

## Research Article

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Writing History of Buddhist Thought in the Twentieth Century:  
Yinshun (1906-2005) in the Context of Chinese Buddhist  
Historiography

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**Abstract**

Venerable Yinshun 印順 (1906–2005) was the eminent scholar-monk in twentieth-century Chinese Buddhism. This paper is about his historiographical practice and tries to outline his position in Chinese Buddhist historiography especially in reference to the Song dynasty historian Zhipan 志磐 (thirteenth century). It tries to answer the question in what ways Yinshun can be said to have modernized Buddhist historiography for Chinese Buddhism.

**Introduction (1)**

One of the sources of Buddhist activism is the ongoing collision of the Buddhist tradition with so-called modernity. But exactly what constitutes modernity is notoriously difficult to define. A large number of ideas and phenomena have been identified as modern: science, individualism, progress, rationalization, objectivism and universalism, secularization and disenchantment of the world. The difficulty in delineating the *gestalt* of modernity is compounded by the fact that every age, indeed every generation, is faced with its own array of phenomena that can be described as *modernus*—present, contemporary. Moreover, as is obvious to the student of Asian history, many attempts to define modernity are deeply Eurocentric. Although Buddhist activism has been linked variously to "Western"

ideas like Democracy, Science, or even Communism (2), for most of the actors Western modernity was merely an inspiration, and the problems it posed were almost always answered by taking recourse to the own tradition. For its theoretical underpinning, Buddhist activism always first draws on the set of possibilities of its own tradition as an answer to the challenges posed by modernity. This was often done by a shift of emphasis from the current mainstream ideology to older, almost forgotten systems, like in case of the renaissance of Weishi/Yogacara thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among Chinese Buddhists and New Confucians. In order to do so, these actors had to have an idea about what ideas were available in the histories of their traditions. This is why the writing of intellectual history, though in itself not obviously a form of social activism, played an important role in Buddhist activism.

The following discussion of the changing practices and perceptions within Chinese Buddhist historiography is centered on the scholar-monk Yinshun 印順 (1906–2005), who in the twentieth century has written more on the history of Buddhist thought than any of his contemporaries within the Sangha, and who in 1973 was the first Chinese Buddhist monk to obtain an (honorary) PhD degree (3). As a student of Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), a key figure in the history of modern Chinese Buddhism, Yinshun was part of a larger reorientation in the self-perception of Chinese Buddhists. This is especially true for Taiwan, where his presentation of doctrinal history, in spite of initial resistance, is now widely accepted as orthodox and his works have been used as textbooks in universities and Buddhist seminars alike. I have argued elsewhere that Yinshun's main contribution should be seen in his contribution to Chinese Buddhist historiography rather than in his essays on *renjian fojiao* 人間佛教 "Buddhism for the Human Realm." (4) Considering Yinshun's oeuvre as well as the institutions he founded, there can be no doubt that his main interest lay with intellectual and textual history. Regarding *renjian fojiao*, Yinshun modifies the ideas of his teacher Taixu only in very minor ways.

In what way then is Yinshun part of twentieth-century modernity?

What are the continuities and differences that characterize Yinshun's interest in history? How far is his methodology indebted to pre-modern Chinese Buddhist historiography, and where and how does he modernize the practice of writing history? In the following I contend that in the main his premises and methods are identical to those of traditional Chinese Buddhist historiography. Nevertheless, for Chinese Buddhism something new occurred in his writing, and a new way of presenting the tradition had been found by looking towards the larger, international context of scholarship. I propose that one important influence from European scholarship—and this mainly via Japan—that cannot be understood as a return to previous modes of historiography is *the use of the academic monograph*. By adopting the genre of the academic monograph in his later writings, the milieu of his truth-claims changes from that of religious essayism into academic discourse. With this he has opened up new ground for Chinese Buddhist historiography as written by Chinese Buddhists themselves.

### **Genres in Buddhist historiography before Yinshun**

In order to contextualize the idea that Yinshun's main contribution to historiography was that of introducing a new genre into the emic discourse, here is a short overview of the genres in use before the twentieth century. Buddhist historiography in China starts with the collections of hagio-biographies of eminent monks and nuns (5). These were modeled after the Confucian *liezhuan* 列傳 (biography), a form first employed in the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the Grand Historian*). (6) We use the term "hagio-biography" because in contrast to their relatively sober Confucian pendant, they include numerous legendary events, though perhaps less so than the *vitae* of saints in European Christian literature. The hagio-biographies are presented in different categories, where next to translators (*yijing* 譯經) we find exegetes (*yijie* 義解), specialists in magical powers (*shenyi* 神異), vinaya specialists (*minglü* 明律), and others. (7)

By the sixth century Confucian historiography was already firmly established. Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 BCE) and Ban Gu 班固 (32–92 CE) had started the cycle of imperial historiography, where

each dynasty compiled the official history *zhengshi* 正史 (official history) of the previous one. The *zhengshi* and private historiography already offered a range of possible genres for writing about the past. It was not accidental that Chinese Buddhists at that time chose the *liezhuan* as the main vehicle for their historiography. The other main alternative—using annals modeled on the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), in which events are arranged chronologically - was impractical for several reasons. First, the calendric devices at the disposal of sixth century Buddhists could not cope in practice with Buddhism outside China proper. The mapping of events in India and Central Asia to the Chinese calendar would have been too vague to be meaningful. In fact, even within China, a proper consensus on the series of legitimate dynasties, especially for the North, had not yet been formed, and there must have been doubts about the ability to date events there after the Han with confidence. Certainly for Indian—and in the sixth century perhaps even for early Chinese—Buddhism there were too few available records to have allowed Huijiao 慧皎 in the early sixth century to write an annalistic account of the Buddhist past (8).

Next to hagio-biography, the history of the Buddhist texts themselves became an important topic. Canon and canonization were among the most successful devices of the Buddhist tradition that contributed to its continuity in very diverse cultural surroundings. To handle the massive number of Indian texts that were brought to China and translated in different places, catalogs of Buddhist scriptures (*jinglu* 經錄) became an important tool. Beyond a list of titles, the catalogs contained information regarding authorship and content, often referring back to older catalogs. The oldest surviving catalog, the *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 by Sengyou 僧祐 (502–557), frequently cites the older catalog of Daoan 道安 (312–385). It still contains a section of biographies and one section with translation prefaces, mixing bibliographical with historical information. This mix, however, could not establish itself as a genre and, after the sixth century, *sengzhuan* and *jinglu* were usually compiled independently.

During the Tang dynasty the formation of schools or sects within

Chinese Buddhism gained momentum. While the writing of hagio-biographies continued, both the Tiantai and the Chan schools soon developed forms of historiography that were limited to the history of their own schools with lineage creation being a central concern. These genealogies were also inspired by a Confucian model, that is, the clan-genealogies (*pudie* 譜牒 or *jiapu* 家譜) (Schmidt-Glinzer, 1982: 5–6). Other works, like the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (dated 801), order hagio-biographies chronologically and limit the scope to the patriarchs of the Chan school.

