

“Bhadracaryā-praṇidhāna-gāthāḥ (普賢菩薩行願讚)” translated in Chinese by Amoghavajra

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Bhadracaryā-praṇidhāna-gāthāḥ consists of the 62 verses described about the ten vows that Samantabhadra (普賢菩薩) had preached for the completion of Sudhanakumāra's (善財童子) enlightenment. It is also called Samantabhadra's practice of the ten vows (or Fugengyo: 普賢行).

The translator of this Chinese edition, Amoghavajra (不空) was a disciple of Vajrabodhi (金剛智) who was the fifth successor of Mahāvairocana's Dharma. After Vajrabodhi died in 741, Amoghavajra voyaged to South India to gather the scriptures of Esoteric Buddhism such as Vajraśekhara-sūtra (金剛頂經). As he had been under the patronage of the Tang dynasty since 756, he could engage in translating many sutras at Daxingshan temple (大興善寺) in Chang'an (長安). This text of Bhadracaryā-praṇidhāna-gāthāḥ was to be brought from South India by him. Perhaps it is presumed to have been translated after 756.

We can find some characteristics of Fugengyo in the contents of this text. First of all, so-called Ichijin-hokkai-kan (一塵法界觀) is picked up as one of them. It is a sort of contemplation on feeling the universe as follows. There are innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas within things like one fine particle. Moreover they are ubiquitous in the universe. This is also a cosmic view being unique to Hua-yen (華嚴) Buddhism.

Second of all, in this text it is persuaded Mahāyāna Buddhist training as a practice to enter into the truth of the universe (or Nyuhokkai: 入法界), that we conceive, worship and praise the myriad of Buddhas being ubiquitous in the universe. Here it is very important that the subject of worship and confession is not mere one but all Buddhas in the three worlds of the past, the present and the future. By possessing repentance for all the three worlds Buddhas, it is possible to eliminate and purify the disabilities of our own Karman (業). As already mentioned, this Ichijin-hokkai-kan contemplating that the three worlds Buddhas are ubiquitous in the universe is indispensable. It can be said the root of the Buddhist training for repentance (or Sangogyo: 懺悔行). This point is also an important feature of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Third of all, after the death of the person who performed this Fugengyo, his wish to be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha (無量光仏) is stated in the text. The purpose for his rebirth is to obtain a proof (Vyākaraṇa: 授記), from Amida Buddha directly, that he can always become a Buddha in the future. This thought of Vyākaraṇa is peculiar to Mahāyāna Buddhism being found in Mahāyāna Sūtras such as Saddharma-puṇḍarīka sūtra (法華經) and Sukhāvati-vyūha-sūtra (無量壽經). This text belonging to the last part of Avataṃsaka Sūtra (華嚴經) is strongly influenced by Pure Land ideas such as the wish of the rebirth to Pure Land (願生淨土) and the acquisition of Vyākaraṇa (授記獲得). Therefore I think that the relation with Pure Land Buddhism is very significant in considering the formation of this text.

Keywords: Fugengyo (普賢行) Ichijin-hokkai-kan (一塵法界觀) Nyuhokkai (入法界)