

## Practices Related to the *Lotus Sūtra* in Yanshou's *Zixing lu*

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This article aims to understand the practices related to the *Lotus Sūtra* in Yongming Yanshou's 永明延壽 (904–975) life and in one of his works, the *Zhijue chanshi zixing lu* 智覺禪師自行錄 (Records of Yanshou's self-cultivation). In this text, 108 daily events are listed as Yanshou's self-cultivation. Of those related to the *Lotus Sūtra*, I have identified three categories: 1. the construction of Lotus halls (*fahua tang* 法華堂); 2. the veneration, printing and distribution of the *Lotus Sūtra*; 3. cultivation of the Lotus Samādhi. As this article shows, although Yanshou is well-known as a synthetic practitioner, embracing the doctrines of different schools and engaging in various practices, he always tried hard to integrate them under the ultimate goal of attaining enlightenment.

Since the *Lotus Sūtra* was translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 286 AD in Chang'an, the teachings of the *sūtra* have made it one of the most important *sūtras* in China. The Tiantai tradition is characterized by the practice of meditation and its exegetical method in accordance with the teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The *Lotus Sūtra* also inspired many special Buddhist practices in the Tang dynasty (618–907).<sup>1</sup> To continue working on this topic after the Tang, this article aims to understand the practices related to the *Lotus Sūtra* in the life of Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975) from the Five Dynasties (907–960) and one of his works, the *Zhijue chanshi zixing lu* 智覺禪師自行錄 (“Records of Yanshou's Self-cultivations”; referred to hereafter as the *Zixing lu*).

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<sup>1</sup>James A. Benn, “The *Lotus Sūtra* and Self-Immolation,” in *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra*, ed. Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone, pp. 107–31 and Daniel B. Stevenson, “Buddhist Practice and the *Lotus Sūtra* in China,” in *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra*, pp. 132–50.

In the history of Chinese Buddhism, Yanshou is known as a synthetic practitioner. To understand this characteristic, we have to look at the historical context of Yanshou's life from two aspects. First, Yanshou was born sixty years after the Huichang 會昌 Buddhist persecution (845) and experienced the last large-scale imperial Buddhist persecution, which was initiated by Emperor Shi 世 of the Later Zhou 周 in 955. During the Huichang Buddhist persecution, Chinese Buddhism suffered from the destruction of Buddhist temples, the defrocking of thousands of monks and nuns, and the destruction of Buddhist texts. Yanshou's compilation of the one-hundred-fascicle *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 ("Records of the Tenet-mirror", T 48, no. 2016) can be seen as a response to the need for a comprehensive doctrinal superstructure covering the range of Indian and Chinese Buddhist thought after the Huichang Buddhist persecution.<sup>2</sup>

The Song historian monk Huihong 惠洪 (1071–1128) describes Yanshou's broad-minded approach in his *Zongjingtang ji* 宗鏡堂記 ("Records of Zongjing Hall"). He recounts a visit to Jingci Si 淨慈寺, a Buddhist temple where Yanshou resided for fifteen years (961–976).<sup>3</sup> Huihong was told by an old monk that there were two pavilions at the temple and they were the places where the *Zongjing lu* was compiled. The old monk explained that at that time Yanshou often lamented that scholarly monks specializing in Huayan 華嚴, Faxiang 法相, and Tiantai 天台 tended to argue with each other. Like fire and ice, they could not coexist, and this situation was not constructive. Yanshou thus instructed his disciples each broadly to study the doctrines of a different school and to debate with each other. Finally, Yanshou reconciled their arguments with the theory of mind-only as a means of harmonizing their differences.<sup>4</sup> This is the first factor contributing to Yanshou's synthetic character.

Second, if we look at the Buddhist environment of the Wuyue 吳越 Kingdom, where Yanshou was born, we can also understand another aspect of Yanshou's synthetic approach. Although all of the Wuyue kings believed in Buddhism, the nature of each king's relationship with Buddhism varied. In the early period of the kingdom, King Qian Liu's 錢鏐 (r. 893–932) construction of Buddhist monasteries and support for Buddhist monks helped him acquire renown as a virtuous king. He believed that Buddhist rituals and the practice of *dhāraṇī* chanting for

<sup>2</sup> See Jan Yün-hua, *Yanshou foxue sixiang de xingcheng* 延壽佛學思想的形成, pp. 242–43.