The Song witnessed an unprecedented flowering of Buddhist historiography (9). A large number of a new type of comprehensive history were produced, modeled on the official imperial histories (*zhengshi* 正史) and influenced by the historiography of Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), the eminent Confucian historians of the early Song—this in spite of the fact that neither was a friend of Buddhism (10). During the Southern Song (1127–1278) and the Yuan (1206–1368), the mixed *jizhuan* 紀傳 style preferred by the Tiantai school that combines annals and hagio-biographies was eclipsed by the annalistic *biannian* 編年 style, preferred by authors of the Chan school (11). This was partly because of the influence of Sima Guang's monumental *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (completed in 1084), but was also conditioned by other political and historiographical developments during the Song and Yuan (Schmidt-Glinzer, 1982: 134–39). Many of the extensive Buddhist histories of this time were motivated by the debate between the Tiantai and the Chan school concerning the "correct" construction of their respective lineages (12). Clearly, however, Chinese Buddhist historiography was written in genres developed by Confucian historiography. It was not an original creation nor did it have much influence outside the Buddhist scene.

After the Yuan the dominant genre for the Chan school was not that of comprehensive histories, either in the *biannian* or the *jizhuan* style, but rather the *yulu* 語錄, "Recorded Sayings," which focused on the "encounter dialogs" of Chan masters with their students (13). The term *yulu* can be found in the general discourse of Chinese

historiography and has been used in the Buddhist context since the ninth century. As a distinct genre, however, it is not found before the eleventh century (See Wittern, 1998: 51–64). The recording of real or imagined encounter dialogs, though historiographically a regression, suited the needs of the tradition for legitimization and, it might be assumed, for practice.

Collections of hagio-biographies were still compiled after the Song, but on a smaller scale and with lower standards. Nevertheless, some developments within this genre took place, like the appearance of collections of biographies of laypeople (*juren zhuan* 居人傳) (14) and virtuous (Buddhist) women (*shannüren zhuan* 善女人傳) (X1657), both compiled by Peng Jiqing 彭際清 (1740–1796).

In trying to find a historical self-awareness in Buddhist attempts to relate the past, the comprehensive histories of the Song are a natural starting point. The most influential of these monumental works is the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (*Completed Records of the Buddha and Patriarchs*) (dated 1269) by Zhipan 志磐, which "in more than one regard is the apex of the historiographical efforts of [Chinese] Buddhists." (15) Zhipan, whose dates, ironically, are unknown (16), was a historian of high standards, conscious of his role and his position within the larger context of Chinese historiography. In the preface he writes:

In the making of this work I have cut and pasted from older texts, summarized and added [new] material, used the arguments of [my] teachers and friends, and studied transcriptions of stone inscriptions. I have not simply repeated everything word for word, but have referenced the origin [of the information], as it should be the method of those practicing historiography. When things get complex we must reference all our sources. Because this work makes use of [Buddhist] canonical and doctrinal scriptures, it is not easy to understand for Confucians and Daoists. If [however] they read it word for word, sentence by sentence and ask monks about passages that are difficult for them, they can enter its essence and spirit, and eventually come to know the

Buddha. If they read it careless and quickly without researching its basic purpose, how can it be of use to them? Again in this world, there are Confucians who enjoy and uphold the anti-Buddhist writings of Han [Yu] and Ou[yang Xiu] but do not know that these two masters in their final years made their peace with the Buddhist teachings. If people today were less puffed-up, and studied this work repeatedly and thoroughly they could understand that the words of Han and Ou were on the surface aggressive, but beneath supportive. (17)

The fifty four chapters of the *Fozu tongji* were not only written for Buddhists, but aspired to a broader audience familiar with the official histories of imperial historiography, on which it was carefully modeled. All parts of the imperial histories were cast in a Buddhist mold. The basic annals (*benji*本紀) were used to record the lives of Shaakyamuni and the Tiantai patriarchs. The genealogies of noble houses (*shijia* 世家) of the Confucian model are used by Zhipan to provide information on groups of Tiantai monks that were ordained under the same master (*zhuzu pangchu shijia* 諸祖旁出世家). Biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳) became hagio-biographies of eminent Tiantai monks (*zhushi liezhuan* 諸師列傳). Tables (*biao* 表) illustrate the Tiantai lineage (*lidai chuanjiao biao* 歷代傳教表). Monographs and miscellaneous essays (*zhi* 志) are used to elaborate topics such as Buddhist cosmography (世界名體志) or rebirth in the Pure Lands (淨土立教志). Especially valuable is a long annalistic part disguised as monograph: the "Monograph on the Vicissitudes of the Teaching" (*Fayun tongsai zhi* 法運通塞志) in fifteen chapters (*juan* 卷) (18). Here Zhipan gives a year-by-year account of Buddhist history, especially in its interaction with Confucianism and Daoism, ranging from the Zhou dynasty to 1265 CE. Over time the connection to India became less and less important for the discussions between the Tiantai and the Chan schools, where the bone of contention was usually which Chinese lineage should be given preeminence and which doctrines in Chinese texts were to be taken as orthodox.

We have seen that the Buddhist historiographical tradition in China



has consistently adopted Confucian genres and used them with only minor modifications. With the literary format they also adopted a certain historiographic attitude. By the time of Zhipan, near the end of the Song dynasty, a clear concept of a "method of the historians" (*shishifa* 史氏法) had evolved. Writing at the end of the most prolific period of Chinese Buddhist historiography, he gives an overview of previous Buddhist histories:

In the reign period Zhenghe (1111–1118) of emperor Huizong (r. 1101–1126), Master Yuanying [元] 顥 of Wuxing 吳興 started writing the *Zongyuan lu* 宗元錄, describing the events in the transmission of the Tiantai school from the Northern Qi (479–502) to the Yuanyou reign period (1086–1094) of our dynasty. By writing the book he summarized the [history of our] tradition, and from then on the splendor of its teaching and its patriarchs started to become discernible. In the Qingyuan period (1195–1201) of emperor Ningzong, Wu Keji 吳克己 [who called himself] Kaian 鎧菴 wanted to expand it [the *Zongyuan lu*] and called it *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, but he died before he could finish it. During the reign period Jiading (1208–1225) there was Master Jingqian [景] 遷 [called] Jing'an 鏡菴, who took up Yuanying's book and Kaian's new work. He reedited them, added more than 60 new biographies and called it *Zongyuan lu* 宗源錄. (19) During the reign period Jiaxi (1237–1241) of emperor Lizong (r. 1225–1265), Master Zongjian [宗] 鑑 from Liangzhu 良渚 in Qiantang 錢唐 (20) took Wu's book and treated in the method of the historian[s] (放史法). He created basic annals, the genealogies of noble houses, biographies, lists and various monographs, and still called it by its old name *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統. However Jing'an was not able to fully establish and structure his text, and Liangzhu often confuses names and titles. When it comes to abstruse language, bad style, sloppiness and mistakes, they are found in both, with the *Shimen* 釋門 being especially coarse. But it is asking too much, that the first draft, the research, the

