

Faith, Practice and Enlightenment in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and the Huayan School

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“Faith” in Buddhism

In the West, it is quite common to think that Buddhism is different from other world religions in that it does not require its followers to have solid faith in a transcendental being. This faith is a prerequisite for Christians, who first have to accept the existence of God and of his will. Westerners who favor the rational aspect of Buddhism tend to regard it as a kind of philosophy or attitude towards life, and emphasize that Buddhism can be practiced without faith in an external God, as Buddha himself never relied on such forces.

As Luis O. Gómez says, “The most common English theological meanings are the ones that have the most questionable similarity to historical Buddhist belief and practice: acceptance of and secure belief in the existence of a personal creator deity (‘belief in’), acceptance of such deity as a unique person with a distinctive name, the unquestioned acceptance of this deity’s will, and the adoption of the articles of dogma believed to express the deity’s will.”¹

In terms of a creative God who can influence the lives of living beings, it is certainly true that Buddha and his early followers did not proclaim the necessity of this kind of faith. However, Buddhism does require faith of a kind unrelated to a transcendental being. First of all, it is impossible to practice Buddhism without accepting the law of karma and rebirth. If someone does not believe that his/her deeds have a consequence for this life or even subsequent lives, then why would they follow the noble eightfold path of the Buddha, meditate, or bother with Buddhist ethics? Of course, the law of karma and rebirth can be experienced at an advanced level of meditation, but unfortunately it cannot be reached by ordinary practitioners. Thus, they have to suppose or have faith that Buddhist practice is beneficial for their future.

¹ Gómez 2004: 277.

An early Buddhist text, recognizing that to do so is to take a risk on the part of the practitioner, notes that followers should pursue a moral life regardless of whether or not karma and rebirth exist because at the very least they will be praised by wise people for their meritorious deeds.²

In early Buddhism, the historical Buddha was not regarded a transcendental being, and in this sense he was different from Jesus, who was said to have a transcendental nature as the son of God. Yet, Buddha's followers must have had faith in the Buddha as an authentic religious teacher and in his teachings for eliminating suffering and bringing happiness. As mentioned above, even in early Buddhism faith played a crucial role in the process of proselytizing. With the rise of the Mahāyāna, faith became an increasingly integral part of the religion.

After the nirvāṇa of the Buddha, he gradually became deified and was endowed with transcendental characteristics. Hirakawa Akira probably exaggerated the role of the laity in the stūpa cult, but he rightly pointed out that participation of the laity in this cult may have been central in elevating the Buddha to a transcendental level.³ The Mahāyāna sūtras provided rich and complex details of the Buddha's transcendent nature. The *Lotus Sūtra* introduced a paradigmatic change in the concept of the Buddha by claiming that his nirvāṇa was only an *upāya*: he, in fact, did not enter nirvāṇa, and is ever-abiding, always present, and always available to come into contact with. With the nirvāṇa of the Buddha, it appeared to followers that authentic teachings were no longer accessible, and that their transmission had ended forever. With the appearance of this new teaching, however, transmission could start again, and all the later scriptures attributed to Buddha could be authentic sources of Buddha's word, or the *buddhavacana*.

All these transcendental qualities - ever-abiding, eternal, omnipresent, compassionate and so on - paved the way for Buddha to become an object of faith, in the same way that God became the center of worship in other world religions. It is hard to deny that this concept is in contradiction with the original aim of the founder, who spread the ascetic teaching of curbing desire in order to reach liberation. The art of Gandhāra served as the ideal physical objects for the worship of Buddha, who is depicted as an idealized god with perfect harmony and transcendental wisdom.

² Harvey 1990: 44.

³ Hirakawa 1963.

Faith and the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*

The *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, or *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, is said to be the most perfect teaching of the Buddha as it directly reveals the experience of enlightenment that Buddha went through under the bodhi tree. It shows the *dharma-dhātu*, or the realm of reality (phenomena) viewed from the spiritual level of the Buddha. Of course this world-view is not easy to access, as it presupposes the experience of enlightenment that ordinary people have had. The following is a famous passage from the sūtra:

Children of the Buddha, just as if there was a great sūtra, as extensive as the great universe, in which are written down all phenomena in the great universe. That is to say, in it is written about the phenomena in the great enclosing iron mountains, as extensively as the great enclosing iron mountains; it is written about the phenomena on earth, as extensively as the earth; it is written about the phenomena in the medium universe, as extensively as the medium universe; it is written about the phenomena in the small universe, as extensively as the small universe. In the same vein, all phenomena – be they of the four continents, or the great oceans, Sumeru mountains, the palaces of the Gods in the heavens of the realm of desire, the palaces in the realm of form, and the palaces of the formless realm – are written down to an equal length. Even though this sūtra is as extensive as the great universe, it can be fully comprised within a single particle of dust. As it is with one particle, so it is with all particles of dust.⁴

佛子！譬如有大經卷，量等三千大千世界，書寫三千大千世界中事，一切皆盡。所謂：書寫大鐵圍山中事，量等大鐵圍山；書寫大地中事，量等大地；書寫中千世界中事，量等中千世界；書寫小千世界中事，量等小千世界；如是，若四天下，若大海，若須彌山，若地天宮殿，若欲界空居天宮殿，若色界宮殿，若無色界宮殿，一一書寫，其量悉等。此大經卷雖復量等大千世界，而全住在一微塵中；如一微塵，一切微塵皆亦如是。⁵

⁴ Chien 1993: 105-106.

⁵ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 272, c7-17.

It is not easy to imagine and accept that the whole world can be contained in a single particle of dust. However, according to the *sūtra*, this world-view came out of the Buddha's enlightenment, and its teachings are *buddhavacana* and therefore true. Here, the reader must have faith to acknowledge the statement of the *sūtra* as a valid teaching. The *sūtra* explicitly stresses the importance of this faith:

Faith is the basis of the path, the mother of virtues,
Nourishing and growing all good ways,
Cutting away the net of doubt,
Freeing from the torrent of passion,
Revealing the unsurpassed road of ultimate peace.

信為道元功德母， 長養一切諸善法，
斷除疑網出愛流， 開示涅槃無上道。⁶

...