<sup>3</sup> Jingci si was called Yongming Si 永明寺 during Yanshou's abbacy.

<sup>4</sup> Jingci sizhi, p. 224 and Jan Yunhua, *Yanshou foxue sixiang de xingcheng*, pp. 220–21.

protection helped him consolidate his authority over the state. Buddhism also provided a means to assuage his guilt over slaughter in battles.<sup>5</sup>

During the middle period of peace and prosperity, Buddhism offered a path for rulers such as Qian Yuanguan 錢元瓘 (r. 932–942) to express their wishes for fortune, happiness and even liberation in the present and future. As the Wuyue kingdom came to a close, Qian Hongchu 錢弘俶 (r. 947–978) expressed his wishes to protect the kingdom by erecting *dhāraṇī-sūtra* stone pillars and helped bring the Tiantai master Zhiyi's 智顗 (538–597) works back from Korea. Thus Buddhism served both political and religious functions for each of the Wuyue kings.<sup>6</sup>

However, at the same time, the Wuyue kings also supported Daoist priests and often used Daoism as a means of supernatural power. They were concerned more with the efficacy of the ritual than with religious affiliation. When ritual reaped good results for the kings and the state, they rewarded the practitioners. They bestowed purple robes on Buddhist monks, honorific titles on Daoist priests, and new temples on local deities. To summarize their attitude towards various religions, it was pragmatic. This is the religious atmosphere Yanshou lived in. This, I believe, is the second factor that contributed to Yanshou's synthetic character. This synthetic approach is also seen in Yanshou's practices related to the *Lotus Sūtra*.

I have chosen the *Zixing lu* as the main source in order to understand the role of the *Lotus Sūtra* from a more practical aspect. This article first tries to see the role of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Yanshou's life, then gives a brief introduction to the *Zixing lu*, and finally analyzes the practices related to the *Lotus Sūtra* in the *Zixing lu* to show the soteriological meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Yanshou's practice.

### The Role of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Yanshou's Life

There are 27 records containing Yanshou's biography, starting from the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 ("Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Song"), compiled in 988, to the *Jingtu shengxian lu* 淨土聖賢錄 ("Record of the Pure Land of Masters and

<sup>5</sup>Yi-hsun Huang, *Integrating Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 19–30.

<sup>6</sup>Yi-hsun Huang, *Integrating Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 30–43.

Laymen”), compiled around 1790 in the Qing dynasty.<sup>7</sup> These sources are varied in compilation dates and sectarian affiliation. Some of them portray Yanshou as a Chan master, while others depict him as a Pure Land master. However, a description that commonly appears in different sectarian sources is his interest in the *Lotus Sūtra*, as shown in the following two passages from the *Jingde chuan-deng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (a Chan source) and the *Longshu zengguang jingtuwen* 龍舒增廣淨土文 (a Pure Land source).

持法華經，七行俱下，才六旬悉能誦之，感群羊跪聽。  
 (In his youth, ...) he chanted the *Lotus Sūtra*, [reading] seven lines  
 at a glance,  
 and was able to recite it entirely from memory in only sixty days.  
 (As he did so,) he inspired a flock of sheep to kneel down and listen.<sup>8</sup>

少誦法華經。When he was young, he recited the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>9</sup>

Based on his biographies, we may conclude that the *Lotus Sūtra* played an important role in Yanshou's early training, and his skill in reciting the *Lotus Sūtra* was said to evoke a miraculous response. Yanshou's special connection with the *Lotus Sūtra* may also be seen in his works.

In the complete list of Yanshou's works recorded in the *Zixing lu*, two works are directly related to the *Lotus Sūtra*: *Fahua lizanwen* 法華禮讚文 (“Praise for the *Lotus Sūtra*”) and *Fahua lingrui fu* 法華靈瑞賦 (“Verse on Miraculous Power of the *Lotus Sūtra*”).<sup>10</sup> Although neither work is extant, it is not difficult to see Yanshou's veneration of the *Lotus Sūtra* by just looking at the titles of these two works. Furthermore, the *Lotus Sūtra* is frequently cited in two of Yanshou's fa-

<sup>7</sup> Albert Welter, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*, pp. 42–43. The research on the biography of Yanshou is exhaustive because Shih Heng-ching has a translation of Yanshou's life in English in her *The Syncretism of 'Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism* (1992). Albert Welter also provides an excellent and extraordinary analysis of the development of Yanshou's biographies and the intention of various compilers under different circumstances in his *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds* (1993). Wang Cuiling 王翠玲 has a translation of Yanshou's life in Japanese in her *Eimei enju to goetsu bukkyo* 永明延壽と吳越佛教 (2003). As a result, it is unnecessary for the author to repeat Yanshou's life story here.