styling and editing should all be done by one person alone. [...] Our writing now, draws on both the *Zongyuan lu* and the *Shimen zhengtong*, it compares the meaning of these texts and deletes and adds [to their accounts]. It also makes use of the canonical scriptures, the commentaries and sub-commentaries, the historical works of the Confucians and the records of the transmissions of the various [Buddhist] schools. Also [histories like] the *Longxing tongji* 隆興統紀 of Master [Zu]xiu [祖]琇 or the *Shishi tongji* 釋氏通紀 of Master [De]xiu [德]修 are used and cited. According to the method of the historians (*shishi fa* 史氏法), [our work] consists of four chapters on the Buddha, four on the patriarchs, four on noble houses, eleven with biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳) [of the *shannei* 山內 school of the Tiantai sect], one with various biographies (*zazhuan* 雜傳) [of the *shanwai* 山外 school], one with [biographies of monks] whose position in the lineage is unclear, two with tables, and thirty chapters with essays. [Thereby, I have] accomplished a complete documentary record of one school [the *shannei* Tiantai]. After each biography I have added an appraisal to describe the special virtue (21) [of its subject]. After an event I explain doubtful points (CBETA/T.49.2035.130c-131a).

Zhipan was, of course, also well versed in secular historiography. He praises historians who included events concerning Buddhism in their accounts (CBETA/T.49.2035.356b25). In the same passage he criticizes Ouyang Xiu: "How much different [from these other works] is Ouyang's revised 'New History of the Tang'! He extirpated all events where Buddhism had helped in the administration of the nation and developed the minds of men" (CBETA/T.49.2035.356c14). Zhipan is deeply dissatisfied with Ouyang's treatment of Buddhism and in his writings criticizes him frequently and with gusto. One more example will suffice: "In his revised history of the Tang and the Five Dynasties Period, he has deleted all events concerning Buddhism and Daoism. The 'History of the Tang' is the official History of the Tang dynasty, not

Ouyang's private records. If something is found lacking, it can be discussed, but how can one extirpate things one personally does not like? He must be considered as someone not broadly learned, unfit for the job of revising history" (CBETA/T.49.2035.356b25).

Clearly, Zhipan was highly aware of his predecessors and felt competent to improve on them. For this he had a concept of how—for him "modern"—historiography works:

In recent times a number of masters have established a method for transmitting [tradition/teaching/history]. In this one should make use of three principles: Firstly, observing actions one should practice one's understanding. Secondly, when giving a lecture [on a text] one should have a [clearly defined] purpose. Thirdly, writing a book, one is to elucidate the lineage of tradition. Everything beyond these three is excessive. Next to the doctrines of the scriptures and the [descriptions of the] rituals one should record appraisals of members of the faith to give later generations something to admire. If the worthy and famous Confucian and Daoist gentlemen would get to know these followers of the [Buddhist] way, the effort would not be in vain (22).

We emphasize Zhipan here because his case shows a number of parallels to Yinshun. Like Yinshun, Zhipan was writing a "modern," state-of-the-art history. He aspired to a balanced view in his treatment of events and, like Yinshun, his account of Buddhist history was widely accepted as orthodox. Like Zhipan, who was writing against the historiography of the Chan school, Yinshun struggled against other narratives (23). The differences between Zhipan and Yinshun, however, are also significant. While Zhipan was an exponent of the comparatively recent development of sectarian historiography, for Yinshun the "modern" move was to abandon the sectarian perspective. They also differ in their perception of the object of historiography: Yinshun equates Buddhist history with the history of Buddhist thought, while Zhipan's history consists mainly of biography and events.

### Continuity and innovation in Yinshun's works

One aim of this paper is to demarcate in which ways Yinshun should be seen as continuing traditional modes of historiography and in what respects he can be shown to "modernize" them. Though his main interest was the history of Indian Buddhist thought, his understanding of the past is clearly rooted in both the Chinese and the greater Buddhist tradition. In his motivation, as well as in his hermeneutics, he is a successor of Huijiao and Daoshi 道世, Zanning 贊寧 and Zhipan (24). All these monks have dealt with Buddhist history in a comprehensive fashion and created large encyclopedic works and collections. Like Yinshun they spent their lives behind books to gain the erudition that is necessary for this form of writing. Like Yinshun they tried to show the "vicissitudes of the teaching," and like him their motivation was religious, not academic. Generally, Yinshun prefers the hermeneutic devices found in traditional Buddhist historiography over those of academic historiography. Only in his later works, starting in 1968 with *Shuoyiqieyoubu weizhu de lunshu yu lunshi zhi yanjiu* 說一切有部為主的論書與論師之研究 (SWLLY) (*Shaastra literature and Shaastra masters—with particular consideration of the Sarvaastivaadin School*), he changes style and content to a more academic register, but more on this below.

#### *Traditional hermeneutic devices in Yinshun's work*

There are certain hermeneutic devices that are characteristic of the Buddhist tradition. In the absence of textual criticism, most of these are motivated by the need to resolve contradictions among texts and aim to explain, and thereby defuse, doctrinal differences. Yinshun uses a number of them in his works. In the preface to SWLLY, for example, he cites *upaaya* "expedient means" (*fangbian* 方便) as a condition for a balanced understanding of Buddhism. The notion of *upaaya* is well attested in Aagama literature and is one of the few doctrines that can be found in all Buddhist traditions. The idea of "expedient means" that the Buddha taught different things to different audiences according to their capacity for understanding. *Upaaya* allows commentators to de-emphasize certain teachings or

explain apparently deviant behavior by labeling it "expedient means" (with an implied 'only').

Another tool for understanding Buddhist doctrine and its history which provides a similar function is the abhidharmic notion of a difference between a "worldly," relative truth (*sa.mv.rti-satya*) and a "supra-mundane," absolute truth (*paramaartha-satya*). This distinction plays an important role in Yinshun's explanation of what he considers to be the central tenets of Buddhism (25).

The various *panjiao* 判教 schemata of later Mahaayaana schools, in which scholastics try to rank the different schools and doctrines and, by systematizing their relationship, legitimize and advance their own, also appear in Yinshun's earlier works, especially where he discusses his differences with his teacher Taixu. I have elsewhere discussed his *panjiao* in the context of Chinese Buddhism (Bingenheimer, 2004: 83-105). Here it should be remembered that Yinshun, at least during his earlier period, does indeed use *panjiao*—he does not merely discuss it. However, even during the 1930s and '40s, in Yinshun's first attempts to organize the history of Buddhist thought, one can see how he introduces new modes of rationality into the tradition. He does, for instance, accept chronology in the arrangement of his *panjiao*, a move that would later lead him to discuss the history of Buddhist thought in an academic format (26). Moreover, the progressive simplification of Yinshun's *panjiao* schemata (27) and the shift of their focus from Buddhism in general to developments in Indian Buddhist thought, bear witness to a gradual farewell from the *upaaya* of *panjiao*. The normative impulse, which desires to choose one strand of tradition as the "truest" truth, does not find any basis in a chronological arrangement. This is also the reason why Yinshun's choice of Nāgārjuna's "early Mahaayaana" as the most succinct formulation of Buddhist truth is not based on his *panjiao*.

