

# Dào-xuān and the Mahāyāna precepts.

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Chinese Buddhism began in the middle of the second century C.E. when Ān-shì Gāo (安世高) and Lokasena (支婁迦讖) came from Central Asia to China and translated Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna sūtras from Sanskrit to Chinese. Chinese Buddhist received both these different doctrines of the Buddha's teachings, so they were very puzzled as to how to deal with them. The general tendency at that time was to use the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra as a clue to settling the differences between the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna; they understood it as a development from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna. They thought that the "mahā" in "Mahāyāna" meant Sakyamuni Buddha, and they promoted the opinion that Mahāyāna was the true Buddhayānā (佛乘).

Chinese Buddhists at that time thought that, in order to know the Buddhayāna, the best method was to study the precepts which tell about the monks' daily life. In the early days of Chinese Buddhism, they had only the prātimoksa, or books on the precepts (kai-bon 戒本), which list without explanation the precepts that a bhikkhū or bhikkhunī has to observe. They also had the books of Karman (羯磨本), actions or procedures, which explain the conduct of the religious order and were used in the many Buddhist schools of India. Still, they did not concretely understand the rules for regulating the monks' daily life.

Finally, in the beginning of the fifth century, the complete Vinaya-Pitaka of the four schools were translated and the detailed regulations of the monks' daily life were clearly understood. These four

Vinaya-Pitaka were translated within only twenty years of the beginning of the fifth century. From this fact we know how eager the Chinese religious orders were to have explanations concerning the model daily life of a Buddhist. However, these translations were only made four hundred years after Buddhism came to China in 2 C.E. (the first year of Yuán-Shòu).

During the first four hundred years, although many Buddhist monks came from Central Asia, no complete Vinaya-Pitaka was brought to China. This was because, according to Fǎ-xiǎn (法顯), "The precepts are handed down only by word of mouth, so that they were never open to the public." But this fact might indicate that the monks from foreign countries did not keep the precepts themselves, so they did not want the true precepts to be known to the people of China. It does not seem likely that the foreign monks, who knew that monks had to observe Buddhist precepts, and the Chinese monks, who did not know the true precepts, were living together. It is possible that the foreign monks found it difficult to observe the Buddhist precepts in China. To testify to this, an Indian monk named Qí-yù (耆域) who came to Luò-yáng (洛陽) in the end of Hùi-dì's reign (惠帝 290-306) regretted that foreign monks wore gorgeous robes which were against the Buddhist teachings. In this way, in Chinese Buddhism, things changed in form from the plain and simple style of India to the gorgeous and decorative style of China.

Now, Chinese monks hoped that the Shí-sòng-lù (十誦律) would be translated first as an instruction book, because Shí-sòng-lù is the Vinaya-pitaka of the Sarvāstivāda school which emphasized the tradition followed in Sakyamuni's day. In addition, the Shí-sòng-lù was translated by Kumārajīva, a great translator with few parallels in history; this fact made this Vinaya-pitaka the more authoritative one. At the same time, the majority of foreign monks in China were of the Sarvāstivāda school, and the students of Kumārajīva were con-

trolling the affairs of the Chinese Sangha, so the Sarvāstivāda school came to exercise influence over all the northern part of China.

Precepts (kairitsu) are the Buddhist discipline in everyday life. These precepts necessarily apply to every Buddhist monk or nun, under all conditions wherever they may go. But these precepts were formulated in India long ago and, while fitting for Indian manners and customs, could not be applied to the Chinese Sangha without modification. Finally, in the Xī-jìn (西晉) dynasty (265-316), dissatisfaction with the precepts came to the surface. Chinese monks blended their own manners and customs into the Buddhist precepts in a positive spirit and gave additional explanations of the precepts.

The first text written in China concerning the model life of a monk or nun was Dào-ān's Fú-fǎ-xiàn-zhān-sān-lì (佛法憲章三例). It is said that this text was used in almost all temples in China as soon as they were established. In this way Chinese Buddhism underwent great changes during the time that Dào-ān was active. Dao-ān's contemporaries, Zhī-dùn (支遁) (314-366) and Hùi-yuǎn (慧遠) (334-416) of Lú-shān (廬山), each established models of the monks' and nuns' life. These are called Sēng-zhì (僧制). In this way, the religious orders were controlled by the precepts and the sēng-zhì. (僧制) These two models interacted with each other from the earliest formative period of Chinese Buddhist history.

