

THE “信不及” (*SHIN FUGYŪ*) AS EXPOUNDED IN THE *LANKAVATARA*

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This is a phrase from *The Record of Zen Master Lin-chi I-hsüan* (Rinzai Gigen, d. 866, T'ang dynasty). In my understanding, it is used there in the sense of “lacking in confidence in one's Original Self,” or “not abiding in one's True Self.” Let me quote one passage from the *Record*.¹⁾

[Master Lin-chi] further said, “We hold this dharma-assembly today only for the single, most important matter. Are there any further questions? Be quick in presenting your question, [for] as soon as you even slightly open your mouth, you will already have missed the point. Why is it like this? Do you not see Śākyamuni said,

‘The dharma is free from words and letters; it has nothing to do with causes or conditions.’?”

Because you are not confident of your Original Self—that is why [we] have today's complications. I am afraid the Royal Attendant and other officials will be involved in this and that it will obscure their Awakened nature. [So,] it is better simply to leave.”

He gave a shout and said, “A person lacking in the power of confidence in his Original Self will never see the day of his realization. Take care of yourselves.”

The interesting thing here is that the same notion was also already expressed with more details in the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*, a Sanskrit mahāyāna text, the first of whose three Chinese versions was translated in A. D. 443.

In the *Laṅkāvatāra 2*, we see the following two passages, which include the

1) The *RINZAIROKU* by Prof. Seizan Yanagida, Daizō-shuppan, Tokyo 1972, I-5, p. 47. For further references, see X-3, p. 71; X-4, p. 73; XI-1, p. 92; XII-5, p. 102; XIII-24, p. 147.

expression “lacking in *śraddhā*” (“lacking in confidence in one’s Original Self,” in my translation below) as their central theme: (Vaidya 19, 8-11; Nanjō 40-41)

(1) Those ascetics, whether brahman or non-brahman (*śramaṇāḥ*), who are lacking in confidence in [their Original Self²], assert that the substance manifests itself through causality, abiding in time, and that out of the external conditions all the components of the world (*skandha-dhātva-āyatanānam*) arise, abide, and then decay.

They are advocates of annihilation, negating continuity (*saṃtāna*), activity, rise, downfall, existence, the extinction of suffering, the way to extinction, deed, fruition, and truth. Why? Because they neither [properly] perceive what is present before the eyes nor have the [right] view of the beginning.

For example, a jar without a body does not serve as a jar, and a seed which was burnt never sprouts. In the same manner, those existences as components of the world which have been annihilated, which are being annihilated, or which will be annihilated, have no uninterrupted function. [In all this they first see being and then its negation, non-being. Being at a loss where to find true continuity or ultimate basis, they become advocates of annihilation.]³ This is because they fail to see that their own mind is seen and discriminated as what is external (*svacitta-dṛśya-vikalpa-darśana-aheturvāt*).

(2) Suppose, further, that those who are lacking in confidence in their Original Self⁴ [assert a proposition that] the three necessary conditions⁵ [that is, the action, the acted-upon, and the actor], when they meet and possess action (*tri-saṃgati-pratyaya-kriyā-yogena*), will enable all kinds of consciousness to arise. It would then follow that any impossibility will become possible: that hair can grow on the tortoise [shell]; that sesame oil can come from grains of sand.

These proclaimers of being and non-being will have to give up their own proposition, violate fixed rules [of the world, such as: tortoises have no hair on them

2) *ye kecin-mahāmate śramaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā abhūtvā śraddhā: dge-sbyoñ nam bram-ze gañ la la ma byuñ ba ḥam yod pa* (77a, 6, Peking ed. 29).

3) Cf. G. Tokiwa: “The Ālayavijñāna of the *Śraddhotpāda*,” J. I. B. S. 45, B., p. 19.

4) *yadi punar-mahāmate abhūtvā śraddhā: gal-te ma byuñ ba ḥam yod pa las* (77b, 2).

5) According to Ye-śes dpal bzañ-po’s *Hphags-pa lanḥkar gśegs-paḥi ḥgrel-pa*, 86b, 8, No. 5519, Peking, either the past, future, and present moments or the actor, acted-upon, and action.

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and sesame oil comes only from sesame seeds], and make the action, the acted-upon, and the actor useless. [They cannot overcome contingency since they depend on what is external.]

Notwithstanding, they teach that out of the three conditions, as they meet and act, [every kind of consciousness arises,] each having its own characteristic and causality. They will proclaim the past, future, and present existence of being and non-being from conjecture, with the use of reasoning and tradition, prompted by the fault of their wrong view.

By these two cases of traditional and non-traditional ascetics, who certainly include Buddhists, the sutra never means those of any special persons; they simply indicate ordinary man's modes of living and thinking, those of us who are lacking in confidence in our Original Self. The first case shows the direction of conjecture from being to non-being, and the second from non-being to being. The second presupposes the first. The sutra says that in the first case, by facing, or thinking that we are facing, the annihilation of what has existed, we fail to see continuity. But where and how can we ever see true continuity? The sutra condemns us, criticizing us as lacking in confidence in our Original Self, as Master Lin-chi does. Without the Self-confidence, we cannot but end in nihilism, seeking shelter in vain either externally or internally.

Without being restored to our original Self-confidence, but merely under the influence of wrong views, we conjecture, with the help of reason and tradition, that consciousness arises where and when necessary conditions meet and work. This is our “rationalism,” which is based on nihilism. Naturally, for this also the sutra criticizes us as those who are lacking in Self-confidence.

