

## 博士後期課程

平成 30 年度

武蔵野大学大学院 仏教学研究科 仏教学専攻 博士後期課程 入学試験問題 (1月21日)

### [ 英語 ]

次の英文を読み、下線部 (1) (2) を日本語に翻訳しなさい。

(1) All major world religions have to account for human fulfillment and the afterlife. One of the first questions teachers of religion encounter is: "What happens to me when I die?" The loss of loved ones and close friends and the prospect of one's own demise, as we advance in age and the end of life draws near, prompts this question. In our contemporary age end of life issues also raise the question of human fulfillment in this world and beyond.

The concept of the Pure Land is often compared with the concept of Heaven or Paradise in other religions, such as Christianity and Islam. Because of oppression and despotism in society, the Pure Land, like a heaven, often appears as an alternative to suffering in this world. It is depicted as "Otherworldly." In popular Pure Land teaching emphasis was placed on the aspect of "going to" the Pure Land so many millions of miles to the West, reinforcing its otherworldly character.

While there are afterlife dimensions, the Pure Land, in some interpretations, is also an aspect of this world. When the Buddhist concept is fully presented, there are considerable differences from the concept of Heaven in other faiths.

We may note, first of all, that in the early tradition, now known as Theravāda, there is no conception of the Pure Land. When the Buddha completed his course in this world, he achieved *Nirvāna* without residue in contrast to *Nirvāna* with residue, which he attained with his enlightenment. Gautama Buddha had chosen, according to Theravāda Buddhist understanding, to remain in this world to share the Dharma, even though he had done everything required to enter *Nirvāna*. *Nirvāna* was an ineffable, inconceivable state where karma was exhausted and the conditions that create new life forms were dissolved. When the Buddha left this world, his state was indescribable. Consequently, early representations of the Buddha show him as an empty seat. He was the trackless one.

However, as Buddhist thought continued to evolve, it eventually gave rise to the Mahāyāna teaching. In Mahāyāna thought each Buddha purified a land where he taught the beings who were born there. Basing itself on an idealized understanding of Gautama Buddha, people during his time gained enlightenment through the influence of his presence. Therefore, people could attain Buddhahood in a Buddha land that was absolutely pure, because a Buddha was present in that land. As Mahāyāna mythology unfolded, innumerable Buddha lands are depicted in every sector of the universe termed the ten directions (four cardinal points, four intermediate directions, the nadir, and zenith). They are the great universe of three thousand great chiliocosms. Initially the Western Pure Land of Amida was one of these lands. In the course of history the cult of Amida grew, becoming the supreme goal of fulfillment within the Pure Land movement, which reached its peak with Shinran and other successors of Hōnen in Japan.

For some people the Pure Land of Amida became an object of meditation and visualization promoted by the dissemination of the *Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present Sūtra* (*Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra* [abbreviated name]) and the *Contemplation Sūtra*. Gradually the recitation of the name of Amida also became a means for entering the *samādhi*-trace state aimed at visualizing Amida and the Pure Land. Through such "mystical" or spiritual experiences, a practitioner gained union with Amida Buddha and an assurance of birth in that land.

(2) The recitation of the name gradually became an independent practice and source of merit toward birth into the Pure Land for ordinary people who could not engage in the rigorous monastic discipline. This development reached its culmination in Hōnen, who made it the sole practice whereby monks and lay people could attain birth in the Pure Land during the Last Age. The Pure Land, from one perspective, is a symbolic expression for *Nirvāna*. The bliss, joy, and freedom of that land embody the conditions that attend the realization of *Nirvāna* itself. However, it is given mythic, symbolic expression as the object of meditation. Visualization of the Pure Land brings union with Amida.

On the popular level, the ordinary person viewed the Pure Land as liberation from the bondage to life and its sufferings in this world. In this aspect, it would appear as a heaven. Shinran, in some of his letters, affirms the belief of his followers that they will meet in the Pure Land and there will be reunion there with those we lose by separation in this world. This is the natural yearning of the heart in the face of great loss. It is also a response to the human desire for continuity and survival. However, it is to be noted that the Pure Land is a world of non-ego and not a sphere for the satisfaction of personal desire. Therefore, T'an-luan, an early Chinese teacher declared: "A person who, without awakening the mind aspiring for supreme enlightenment, simply hears that bliss is enjoyed in that land without interruption and desires to be born there for the sake of the bliss; such a person will not be able to attain birth. Thus it is said, they do not seek the sustained bliss for their own sake, but think only of freeing all sentient beings from pain" (*Kyōgyōshinshō*, III. I).

(Alfred Bloom, *The Essential Shinran*. World wisdom, 2007)