Two other traditional models, which again show the strong influence of the *Dazhidu lun* 大智度論 on Yinshun (28), are those of the four *siddhaanta* (*xitan* 悉檀) and the three Dharma Seals (*san fayin* 三法印). The four *siddhaanta* organize Buddhist teachings according to

certain purposes (See, e.g., YFSS, 126). Yinshun mentions the *siddhaanta* as the way Naagaarjuna "has organized all the Buddhist teachings in his time." The four *siddhaanta* also appear as characterizations of the four large Chinese Aagama collections, which are said to have been taught for different purposes. The three Dharma Seals (29) are used in the influential essay *Yi fofa yanjiu fofa* 以佛法研究佛法, (30) where Yinshun outlines a methodology of Buddhist studies *qua* Buddhist practice.

It is obvious that Yinshun makes ample use of traditional hermeneutic devices in his writing. Significantly, most of these are explained first in the *Dazhidu lun*, for Yinshun the key text for a correct understanding of Naagaarjuna. (31)

Not only in his hermeneutics but on a formal level as well, Yinshun uses traditional models. In his large oeuvre we find a number of different genres: apologetical works, travel notes, short essays on questions concerning Buddhist doctrine and history, prefaces, and obituaries. The first third of the *Miaoyun ji* 妙雲集 collection consists of *sutra*-lectures, which were edited partly by Yinshun, partly by his students, and were based on lecture notes. This kind of running commentary in which a text is discussed passage by passage is one of the oldest genres of Buddhist literature in India and China. I have not found a discussion of Yinshun's commentaries, and the relationship of his commentaries to earlier commentaries on the same *sutra*, anywhere. Although the commentaries are appreciated by some scholars (32), few would have proclaimed Yinshun to be "the leading authority in Buddhist studies in contemporary Taiwan," purely on the merit of these commentaries (Qiu, 2000: 1).

### *Roads not taken*

In order to understand Yinshun's position between traditional and modern modes of writing with greater precision, it is important not only to see where he followed tradition, but also to notice what is not there – that is, which traditional genres and hermeneutic devices he did not take up, although they were ready at hand and indeed used by his contemporaries.

Yinshun did not write biographies (33) or annals, which were for many centuries the dominant genres of Chinese Buddhist historiography. An important exception are the detailed annals (*nianpu* 年譜) of his teacher Taixu (MYJ 13). (34) In another major departure from past practice, Yinshun never wrote sectarian history in the traditional sense, where the historian details the development and/or the doctrines of his own lineage.

Another prominent way of perceiving Buddhist history not taken up by Yinshun is the teaching of the three ages (35) involving the concept of *mofa* 末法, "the final days of the Dharma." This idea was widely emphasized by the Pure Land movements in Japan, to justify the "simple" practice of calling on Amitabha's name. The argument is that in our degenerate present, the end-time of the *dharma*, liberation by one's own efforts (*zili* 自力) is not possible anymore. Only through the help of a Buddha or Bodhisattva, through another's power (*tal* 他力), was it possible to escape the cycle of rebirth.

For several reasons, this descendant model of history held little attraction for Yinshun. Firstly, Yinshun separated his *panjiao* from chronology. He describes Buddhist doctrines as they appear at different stages, but their respective merit is not connected to their timing. In this system there is no room for ascendant, descendant, or millenarist conceptions of history. Secondly, Yinshun, influenced by Taixu, subscribed to the Chinese form of Buddhist modernism—*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教, a "Buddhism of the Human Realm." *Renjian fojiao*, as all Buddhist modernisms, is based on the possibility of social change for the better. The idea of living through the final days of truth's decline is at odds with the optimism and reformism of Buddhist modernism.

Seen from an academic perspective, the absence of annalistic or millenarist writing certainly strengthens his scholarly practice, but for a comprehensive picture, other absences should also be mentioned.

Yinshun seems completely unconcerned with studying Sanskrit, Pali or Tibetan (36). The picture he draws of Indian Buddhism is

completely derived from Chinese sources. This lack of philological skill may be one of the reasons why his influence on non-Chinese Buddhist scholarship was minimal (37). When asked, admirers of Master Yinshun sometimes say that it was nearly impossible to study Indian languages in China in the 1930s and '40s. There are, however, examples of scholars, both secular (Lü Cheng 吕澂) and monastic (Fazun 法尊), who mastered canonical languages other than Chinese. Especially considering that Taixu tried to encourage his students to study other traditions, it cannot be said that Yinshun lacked opportunities to at least get started on one or more foreign languages.

Another factor that separates Yinshun from academic practice is that Yinshun's conception of Buddhism itself was exceedingly narrow. In the study of religion we are by now used to multiple approaches, conventional or eccentric methodologies, "thick descriptions," an awareness of the economies of power and repression, etc. In their competition with the "exact" sciences, the humanities in the late twentieth century have become self-reflective to an unprecedented degree. On the other hand, Yinshun's account of the Buddhist past knows no politics, no philology, no (comparative) philosophy, no economy, no archeology, no art. Yinshun's Buddhist past is equivalent to its doctrinal history. Social and cultural contexts play only a marginal role.

It is mainly due to the lack of languages and methodology that Yinshun's works were, from an international perspective, already slightly outdated when they appeared. The last twenty years, have seen a steady growth of Chinese academic publications on Buddhist Studies both in quality as well as in quantity and Yinshun's works have already become much less prominent and less visible than they were in the seventies and eighties.

*The introduction of a new genre*

The starting point of Yinshun's intellectual journey was how to account for the difference between the Buddhism he saw practiced in China and the Buddhism he found in the canonical texts,



especially those translated from Indian texts. To this end Yinshun had to use Chinese translations to study Indian Buddhism as a history of ideas. For this kind of discourse, traditional Buddhist historiography could not provide him with tools. There was no genre in which to present a general history of ideas of Indian Buddhism.

Annals were not an option because of the lack of calendric devices and a general lack of written sources about political and cultural events. As for biographies, we lack even basic biographical facts on the most important figures in Indian Buddhism. When writing about Indian monks, it is impossible to realize even the opening formula that Chinese Buddhist hagiographies demand.

The lack of genres that could cope with these obstacles is partly responsible for the fact that Chinese traditional historiography did not attempt to construct "Indian Buddhism" as a significant other. On the contrary, Chinese Buddhist historians contributed to the sinicization of Buddhism in a way that de-emphasized the Indian origins. Just like Tiantai and Huayan philosophy, or the ever-growing lineages of the Chan school, Buddhist historiography helped to construct Chinese Buddhism as "Chinese" without referring to India more than absolutely necessary. As distinct forms of Chinese Buddhism developed, much of what was transmitted from Indian became less important for Chinese Buddhists, especially since they needed to appear as Chinese as possible in their competition with the Confucianists and Daoists. Both Confucians and Daoists never tired of reminding the Buddhists that theirs was a foreign, non-Chinese, and therefore barbarian teaching. Though the connection to India was never lost, not the least because the lineages of all schools had to be traced back to the Buddha himself, in the context of the often xenophobic attacks by Daoists and Confucians, de-emphasizing the Indian origin was a natural strategy for Buddhists.