Exceptions to the precepts were also established from earliest times. These exceptions are called Suí-fāng-pí-ní (隨方毘尼) which means, that the meaning of the precepts could be adapted to suit different weather conditions. This provision is found in the wǔ-fēn-lǜ (五分律), which shows that it was accepted in Hīnayāna Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism developed along the lines of Mahāyāna Buddhism which originated as laypeople's Buddhism, so Chinese monks promoted a positive Sinicization of the precepts. This was a serious problem not only for the religious orders, but also for the government at that time.

We find this fact documented in the Chū-sān-zàng-jì-jí (出三藏記集) and in the Xù-gāo-sēng-zhuàn (續高僧傳).

After the difficult years of studying the texts and learning how to control the religious order, many Chinese people became pious believers in Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism in the T'ang dynasty came to have a school based on the precepts, called the Sì-fēn-lù-zōng (四分律宗) and founded by Dào-xuān. Chinese Buddhists in the T'ang dynasty were eager to establish a Buddhism which the Chinese people could fully understand, a Buddhism in which they could have faith, a Buddhism which was suited to Chinese society and reasonable to practice in China. With these ideas in mind, Indian Buddhism was transformed into Chinese Buddhism in the T'ang dynasty.

As the monks took this approach with the public, the public developed a yearning for the special status of the monks who were free from taxes and military service. Buddhist temples accepted these people gladly into the religious order, so that many "bogus monks" (偽濫僧) joined who were called landlord monks (地主僧) and peasant monks (百僧姓). The majority of these bogus monks were farmers who could neither read nor chant the sutras, and did not observe the precepts. This fact contributed to the decline of the Buddhist Sangha, but still the power of the temples became stronger than that of the central government or the local governments.

Dào-xuān devoted himself to correcting the disorder that existed in the Buddhism of his day. He describes the monks of that time as follows: (1) The monks not only had no faith in Buddhism, they also had no education in Buddhism. Their behavior was unworthy of a Buddhist monk, such that they were put down by the public and the public lost faith in Buddhism. Moreover the monks said that the precepts are a Hīnayāna teaching and had nothing to do with Mahāyāna monks. (2) The majority of monks and nuns were expelled from the religious order and returned to secular life because they

had women or men servants (kappiya-kāraka). Not only that, but the controllers of the religious order assumed indifferent attitudes and had no solution for these problems.

Dào-xuān's motive for writing the Háng-shi-chaō was to save the religious order from corruption. Dào-xuān thought that the best standard for the Buddhist monks was the Sì-fēn-lù (四分律) and when he came across something in it he did not understand, he compared it with other Vinaya-pitakas and various śāstras (經), both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. At his time, there were many works explaining the Si-fen-lü. One of the best ones among them was the Guǎng-shū (廣疏) written by Zhì-shoǔ-lù-shī (智首律師) and another was the Zhòng-shū (中疏) written by Fǎ-lì-lù-shī (法礪律師). Dao-xuān used the former as a basis and took the latter into consideration to criticize traditional doctrines of various scholars before him. He interpreted the precepts in a way suitable to his time to show that the Mahāyāna was the height of Buddhist thought. But Dao-xuān's thought was confined within the limits of the Si-fen-lü, so we do not find original opinions.

In any case, the Háng-shì-chāo (行事鈔) is the immortal work of the T'ang dynasty and was used as the "Vinaya-pitaka" of the Sì-fēn-lù school (四分律宗). Thereafter, it was used as the guideline for Chinese Buddhists' daily life. After Dào-xuān, we find sixty scholars who did research on the Hāng-shi-chāo.

Dào-xuān tried to harmonize the Si-fen-lü with the Mahāyāna teachings and he emphasized in the Hāng-shi-chāo that he had accepted the traditional viewpoint originated by Hùi-guāng (慧光). He introduced various rules for the religious order and monastic codes in the Hāng-shi-chāo, because in the bōdhisattva precepts much consideration was given to the moral aspects and less or none to the practical aspects. The development of Dào-xuān's views on the precepts was made through adopting the interpretation of the Sui-fāng-pi-ni (隨方

毘尼), in cases for which no special provision is made in the code of the precepts, it may be decided according to the circumstances. It is allowed in such cases to take measures suited to the requirements of time and locality.

