

Scriptural role in American Zen

In this paper I am going to examine the historical phenomenon of American Zen in the perspectives of the role played by scripture in the transmission of Zen to the West and in the subsequent development of American Zen. Specifically, my paper will be divided into three parts. In the first part, I will discuss the transmission and translation of some important Zen related scriptures in the America. In the second part, I will examine the scriptural roles in the transmission of Zen to the West through the efforts of the immigrant Buddhists, i.e. the Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese, and the converted American Buddhists. In the third part, I will make the argument that the immigrant Buddhists tend to emphasize on the scriptures more than that of converted American Buddhists.

First, let me discuss the transmission and translation of some important Zen related scriptures in America such as the *Heart Sūtra*, *Diamond Sūtra*, *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, *Platform Sūtra*, *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, and *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

The Heart Sūtra, the most well-known and popular among Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtra, especially the *Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā)* class and within Zen tradition, in both shortness and depth of meanings. It literally translates as the *Heart of the Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom*.¹ The *Heart Sūtra* is much shorter than the other *Perfection of Wisdom*

¹ Skt. प्रज्ञापारमिताहृदय *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya*; Ch. 般若波羅蜜多心經. Theoretically, since it belongs to a larger work of *Prajñā* literature, it is considered as the essence of wisdom and compassion, which are interconnected. Hence, compassion is the appropriate and natural response for the Zen practitioners while they focus on wisdom aspect of the practice. In addition, it follows the same logic as the *Diamond Sūtra*: no form; no consciousness; no attainment; no pain; no suffering; no body; no emotion; no birth; and no death. The realization of *Prajñā* wisdom on a deep level is to recognize a perspective as no perspective, and emptiness is the true nature of everything. The true nature of form is emptiness because emptiness is like the mind's mirror that reflects forms, creating them in the interaction (Alexander Simpkins, Annellen Simpkins, *Zen in Ten: Easy Lessons for Spiritual Growth* (Boston, MA: Tuttle Publishing, 2003), 34).

sūtras, but it contains explicitly and implicitly the entire meaning of the longer *sūtras*.² Edward Conze estimated that this *sūtra*, diligently studied in Zen tradition together with the *Diamond Sūtra*, was produced approximately around the fourth century A.D.³ Different scholars consider it to be two centuries older than that.⁴ However, contemporary scholars cannot verify any date earlier than the seventh century A.D.⁵ This short and famous *sūtra* is recited in most of the Eastern Asian countries such as China, Japan, and even Tibet. Due to its content and its length, it is the most famous Buddhist *sūtra*, including: seven extant Indian commentaries; scores of commentaries in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tibetan, Vietnamese, and the Western languages; the most common recitation of the *sūtra* in most of Mahāyāna Buddhist countries; and the numerous translations of the *sūtra* into European languages.⁶ It is a basic text in all schools of Zen Buddhism, and is chanted daily in the monasteries and Zen Centers of China, Korea, Japan, and the United States.⁷

In the 1920s and 1930s, there were translations and articles about the *Heart Sūtra* written by Dwight Goddard and Shaku Hannyā. Edward Conze wrote about *The Ontology of the Prajñāpāramitā* in 1952, and in 1958 he translated the first full translation of the *Heart Sūtra*. In the 1960s, there were at least six essays and articles about this Sūtra. In 1975 Edward Conze also translated the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom*. During the 1970s, at least twenty-three other commentaries, book reviews, and others on the *Heart Sūtra* were lectured on and written by

²Kelsang Gyatso, *Heart of Wisdom: An Explanation of the Heart Sūtra*, 4th ed. (Cumbria, England: Tharpa Publications, 2001), 2.

³ Edward Conze, *Buddhist wisdom: containing the Diamond Sūtra and the Heart Sūtra* (London, England: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958), xxviii, xxix.

⁴ Donald S. Lopez Jr., *The Heart Sūtra Explained: Indian and Tibetan Commentaries* (New York: NY, State University of New York Press, 1988), 5.

⁵ Jan Nattier, 'The Heart Sūtra: A Chinese Apocryphal Text?' *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, no. 15-2 (1992): 153-223.

⁶ Lopez, 187.

⁷ Mu Soeng, Mu Soeng Sunim, *Heart Sūtra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality*, 3rd ed. (Primary Point Press, 1996), 70.

