the *Bhadraśrī*, a chapter of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. In his article, he also demonstrates that the title *Buddhāvataṃsaka* was used before the compilation of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. He finds four *sūtras* bearing this title and regards them as the original *Buddhāvataṃsaka* group. He adds three other *sūtra*s to this group, because he finds some similarities among these works. The most important is that all these seven *sūtra*s were preached at the meeting held

in the Hall of Brightness, which is not a historical but a mythical place. The author suggests that this original *Buddhāvataṃsaka* group played an important role in the formation of large *Buddhāvataṃsaka*, as most of them were incorporated into this huge *sūtra*. Nonetheless, he calls attention to the fact that even though this group formed the nucleus of the large *Buddhāvataṃsaka*, this is not necessarily its oldest strata. All these works refer to the ten stages, thus the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* must have predated them.

Jan Nattier in her article titled *New Light on the Early History of the Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra: Evidence from Chinese Sources* also looks for the origin of this Mahāyāna *sūtra* and finds some texts that could be called the "Proto-*Buddhāvataṃsaka*." First, she shows very convincingly that the oldest text in the Chinese translation of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* texts, *Dousha jing* 兜沙經, produced by Lokakṣema 支婁迦識 in the latter part of the second century CE, can be matched with two other translations, the *Zhu pusa qiu fo benye jing* 諸菩薩求佛本業經 and the *Pusa shizhu xingdao pin* 菩薩十住行道品. Consequently, these tree texts used to be one text translated by Lokakṣema, but during its transmission they became separated and were given different titles. The usage of terminology and the style of the translation substantiate this claim. Next, she finds that this reconstructed text is very similar to the *Pusa benye jing* 菩薩本業經, translated by Zhi Qian 支謙 in the early to mid-third century, thus this must be a different recension of the same text. She regards this text, that we have two recensions of, a possible candidate for the title "Proto-*Buddhāvataṃsaka*," or, at least, a scripture whose content resembled that of the "Proto-*Buddhāvataṃsaka*." The larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* seems to be an expansion of this "original" *sūtra* by inserting other materials into the text without changing the sequence of the teachings. In addition, Nattier studies the content of this early *sūtra*, carefully comparing the two recensions and the related "pieces" in the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, in order to shed some light on the possible authors of the text and their practices. She points out that the bodhisattva, whose practice is depicted in this *sūtra*, is a male belonging to the wealthy and privileged class. A bodhisattva must wish the well-being of all living beings during his every-day activitiy, even while entering his harem. The *sūtra* does not reject but incorporates the non-Mahāyāna practices, nontheless it emphasizes the Mahāyāna teachings, the attaiment of Buddhahood through ten stages. This scripture, like the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, is a highly visual text. The bodhisattvas are told to see the Buddhas in meditation, and the new revelations are transmitted through bodhisattvas emerging from *samādhi*.

After discussing the origin of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* by Jan Nattier and ŌTAKE Susumu, Imre Hamar's article titled *The History of the Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra: Shorter and Larger Texts* gives a survey of the texts related to this scripture. If *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* is mentioned, usually one has three texts in mind: Buddhabhadra's first Chinese translation titled *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 in 420, Śikṣānanda's second Chinese translation under the same title in 699, and the Tibetan translation titled *Sangs-rgyas phal-po-che zhes bya-ba shin-tu rgyas-pa*

chen-po'i mdo by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, and Ye-shes-sde in the first quarter on 9th century. We are tempted to call these texts the "complete" *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, however the comparative study of these texts reveals that they are different in many aspects. The number and sometimes the titles of the chapters are at variance, moreover in the Tibetan text we find two chapters that are missing from both Chinese texts, and there is one chapter which is missing from the earlier Chinese translation made by Buddhabhadra but the the other Chinese version and the Tibetan text include it. Thus it seems to be more appropriate to say that today we have three recensions of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, which could be called the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*s. Although the Sanskrit text has not survived, we have some knowledge of its existence through the report of Chinese Huayan exegets. Zhiyan recorded the title of the chapters of the Sanskrit manuscript he had seen. This could be called the fourth recension. Before and after the appearance of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* chapters were translated as freestanding works, and many of them are preserved in the Buddhist Canon. Hamar's article ends with a comparative chart which relates the chapters of the four recension of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* to the extant freestanding translations.