Faith can go beyond the pathways of demons,
And reveal the unsurpassed road of liberation.
Faith is the unspoiled seed of virtue,
Faith can grow the seed of enlightenment.⁷

信能超出眾魔路， 示現無上解脫道。
信為功德不壞種， 信能生長菩提樹⁸

As the text says, faith is the “basis of the path” because through it practitioners become convinced that practice has a purpose, that is, enlightenment or liberation from all suffering. On the one hand, faith in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* is required to accept the teachings about the Buddha's realm described in the scripture, and, on the other hand, it is necessary for religious practice. Faith is mentioned as a prerequisite for proceeding on the religious path in several chapters of the *sūtra*, and is described as bringing about positive results, such as eliminating difficulties and an understanding of the Dharma. Thus faith has a “causative” role.⁹ The Bodhisattva Diamond Treasury hesitates to teach

⁶ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 72, b18-19.

⁷ Cleary 1993: 331-332.

⁸ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 72, b27-28.

⁹ Dirck Vorenkamp has carried out a detailed study on the meaning of faith in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* and Fazang's understanding with regard to it. He concludes that the *sūtra* represents the traditional Buddhist view on faith, which holds that faith brings about wisdom. However, Fazang, based on the Huayan doctrine of intercontainment, claims that faith must rely on prior understanding. See Vorenkamp 1997: 65-135.

about the ten grounds, suspecting that the disciples gathered together do not have the necessary faith to listen to profound teaching. He starts teaching only after he has been assured of the presence of faith in the listeners.¹⁰

Fifty-two Stages

In a detailed study, Itō Zuiei showed that the central concepts of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* are the cause of enlightenment, bodhisattva's activity, *bodhisattva-caryā*, and the result of practice (enlightenment). The cause aspect is depicted in the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, and the result aspect is the *Tathāgatopatti-saṃbhava-nirdeśa-sūtra*.¹¹ The two sūtras once circulated independently, but eventually were incorporated into the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.¹²

These two chapters might have served as a model for the fifty-two stages that stretch from initial faith to final enlightenment through which a bodhisattva must pass. The fifty-two stages include the ten stages of faith (*shixin* 十信), ten abodes (*shizhu* 十住), ten practices (*shixing* 十行), ten dedications of merit (*shihuixiang* 十迴向), ten grounds (*shidi* 十地), virtual enlightenment (*dengjue* 等覺, also known as *wugou di* 無垢地), and marvelous enlightenment (*miaojue* 妙覺).¹³

However, the category of ten faiths did not originate in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*; it can be found in the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (*Renwang hu guo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經)¹⁴ and the *Bodhisattvas' Diadem Primary Activities Sūtra* (*Pusa yingluo benye jing* 菩薩瓔珞本業經).¹⁵ The ten faiths are: 1. the stage of faith (*xinxin* 信心), 2. the stage of mindfulness (*nianxin* 念心), 3. the stage of endeavor (*jingjin xin* 精進心), 4. the stage of mental stability (*dingxin* 定心), 5. the stage of the wisdom of understanding emptiness (*huixin* 慧心), 6. the stage of pure self-restraint (*jiexin* 戒心), 7. the stage of the returning of merit (*huixiang xin* 迴向心), 8. the stage of maintaining the dharma within oneself (*hufa xin* 護法心), 9. the stage of detachment (*shexin* 捨心), and 10. the stage of aspiration (*yuanxin* 願心).

¹⁰ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T09, no. 278, p. 543, a24-b6.

¹¹ Itō 1988.

¹² Hamar 2007a.

¹³ Charles Muller: Digital Dictionary of Buddhism [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?4e.xml+id\(b4e94-5341-4e8c-4f4d\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?4e.xml+id(b4e94-5341-4e8c-4f4d))

¹⁴ *Renwang hu guo bore boluomiduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經, T08, no. 246, p. 836, b17-22.

¹⁵ *Pusa yingluo benye jing* 菩薩瓔珞本業經, T24, no. 1485, p. 1017, a18-22.

When introducing the stages of the bodhisattva in terms of the distinct teaching (*biejiao* 別教), the founder of the Tiantai school Zhiyi 智顛 (538-597) mentions the fifty-two stages of the *Bodhisattvas' Diadem Primary Activities Sūtra*.¹⁶ While he also notes that Huayan includes forty-one stages, since Huayan is regarded as a distinct teaching, the fifty-two stages became associated with Huayan in Tiantai Buddhism, and Huayan scholars also adopted this view.¹⁷ The concept of ten faiths might have been a Chinese innovation, for the two sūtras where it is found are thought to be apocryphal (authored in China).¹⁸

While the concept is called the “ten faiths,” only the first item, the state of mind of faith, is connected to faith (*xin* 信): the other members all represent various aspects of religious practice that are just generally related to mind / mental states (*xin* 心). These ten faiths are not elaborated upon in the sūtra, but the 12th chapter *Chief in Goodness* contains many passages about the importance of faith. Therefore, this chapter, which precedes the chapters *Ten Abodes* (15), *Ten Practices* (21), *Ten Dedications* (25) and *Ten Grounds* (26), can be regarded the source of the ten faiths. Chengguan 澄觀, arranging the chapters into assemblies, states that the ten faiths were taught in the Hall of Universal Light at the second assembly during which the chapter *Chief in Goodness* was preached.¹⁹

Faith is Complete Enlightenment

The bodhisattva path is divided into stages that require various capacities, and involves the practitioner’s spiritual evolution as he/she goes through them until finally reaching complete enlightenment. In its elaboration of fifty-two stages, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* appears to teach a gradual path that begins with initial faith and goes up to enlightenment. However, this is not necessarily the case: there is one sentence in the sūtra that seems to suggest a different meaning. Below is the sentence in its full context.

¹⁶ *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33, no. 1716, p. 732, a7-14.

¹⁷ Yoshizu 1992. On the later incorporation of the ten faiths into Tiantai Buddhism, see Chappell 1983: 131.

¹⁸ Another piece of evidence of their Chinese origins is that only Paramārtha’s translation of Vasubandhu’s commentary on the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* (*She dasheng lun* 攝大乘論) includes references to ten faiths. See Yoshizu 1992: 274.