<sup>8</sup> *Jingde chuandeng lu*, T51, p. 421c10–11; Welter, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*, p. 194.

<sup>9</sup> *Longshu zengguang jingtuwen*, T47, p. 268b20–21; Welter, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*, p. 198.

<sup>10</sup> *Zixing lu*, X63, p. 165a12 and p. 165b3.

mous works, the *Zongjing lu* and *Wanshan tonggui ji* 萬善同歸集 (“Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds”, T 48, no. 2017).<sup>11</sup>

### Introduction to the *Zixing lu* 自行錄

The *Zixing lu* is a work written by Yanshou’s disciple, Chuanfa Xingming 傳法行明 (932–1001).<sup>12</sup> Xingming mentioned his own name in the preface of the work and explained that he compiled the work based on Yanshou’s discourses and Xingming’s inquiries of Yanshou.<sup>13</sup> There are 108 daily events described as Yanshou’s self-cultivation in the *Zixing lu*. Xingming first lists the events according to the six periods of a day (*zhouye liushi* 晝夜六時). He starts with Yanshou’s routines, going from morning, noon, evening, early night, midnight up to late night, and finally activities done in his spare time. After item 55, the remaining events are listed randomly. The reason for this might be that after listing the basic routines, Xingming observed something else, or Yanshou told him to add things he had missed. The purpose of compiling this work, according to Xingming, is both self-cultivation and the benefit of others (*zili lita* 自利利他).<sup>14</sup>

The 108 daily activities include some basic Buddhist practices such as taking refuge in the Buddha, Buddhas, and the Three Jewels, worshipping the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, making confession and offerings, burning incense, circumambulating the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, meditating, preaching, compiling, and publishing Buddhist texts, and reading Mahayana *sūtras*. The Mahayana *sūtras* read are the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Huayan Sūtra*, *Heart Sūtra*, *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, and *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. Based on the 108 daily events, we can tell that Yanshou was a very religious monk who was full of compassion and tried to benefit all sentient beings by every means.

### Practices Related to the Lotus Sūtra in the *Zixing lu*

Among the Mahayana *sūtras* Yanshou chanted in the *Zixing lu*, the *Lotus Sūtra* appears frequently in his daily activities. I categorize the events related to the

<sup>11</sup>The *Lotus Sūtra* is mentioned at least 124 times in the *Zongjing lu* and 28 times in the *Wanshan tonggui ji*.

<sup>12</sup>Wang Cuiling discovered in the preface of the *Zixing lu* that Yanshou’s disciple, Chuanfa Xingming, described himself as the author of the text; see her *Sugyoroku no kiso deki kenkyu*, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup>*Zixing lu*, X63, p. 159a16–17.

<sup>14</sup>*Zixing lu*, X63, p. 159a15.

*Lotus Sūtra* into three activities: 1. the construction of Lotus halls (*fahua tang* 法華堂); 2. veneration, printing and distribution of the *Lotus Sūtra*; 3. cultivation of the Lotus Samādhi.

## I. Construction of Lotus Halls

The very first event recorded in the *Zixing lu* is that Yanshou established Lotus halls in many places throughout his life, but Xingming did not provide detailed information about what Yanshou did in the Lotus hall.<sup>15</sup> If we trace back the origin of the Lotus hall and its function, the earliest text in which the term “Lotus hall” appears is the *Bianzheng lun* 辨正論. The *Bianzheng lun* is an apologetic text written by the monk Falin 法琳 (572–640), defending Buddhism from Daoist and Confucian criticisms in the early Tang.

To show the strong support the court gave to Buddhism, Falin argues that many emperors and officials from the Northern and Southern Dynasty to the Tang were pious Buddhists. Among them, Falin names an official called Zhengqiong 鄭瓊 in the Wei Dynasty (386–534), who established a Buddhist temple called Jingyu si 淨域寺, constructed a Lotus hall, often held vegetarian feasts and painted the images of Buddha.<sup>16</sup> However, since the information is too brief, we are not able to know the specific function of the Lotus hall.

