On the Seventh Abode in Kūkai's *Ten Abodes of Mind of the Mysterious Maṇḍala*

Sanja JURKOVIĆ

“The mind realizing non-origination of the mind” (覺心不生住心) is the name of the seventh abode in Kūkai's model of the ten abodes of mind, which is related to the teachings of the Chinese Sanlun (三論) tradition. The name of this abode is based on the concept appearing in the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, in the passage which describes the yogic practice of the second *kalpa*.¹⁾ In relation to *Putixi lun* (Treatise on Bodhicitta, 菩提心論), which is the other primary source for the establishment of the model of ten stages,²⁾ the seventh stage in the Kūkai's model corresponds to that aspect of Mahāyāna practice which emphasizes the realization of emptiness of all phenomena (一切法空).³⁾ Beginning with the seventh stage, Kūkai directs the attention of the practitioner towards the *mind* itself, initiating the process of the realization of non-origination of the mind (心不生). Stages seven and eight reveal the process of the realization of emptiness until its complete transcendence at the ninth stage.

1.

Kūkai presents the teaching of the Sanlun tradition, almost exclusively on the basis of Jizang's (吉藏) writings on the topic of the two truths (二諦) and the eightfold negation (八不), in *San lun xuan yi* (The Profound Meaning of the Three Treatises, 三論玄義) and *Da cheng xuan lun* (The Profound Meaning of Mahāyāna, 大乘玄論). The purpose of the eightfold negation at the seventh abode is to cut off all “mental manifoldness” (prapañca, 戲論) and bring the practitioner to a tranquil state of mind, wherein he realizes the non-origination of the mind. However, it seems that Kūkai considers the Sanlun realization of emptiness as remaining on a rather theoretical level. In the text of the eighth stage he states, that “bodhisattvas of the previous eon [the sixth and the seventh abode] still engage in mental manifoldness.”⁴⁾ Moreover, he regards the *eighth* abode as the place of mind which is “unconditioned and without charac-

teristics,” and it “explains nonduality as neither existent nor nonexistent.”⁵⁾ In the text of the seventh abode, Kūkai extensively quotes Jizang’s writings on the incorrect understanding of the middle way (中道) on the basis of the concept of two truths.⁶⁾ The theory of the two truths was a subject of many debates among Chinese Buddhist scholars, especially in the fifth and the sixth century, and was a convenient tool to use in order to point out the false understanding of other traditions. Sanlun is especially known for the concept of “destroying the false and revealing the correct” (破邪顯正), which was developed by Jizang. Kūkai does not use this concept in relation to the Sanlun teaching in the seventh abode, but he refers to passages in which Jizang refutes the wrong understanding of the Pi tang, Cheng Se, and She lun (攝論) traditions, and generally the other teachers (of the Liang dynasty) in relation to the two truths. Due to the tendency of earlier Sanlun scholars⁷⁾ to relate the concepts of “emptiness” and “provisionality” with “non-being” (無) and “being” (有) respectively, and to posit them as two ontological realities, Tiantai master Zhiyi (智顗) emphasized the concept of the three truths (三諦) and the meditation of “three insights in the single thought” (一心三觀), in order to provide a more profound insight into the meaning of the middle way. Although Kūkai fully acknowledged the importance of the concept of two truths, he may have had a slightly negativistic view towards the practical results of the Sanlun way of practice and meditation, in terms of the realization of the middle way. The Tiantai concept of the three truths might have seemed to Kūkai to be practically more conducive to the realization of the true meaning of the middle way. In *Unji gi* (Meanings of the Syllable Hūm, 吽字義), he concisely states that the “three truths interpenetrate perfectly (三諦圓涉).”⁸⁾ Furthermore, in the text of the eighth abode, he emphasizes the Tiantai method of “calming and contemplation” (止觀道) and refers specifically to the meditation of “three insights in the single thought,” which brings insight into emptiness, dependent origination, and the middle way.⁹⁾

2.

The concept of Buddha-nature must have been extremely important for Kūkai as the whole Shingon practice is based on the idea of the original identity of sentient beings and Buddha. The depth of insight into the meaning of the original Buddha-nature of mind may be one of the criteria for positioning the different teachings at

their respective places, when considering the progressive aspect of the ten abodes. In expounding the meaning of the sixth abode, related to the Faxiang (法相) teaching, Kūkai emphasized the development of *bodhicitta* in a relative sense (*sāṃptika-bodhicitta*, 世俗菩提心). In relation to the realization of Buddha-nature, in *Unji gi* he criticizes the Faxiang view stating: “To teach that *this* possesses it, while *that* does not, is nothing more than a provisional doctrine.”¹⁰⁾ Considering the seventh abode, it is known that Jizang wrote a lot on the meaning of Buddha-nature.¹¹⁾ It is considered that it was the influence of Jizang that later Sanlun scholars held the view that “grasses and trees have a Buddha-nature.”¹²⁾ However, Kūkai did not seem to find it significant to emphasize insight into Buddha-nature at the seventh stage. On the contrary, in *Unji gi* he states that “rejecting existence and establishing non-existence, is diminution and decrease,” which “cuts constantly the Buddha-nature, although the original Buddha is without diminution and without decrease.”¹³⁾ Within the tenfold model of abodes, realization of Buddha-nature happens at the eighth abode of “the mind of the unconditioned one way” (一道無為心), which is related to the Tiantai (天台) tradition. Kūkai characterizes the eighth abode with the realization of the principle of original purity (本来清淨理).¹⁴⁾ On the basis of the practice of “calming and contemplation,” the practitioner of the eighth abode attains *sūram-gamasamādhi* (首楞嚴三昧), which is another name for Buddha-nature. Zhiyi seems to be unsatisfied with the Mādhyamika approach as being “devoid of functions (無功用).”¹⁵⁾ The state of activity, transcending the state of stagnation in emptiness, is also an important factor for Kūkai in the establishment of the ninth stage.¹⁶⁾ From the same perspective, it can be concluded that Kūkai considered Tiantai insight into emptiness, as it relates to the realization of Buddha-nature, as more profound than the Sanlun approach.