¹⁹ 第二會普光法堂說十信法門, *Da huayanjing celüe* 大華嚴經略策, T36, no. 1737, p. 702, b6.

Ten things should also be cultivated: knowledge of what is so and what is not; knowledge of past, present, and future consequences of actions; knowledge of all meditations, liberations, and concentrations; knowledge of superiority and inferiority of faculties; knowledge of all kinds of understandings; knowledge of all kinds of realms; knowledge of where all paths lead; unhindered clairvoyance; unhindered knowledge of past lives, knowledge of the eternal cancellation of habit energy. Contemplating on all these ten powers of the enlightened, in each power are innumerable meanings; one should ask about them, and after having heard about them should arouse a mind of great kindness and compassion and observe sentient beings without abandoning them, reflect on the teaching unceasingly, carry out superlative deeds without seeking rewards, comprehend that objects are like dreams, like illusions, like reflections, like echoes, and like magical productions. If enlightening beings can unite with such contemplations, they will not entertain a dualistic understanding of things; and all enlightening teachings will become evident to them: at the time of their first determination they will immediately attain complete perfect enlightenment, will know all things are the mind's own nature, and will perfect the body of wisdom and understand without relying on another.²⁰

復應修習十種法。何者為十？所謂：處非處智、過現未來業報智、諸禪解脫三昧智、諸根勝劣智、種種解智、種種界智、一切至處道智、天眼無礙智、宿命無礙智、永斷習氣智。於如來十力，一一觀察；一一力中，有無量義，悉應諮問。聞已，應起大慈悲心，觀察眾生而不捨離；思惟諸法，無有休息；行無上業，不求果報；了知境界如幻如夢，如影如響，亦如變化。若諸菩薩能與如是觀行相應，於諸法中不生二解，一切佛法疾得現前，初發心時即得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提，知一切法即心自性，成就慧身，不由他悟。²¹

²⁰ Cleary 1993: 402-403.

²¹ See *Chapter Religious Practice (Fanxing pin 梵行品)* T10, no. 279, p. 88, c21-p. 89, a3.

The passage says that a bodhisattva should contemplate on the Buddha's ten powers, give rise to a compassionate mind toward living beings, and understand the non-reality of all things. At this initial stage, having attained this non-dual mind, all Buddha's teachings become clear, and he can have a perfect enlightenment, which makes him realize that all things or teachings are none other than the self-nature of the mind. The last statement seems to refer to Yogācāra teachings, but Buddhahadra's translation is different:

At the time of their first determination they will immediately attain Buddhahood, and understand the real nature of all things.

初發心時便成正覺。知一切法真實之性。²²

If we compare these two versions with the Tibetan text, we find that the Tibetan version supports the former Chinese version. It also says that the bodhisattva realizes that all dharmas have the nature of mind, and thus can obtain wisdom that is not dependent on others:

He understands the non-dual nature of all dharmas, and by the first determination he will achieve the state of full enlightenment. As he knows all dharmas as the nature of mind, and, not dependent on any others, he becomes endowed with the embodiment of wisdom.

des chos de dag gnyis-su med-par rtogs-pas sems dang-po
bskyed-pa nyid-kyis / blana-med-pa yang-dag-par rdzogs-pa'i
byang-chub-tu mngon par 'tshang-rgya-ba'i gnas yod-do / chos
thams-cad sems-kyi rang-bzhin-du shes-pas gzhan gyi dring mi
'jog-par shes-rab-kyi phung-po dang yang ldan-par 'gyur-ro /²³

²² *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T09, no. 278, p. 449, c14-15.

²³ Chapter 21 *Tshangs-par spyod-pa*, p. 11. Tog Palace manuscript of Tibetan Kanjur.

Enlightenment at the Stage of Faith in Huayan Buddhism

Zhiyan 智儼 (602-668), the second Huayan patriarch who inherited the teaching of the Dilun 地論 and Shelun 攝論 schools, recognized the importance of enlightenment at the stage of faith, but placed more emphasis on the gradual path of the ten grounds in a bodhisattva's career. It was the third patriarch, Fazang 法藏 (643-712), who claimed that enlightenment at the stage of faith (*xinman cheng fo* 信滿成佛) is a unique doctrine of the distinct teaching of One Vehicle (*biejiao yisheng* 別教一乘).²⁴ He underlined the importance of faith as follows:

Now, those wishing to enter the *dharma-dhātu* of non-hindrane must awaken penetrating, resolute faith. The reason is that resolute faith is made the basic foundation and the ground for a multitude of practice. All practices are born from resolute faith. Thus resolute faith is listed first and it is made the point of departure.²⁵

今欲入法界無礙者要先發得徹到信心。何者以信為初基。眾行之本。一切諸行皆藉信生。是故最初舉信為始也。²⁶

Fazang's fellow disciple under Zhiyan, the Korean Ŭisang 義湘 (625-702), might have influenced his views on the importance of enlightenment at the stage of faith.²⁷ Ŭisang emphasizes that in the perfect teaching of the One Vehicle, a bodhisattva at the initial stage of faith is identical with a Buddha:

Question: A first stage bodhisattva means a bodhisattva of the [nascent] faith stage. If so, this is the position of the disciple. However, one who has achieved right enlightenment is in the stage of buddha. This is a great teacher. Superior and inferior are not equal. Positions and stages are also different. Why then are head and feet placed in the same position?

²⁴ Yoshizu 1992: 282-287.

²⁵ Unno 1964: 69.

²⁶ *Huayan you xin fajie ji* 華嚴遊心法界記, T45, no. 1877, p. 645, b22-25.

²⁷ Fazang's friendship with the Korean monk is well attested by his letter to him. See Forte 2000.