The late Dr. D. T. Suzuki translates the term “lacking in *śraddhā*” as “[those] who assume something out of nothing.”⁶⁾ Although it is not very literal, his translation bolsters the point we wish to make here. Insofar as we are not abiding in our True Self, but still do not wish to sink in annihilation, we

6) *THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1932, Reprinted 1968, p. 36. This is interesting, but Dr. Suzuki does not seem to have taken special notice of the term *śraddhā* here. He follows the Chinese and Tibetan versions.

will be forced to summon up the courage to form something out of the bottomless chasm of nothing. This is nothing but modern existentialism. But in this one cannot overcome the contingency and basic anxiety of our existence. The sutra attributes this to the lack of *śraddhā*.

Except in the above cases, Dr. Suzuki translates *śraddhā* as “faith.” I render it into “confidence in one’s Original Self.” I feel that “faith” may be used for *adhimukti* in the sense of “faithful understanding” but not for *śraddhā*. In English “confidence” may sound rather optimistic but by my translation of *śraddhā* I do not mean confidence in anything else or in one’s ordinary ego-self but in one’s True Self. What is truly confident of one’s True Self is none other than the Self. Hence my other rendering, “Self-confidence.” *Śraddhā* does not have the structure in which the unsaved rely on the savior, which I understand “faith” has. I think *śraddhā* in this sense is more fitting and ultimate than *adhimukti*, in the context of Buddhism *per se*.

The sutra takes up the problem of *śraddhā* as what concerns the problem of ultimate basis and true continuity, that is, the sutra’s key concept, *ālayavi-jñāna-dharmakāya or tathāgatagarbha*. This same concept is given brief but clear exposition in a short treatise extant only in Chinese, 大乘起信論 (J. *Dai jōkishin-ron*). Dr. Suzuki translates the title as “Aśvaghōṣa’s Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna.” I would translate it as “A Mahāyāna Treatise on the Rise of Self-confidence.” Usually it is rendered in Sanskrit as *Mahāyāna-śraddhōtpāda śāstra*. This sounds very proper to me, for the Sanskrit title suggests the close relationship between *śraddhā* and *utpāda*, the latter being a concept which expresses affirmation and activity. We can see evidences for this notion in the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*.

After the above two cases of the lack of *śraddhā*, the sutra goes on to mention the case of those who are free from it. Although the sutra makes no direct reference to their *śraddhā*, we see that it is indubitably implied. It states: (V 19, 21–V 20, 3; N 42–43)

There are, however, other ascetics, traditional or nontraditional, who have realized freedom from identity (*niḥsvabhāva*) …… , freedom from the rise (*anutpāda*) [, abiding, and fall of identity] …… , seeing that it is their own mind that is seen

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and discriminated as that which is external, and that [consequently there prevails] the beginningless manifoldness of phenomena (*prapañca*). They are freed from retrogression in which their own mind is re-discriminated as external conditions.....

They will practice.....being free from various manifestations (*niravabhāsa-gocarāṃ*), that is, from rising, abiding, and falling, and attain the rise of the absolutely active way of their True Self (*svacittōtpāda*)⁷⁾. Before long these Self-awakened, other-awakening, great beings (*bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ*) will acquire equality between life-and-death (*samsāra*) and their extinction (*nirvāṇa*)

In the above quotation the term *svacitta-utpāda* attracts our attention. The sutra seems to assert that only on the basis of freedom from the rising, abiding, and falling (*anutpāda*) of identity (*niḥsvabhāva*), that is, freedom from the view that things have their own “selfness,” can one attain the rise of the absolutely active way of one’s True Self. Since the True Self is free from identity, this is Formless Self. Also the rise of its absolute activity is no mere rising of identity. It is free from any identity. This interpretation seems to find its support in another expression in the sutra : (V 27, 12-14; N 62)

The unawakened ordinary beings perceive identity [to arise]. It is really non-existent, but they attach themselves to it and presume it to be real. Hence [the proclamation that] everything is free from the rising [of identity]. The rise (*utpāda*) which is characteristic of the identities of all things, however, is the ultimate mode of being, which is original to the awakened one’s knowing⁸⁾. This is far from the [rising of] identity which is not free from the duality of unawakened ordinary people.

Another manner of expressing the above insight is to say that the rise of the self-identities of all things is, as it is, the rise of the absolute activity of one’s Formless Self. This is resurrection⁹⁾, as it were, of the world, the for-

7) I have not been able to ascertain the meaning of this term, but I feel it is synonymous with *śraddhōtpāda*. Dr. Suzuki (Ibid. p. 38) renders it as “the awakening of Mind itself.”

8) *pratyātma-ārya-jñāna-gati-gocarō hi mahāmate sarva-bhāva-svabhāva-utpādaḥ*. Dr. Suzuki follows the Chinese versions and gives “unborn” in his translation instead of “born” where the Sanskrit is *utpāda*.

9) Monier Williams’ *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* gives ‘resurrection’ for *utpatti*.

mation of history by the Formless Self. This creative activity (*utpāda*) of the awakened Self seems to be what the sutra means by *śraddhā*.

Reference to the term *śraddhā* in the sutra is very rare. Here are two instances from chapters other than the second:

Here are Yakṣas, O the Honored One,
 Freed from the fault of covetousness,
 Reflecting upon their original way of being;
 [They are] attainers of their ends with the past Buddhas,
 Enjoying *śraddhā* and guiding each other in the Mahāyāna truth. (L 1, Verse 14, V 2, 29-31; N 5)

……those who have already served past Jinas, planted the roots of virtue, been full of *śraddhā*, and free from discrimination, ……those Self-awakened, other-awakening, great beings who are unattached to body, living, and property, free from greedy desire of taste, free from covetousness, being compassionate and desirous of approaching all existences as their own existences, who lovingly regard all beings as their only son. (L 8, V 102, 9-12; N 250)

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