Dào-xuān said in the Háng-shì-chāo (行事鈔) that the teachings of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna accord with the capacities of people to understand and that enlightenment is attained not by the doctrine, but by people's minds. This view is based on the ideal of the Mahāyāna precepts and, to realize this ideal, Dào-xuān had to use the Vinaya-pitaka of the Hīnayāna. Therefore, Dào-xuān developed his view of the precepts recorded in the Sì-fēn-fēn-tōng-tà-chèng (四分分通大乘), meaning "the Sì-fēn-lù which includes the spirit of the Mahāyāna."

Dào-xuān's fundamental standpoint on the Mahāyāna precepts was to observe the pratimoksa (Lù-yí-jiè 律儀戒) not only in action, but also in mind, so that monks could accomplish the three ideals of a Bodhisattva (Sān-jù-jìng-jiè 三聚淨戒):

1. Keeping all precepts (Shè-lù-yí-jiè 攝律儀戒);
2. Practicing all virtuous deeds (Shè-shàn-fǎ-jiè 攝善法戒);
3. Granting mercy to all living beings (Shè-zhòng-shēng-jiè 攝衆生戒).

Through these three ideals of a Bodhisattva, the monks were able to lead the public to nirvāna (涅槃) and ensure that Buddhism would last forever.

There are two ways of receiving the Bodhisattva precepts. One is the Zì-shì-shòu-jiè (自誓受戒) which is mentioned in the Fań-wǎng-jīng (梵網經), the Yīng-luò-jīng (瓔珞經) and the Zhān-chá-jīng (占察經). The other is the Cóng-tā-shòu-jiè (從他受戒) which is related in the Yù-qié-lùn (瑜伽論) and the Pú-sá-shàn-jiè-jīng (菩薩善戒經). Having two different traditions of Bodhisattva precepts was a great problem for candidates wishing to become Bodhisattvas.

In the case of the Cóng-tā-shòu-jiè monks first received the precepts of the Hīnayāna, and then the precepts of a Bodhisattva.

They were not allowed to receive the precepts of a Bodhisattva only. There is a proper order in which to receive the precepts. Strictly speaking, first the monk candidates receive the precepts of a layman (upāsaka). Second, they receive the precepts of a Buddhist novice (Śrāmanera). Third, they receive the precepts of a fully ordained monk (Bhikṣu). And the, finally, they are able to receive the precepts of a Bodhisatta.

The ordination ceremony for the Cóng-tā-shòu-jiè tradition of Mahāyāna precepts is conducted by one teacher of the precepts and attested by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten quarters of the world.

This ordination ceremony is quite different from that of the Hīnayāna precepts. In order to administer the Hīnayāna precepts, three teachers of the precepts and seven monks to testify are needed. In the case of the Bodhisattva Sangha, images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are installed for the ceremony of administering the precepts, and the monk candidates made their vow to those Buddha and Bodhisattva images in order to make the rite sacred. To enshrine the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas instead of a group of human beings as Bodhisattvas means that they preferred to make vows to the merciful images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. They repent by seeing that nothing has independent existence (理懺), and they get rid of illusion by seeing that no illusion has independent existence, rather than by chanting sutras and doing other practices (事懺). These are the characteristics of the precepts of a Bodhisattva.

Dào-xuān acknowledged in the Shì-mén-guī-jìng-yí (穢門歸敬儀) that receiving the precepts of a Bodhisattva in the manner of the Zì-shì-shòu-jiè (自誓受戒), with the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas enshrined as the teachers of the precepts, was not the manner of the Jñapticaturtha karman (白四羯磨), Dào-xuān acknowledged this because the Fán-wǎng-jīng (梵網經), the Yīng-luò-jīng (嬰珞經), and the Zhān-chá-jīng (占察經) came into wide use at that time, and these sutras

has acknowledged the manner of the Zì-shì-shòu-jiè so Dào-xuān could not ignore them. In the same way, Daò-shì (道世), who was a fellow student of Dào-xuān, acknowledged the Zì-shì-shòu-jiè in his Pí-ní-tǎo-yào (毘尼討要). So, most probably his teacher Zhì-shǒu's (智首) way of administering the precepts of a Bodhisattva would have been the manner of the Zì-shì-shòu-jiè.

Now, what are the contents of the precepts? According to the Háng-shì-chào (行事鈔), the ten precepts and the upasampadā (具足戒) are administered for the monks and the nuns, and the tri-saranga-gamana or the threefold refuge (三歸) the pañca silāni or the five precepts (五戒), and the eight precepts for the laymen and laywomen.