This strategy, however, was not adopted everywhere, and Yinshun would have been aware of at least one other solution. Traditional Buddhist historiography in Japan had a clear notion of a three-tiered transmission of Buddhism that started in India, passed through

China, and culminated in Japan. For Japanese Buddhists this had great advantages for the construction of a distinct identity vis-à-vis China. This particular national mode of Buddhist historiography is exemplified in the early fourteenth century by Gyoonen's 凝然 (1240–1321) *Sangoku buppoo denzū engi* 三國佛法傳通緣起 (Account of the Transmission of Buddhism in Three Countries), dated 1311. The Korean states (38), from which Buddhism was originally introduced to Japan, were glossed over and the part relating to Indian Buddhism comprises only one out of fifteen pages. Fourteenth century Japanese writers were no more interested in India than their Chinese counterparts, but the memory of India could be used to relativize the importance of China.

With the destruction of the Buddhist institutions of Central Asia and India by Muslim invaders, the West-East transmission of Buddhism came to an end. Chinese Buddhism *per se* had little to gain by drawing on its Indian ancestry. Yinshun's emphasis on Indian Buddhism, though not remarkable in the context of international scholarship, was a real breakthrough for the Chinese tradition. His change of perspective opened up new horizons for Chinese Buddhists.

Another possible format not used by Yinshun is that of sectarian history. Yinshun could have followed the well-established narratives of sectarian historiography *à la* Gyoonen's *Hasshuu kooyoo* 八宗綱要 (1268) that were widely used by Japanese Buddhists well into the modern era (39) and emulated by Chinese Buddhists (for example, Huang Chanhua, 1988). Here Buddhism was presented tidily separated into different sects, variously counting eight, twelve, or thirteen of them. The main historical device was lineage construction, and the presentation of doctrine was based on representative texts ascribed to each constructed school. This kind of text was usually intended as introductory reading and addressed neither the development of the doctrines nor the mutual influence of the schools beyond a few basic stereotypes. Each school was presented as a pristine entity, and a discussion of the ambiguity and vagueness of the vast range of texts was avoided. By the time Yinshun started writing his later works, this

way of organizing the field was in the process of being discarded. The entities it proposed—schools or sects—were viewed more and more as products not of history, but merely of historiography. Moreover, Yinshun himself had no strong sectarian affiliations, and he realized that this approach could not have helped him with his starting question, that is, why in both theory and practice the Buddhism he encountered in Southern China in the first half of the twentieth century differed so much from the Buddhism he found in the canon.

In many ways Yinshun was a traditionalist—he lived his life as Buddhist monk according to the rules of Chinese Buddhism, read the texts of this tradition, and taught fellow monastics and laypeople. His main success was that as a traditionalist he found a new way to write about his tradition. Over the course of twenty years, roughly between the 1940s and 1960s, Yinshun taught himself to use the form of the *academic monograph*, an extensive treatment of one single topic or period, to present his ideas. The publication of SWLLY in 1968 was a turning point in his work. Zhang Mantao, in those days the dean of Buddhist Scholarship on Taiwan, remarked proudly that the book "caught up" with the scholarship of the Japanese "neighbors." (40)

It was the mastery of the academic monograph, the appropriation of a formal way of "academic writing," that became the central element in the influence of Yinshun's later presentation of Buddhist history (41). On more than 700 pages Yinshun treats the abhidharmic traditions of Nikaaya Buddhism (*bupai fojiao* 部派佛教), especially that of the Sarvaastivaadins, in a comprehensive and lucid manner. Yinshun was one of the few scholars, who were able to read the difficult, extensive *Abhidharma* texts preserved in the Chinese canon with ease. This enabled him to outline the pre-mahaayaana doctrinal developments that occurred in Northern India as they appear in Chinese sources. Next to material in the Chinese canon, he, for the first time, used material from the Pali Canon (in Japanese translation [see Takakusu, 1935-40]), and a Chinese translation of Taaranaatha's *Rgya-gar cho-'byung* (History of Indian Buddhism). Although he cites almost no secondary literature, he starts to escape

the narrow confines of Chinese Buddhist scholasticism and enter into a dialog with other traditions.

John Maraldo has remarked how so far it was not possible "to specify a philosophically Buddhist sense of history, which would challenge modern historical sensitivity and call for a real 'fusion of horizons'" (Maraldo, 1986: 34), the synthetical form of understanding that the humanities can provide. Maraldo agrees with Schmidt-Glinzer, who argued that Chinese Buddhist historiography owes more to China than to Buddhism (Schmidt-Glinzer, 1982: 6). Concerning this question, I believe it is helpful to look at what genres are provided for the writing of history in a given context. In China, Buddhists were never forced to invent new genres, because Confucian writing provided enough tools to fulfill the dual task of remembering and legitimizing. The Buddhist chronicles of Sri Lanka and Tibet, however, show that other Buddhist traditions were perfectly capable of developing their own historiographic genres in the absence of immediate secular models. Instead of trying to find a specific Buddhist sense of history in Buddhist philosophy, we therefore must analyze the various forms of Buddhist historiography in their respective cultural contexts. I do not believe that there is a unique "sense of history" in any tradition that can be shown independent of its textual representation in form of genres. Every historiographical practice, be it oral, scriptural, or multi-medial, is bound by its discursive conventions, which allow it to show some phenomena better than others.

These conventions are emphasized by Tzvetan Todorov in his definition of genre:

In a society, the recurrence of certain discursive properties is institutionalized, and individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constituted by this codification. A genre, literary or otherwise, is nothing but this codification of discursive properties. [...] It is because genres exist as an institution that they function as "horizons of expectation" for readers, and as "models of writing" for authors. [...] On the one hand, authors write as a function of

(which does not mean in accord with) the existing generic system [...]. On the other hand, readers read as a function of the generic system, with which they are familiar through criticism, school, the distribution system of the book, or simple hear-say; it is not necessary that they be conscious of this system, however. (42)

After this, Todorov develops his idea that all genres coincide with or are derived from speech-acts. It would, of course, exceed the scope of the present paper to apply Todorov's thesis to the Western academic monograph; however, the first place to look for the origins of the monograph in speech might be the lectures at medieval universities and the following debates. It seems worth noting that, although Yinshun had seen plenty of Japanese and Western monographs on which to model his writing, his first mature academic monographs appear in the late 1960s after teaching Buddhist thought in universities and Buddhist institutes. His early proto-academic works *Yindu zhi Fojiao* (1942) and the lectures notes on *Vijñānavāda* und *Madhyamaka* (43) were still largely edited by his students. They show Yinshun's talent and the trajectory of his later work, but still lack annotation and academic diction. His first works in an academic mold appear after he had started to teach at Chinese Culture University (Taipei) in 1965. His use of the academic monograph—which treats one discrete topic, uses secondary literature and annotation, and argues independently from religious truth-claims—had matured as a direct consequence of teaching in an academic environment. As a natural scholar, Yinshun must have felt the pull of academic life and wanted to present his ideas in an acceptable form. The expansion of annotation in his later works especially points to a growing sensibility and desire to conform to an academic standard. As he writes in the preface to SWLLY:

In 1942, amidst the sounds of war, I wrote *Yindu zhi fojiao* 印度之佛教. [...] The book was written in classical Chinese, it asserted much but had little annotation, for Buddhist history this kind of writing is not appropriate. Moreover some things in it are superfluous and there are some

mistakes. [Recently] someone offered money for a reprint, but I thanked him and declined saying: I would like to rewrite the book in a more vernacular idiom and give references for the quotes (SWLLY, 1).