Answer: The dharma and function of the three vehicle law of expedient means and the one vehicle law in the round teaching are different. Both of them should be distinguished without confusion. What is meant by this? In the three vehicle law, head and feet are different. The years and months of an old man and a baby are not the same. Why so? Because it is based on marks. Because of producing the heart of [nascent] faith in the one vehicle round teaching, head and feet are comprehensively one. [Now] the years and months of an old man and a baby are the same. How? Because they are [both] established by causal conditions and based upon universal-principle.²⁸

問。初發心菩薩者。信地菩薩。即是弟子位。成正覺者佛地。即是大師位。高下不同。位地今一別。何以故。同處並頭脚耶。

答。三乘方便法。與圓教一乘法。法用逗留。各別不得雜用。其其義云何。三乘法頭脚各別何耶。兒子年月不同。何故如是。約相說故。生信心故。圓教一乘法者。頭脚總一。阿耶兒子年月皆同總。何以故。由緣成故。約道理說故。²⁹

Fazang regarded dependent arising from the *dharmadhātu* (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起) as the central concept of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. One of the most important Chinese Huayan innovations is the tenet of the ten mysterious gates, which is said to describe the interrelated existence of the *dharmadhātu*. The third gate reveals that all dharmas are mutually identified freely (*zhufa xiangji zizai* 諸法相即自在). Here, Fazang refers to the enlightenment at the stage of faith, saying that after the arousal of *bodhicitta*, the bodhisattva has limitless merit. This implies that at the beginning of his spiritual path, a bodhisattva already accomplishes all the merits of the subsequent stages.

All dharmas are mutually identified freely. All these above meanings [i.e., the dharmas of dependent origination] are [such that] one is identical with all and all are identical with the one, and they are perfectly free and unhindered in their interfusion. With reference to common essence, [one] of itself possesses and includes all dharmas. However, the all of these [dharma “A”]

²⁸ Odin 1982: 210.

²⁹ *Hwan ilsŭng pŏpkyedo* 華嚴一乘法界圖, T45, no. 1887A, p. 715, b3-10.

also in themselves are mutually inclusive, because they are repeatedly inexhaustible [in their interrelations]. However, this inexhaustibility is within the first category. Therefore this [*Avataṃsaka*] sūtra says, ‘The qualities of a single thought of a bodhisattva who has aroused the first thought of enlightenment are deep and extensive, without boundaries. The Tathāgata [himself] could not finish describing them if he took an eon.’³⁰ How much more so if [the bodhisattva] were to possess and cultivate the meritorious practices of the ten perfections [pāramitā] and ten stages [bhūmi] for boundless, innumerable, immeasurable eons!³¹

三者諸法相即自在門。此上諸義一即一切。一切即一。圓融自在無礙成耳。若約同體門中。即自具足攝一切法也。然此自一切復自相入。重重無盡故也。然此無盡皆悉在初門中也。故此經云。初發心菩薩。一念之切德。深廣無邊際。如來分別說。窮劫不能盡。何況於無邊無數無量劫。具足修諸度諸地功德行。³²

Zhiyan emphasized the gradual path of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, while Fazang advocated its idea of enlightenment by obtaining faith. The fourth patriarch Chengguan was aware of this contradiction in the scripture, and made efforts to interpret the text in such a way that the obvious contradiction (unacceptable for a sūtra) is resolved. Fazang, explaining the stages of the spiritual path, established two categories: the gradual (*cidi xingbu* 次第行布) and mutual interfusion (*yuanrong xiangshe* 圓融相攝).³³ Chengguan further elaborated on them:

The sixth is elucidating the stages. It shows bodhisattvas the practice as the cause of Buddhahood. To reach the end of a road it must have stages. ‘The great treasure of a sage is his rank.’³⁴ If there is no stage, practice cannot be completed. There are two aspects. The first is the gradual way, as different stages are established. The second is a way of interfusion, as one stage includes the other stages. If any of the stages is completed, it leads to Buddhahood. The first ground says: ‘One ground includes

³⁰ *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T09, no. 278, p. 433, a2-6.

³¹ Cook 1970: 498-499.

³² *Huayan yisheng jiaoyifenqi zhang* 華嚴一乘教義分齊章, T45, no. 1866, p. 505, a26-b4.

³³ *Huayanjing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T35, no. 1733, p. 108, c3-8.

³⁴ Reference to *Zhouyi xici xia zhuan* 周易繫辭下傳, Chapter 1.

the merits of all grounds.’³⁵ Faith comprises the ocean of result. ‘At the time of their first determination they will immediately attain Buddhahood.’ However, these two ways are unobstructed. The gradual way is from the perspective of teaching, and the way of interfusion is from the perspective of the function of absolute nature. The phenomena are the phenomena that are identical with nature, thus the gradual way does not obstruct the way of interfusion. The nature is the nature that is identical with the phenomena, thus the way of interfusion does not obstruct the gradual way. The way of interfusion does not obstruct the gradual way, thus one is immeasurable. The gradual way does not obstruct the way of interfusion, thus the immeasurable is one. The immeasurable is one, thus the phenomena are interfused in a hidden way. One is immeasurable, thus phenomena are interconnected in innumerable ways.

六彰地位者。為顯菩薩修行佛因。一道至果有階差故。夫聖人之大寶曰位。若無此位行無成故。此亦二種。一行布門。立位差別故。二圓融門。一位即攝一切位故。一一位滿即至佛故。初地云。一地之中。具攝一切諸地功德。信該果海。初發心時便成正覺等。然此二無礙。以行布是教相施設。圓融是理性德用。相是即性之相。故行布不礙圓融。性是即相之性。故圓融不礙行布。圓融不礙行布。故一為無量。行布不礙圓融。故無量為一。無量為一。故融通隱隱。一為無量故涉入重重。³⁶

Chengguan explains that the stages on the religious path can be viewed from two perspectives: teaching and the absolute truth. In teaching, there are various stages and thus the fifty-two stages discussed above are depicted as the bodhisattva’s way to reach enlightenment. However, in terms of the final truth, in other words, on the level of *tathatā* or thusness that is realized by the Buddha in his enlightenment, these stages are interfused. This is the reason why the sūtra also teaches that at the first stage the practitioner is completely enlightened. In addition, these two perspectives do not contradict each other, and therefore can be true at the same time. In this way, the sūtra puts forth the idea of endless interconnection.

³⁵ The original text of the sūtra says: 住於一地。普攝一切諸地功德, *Shijian jingyan pin* 世間淨眼品, T09, no. 278, p. 395, b25-26.