Dào-xuān cited the Shàn-shēn-jīng (善生經) and acknowledged the possibility of receiving the Bodhisattva precepts partially, not all at one time. The custom of receiving these precepts partially started not in China, but was already being done in India, as mentioned in the Zēng-yī-ā-hán-jīng (增一阿含經, Ekottarāgama, Vol. 20), the Mahasanghika Vinaya-pitaka Vol. 9 (僧祇律), and the Dà-zhī-dù-lùn (大智度論). Especially after the Yōu-pó-sè-jiè-jīng (優婆塞戒經) was translated, the partial receiving of precepts became popular in China. This is because Chinese monks did not like only the formality of receiving the precepts, but they wanted to be true to themselves and wanted to place importance on the Bodhicitta (菩提心) or the aspiration to enlightenment, even though it meant receiving the precepts one by one or little by little.

According to the Pú-sà-jiè-yì-shū (菩薩戒義疏) Vol. 6, whose author is said to be Zhì-yì (智顓), there were six texts which were used among the monks, nuns, and laypeople in the Suí (隋) dynasty. Those six precept manuals for Bodhisattvas are the Fàn-wǎng-běn (梵網本), Dì-chí-běn (地持本), Gāo-chāng-běn (高昌本), Yīng-luò-běn (嬰珞本), Xīn-zhuàn-běn (新撰本), and Zhì-zhǐ-běn (制旨本). Four texts out of these six, excluding Dì-chí-běn (地持本) and Zhì-zhǐ-běn (制旨本), are based

on the Fan-wang precepts, although the order of receiving the Bodhisattva precepts and method of receiving them differed from one to the other. The other two texts, the Dì-chí-běn (地持本) and Zhì-zhī-běn (制旨本), are based on the Dì-chí-jìe (地持戒). In this way, the Bodhisattva precept manuals which were used from the end of the Sui dynasty to the beginning of the T'ang dynasty can be divided into these two groups.

At this time Xuán-zàng (玄奘) had just arrived back from India. When he translated the Yogacārabhūmi at Hóng-fú-sì (弘福寺) in Cháng-ān (長安), Dào-xuān helped him and I think that Dào-xuān learned various things about the Yogacārabhūmi from Xuán-zàng. I think that the Dì-chí-jìe which is explained in the Pú-sà-dì-chí-jīng (菩薩地持經), is the origin of the Chinese Mahāyāna precepts, and the Pú-sà-dì-chí-jīng, which is mainly based on the Yogacārabhūmi, was popular at the beginning of the T'ang dynasty. It seems to me that the precepts of the Pú-sà-dì-chí-jīng were more widespread than the Brahmajala precepts during the T'ang dynasty, such that from the beginning of the T'ang this tradition was becoming the main stream of Chinese Mahāyāna precepts.

According to the Xù-kāo-sāng-chúan (續高僧傳), there were eight monks who made efforts to spread the Dì-chí-jìe (地持戒) during Dào-xuān's time. These eight were authorities on the Dì-chí-jìe and it seems that they spread the Dì-chí-jìe from the city to the provinces.

The administering of precepts in the Zen Sangha, which prospered in the T'ang dynasty, is worthy of study. According to Dr. Ui's (宇井博士) book Research on the History of Zen (禪宗史研究), there were 126 monks of the Northern Chán school (北宗禪) who had a profound knowledge of the precepts and belonged to one of the three sub-schools of the Sì-fēn-lù-zōng (四分律宗): Xiāng-bù (相部), Dōng-tǎ (東塔), and Nán-shān (南山).

The characteristic of the philosophy of the Yogacārabhūmi regarding

(10)                    Dào-xuān and the Mahāyāna precepts. (Sato)

the Bodhisattva precepts was that the monks, nuns, and laypeople led their everyday lives according to a common set of precepts.

The Yogacārabhūmi says that there are two kinds of Bodhisattva precepts, and it puts the laypeople before the monks and nuns with the intention of making the laypeople's lives as close to the Buddha's teachings as possible. In this way, it is fundamentally different from the limited idea of the Hīnayāna precepts. At this point, we find a major advance in thought regarding the precepts. In accordance with this thought, the precepts regarding secular, vocational ethics, which were of concern to the laypeople, rather than the precepts of the monk, were explained in an easily understandable way. As I have stated above, Chinese Buddhism has maintained the lay Buddhist point of view, which is the aim of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore, I believe that the idea of Suí-fāng-pí-ní, to accord with the spirit of the precepts, will be brought to life more in the future.