Yinshun was clearly aspiring to improve his presentation and follow academic standards of annotation. These annotations were often added or edited by assistants, and only one of his works (*Chuqi dasheng fojiao zhi qi yuan yu kaizhan* 初期大乘佛教之起源與開展) was indexed. (44) Annotation might be considered a trivial topic when talking about an author of such an enormous output, but the fact that Yinshun in his later years moved towards the academic monograph and offered, however rudimentary, annotation, seems to me an important aspect of his role as Buddhist historian between tradition and modernity. To be modern does not mean to be new: Zhipan had realized that annotation and reference is more than a formality 700 years earlier. In his study on the history of annotation in historical works, Anthony Grafton emphasizes how formal criteria influence the rhetoric and thereby the impact of the presentation:

The radical nature of the shift from providing a continuous narrative to producing a text that one has annotated oneself seems clear. Once the historian writes with footnotes, historical narrative tells a distinctively modern, double story. [...] In documenting the thought and research that underpin the narrative above them, footnotes prove that it is a historically contingent product, dependent on the forms of research [and] opportunities [...] that existed when the historian went to work (Grafton, 1997: 23).

Through the use of conventional annotation, Yinshun moves from religious essayism to academic writing and enters into a dialog with the larger field of Buddhist, or rather religious, studies. As Grafton writes:

Only the use of footnotes enables historians to make their texts not monologues but conversations, in which modern

scholars, their predecessors, and their subjects all take part (Grafton, 1997: 234).

Another aspect of, or rather a condition for, Yinshun's introduction of a new genre is the formation of a new audience. Since 1949 the social dynamics of Taiwanese Buddhism have changed considerably. Buddhism has managed to attract a more and more educated clientele. Relative to competing religions, this means that the educational gap between Buddhists and Christians diminished, both religions leaving folk-religion and Taoism behind. Although there are few reliable figures about religion in Taiwan, one easily observable fact that illustrates this trend is the founding of Buddhist universities and colleges. While Christian institutions of higher learning were allowed to operate in Taiwan since the early 1960s (45), Buddhism has only been able to establish accredited universities since the 1990s (46). In 2006 a law was enacted that allowed denominational colleges, where it is possible to study theory and practice of only one religion. These accredited colleges bestow bachelor and master degrees in Religion. To date there are five Buddhist universities (47) and one accredited Buddhist college (48). At least one more Buddhist university and a number of colleges are in planning.

Next to the unprecedented growth of Buddhist educational organizations in Taiwan during the last twenty years, academic research on Buddhism in state universities has grown exponentially (49). These changes produced a new readership of educated Buddhists, who were interested in more factual narratives. Such narratives could not be told in the form of the short religious essay, with its generalizations and exhortations, anymore. For many Taiwanese and Chinese academics, Yinshun's works offered a first glimpse of Buddhist studies, and for many years, roughly the time between 1970 and 1995, his works represented the best scholarship on Buddhism available in Chinese.

## **Conclusion**

As Todorov and Grafton have argued, the formal dimension of

discourse is not a mere formality. Yinshun's use of a new genre, the academic monograph, transports Chinese Buddhist historiography into a new context—that of academic scholarship. A large number of Taiwanese Buddhist scholars such as Li Zhifu 李志夫, Yang Yuwen 楊郁文, and Lan Jifu 藍吉富 were directly inspired by his work. Yinshun's acceptance of academic conventions such as annotation and indexing was an integral part of his attempt to resolve the tension between his desire for religious orthodoxy and the claim to be forwarding objectively relevant data about Buddhist doctrinal history. He accepted some formal criteria of academic writing, while managing to avoid questioning the validity of Buddhist truth claims in an absolute manner or committing himself to an agnostic perspective as it is often expected in academia.

Nevertheless, Yinshun moved closer and closer to a historiographical perspective in the academic sense. By doing so he introduces—or, remembering *Zhipan*, perhaps *re-introduces*—a sense of history that engages prevailing narratives and identities critically. This sense of history goes beyond the hagiographical and sectarian images that had determined the self-perception of Chinese Buddhists for centuries. It results in a presentation of history in which religious doctrine is conditioned by time and circumstance. Like in the various *panjiao* systems of the past, Yinshun's discussion of Buddhist doctrine retains the desire to decide which of the various competing systems is the best (he awards this honor to Madhyamaka thought). However, his historical presentation, free from sectarian politics and based (again) on chronology and textual references, creates a critical distance that opens new horizons for its readers.

If rationality means the ability to see oneself from a distance, Yinshun can be said to have rationalized the emic discourse on the history of Buddhist doctrine. At the same time his view of history as well as of rationality itself stays well within a Buddhist perspective. For Yinshun, as for his predecessors during the Song, "Buddhist historiography" is not merely historiography of Buddhism, but part of his Buddhist practice. Although he agrees with his teacher Taixu on the importance of a "Buddhism for the Human Realm" (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教), Yinshun was not a social activist. He was



interested in the history of Buddhist thought because he felt it mattered. Historiography informs our perception of history and our perception of history is part of our identity. History matters, and Yinshun's practice of historiography, imbued with the authority of "modern" scholarship, has profoundly influenced the self-perception of Buddhist activists like Shi Zhengyan 釋證嚴 and Shi Zhaohui (Chao Hwei) 釋昭慧, and provided them with a narrative that in turn could accommodate *their* practice.