³⁶ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, T35, no. 1735, p. 504, b16-28.

The Four Models of Cultivation and Enlightenment

As we have seen above, on the basis of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, Huayan monks attempted to combine initial enlightenment at the level of faith with the final enlightenment at the end of bodhisattva path. However, the new Chinese paradigm of sudden enlightenment had become widespread in Chinese religious thinking due to the growing influence of Chan Buddhism. This framework does not link sudden enlightenment to initial enlightenment at the stage of faith: the former is said to occur with the realization of Buddha-nature. The practitioner becomes aware of his/her possession of Buddha nature, and at that moment experiences enlightenment. However, the question then naturally arises: why should one bother with any kind of religious practice once one is enlightened? While Chan monks challenged the Indian way of gradual cultivation, Huayan monks tried to show that cultivation is still necessary even after one has experienced sudden enlightenment. The fourth patriarch Chengguan provide a theoretical context to support the idea of gradual practice, and the fifth patriarch Zongmi (who was both a disciple of Chengguan greatly indebted to his master's works and the patriarch of the Heze 菏泽 lineage of Chan Buddhism), argued for the importance of gradual cultivation after sudden enlightenment.

In his commentary on the first chapter of the *Huayanjing*, Chengguan refers to the scene in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* in which Mahāmati asks how Buddha purges living beings of the manifestations of their minds (*zixin xianliu* 自心現流).³⁷ Buddha provides four similes for gradual purification and four similes for sudden purification,³⁸ stating that the process of purification is gradual like the ripening of mango fruit, making pottery, the creation of the world, and mastering various skills, and that it is sudden like objects being reflected by a bright mirror, objects being illuminated by the sun and moon, the creation of the environment by *ālayavijñāna*, and the illumination of Buddha's light. Next, Chengguan further elaborates upon the term "sudden" as follows:

³⁷ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 164, b10-p. 165, a2.

³⁸ *Lengqie abaduoluo baojing* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, T 16, 670: 485c27-486a10.

1. Sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (*dunwu jianxiu* 頓悟漸修). This is like suddenly seeing a nine-layered platform that one must climb up before reaching the top. One suddenly understands the nature of the mind, realizing that her/his mind is identical with Buddha, and that it includes all dharmas. Then one must collect merits by cultivating various practices. This is from the aspect of initial enlightenment (*jiewu* 解悟).
2. Sudden cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment (*dunxiu jianwu* 頓修漸悟). This is like rubbing a mirror: the mirror is rubbed everywhere at the same time, yet its brightness appears gradually. All practices are cultivated suddenly, but enlightenment is reached gradually. This is from the aspect of final enlightenment (*zhengwu* 證悟).
3. Sudden cultivation followed by sudden enlightenment (*dunxiu dunwu* 頓修頓悟). This is like when silk is cut with a sharp sword and all the fibers are cut simultaneously, or when an entire piece of silk immediately takes on a new color when being dyed. All practices are cultivated together and at the same time enlightenment is bright.
4. Gradual cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment (*jianxiu jianwu* 漸修漸悟). This is like cutting bamboo gnarl by gnarl.

At first glance, this gradual / sudden cultivation and enlightenment scheme appears to recognize the possibility of both gradual and sudden enlightenment. However, Chengguan wants to emphasize the importance of cultivation, whether gradual or sudden. Elsewhere, he criticizes Chan monks who neglect cultivation, claiming that “the mirror is originally bright.”³⁹ Chengguan argues that from the aspect of principle, we can speak about inherent wisdom, and from the aspect of phenomena, we can speak about the wisdom of Buddha. Even if the mirror of mind is originally clear, it is buried by infinite afflictions, and ordinary people do not have the same realization as the Buddha. As principle and phenomena are unobstructed, the pursuit of cultivation is identical with its non-pursuit. This kind of cultivation is non-cultivation (*wuxiu* 無修), and non-cultivation is the real cultivation (*zhenxiu* 真修).⁴⁰

³⁹ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 164, c20-22.

⁴⁰ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 9, a26-27

After the translation of the forty-fascicle *Huayanjing* was completed in 798, Chengguan wrote a commentary on it by imperial command. By this time, as a leader of the Buddhist community, he must have experienced the growing influence of Chan Buddhism. In his new commentary, he responded to the challenges of Chan by including a chapter entitled “The Discussion of Various Levels of Cultivation and Realization” (*bian xiuzheng qianshen* 辨修證淺深),⁴¹ which is not found in his earlier commentary. There, adopting a famous Chan slogan, he says that the teachings of *Huayanjing* have been transmitted mind-to-mind since the time of the Buddha without relying on writing.

He divides the learning of wisdom (*huixue* 慧學) into nature and characteristics, and the learning of meditation (*dingxue* 定學) into gradual and sudden. Just as he does with the ten differences between nature and characteristics in a previous chapter,⁴² he then expounds the meaning of gradual and sudden. He presents the Northern school of Chan as an example of the latter, characterizing it as the practices of observing the mind and cultivating purification (*kanxin xiujing* 看心修淨). He offers two models under the category of gradual: sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (*dunwu jianxiu* 頓悟漸修) and gradual cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment (*jianxiu jianwu* 漸修漸悟). On the other hand, he states that “sudden” means the direct pointing at the essence of mind and the sudden elimination of verbal expressions, and again offers two models: sudden cultivation followed by sudden enlightenment (*dunxiu dunwu* 頓修頓悟) and non-cultivation followed by non-enlightenment (*wuxiu wuwu* 無修無悟). Chengguan claims that though these sudden and gradual methods seem to be different, in fact they are only different paths that lead to the same goal. According to him, what is really crucial is whether one can obtain meaning (*deyi* 得意) or not. If one understands the meaning of the teachings through them, then both methods are praiseworthy, but if not, they are problematic.

Next, he explains the object of enlightenment (*suowu* 所悟), the method of enlightenment (*neng wuru fa* 能悟入法), and the characteristics of enlightenment (*wuxiang* 悟相). He describes the object of enlightenment in the following way:

The object of enlightenment is the following. Some say that the essence of mind is separated from thought, that original nature is pure and neither born nor perishes. This [statement] is mostly from the aspect of gradual [way]. Some say that the non-abiding,

⁴¹ *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* 華嚴經行願品疏, X05, no. 227, p. 64, a20-p. 65, a15.