There are many Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, but only few of them became very prominent in forming the characterics of East Asian Buddhism. The *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* is undoubtedly one of them. It would be interesting to study the reason why this scripture was so influential. Is it due to the fact that it is said to be preached right after Buddha's enlightenment depicting the ultimate truth, or its emphasis on the bodhisattva path, or its highly visual and imaginative nature? This way or that way, it gave rise to a special East Asian form of Buddhism which is called Huayan in Chinese, Hwaŏm in Korean, and Kegon in Japanese. It would be an exaggeration to regard it a "school" as it had no institutional background, thus "tradition" or "lineage" seem to be more appropriate terms. This lineage is usually described by five patriarchs: Du Shun 杜順 (557–640), Zhiyan 智嚴 (602–668), Fazang 法藏 (643–712), Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839), and Zongmi 宗密 (780–841). In addition to Zhiyan, Fazang and Chengguan, the lay hermit of Wutaishan Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635?–730) and Fazang's heretic disciple Huiyuan 慧苑 (673–743) wrote commentaries to the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. These exegetical works became the main sources of understanding this huge scripture in East Asia.

Chapter Three discusses some aspects of Chinese Huayan Buddhism. ARAMAKI Noritoshi in his article titled *The Huayan Tradition in Its Earliest Period* has attempted to reconstruct the beginning of Huayan tradition before the so-called first patriarch right after Buddhabhadra's translation of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. Buddhabhadra is said to teach meditation to Xuangao 玄高 (402–444), a monk who later played important role in the Buddhist development of Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534), but finally fell prey to the anti-Buddhist movement. Aramaki suspects that Buddhabhadra took his translation of *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* with him to the North, and transmitted it to Xuangao, along with the *huayan samādhi*. Xuangao established a religious community with Daorong 道融, who is regarded as the first

transmitter of the bodhisattva *śīla sūtra*, the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經, at the Binglingsi 炳靈寺 cave. Aramaki calls attention to the parallel development of the Vairocana Buddha images accompanied by the "one thousand Buddha images" and Huayan Buddhism.

In terms of Huayan philosophy, Du Shun's important contribution was the paradigmatic change of the concepts form/emptiness for phenomenon/principle. Zhiyan wan an innovative thinker who advocated several key Huayan tenets, like the *dharmadhātu* dependent arising, nature-origination, classification of teachings, etc. Fazang was the person who formulated the system of Huayan philosophy, while Chengguan and Zongmi tried first to bring closer and later to harmonize this Buddhist philosophy with other Buddhist schools and Chinese thought. WEI Daoru in his article titled *A Fundemental Feature of the Huayan Philosophy*, discusses one very important Huayan concept called perfect interfusion (*yuanrong* 圓融). Huayan masters tried to understand the world with the help of this concept, and this was the goal that a practitioner is supposed to attain through Buddhist practice. Wei explains this concept from the perspectives of 1. substance and function as well as of essence and phenomena, 2. non-duality of the opposite sides in entity, 3. mutual inclusiveness and penetration of things or phenomena, 4. general relationship among things and phenomena, 5. practice.

Perfect interfusion of nature (*xing* 性) and characteristics (*xiang* 相) also played an important role in establishing two important terms, *faxiangzong* 法相宗 and *faxingzong* 法性宗. Imre Hamar in his article titled *A Huayan Paradigm for the Classification of Mahāyāna teachings: The Origin and Meaning of Faxiangzong and Faxingzong* challenges the widespread view that *faxingzong* refers to the Huayan tradition. Fazang criticized Xuanzang's 玄奘 (600–664) Yogācāra by using the pejorative term, *faxiangzong* implying that this school only investigates the characteristics of the *dharma*s. However, the invention and frequent application of the term *faxingzong* must be attributed to Chengguan. He is the first to use this term for Madhyamaka in the classification of Buddhist teaching that Dīvākara is said to relate to Fazang. The term *xing*, as Fazang used, can be connected with both Madhyamaka and Tathāgatagarbha philosophies, as it can denote the emptiness of self-nature or the Buddha-nature. Chengguan seems to elaborate this meaning in his explanation of ten differences between *faxiangzong* and *faxingzong*. Under the rubric of *faxiangzong* he propounds the tenets of Yogācāra, while *faxingzong* includes not only the Madhyamaka teachings but also the Tathāgatagarbha ones. One of the most important difference is that *faxiangzong* claims that the Absolute is immovable, thus it does not have anything to do with the phenomenal world, while according to the *faxingzong* the outer world evolves out of the Absolute mind. In examining the scriptures that are quoted to substantiate these stances we find that some scriptures belong to both *faxiangzong* and *faxingzong*. Thus we can conclude that this pattern is used as a transscriptural hermeneutical device for classifying various Buddhist teachings. In addition, *faxingzong* cannot be identified with Huayan tradition, as it represents only the advanced teaching of Mahāyāna, while Huayan is the perfect teaching.