## Notes

1. This paper develops ideas first outlined in Bingenheimer, 2004: 182-195. Many thanks to Simon Wiles for correcting the English.
2. See the paper by Xue Yu in this special issue.
3. He received his degree from Taishō University for his only monograph on Chinese Buddhism, *Zhongguo chanzong shi* 中國禪宗史 (History of the Chan School) (1971), which was translated into Japanese for this purpose. This degree is a "traditional" Japanese degree, which was generally awarded to a senior scholar for an outstanding work. It is in many respects comparable to what today would be called "honorary" degree (honorary degrees are a fairly recent addition to the Japan system), since Yinshun never studied or took exams at a Japanese university. In fact he did not even attend the award ceremony.
4. On the use of the term *renjian fojiao* with Taixu and Yinshun and why the difference between *renjian fojiao* and *rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教 is negligible, see Bingenheimer (2007).
5. The earliest *sengzhuan* 僧傳 collections were compiled in the sixth century. After the first *sengzhuan* by Huijiao 慧皎—the *Gaosengzhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of eminent monks) (dated 519)—major collections were compiled until the Qing dynasty. After the first collection of hagio-biographies of nuns—the *Biqiuni*

*zhuan*比丘尼傳 (Biographies of nuns) (dated 516)—however, no similar collections were compiled. This results in an unfortunate lack of knowledge about the development of the Chinese *Bhikunī Sangha* during the Sui, Tang, and Song. Only the *Chuandeng lu* 傳燈錄 (The record of transmitting the lamp) literature after the Yuan again includes *vitae* of female (Chan-) masters. The history of Chinese Buddhism was (as history everywhere) written by men, who tended to exclude women from their narratives. This has been changing only slowly in the late twentieth century, and in Taiwan these changes are clearly connected to Yinshun. Two of the most prominent Taiwanese nuns, Ven. Zhengyan 證嚴 and Ven. Zhaohui (Chao Hwei) 昭慧, are Yinshun's students, and at least Zhaohui has in the past justified her activism as a necessary consequence of his teachings.

6. Dennis Twitchett remarks that there must have been predecessors of the *liezhuan* as employed by Sima Qian (Beasley and Pulleyblank, 1961: 95–6). In the absence of earlier sources, however, the *Shiji* is the first surviving work that contains the *zhuan* as a genre. Biographies (*zhuan ji* 傳記) are also listed as an independent category in the fifteen categories of Confucian historiography according to the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (The Imperial Collection in Four Sections) classification (cf. Gardner, 1938: 101).

7. Shi Hongyin discusses Yinshun in these traditional categories and concludes that Yinshun is similar to "eminent monks of the Indian type (*yinduxing de gaoseng* 印度型的高僧)" (Shi Hongyin, 1984: 3–4). Just as these monks, Yinshun, he says, brings out and discusses differences (*bianyi* 辨異) and tries to "do away with heresies and expose the orthodox (*cuixie xianzheng* 摧邪顯正)." This evaluation is interesting, because it shows how Hongyin comes to terms with Yinshun's new and slightly threatening idea to seriously consider the differences between Indian and Chinese Buddhist thinking. By integrating Yinshun in the pattern of the *Gaoseng zhuan* categories, Hongyin softens the challenge and minimizes friction.

8. The official imperial history of the Jin dynasty—the *Jinshu* 晉書—covering the time between 265 and 420, was compiled only in the Tang (in 648, by Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, the famous chancellor). The same is true for most other dynastic histories between the third and seventh centuries. Though some official history was written in the sixth century, it would have been extremely difficult for someone without access to the state archives to acquire reliably dated sources, especially since China was still divided into North and South, which both sought to legitimize their rule with the help of historiography. The first work that tried to outline the history of Chinese Buddhism – especially translation history – of North and South was the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (Record of the history of the three treasures) (d.597). Basically a *sutra* catalog, it contains short annalistic parts, the first of which even attempts to relate events in India (Buddha biography, Aśoka etc.) according to Chinese chronology. Its author Fei Changfang 費長房 (fl. late sixth century), about whom we know little, is notorious for including all kind of wrong information in his catalog. Already Zanning points out that in Fei's work "fact and fiction are hard to separate" (T50.2060.436b12). Through a series of unfortunate circumstance the errors or fabrications of the *Lidai sanbao ji* entered later catalogs and became the basis of the authorship attributions found in the Taishoo edition, most of which should be considered wrong for the period before the Sui, i.e., Fei Changfang, (Onoo, 1936: 4).

9. An overview in English is Jan (1964). In Chinese, Chen Yuan offers in-depth discussions of a few works (Chen, 1962), and Zhao Puchu contains helpful, extensive summaries of many historiographical works (Zhao, 1992). Schmidt-Glinzer (1982) and Cao Ganghua (2006) offer the best analysis.

10. Ouyang cleared his revised version of the Tang official history, the *Xintangshu* 新唐書, of all things that he considered superstitious, including many references to Buddhism. Davis sums up his stance: "Ouyang Xiu, in his thoroughgoing hostility to legends that contravene human reason, saw his mission as one of methodical suppression or thoroughgoing exposure" (Davis, 2001:

205). Ouyang did, however, include stories on the self-immolation of "virtuous" women, indulging in a form of moral extremism that is at odds with the empirical attitude that he strives for elsewhere in his work.

11. Cao Ganghua's work contains useful tables, where he lists the surviving works of this period. The majority of the works is by Chan monks or laypeople affiliated with Chan schools (mostly the Yunmen and Linji schools) (Cao, 2006).

12. See Schmidt-Glinzer, 1982: 71–83. On the problem of lineage creation in the Chan school see McRae (2003: 1-21).

13. Judith Berling mentions in an important article how with the emergence of the *yulu* genre the very idea of Buddha changed in Chinese religious perception. Berling, too, inspired by Todorov and Ricoeur, believes that a change of genre heralds religious change: "Major religious changes thus can be marked by the emergence of a genre that radically stretches or overturns the norms and expectations embodied in previous genres. A new genre signals a radical break, a shift in discourse and practice, [...]" (Berling 1987: 59).

14. X1646. See Cao, 1999: 377. Many of these biographies are collected from older sources.

15. See Schmidt-Glinzer, 1982: 108. The study of the *Fozu tongji* most often cited in English is still Jan Yün-hua (1963).

16. Jan Yün-hua gives 1220–1275 as tentative dates (in Franke, 1976: 227).

17. CBETA/T.2035.49.131b-c. The claim that Han Yu and Ouyang Xiu made their peace with Buddhism in old age is a common topos in Buddhist literature after the eleventh century (see Liu, 2004: 142–155). In the case of Ouyang, at least the odds are that this was merely wishful thinking. Ouyang's essay *Benlun* 本論 (On Principles), in its final version, is one of the most famous anti-Buddhist tracts of the Song.

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18. A partial translation is Jan (1966).
19. This work is now lost.
20. Or 錢塘 the district (*xian* 縣), which included Hangzhou, the capital of the Southern Song, usually used as euphemism for Hangzhou itself.
21. *De*德 is a dynamic quality which "virtue" does not render very satisfactorily. The Greek *arete* and the *virtù* of the Italian Renaissance are closer to the nexus of power and character. The inclusion of short appendices in which the historian critically appraises the subject of the biography was an important characteristic of the *liezhuan* since the times of Sima Qian.
22. CBETA/T.49.2035.131a. The three rules allow for different translations. Cf. translation of Schmidt-Glinzer (1982: 94).
23. Throughout his life Yinshun debated, sometimes passionately, with Christians, Confucians, and fellow Buddhists. These apologetic essays have not attracted much attention though they are an interesting aspect of his work. See, e.g., Bingenheimer (2004: esp. 42-66 and 83-105).
24. Huijiao 慧皎 (497?–554?) wrote the first collection of hagio-biographies of monks; Daoshi 道世 (d. 683) compiled the first Buddhist encyclopedia, *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma); and Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) is the author of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (Biographies of Eminent monk written in the Song) and other historical works.
25. The *locus classicus* for the two truths is the *Abhidharmakosha* (CBETA/T.29.1558.116b11-12). 諦有二種。一世俗諦。二勝義諦。 For Yinshun's discussion of the two truths in connection with Naagaarjuna, see MJY 9, 205–8, 227–229.
26. Outside his historical works too, Yinshun made use of traditional schemata. The most prominent example is the arrangement of Buddhist doctrine in five "vehicles" for men, gods, *arhants*, *pratyeka*

Buddhas, and *bodhisattvas* that he employed in *Chengfo zhi dao* 成佛之道 (MJY 12), a scheme already used by Taixu.