⁴² For a detailed explanation on the ten differences, see Hamar 2007b.

empty and quiescent *Tathatā* transcends characteristics; or the false is empty and the absolute is existent; or the false is existent and the absolute is empty; or mind is identical with Buddha and the teaching of Buddha inherently exists [in all living beings]. These [statements] mostly belong to the sudden way. However, as neither of [the sudden and gradual ways] go beyond the nature and characteristics of mind, they can be applied together.

然其所悟：或言心體離念，本性清淨，不生不滅，多約漸也。或云無住空寂真如絕相，或妄空真有，或妄有真空，或即心即佛，非心非佛，本具佛法，多屬頓門。然皆不離心之性相，並可通用。⁴³

Despite the discrepancies between the Northern and Southern schools, he underlines that these two stances are not contradictory but rather complementary.⁴⁴

With regard to reaching enlightenment, Chengguan discusses meditation and wisdom. He emphasizes that the only correct approach is to practice these two methods together.

The last section on the characteristics of enlightenment is the longest, and occupies half of the chapter. At the beginning, he states that there are two kinds of enlightenment: initial enlightenment (*jiewu* 解悟) and final enlightenment (*zhengwu* 證悟). Initial enlightenment is the clear understanding of the nature and characteristics [of the mind] (*mingliao xingxiang* 明了性相), while final enlightenment is the arrival of mind at the enigmatic supreme (*xin zao xuanji* 心造玄極). Initial enlightenment is the realization of inherently pure nature, and final enlightenment is complete enlightenment after cultivation. This pair of terms resemble *benjue* 本覺 and *shijue* 始覺 from the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*.⁴⁵

Next, Chengguan discusses four models of enlightenment and cultivation.

⁴³ *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* 華嚴經行願品疏, X05, no. 227, p. 64, b7-11.

⁴⁴ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T36, no. 1736, p. 261, c7-13.

⁴⁵ *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論, T32, no. 1666, p. 576, b14-16.

1. Sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation. This is from the aspect of initial enlightenment. After the practitioner suddenly understands the nature of mind, he engages in gradual cultivation to become one with it. Enlightenment is like the shining of the moon, as it suddenly makes everything bright. Cultivation is like rubbing a mirror in that it makes things clear gradually.
2. Gradual cultivation followed by sudden enlightenment. This is from the aspect of final enlightenment. First the practitioner realizes that all objects are only consciousness and then sees the original purity of mind. Both mind and object become quiescent.
3. Gradual cultivation followed by gradual enlightenment. This also represents final enlightenment. Both cultivation and enlightenment are like climbing a tower: as one goes higher, more distant vistas come into sight.
4. Sudden cultivation and sudden enlightenment. While the above three models present enlightenment and cultivation as existing on a temporal plane, in this model Chengguan explicitly specifies the sequence of enlightenment and cultivation, presenting three possibilities: (1) enlightenment followed by cultivation (*xianwu houxiu* 先悟後修), or initial enlightenment, (2) practice followed by enlightenment, or final enlightenment, and (3) simultaneous practice and enlightenment, which includes both initial and final enlightenment.

In the following table I have summarize the four models of enlightenment and practice in Chengguan’s subcommentary and new commentary.

Subcommentary	New Commentary 1.	New Commentary 2.
1. 頓悟漸修 解悟	1. 頓悟漸修 漸	1. 頓悟漸修 解悟
2. 頓修漸悟 證悟	4. 無修無悟 頓	2. 漸修頓悟 證悟
3. 頓修頓悟	3. 頓修頓悟 頓	4. 頓修頓悟 先悟後修 解悟 先修後悟 證悟 修悟一時 悟道解證
4. 漸修漸悟	2. 漸修漸悟 漸	3. 漸修漸悟 證悟

Three of the four models are identical, but the second row in the table contains different names. It appears that Chengguan saw initial enlightenment as something that is not the result of a practice but rather appears before it, and final enlightenment as being preceded by cultivation. Using these terms, Chengguan transplanted the words *benjue* and *shijue* of *Awakening of Faith* into the context of Chan Buddhism, thereby retaining the meaning and importance of Buddhist cultivation. His disciple Zongmi 宗密 (780-841), who was not only the patriarch of the Huayan lineage but also one of the Chan lineage, adopted his master's scheme and elaborated further on the significance of initial and final enlightenment. He saw the model of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation as the ideal way for Buddhist practitioners.

Li Tongxuan: Faith in the Identity of Sentient Beings and Buddhas

Fazang and Chengguan represent the scholar-monk lineage of Huayan Buddhism that emphasized a scholastic interpretation of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* in which religious practice seems to be only secondary. However, the famous Huayan hermit Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635-730), who was worshipped as a saint by the people even though he was not an ordained monk, was less scholastic in his writings on the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*.⁴⁶ Kojima Taizan argued that Li Tongxuan represented the Wutaishan 五台山 lineage of the Huayan school, which stressed religious practice.⁴⁷ Although Seunghak Koh has disproved Kojima's claims by showing that Li Tongxuan had no close relation with Wutaishan, his Huayan can still be described as practice-oriented.⁴⁸

Li Tongxuan advocated the practice of no practice based on the idea that all sentient beings are originally enlightened and there is no difference between the sacred and the ordinary, stating that the absolute and the ordinary are both real (*zhen su ju zhen* 真俗俱真) in the one true *dharmadhātu* (*yi zhen fajie* 一真法界).⁴⁹ He rejected temporal causality, which would imply the need for assiduous religious cultivation before attaining buddhahood, and instead proposed the simultaneity of cause and effect (*yinguo tongshi* 因果同時).⁵⁰

⁴⁶ For a summary of Li Tongxuan's teaching, see Gimello 1983. For his ideas on faith and practice, see Shim 1987.

⁴⁷ Kojima 1996, 1997.

⁴⁸ Koh 2011: 275-280.

⁴⁹ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 739, c21-24.