Fortunately, in Daoxuan’s 道宣 (596–667) *Xugaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (“Further Biographies of Eminent Monks”), the biography of the monk Faxiang 法嚮 (?–630) provides a more detailed description. Faxiang is said to observe precepts purely, chant the *Lotus Sūtra*, and understand it thoroughly. He established a Lotus hall next to Qixia Si 栖霞寺 and practiced Zhizhe’s 智者 (538–597) Lotus Repentance (*Fahua chan* 法華懺) in that hall. Faxiang devoted twenty-one days to the Lotus Repentance and is said to have received a great auspicious response (*ruiying* 瑞應).<sup>17</sup> Some years later, in a different text, the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳 (“Biographies of Lotus Sūtra Devotees”) compiled by Huixiang 惠詳 (d.u.),<sup>18</sup> a different monk named Facheng 法誠 (563–640) was said to have devoted himself to chanting the *Lotus Sūtra* and established a Lotus hall.

Based on Faxiang’s biography, the function of Lotus hall is for devotees to chant the *Lotus Sūtra* and practice the Lotus Repentance in it. These two activities

<sup>15</sup> *Zixing lu*, X63, p. 159a20.

<sup>16</sup> *Bianzhen lun*, T52, p. 515c6–8.

<sup>17</sup> *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T50, p. 605c13–21.

<sup>18</sup> *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, T51, p. 37a29–b13.

were also recorded in the *Zixing lu*. We therefore could see a continuation of constructing Lotus halls in a few monks' lives from the Wei dynasty, through the Tang, to Yanshou's time in the Five Dynasties.

## II. Veneration, Printing and Distribution of the *Lotus Sūtra*

In China, the efforts of Lotus devotees centering on the *Lotus Sūtra* are commonly summarized as the five practices of upholding, reading, reciting, explaining, and copying the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>19</sup> In the 55th event of the *Zixing lu*, Yanshou is said to worship (*li* 禮) “the true, pure and profound Dharma (*zhenjing miaofa* 真淨妙法)” of the *Lotus Sūtra* every morning.<sup>20</sup> It is also said in the 84th event that, for the benefit of all sentient beings in the world Yanshou especially prepared incense and flowers as offerings to the *Lotus Sūtra* at the six periods of day and night.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in the 99th event, Yanshou often printed and distributed (*yinshi* 印施) various *sūtras* and *mantras* including the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>22</sup>

As for the purpose of worshipping the *Lotus Sūtra*, three vows can be summarized from the *Zixing lu*: Yanshou wished that all sentient beings might realize the ultimate meaning of One Vehicle (*wu jiujiing yisheng* 悟究竟一乘), achieve Lotus Samādhi (*zheng fahua sanmei* 證法華三昧), and attain rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land (*sheng mituo jingfang* 生彌陀淨方).<sup>23</sup> The latter two vows will be discussed in the next section.

The concept of One Vehicle is the essential tenet in the *Lotus Sūtra*: the Buddha tells the assembly that his earlier teachings were provisional.

十方佛土中，唯有一乘法，無二亦無三，除佛方便說。  
但以假名字，引導於眾生，說佛智慧故，諸佛出於世。  
唯此一事實，餘二則非真。終不以小乘，濟度於眾生。<sup>24</sup>

In the Buddha lands of the ten directions  
There is only the Dharma of the One Vehicle,  
there are not two, there are not three,  
except when the Buddha preaches so as an expedient means,

<sup>19</sup>Daniel B. Stevenson, “Buddhist Practice and the *Lotus Sūtra* in China” in *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra*, pp. 132–50.

<sup>20</sup>*Zixing lu*, X63, p. 160b13.

<sup>21</sup>*Zixing lu*, X63, p. 163c18.

<sup>22</sup>*Zixing lu*, X63, p. 164b18–19.

<sup>23</sup>*Zixing lu*, X63, p. 160b13–14, 163c18–19, and 164b18–19.

<sup>24</sup>*Lotus Sūtra*, T9, p. 8a17–21.

merely employing provisional names and terms  
 in order to conduct and guide sentient beings  
 and preach to them the Buddha wisdom.  
 The Buddhas appear in the world  
 solely for this one reason, which is true;  
 the other two are not the truth.  
 Never do they use a lesser vehicle  
 to save sentient beings and ferry them across.<sup>25</sup>

Since people were not ready for the Buddha's highest teaching, they had to be brought to enlightenment by expedient means. The *Lotus Sūtra* represents the final, highest teaching, and supersedes all other teachings.