3.

The esoteric approach to the seventh abode is related to the “*samādhi* of great emptiness” (大空三昧) of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who embodies both exoteric and esoteric aspects of the teaching on emptiness. On the basis of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, Kūkai presents his mantra: “*He he kumāraka vimuktiṣaṣṭhita smara smara pratijnāna*.”¹⁷⁾ The meaning of this mantra is calling for the prince who is abiding in the way of liberation to recall the vows taken in his previous existences. The esote-

ric interpretation of this mantra is condensed in the syllable “*ma*,” which means emptiness. Mañjuśrī's esoteric aspect is the “*Tathāgata* of no mental manifoldness” (無戲論如來). In esoteric teaching, he teaches the “wheel of revolving syllables,” which is the *samādhi* of the five letters (五字輪) “*a ra pa ca na*.”¹⁸⁾

4. Conclusion

The seventh stage has the function of initiating the process of the development of *bodhicitta* at the ultimate level (*pāramārthikabodhicitta*, 勝義菩提心), which is subsequently deepened at the eighth and ninth stages. Compared to the later stages, the Sanlun teaching is still engaged in “mental manifoldness,” and the discrimination between subject and object is not yet transcended. Kūkai's preference for the Tiantai teaching, instead of the Sanlun, is due to the Tiantai's emphasis on the realization of Buddha-nature, which may be interpreted as a positive aspect of emptiness. It may be stated that, in the context of the ten abodes, Kūkai ignored the aspect of Sanlun teaching related to the development of Jizang's theory on Buddha-nature. However, his intention may not have been to present the Sanlun tradition's teaching from its own doctrinal standpoint; Kūkai emphasized those aspects of Sanlun teaching which are conducive to the progress of a mantra practitioner, based on the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* and *Putixi lun*. His approach to the Sanlun tradition is from the perspective of the Shingon abode, which considers the main historical *Mahāyāna* teachings to be different entrances (*dharmaparyāya*)¹⁹⁾ to the same teaching, represented by the *samādhis* of four bodhisattvas of the central eight-petalled lotus division of the Garbha *maṇḍala*.

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- 1) The original text refers to the Mahāyāna practice only. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (abbreviated as T.) 18, p.3b9-14. Kūkai interpreted this passage as two stages and relates them to the sixth and the seventh abode in his *Ten Abodes of Mind of the Mysterious Maṇḍala* (秘密曼荼羅十住心論) and *Precious Key to the Mysterious Treasury* (秘藏寶鑰), 『定本弘法大師全集』 2, 3 (abbreviated as T.Z.), 高野山 1993.
 - 2) *Putixi lun* is especially important for the establishment of the model of ten progressive stages in *Precious Key to the Mysterious Treasury*.
 - 3) T.32, p.573b.10-14.
 - 4) T.Z.3, p.169.
 - 5) *ibid.*
 - 6) In *San lun xuan yi*, Jizang refutes the wrong views of non-Buddhists, Pi tang (毘曇),

- Cheng Se (成実) traditions, and the false understanding of Mahāyānists. T.45, pp.1-14. Jizang was particularly vigorous in refuting views of Cheng Se scholars. Paul L. Swanson: *T'ien-t'ai Philosophy*, Asian Humanities Press, 1989, pp.82ff.
- 7) See Whalen W. Lai: Sinitic understanding of two truths in the Liang dynasty (502-557), *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 28, no.3, University press of Hawaii, 1978.
- 8) T.Z.3, p.63.
- 9) T.Z.2, p.267.
- 10) T.Z.3, p.63. This criticism refers to Faxiang's classification of people into five groups according to their different, inherent predispositions towards the attainment of enlightenment (五性).
- 11) On Jizang's theory of the middle way as a direct cause of Buddha-nature (中道仏性) and refutation of other different theories on the direct cause of Buddha-nature present at his time, see T.45, pp.35b-37a. Also, see Ming-Wood Liu: The Yogācārā and Mādhyamika Interpretation of the Buddha-nature Concept in Chinese Buddhism, *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 35, no.2, pp.177ff, 1985; The Early Development of the Buddha-nature Doctrine in China, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 16, 1989.
- 12) 平井俊栄: 『中国般若思想史研究』春秋社 1973, p.634.
- 13) T.Z.3, p.63.
- 14) T.Z.3, p.271.
- 15) NG Yu-Kwan: *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism and Early Madhyamika*, University of Hawaii Press, 1993, pp.58ff.
- 16) See Jurković Sanja: On the Ninth Stage in Kūkai's Ten Abodes of the Mind of the Mysterious Maṇḍala – In Relation to the “Mind Which Transcends No Self-nature”, *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol.53, no.2, March 2005.
- 17) T.Z.2, p.157.
- 18) On the meaning of the mantra, see 酒井紫郎: 「文殊菩薩の五字咒法に就いて」『密教文化』 18, 1952.
- 19) 生井智紹: 「曼荼羅と多様不二の理論」, 『曼荼羅の諸相』, 法蔵館, 2005.

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(Researcher, Kōyasan University Research Institute for Esoteric Buddhist Culture)