⁵⁰ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 740, b29-c4.

While Fazang and Chengguan stated that due to the mutual unobstruction, one level of the bodhisattva path can include all the other levels, Li Tongxuan claimed that the fifty-two stages are only expedient means and that in reality each level is identical with the Buddha and the Buddha is identical with all levels (*zhuwei ze fo fo ze zhuwei* 諸位則佛佛則諸位).⁵¹ He says that Mañjuśrī represents the cause, while the Buddha of immovable wisdom is the result. However, the cause and result are not different in terms of essence (*yinguo tongti wu er* 因果同體無二).⁵²

On the level of ordinary beings, the identity of the realm of the Buddhas' and the realm of sentient beings' is difficult to realize, and thus only faith can bridge the gap between the two. Sentient beings must believe that their minds are no different from Buddhas' minds. As Li says:

If they do not believe that their body and the Buddha's body are non-dual in terms of cause and effect in the stage of the ten faiths, they cannot establish [firm] faith and understanding. Therefore it is said in the chapter *The Tathāgata's Manifestation (Rulai chuxian pin* 如來出現品), "Bodhisattvas should know that a moment of their own mind contains all buddhas from the ten directions who attain right enlightenment and turn the wheel of correct dharma. Why is it so? The Buddha's mind and their minds are non-dual." Only when you have such faith can it be called faith.⁵³

十信之中若不信自身與佛身因果無二者。不成信解。是故如來出現品云。菩薩摩訶薩應知自心之內一念中有十方諸佛成等正覺轉正法輪。何以故。佛心與自心無二故。如是信心方名信故。⁵⁴

At the stage of the ten faiths, which as we saw comes at the beginning of the fifty-two stages, the practitioner must believe that his mind is not different from the buddhas' who come from the ten directions. Li Tongxuan says that after this, faith is born in the practitioner, and he will have a vision of the way at the first level of the ten abidings.⁵⁵ Traditionally, this vision is seen as arising at the first ground when the mind of enlightenment is created. However,

⁵¹ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 741, a7.

⁵² *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 752, a7. Shibasaki 1987.

⁵³ Koh 2011: 40.

⁵⁴ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 744, b5-9.

⁵⁵ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 787, a20-23.

Li stresses that ordinary people can attain buddhahood by seeing their true nature at the first stage of the ten abidings just after they have passed through the levels of ten faiths, and that later they only deepen this wisdom.⁵⁶

As we saw above, the traditional list of ten faiths is not actually closely related to faith, and the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* does not include them: they were adopted from other scriptures. Li Tongxuan seems to have been aware of this problem, and he devised a new scheme of ten faiths that emphasizes the belief in the identity of living beings and buddhas from various aspects. The first of ten faiths is ordinary beings seeing faith as the most important and resolving to attain all the results of buddhahood. Thus ordinary beings at this initial stage must believe that:

1. the immovable wisdom of the minds of all buddhas of the ten directions is not different from their own mind,
2. the fundamental wisdom of the bodies of all buddhas of the ten directions and their body are not different,
3. they can carry out the Tathāgata's ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications and ten grounds,
4. they too can attain the *samādhi* of which all buddhas of ten directions were born,
5. they can attain all the supernatural power (*shentong* 神通) of all buddhas of the ten directions,
6. they will receive the buddhas' wisdom,
7. they will receive the buddhas' compassion, which covers everything,
8. they will receive the buddhas' freedom, and
9. while not moving for a movement they will go through endless eons of cultivation and reach all levels in a way equal to all buddhas.

Li Tongxuan explains the reasons why ordinary beings can have these results of buddhahood in the following way:

In the chapter "Chief in Goodness," from the stage of ordinary people faith is regarded as foremost. This is the decision that they will receive the result of Buddha's great bodhi. Thus from the stage of ordinary people, they believe, "the immovable wisdom of the minds of all buddhas of the ten directions are not different from our own minds. Only due to ignorance are they deluded.

⁵⁶ Koh 2011: 42-44.

Ignorance and the mind of buddhas of the ten directions originally are not different.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “the fundamental wisdom of the bodies of all buddhas of ten directions and our bodies are not different. Why? Because they originate from the same fundamental wisdom of the same dharma-nature body (*yi faxing shen yi genben zhi* 一法性身一根本智). It is similar to the branch of a tree. One root can grow many branches and leaves. Depending on conditions a tree can grow different branches and leaves of a different quality.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we can carry out the Tathāgata’s ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications and ten grounds. Why? We remember the ocean of worldly suffering. We have carried out activities that did not benefit anybody. Now, we can carry out activities that benefit others, and the various practices of bodhisattvas can save sentient beings. How could we not perform these?” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “the *samādhi* from which all buddhas of ten directions were born they also can attain. Why? The *samādhis* of all buddhas were born from the *upāya* of the Tathāgata’s self-nature. We are all endowed with the *Tathāgata*’s nature with pure self-essence and are equal with buddhas.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we can attain all supernatural power (*shentong* 神通) of all buddhas of the ten directions. Why? All supernatural power of buddhas can be received on the base of absolute wisdom (*zhenzhi* 真智). Due to its absolute nature wisdom has no mental disturbances (*fannaο* 煩惱), and our ignorance can become wisdom. All karma is destroyed, only wisdom and compassion exist, and the supernatural powers are freely manifested to liberate [living beings]. From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we will receive buddhas’ wisdom. Why? Because all buddhas originate from ordinary beings.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe, “we will receive the buddhas’ compassion that covers everything. Why? Because all buddhas’ compassion originates from the great vow. Like all buddhas we also take the great vow.” From the stage of ordinary people, they believe “we will receive the buddhas’ freedom. Why? Because all buddhas’ wisdom is manifested in the dharmas of nature-origination. The wisdom-body and the dharma-body enter the realms of the living beings. The untainted visible material objects and sense organs function freely. We are also not detached from Tathāgata’s wisdom that manifests its nature in the world.” From the stage of

ordinary people, they believe, “we will go through endless eons of cultivation and reach all levels equal with all buddhas, but will not move for a moment. Why? Because the three periods of time [past, present, future] have no time.”