Furthermore, the *Lotus Sūtra* also emphasizes that the three vehicles are actually the One Vehicle, the Buddha vehicle, through which all sentient beings become buddhas. Carl Bielefeldt concludes that it is Śākyamuni's promise that "all Buddhists, whether or not they now recognize it, are destined for supreme, perfect enlightenment. In the darkness of the latter age, when doubts are many and hopes seem dim, this promise will be a beacon to all believers, guiding them surely to the other shore."<sup>26</sup> Thus, when Yanshou wishes that all sentient beings may realize the ultimate meaning of One Vehicle, he is dedicating the merit from his veneration of the *Lotus Sūtra* to all sentient beings and wishes them to achieve Buddhahood.<sup>27</sup> This special meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra* must give people hope in the dark time of Buddhist persecutions.

### III. Cultivation of the Lotus Samādhi

Yanshou's other two vows related to his worship of the *Lotus Sūtra*—that all sentient beings might achieve Lotus Samādhi and attain rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land—appear in the 55th and 78th events in the *Zixing lu*. The 55th event reads:

晨朝，禮妙法蓮華經真淨妙法，普願一切法界眾生，同證法華三昧，咸生彌陀淨方。<sup>28</sup>

In the morning, [Yanshou] worships the truly pure and profound

<sup>25</sup> My translation is based on Burton Watson's *The Lotus Sūtra*, p. 35, with slight modification.

<sup>26</sup> Carl Bielefeldt, "The One Vehicle and the Three Jewels." *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 10 (1990), pp. 5–16.

<sup>27</sup> *Zixing lu*, X63, p. 163c3.

<sup>28</sup> *Zixing lu*, X63, p. 160b13–14.



Dharma of the *Lotus Sūtra* and hopes that sentient beings can achieve the Lotus Samādhi and attain rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land all together.

Since the *Lotus Sūtra* is not usually considered to be a major Pure Land scripture by Pure Land practitioners or Buddhist scholars, Yanshou's incorporation of the Lotus Samādhi and Pure Land practice is worth noting.

However, Yanshou is not the only exception in the Wuyue Kingdom. Daniel Getz also remarks that devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* was often closely associated with Pure Land practice in China, especially self-immolation for achieving rebirth in the Pure Land.<sup>29</sup> Devotees of the *Lotus Sūtra* should be quite familiar with Pure Land belief because Buddha Amitābha and rebirth in his Pure Land are mentioned in the *Lotus Sūtra*. In the “*Huachengyu pin* 化城喻品” (“Chapter of the Parable of the Phantom City”), the Buddha introduced his disciples to an ancient Buddha named Great Universal Wisdom Excellent Thus Come One (*datong zhisheng yulai* 大通智勝如來). Before this Buddha left the householder's life, he had 16 sons. After hearing that their father had achieved perfect enlightenment, these 16 princes went to visit him and also left the householder's life. Finally, all of them achieved perfect enlightenment and became Buddhas. One of them is Buddha Amitābha in the west.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, the *Yaowang pusa benshi ping* 藥王菩薩本事品 (“Chapter of the Former Affairs of the Bodhisattva Medicine King”) emphasizes that in the five hundred years after the Buddha passed away, if a woman hears the *sūtra* and practices as the *sūtra* teaches, when her life comes to an end she will immediately go to the Pure Land.<sup>31</sup> These two passages show the canonical connection between the *Lotus Sūtra* and Pure Land belief.

This could explain why the practice of chanting the *Lotus Sūtra* for gaining rebirth in the Pure Land often appears in the monks' biographies of Wuyue. For example, the monk Shaoyan 紹嚴 (898–971) vowed to chant the *Lotus Sūtra* ten thousand times and wished for rebirth in the Pure Land. He even planned to offer himself to the Three Sages of the West by immolating his body, but the Wuyue king Qian Hongchu prohibited him from doing that.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See his *Siming Zhili* and *Tiantai Pure Land* in the Song Dynasty, p. 178.

<sup>30</sup> *Lotus Sūtra*, T9, pp. 22a18–25c1 and *The Lotus Sutra*, tr. Burton Watson, pp. 117–34.