27. For a table, see Bingenheimer, 2004: 96.

28. The *Dazhidu lun* (*Mahaprajnaparamita Shaastra*) (Treatise on the great virtue of wisdom) (T. 1509) is an encyclopedic exposition of Buddhism with emphasis on Madhyamaka philosophy. The translator Kumaarajīva attributes the text to Naagaarjuna, but this attribution is highly contested.

29. The three Dharma Seals (*dharmamuudra*) are here "all conditioned things are transient," "all phenomena are without self," and "Nirvana is essentially silent/unmoving." A *locus classicus* for the set of three seals is the *Dazhidu lun* 大智度論. Cf. Lamotte's extensive notes and references on the various sets of two, three, four, five, and ten *dharmamūdra*. Lamotte *Traité* III, 1368.

30. MYJ 16, 1–14, translated in Bingenheimer (2004: 284–301).

31. Cf. the many *Dazhidu lun* citations in YFSS. The importance of the *Dazhidu lun* for Yinshun explains why late in life he still argued strongly, perhaps desperately, in favor of Naagaarjuna's authorship. In his last academic work, *Dazhidu lun zhi zuozhe ji qi fanshi* 大智度論之作者及其翻譯 (The authorship of *Dazhidu lun* and its translation) (1991), Yinshun insists on Naagaarjuna's authorship against the opinions of Lamotte (1970/1990), Katō (1983/1988), and others. Current mainstream opinion in Buddhist Studies seems to be that the *Dazhidu lun* cannot be attributed to Naagaarjuna alone (for example, the list of Naagaarjuna's works in Lindtner (1982)).

32. Lan Jifu believes Yinshun's commentary to the *Shedasheng lun* 攝大乘論 (*Mahayana-samparigraha-shaastra*) (MYJ 6) to be one of his best works (personal communication, 2002).

33. Not counting the many obituaries Yinshun wrote on friend and foe.

34. Shi Shengyan, though he felt that Yinshun misrepresented

Taixu's ideas in some places, praised the scholarly quality of the annals: "Especially the careful assessment of the dating of events and the well-considered selection of sources show the marks of a great historian.[...] Of all the many *nianpu* I have read, I admire the writing in this one the most." *Fagu quanji* 法鼓全集 (Dharma drum complete works [of Master Shengyen]), part 3, vol. 6, p. 28 (*Taixu dashi pingzhuan* 太虛大師評傳).

35. For the theory of the three ages (here: *zhengfa* 正法, *xiangfa* 像法, and *mofa* 末法) cf. Nattier (1992).

36. In fact, this attitude can be found even today with many of his students and followers.

37. Another is that scholars in Buddhist academia in Japan, Europe and America tend to neglect secondary material written in Chinese.

38. In Korea, Buddhist historiography started relatively late. The *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the three kingdoms), written by the monk Iryeon 一然 (1206–1289), mentions older works, but none of these have survived. Importantly, the three kingdoms (*samguk* 三國) mentioned in the title are Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla—not India, China, and Korea. The *Samguk Yusa* is only concerned with Buddhism on the Korean peninsula. To a degree this seems to reflect the fact that compared with the Japanese, the Koreans generally felt more comfortable with their position towards China, and did not have to hardcode their considerable sense of national identity into Buddhist historiography.

39. For example, Nanjio (1886) and Takakusu (1949). The *Hasshuu kooyoo* (Outline of the eight schools) is an early work of Gyoonen, in which he outlines the tradition history and main doctrinal points of texts or groups of text within a model of eight "schools" (*shū* 宗). The *Hasshuu kooyoo* proved to be a useful introductory reader to different Buddhist traditions and became quite popular.

40. Zhang Mantao (1987 [1968]: 96). Cf. also the more detailed review by Huang Junwei (1985).

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41. Yinshun's works were extremely successful in the Chinese world. They are extremely well distributed and for many years have been used as textbooks for entry exams and seminars in universities in Taiwan, China, and the Chinese overseas community.

42. Todorov (1976: 162 f). To the last statement one might add that traditional generic systems do not generally invite scrutiny of the workings of the system by the readers.

43. *Weishixue tanyuan* 唯識學探源 (On the origin of the Mind-only school) (1944) and *Xingkongxue tanyuan* 性空學探源 (On the origin of the doctrine of empty-nature) (1946) (later revised as *Kong zhi tanju* 空之探究 [1985]) (On Emptiness).

44. This was done on the suggestion of Professor Lan Jifu, a prominent author in Chinese Buddhist Studies (personal information 2003). Though only a detail, this illustrates the influence of academia in Yinshun's later work.

45. The oldest Christian university in China, Furen University, was reestablished in Taipei in 1960, eight years after the original Furen University in Beijing was annexed to Beijing Normal University 1952. Wenzao University in Gaoxiong was founded in 1966 by the Ursulines.

46. Though there were private academic institutes before that, e.g., the Chung-hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies 中華佛學研究所 (founded 1985) and the Fa-guang Buddhist Culture Institute 法光佛教文化研究所 (founded 1989).

47. Huafan 華梵大學 (founded 1990, accredited 1997), Nanhua 南華大學 (accredited 1999), Ciji 慈濟大學 (founded 1994, accredited 2000), Foguang 佛光大學 (accredited 2000), Xuanzang 玄奘大學 (founded 1997, accredited 2004). Another university, Dharma Drum University is scheduled to start operation in September 2010.

48. Dharma Drum Buddhist College 法鼓佛教學院 (accredited 2007).



49. This is also evinced by the growing number of Taiwanese researchers in the field. Lan Jifu counts only 60 scholars of Buddhism in 1993, of whom only 12 held a PhD (Lan, 2001). For 2001 he counts about 300 scholars in the field. The exponential growth is connected both to the founding of Buddhist universities and to the larger number of scholars returning with PhDs after studying overseas.

### Abbreviations

CBETA: *Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association* 中華電子佛典協會.

CBETA/T: CBETA edition of the Taishō canon CD-Version 2007.

MYJ: Miaoyun ji 妙雲集 [Miaoyu-collection]. Taipei: Zhengwen 正聞, 24 vols. 1969–1973.

SWLLY: *Shuoyiqieyoubu weizhu de lunshu yu lunshi zhi yanjiu* 說一切有部為主的論書與論師之研究 [Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Abhidharmikas – with special consideration of the Sarvaastivaadins]

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