

The Autobiography about Mystical Experiences by the Samādhi of Buddha's Light [preached] in Gaṇḍavyūha [or Huayan] Sūtra, described by Monk Myōe.

『華嚴仏光三昧観冥感伝』明恵上人述

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(Abstract)

Kegon-bukouzanmaikan-myoukanden (『華嚴仏光三昧観冥感伝』) was described by Monk Myōe (明恵房高弁: 1173–1231), who revived the Kegon sect (華嚴宗) in the Kamakura period. He authored many books on Kegon Buddhism (華嚴仏教), however I think this text, which shows his religious mystical experiences, is very important, especially for comprehending his experiences of Buddhist practice and enlightenment. In particular, this text details the mystical goodness that Myōe himself experienced through the contemplation of Buddha's light (仏光観), the story of his view, and the circumstances of his experiences. Originally it was a chapter of *Kegon-bukouzanmaikan-Hihouzuou* (『華嚴仏光三昧観秘宝蔵』), but it was later separated so that no one else could see it. Therefore it is estimated that this text was established in the third year of Jōkyū (承久三年: 1221), as in *Hihouzuou*.

If I mention some significant points of the contents of this book here, first of all, when he practiced the meditation for more than 100 days in the second year of Jōkyū (承久二年), he experienced a mystical favorable appearance like a dream. The true identity of this appearance was the light like a lump of fire, and out of nowhere he heard a voice saying, "This is the Light Mantra (光明真言)." It is very important that this mystical experience convinced him that a mantra corresponding to the true Samādhi was the Light Mantra. Second of all, after that he found the text about the contemplation of Buddha's light in *Shin-kegon-kyouron* 『新華嚴経論』 described by Li Tongxuan (李通玄) in China. Myōe changed his previous meditation of Engaku's Samādhi (円覚三昧) and began to practice the contemplation of Buddha's light. As a result, during the meditation, he gained a favorable appearance of the first stage by the contemplation of Buddha's light. However, it was later discovered that the experience he had gained was in fact in line with the contents of the Zen Sutra (禅経) that he copied thirty years ago. Finally he notes that the great saint (Buddha) allowed him to pass on the contemplation of Buddha's light to others by a dream announcement.

Myōe's times was truly the so-called last Dharma era. (末法時代), and he worked on the practice of the meditation based on the scriptures for himself. Although he could never meet a master who proved his experience of the enlightenment, he found the proof of his mystical experience in the Zen Sutra and could be convinced of the right way to the Buddhahood. In this way, he created a new method of the meditation, or the contemplation of Buddha's light (仏光観), which should be said a fusion of the Mantra in Shingon Esoteric Buddhism (真言密教) and the meditation in Huayan (華嚴) Buddhism. I hope that translating this text into English here would serve as a resource for understanding what the religious experiences he had gained through the contemplation of Buddha's light.

(Keywords)

Kegon-bukouzanmaikan-myoukanden (『華嚴仏光三昧観冥感伝』); the contemplation of Buddha's light (仏光観); the Kōmyō Shingon (光明真言); Myōe (明恵)