<sup>31</sup> *Lotus Sūtra*, T9, p. 54b29–c2 and *The Lotus Sutra*, tr. Burton Watson, p. 287.

<sup>32</sup> *Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋, v. 89, p. 1293. Some other monks took more rapid ways in order to gain access to the Pure Land. Monk Zhitong 志通 decided to devote himself to Pure Land practices

With Yanshou's explanation in the *Zixing lu*, we will be able to understand the incorporation of the Lotus Samādhi and Pure Land practice with a more systematic understanding. First, let us trace back the origin of the Lotus Samādhi, which is one of the important *samādhis* in the Tiantai school. According to the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, Zhiyi journeyed to Mount Dasu 大蘇山 in 560 and met his master Huisi 慧思 (515–577). Huisi instructed him in devotions centered around the figure of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (Puxian 普賢) and in the Ease and Bliss (Anle 安樂) practices.<sup>33</sup>

Zhiyi later compiled the *Fahua sanmei chanyi* 法華三昧懺儀 (“Manual of Lotus Samādhi Repentance”; T46, no. 1941). The Lotus Samādhi Repentance is a twenty-one-day practice based mainly upon the twenty-eighth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Puxian pusa quanfa pin* 普賢菩薩勸發品 (“The Chapter on the Exhortations of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra”), and on a short scripture known as the *Guan puxian pusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經 (“The Sūtra on the Practice of Visualizing the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra”).<sup>34</sup> There are ten items with regard to what should be done physically in the Lotus Samādhi Repentance:<sup>35</sup>

1. Adorn and purify the meditation chamber (*yanjing daochoang* 嚴淨道場)
2. Purify the body (*jingshen* 淨身)
3. Make an offering of your physical, verbal, and mental deeds (*sanye gongyang* 三業供養)
4. Petition the Buddhas (*fengqing sanbao* 奉請三寶)
5. Pay homage to the Buddhas (*zantan sanbao* 讚歎三寶)
6. Worship the Buddhas (*lifo* 禮佛)
7. Repentance (*chanhui* 懺悔)

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after reading the *Xifang jingtu lingrui zhuan* 西方淨土靈瑞傳 (*Records of Auspicious Response of the West Pure Land*). He jumped from a high rock two times, but he was only slightly injured. Finally, he died in Mt. Fahua with auspicious signs; see *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T50, p. 858c12–859a19. For further readings on this topic, see James A. Benn's “The *Lotus Sūtra* and Self-immolation” in *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra*, pp. 107–31.

<sup>33</sup> *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T50, p. 564b17–18.

<sup>34</sup> *Fahua sanmeichan yi*, T46, p. 949b12; Daniel Stevenson, “The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism,” p. 67.

<sup>35</sup> *Fahua sanmeichan yi*, T46, p. 950a17–20; Paul Swanson, *The great Cessation and Contemplation*, pp. 168–172.

8. Circumambulate [the Buddha image] (*xingdao xuanrao* 行道旋遶)
9. Recite the *Lotus Sūtra* (*song fahua jing* 誦法華經)
10. Bring to mind the true aspects of reality (*siwei yi shijingjie* 思惟一實境界)

According to Zhiyi's *Fahua sanmei chanyi*, these ten procedures (*shifa* 事法) are basic steps for beginners (*xinxue pusa* 新學菩薩) with varying faculties. Because they are not able to enter deep *samādhi* yet, these ten procedures are applied to tame their minds and eradicate their obstacles and bad karma. By doing so, they will be able to purify their body and mind, and then rejoice in the Dharma.<sup>36</sup>

However, Zhiyi also stresses that experienced practitioners who wish to be constantly immersed in profound absorption could directly practice the *Anle xing* 安樂行 ("Course of Ease and Bliss").<sup>37</sup> The Course of Ease and Bliss refers to the practice explained in the *Fahua jing anle xing yi* 法華經安樂行義 ("Meaning of the Course of Ease and Bliss in the Lotus Sūtra") compiled by Huisi, based on the fourteenth chapter of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>38</sup> Experienced practitioners can directly contemplate the true character of all dharmas as empty, do not make mistakes internally or externally, and have unceasing great compassion toward all sentient beings.<sup>39</sup>