故從凡夫地。信十方諸佛心不動智與自心無異故。只為無明所迷故。無明與十方諸佛心。本來無二故。從凡夫地信十方諸佛身根本智與自身不異故。何以故皆是一法性身一根本智。猶如樹枝一根生多枝葉等。以因緣故。一樹枝上成壞不同故。從凡夫地信如來十住十行十迴向十地我悉盡能行之。何以故。自憶無始時來波流苦海。無益之事尚以行之。何況如今有益之事。菩薩萬行濟眾生事。豈不能為。從凡夫地。信十方諸佛皆從三昧生我亦當得。何以故。諸佛三昧皆從如來自性方便生。我亦具有如來自體清淨之性與佛平等。從凡夫地信十方諸佛一切神通我亦當得。何以故。諸佛神通依真智而得。我但依真性智中無有煩惱無明成智。一切業亡唯有智慈。通化自在。從凡夫地信佛智慧我亦當得。何以故。一切諸佛悉從凡夫來故。從凡夫地信佛大悲普覆一切我亦當得。何以故。諸佛大悲從大願起。我亦如諸佛發大願故。從凡夫地信佛自在我亦當得。何以故。諸佛自在於性起法門。智身法身入眾生界。不染色塵諸根自在。我亦不離性起如來智故。從凡夫地信自發心經無盡劫修行滿位齊諸佛。不移一念。何以故。為三世無時故。⁵⁷

According to Li Tongxuan, faith is not related to any external objects; even buddhas or bodhisattvas cannot be relied on. The aspiration of enlightenment must rely on Buddha’s omniscience (*yiqie zhi* 一切智), which is the wisdom of no reliance (*wusuoyi* 無所依).⁵⁸ Li stresses the importance of immovable wisdom (*bu dong zhi* 不動智) that is inherent in all living beings. This wisdom is described in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* as a wisdom that is created by faith:

They have removed the webs of doubts of all time
And aroused faith in those who have realized thusness.
By faith they’ve attained immovable wisdom,⁵⁹
And because their knowledge is pure their understanding is true.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, 1739, p. 745, c17-p. 746, a12.

⁵⁸ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 825, c16-18.

⁵⁹ Here, Cleary’s original translation uses the phrase “immutable knowledge.”

⁶⁰ Cleary 1993: 415-416.

三世疑網悉已除， 於如來所起淨信，
以信得成不動智， 智清淨故解真實。⁶¹

However, this wisdom can lead living beings to follow delusion but also can cause them to awaken. If this wisdom functions as illusion then this discriminatory aspect is called consciousness, while the awakening aspect is called wisdom. The Yogācāra model of transforming consciousness into wisdom (*zhuanishi de zhi* 轉識得智) might have inspired Li Tongxuan to propose this tenet.⁶² This fundamental wisdom is realized suddenly (*dun zheng ben zhi* 頓證本智) at the stage of generating *bodhicitta*.⁶³

Conclusion

In this article, I have shown the relationship between faith, practice and enlightenment in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, and the way in which this problem was addressed in the Huayan school of Chinese Buddhism. The importance of faith in the Buddha, bodhisattvas and the Buddha's teaching was emphasized in several chapters of this sūtra as a prerequisite for Buddhist practice. Even though the concept of ten faiths does not originate in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, in its Chinese interpretation, it became an integral part of the bodhisattva path. The practice and ensuing enlightenment of the bodhisattva are described in great detail by bodhisattvas in the sūtra. Although the majority of this scripture explains traditional gradual cultivation, it contains a passage stating that the bodhisattva experiences enlightenment at the beginning of his spiritual path when he has generated *bodhicitta*.

This reference to initial enlightenment had a great impact on the development of East Asian Buddhism. While the second patriarch of the Huayan school, Zhiyan, had already acknowledged the importance of faith, the third patriarch, Fazang, presented the teaching of enlightenment through the accomplishment of faith (*xinman cheng fo* 信滿成佛) as a unique tenet of the distinct teaching of the One Vehicle, which he saw as referring exclusively to Huayan teachings. Chengguan, who had a broad erudition in Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature, attempted to harmonize all Buddhist tenets by including them in his commentary and subcommentary on the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.

⁶¹ *Da fanguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, p. 92, c22-24.

⁶² Kimura 1972.

⁶³ *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T36, no. 1739, p. 752, a27.

He proclaimed the nonobstruction of the gradual (*cidi xingbu* 次第行布) and mutual interfusion (*yuanrong xiangshe* 圓融相攝), stating that while in terms of teaching there is a gradual path, in terms of absolute nature the first stage includes all the other stages.

As we have seen, the problem of faith, practice and enlightenment was discussed in Huayan Buddhism in relation to the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. However, Chan Buddhism's popular ideas of sudden enlightenment had to be dealt with by the late Tang patriarchs. Chengguan established four models of enlightenment and practice, asserting that while sudden enlightenment arises after the practitioner sees Buddha-nature, this does not mean that practice should be abandoned: on the contrary, gradual cultivation should follow sudden awakening. This model can actually be traced back to the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, where a bodhisattva experiences awakening at the stage of faith but then goes through all the subsequent stages until he reaches the supreme awakening. Zongmi, who was much indebted to his master, Chengguan, advocated sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation. Even though he was also a patriarch of Chan Buddhism, he retained his belief in the importance of religious practice.

Li Tongxuan's Huayan teaching is quite different from the lineage known as the "five Huayan patriarchs." Li was brave innovator ready to devise new ideas and was not held back by previous teachings. He emphasized that initial enlightenment occurs when the practitioner has faith that he is identical with Buddha. He devised a new set of ten faiths related to the belief that a sentient being is no different from a Buddha. He explicitly states that belief should not be directed to outside buddhas or bodhisattvas, but to one's internal identity with buddhas. Li Tongxuan's idea of faith in the identity with buddhas was discovered by Chan Buddhism in East Asia.⁶⁴ His teachings had a great impact on Chinul 知訥 (1158–1210), the famous Sŏn (Chan) master who described initial faith in the identity of living beings with the Buddha as patriarchal faith.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Buswell 1986: 210-213.

⁶⁵ Park 1983: 19-24.

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