Regarding the difference between the Lotus *Samādhi* repentance and the Course of Ease and Bliss, as Daniel Stevenson says, the distinction between them seems to become less absolute in Zhiyi's works.<sup>40</sup> Yanshou, by citing Huisi, explains in his *Zongjing lu* that if the practitioner performs the Course of Ease and Bliss with repentance of the six senses, this is called the Course of Ease and Bliss with form (*Youxiang anle xing* 有相安樂行). If the practitioner utilizes the means of directly contemplating the emptiness of all dharmas, this is called the Course of Ease and Bliss without form (*wuxiang anle xing* 無相安樂行). However, with form or without form, Yanshou emphasizes that the purpose of the cultivations is to understand that the subject who is doing repentance and the object of repentance are both empty (*nenghui suochan jukong* 能悔所懺俱空).<sup>41</sup> The core of the cultivations is to help the practitioner understand the meaning of emptiness.

<sup>36</sup> *Fahua sanmeichan yi*, T46, p. 954b29–955b27.

<sup>37</sup> *Fahua sanmeichan yi*, T46, p. 955b27–28.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Stevenson, *The Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra's Course of Ease and Bliss*, p. 77.

<sup>39</sup> *Fahua sanmeichan yi*, T46, p. 955b28–c1.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of *Samādhi* in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," pp. 70–71.

<sup>41</sup> *Zongjing lu*, T48, p. 966a8–18.

Then, how do we connect the cultivation of the Lotus Samādhi with rebirth in the Pure Land? The explanation can be found in the 78th event in the *Zixing lu*:

晝夜六時，同與一切法界眾生發願，與一切法界眾生親證法華三昧，頓悟圓滿一乘。臨命終時，神識不亂，濁業消滅，正念現前，隨願往生西方淨土，皈命彌陀佛。成就大忍心，遍入法界中，盡於未來際，護持正法藏，開演一乘門，圓滿佛菩提。修習普賢行，廣大如法界，究竟若虛空，誓與諸含靈，一時成佛道。<sup>42</sup>

In each of the six periods of day and night, [Yanshou] makes a vow along with all sentient beings in the world that they may realize the Lotus Samādhi and attain the sudden and perfect enlightenment of the One Vehicle. [He hopes that] at the time of death they are not agitated, their evil karma is extinguished, and having right mindfulness of the present moment, their vow to attain rebirth in the western Pure Land is realized and they entrust their lives to Buddha Amitābha. [In the Pure Land], they achieve great insight of forbearance, penetrate the Dharma realm, and for all time in the future, protect the Dharma storehouse, expound the teaching of One Vehicle, and accomplish enlightenment. Their cultivation of the practices of Samantabhadra would expand to become as immense as the Dharma realm and as penetrating as space. They would vow to attain Buddhahood together with all sentient beings.

Yanshou believes that through practicing the Lotus Samādhi, people can have right mindfulness (*zhengnian* 正念), and have all of their evil *karma* eliminated before the moment of death, so that they may achieve rebirth in the Pure Land as they wish.

The reason why people can have right mindfulness through practicing the Lotus Samādhi is that this practice has the effect of eliminating evil karma. In the *Manual of Lotus Samādhi Repentance*, the seventh step of the Repentance consists of five parts: 1. Repenting of the offenses committed through the six senses (*chanhui liugen* 懺悔六根); 2. Petitioning the Buddhas to expound the Dharma (*quanqin* 勸請); 3. Rejoicing in the presence of virtue (*suixi* 隨喜); 4. Transferring one's merits (*huixiang* 迴向); 5. Arousing the vow to save all beings (*fayuan*

<sup>42</sup> *Zixing lu*, X63, p. 163b21–c3.

發願). The section on repenting of the offenses committed through the six senses deals in detail with repenting of offenses committed through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and consciousness.

Then, when the practitioner proceeds to the section entitled “Sincerely arouse the bodhisattva vows,” the practitioner needs to chant the following vow:

至心發願，願命終時神不亂，正念直往生安養，面奉彌陀值眾聖，修行十地勝常樂。<sup>43</sup>

I earnestly vow that at the time of death I will not be agitated, but will maintain right mindfulness and thereupon be reborn in the peaceful comfort [of the Pure Land], where I can honor Amitābha directly and meet the holy ones. There I will master the ten bodhisattva stages and gain eternal bliss.<sup>44</sup>

As we can see in the above passage, since having right mindfulness and elimination of evil karma are two important conditions for the vow of attaining rebirth in the Pure Land, the Lotus Samādhi is chosen by Yanshou to assist Pure Land practitioners to accomplish their vow.

Yanshou’s incorporation of the Lotus Samādhi and Pure Land practice indicates the popularity of Pure Land practice in the Wuyue Kingdom. Pure Land practice is frequently mentioned in Yanshou’s various works. Yanshou quotes extensively from *sūtras*, commentaries, and treatises relating to Pure Land Buddhism to explain the concepts and practices of Pure Land Buddhism. However, his attitude toward Pure Land Buddhism changes in his writings throughout the different stages of his life.

When Yanshou wrote the *Zongjing lu*, he was devoted to Chan. The theory of mind-only was his central tenet and main interest. At this time he saw Pure Land practice as an independent Buddhist teaching, but its practice does not occupy much space in this one-hundred-fascicle work and is, in general, considered to be a practice for people of inferior faculties. Yanshou’s view of Pure Land Buddhism in the *Zongjing lu* also lacks the sense of devotional practice that we usually expect of Pure Land practice.

In the *Wanshan tonggui ji*, the theory of mind is still the main theme, but Yanshou becomes more open to other practices and encourages people to practice whatever will enable them to see their own minds, including Pure Land practice.

<sup>43</sup> *Fahua sanmeichan yi*, T46, p. 953b22–24.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Swanson, *The Great Cessation and Contemplation*, p. 171, with modifications.

We can also tell from his tone in the *Wanshan tonggui ji* that Yanshou had become more accepting of devotional Pure Land practice compared with his attitude when he compiled the *Zongjing lu*. In the *Wanshan tonggui ji*, Yanshou also adopts the concept of “the final stage of the Dharma” (*mofa* 末法) from Daochuo’s *Anle ji*. In the time of final Dharma and the evil age of five corruptions (*wuzhuo eshi* 五濁惡世), only Pure Land Practice can help people attain the path.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, in the *Wanshan tonggui ji* and *Zixing lu*, we find that Yanshou’s attitude is quite open to many kinds of practice. Yanshou says in the *Wanshan tonggui ji*:

或因念佛而證三昧，或從坐禪而發慧門，或專誦經而見法身，  
或但行道而入聖境。但以得道為意，終不取定一門，惟憑專志  
之誠。<sup>46</sup>

Some people attain *samādhi* through the *nianfo* practice;  
Some people gain access to the gate of wisdom through seated  
meditation;  
Some people see the Dharma-body through attentively reciting  
Buddhist *sūtras*;  
Some people enter a holy state through the practice of  
circumambulation.  
All of them, however, share in their aim to achieve the Way.  
There is no one practice that suits everyone;  
Single-minded sincerity is the only factor.

In this passage, Yanshou emphasizes that every practice *in itself* can help the practitioner to achieve the *Dao*. The only important factor is single-minded sincerity during practice.

This more conventional and devotional attitude of Yanshou in the *Wanshan tonggui ji* and *Zixing lu* is a common phenomenon among Buddhist practitioners. When they advance in age and think more of death, they frequently become more interested in Pure Land practice, for Pure Land Buddhism offers more promises and comforts for the afterlife than other forms of Buddhist practice.

However, it is worth noting that, as we can see in the 78th event in the *Zixing lu*, rebirth in the Pure Land is not the final goal. Instead, Yanshou emphasizes that after attaining enlightenment in the Pure Land, the practitioner should continue to cultivate the practice of Samantabhadra; further, its ultimate goal is in

<sup>45</sup> *Daji yuezang jing* 大集月藏經, T13, 267a3–6, *Anle ji*, T47, 13c8–12 and *Wanshan tonggui ji*, T48, 968a29–b3.

<sup>46</sup> *Wanshan tonggui ji*, T48, 964a6–8.

accordance with emptiness. The practitioner also needs to make a vow to attain Buddhahood together with all sentient beings.

## Conclusion

Born sixty years after the Huichang Buddhist persecution and in a pragmatic country, Yanshou is well-known for his synthetic character and was definitely a sincere devotee of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Among the 108 daily events described as Yanshou's self-cultivations in the *Zixing lu*, we find that the construction of Lotus halls, veneration, printing and distribution of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and cultivation of the Lotus Samādhi are all practices related to the *Lotus Sūtra*. What we need to note is that though well-known as a synthetic practitioner, while embracing the doctrines of different schools and engaging in various practices, Yanshou always endeavored to integrate them under the ultimate goal of attaining enlightenment.

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