Venerable Hsuan Hua, Alex Wayman, and others. During the 1980s, at least twenty-eight commentaries, essays, and reviews about the *Heart Sūtra* were written by Thich Nhat Hanh, Donald Lopez, and others.⁸ During the 1990s, there was an increase in number, i.e. forty-six, of new books, commentaries, book reviews, essays, and others about the *Heart Sūtra* from Norman Waddell, Jan Nattier, and others. During the 2000s, about thirty-five new books, commentaries, and others on the subject were written by many different scholars, masters, and others such as Dalai Lama, Master Sheng-yen, and others. Insofar, in 2010 we have a couple commentaries on the subject. In summary, the peak of writings on the *Heart Sūtra* is during the 1990s. In the 2000s, the number of writings about this *sūtra* is reduced statistically.

The Diamond Sūtra or *The Diamond of the Perfection of Transcendental Wisdom Sūtra* has been highly recognized in most of Mahāyāna Buddhist countries and translated into their respective languages.⁹ This *sūtra* reflects the dharma which, like a diamond, cuts all other stones and is itself uncut, cuts through all other *dharmas* and is itself traceless. It emphasizes the practice of non-abiding and non-attachment. As a genre of *Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra*, it must have been written about the beginning of the Christian era and was first translated into Chinese about 400 A.D.¹⁰ According to the British Library, it is “the earliest complete survival of a dated printed book.”¹¹ This *sūtra* was one of the earliest scripture that has been translated from the Chinese into English in the nineteenth century: by the Rev. S. Beal in 1864 and by Max Muller

⁸ Venerable Master Hsuan Hua (宣化; 1918–1995) taught five Chinese Buddhist schools: Chan 禪宗; Tiantai 天台宗; Vinaya 律宗; Esoteric 密宗; and Pure Land 淨土宗 (Hsuan Hua, *Dharma talks in Europe: given by the Venerable Master Hua in 1990* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1990), 181).

⁹ Skt. वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र, *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*; Ch. 剛般若波羅蜜多經, or shortened to 金剛經; Japanese, 金剛般若波羅蜜多經, shortened to 金剛; Korean 금강반야바라밀경, shortened to 금강경; Vietnamese *Kim cương bát-nhã-ba-la-mật-đa kinh*, shortened to *Kim cương kinh*; Tib. 'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa rdo rje gcod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo.

¹⁰ Dwight Goddard, *A Buddhist Bible: History of Early Zen Buddhism, Self-Realization of Noble Wisdom, The Diamond Sutra, The Prajna Paramita Sutra, The Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York, NY: Harper and Row: first Publication 1932), 157.

¹¹ <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/diamondSūtra.html>. (accessed October 27, 2010).

in 1894.¹² In the twentieth century, it was translated again by at least ten scholars such as William Gemmell in 1913, Dwight Goddard in 1932, and Edward Conze in 1958.¹³ In the twenty-first century, insofar there are only two new translations of this Sūtra done by Red Pine in 2002, and *Chengguan (fa shi)* in 2005.¹⁴ Statistically, we can see that there rarely has been any commentary, essay, or book review about this Sūtra until the 1970s, which has around five works such as Venerable Hsuan Hua's lecture and D. J. Kalupahana's reviewed work.¹⁵ In the 1980s, we have around three more works on this sūtra such as that of Evelyn Tucker and Gerald Doherty.¹⁶ In the 1990s we see the number of work on this sūtra increasing up to fourteen such as the works of Thich Nhat Hanh and Colin Hester.¹⁷ In the 2000s we witness the surge of works on this subject up to twenty such as that of Mu Seng and Red Pine.¹⁸ Insofar we have around five

¹² Rev. S. Beal, trans., "Diamond Sūtra," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 8 (1864-65): 24. Max Muller, trans., *Diamond Sūtra and The Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra*, Buddhist Mahayana Texts, vol. XLIX (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1894).

¹³ William Gemmell, trans., *The Diamond Sūtra (Chin-kang-ching) or Prajñā -paramita* (1913). Dwight Goddard, trans., *A Buddhist Bible* (1932). Edward Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books: Diamond Sūtra and Heart Sūtra* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958).

¹⁴ Red Pine, *Diamond Sūtra* (New York, NY: Counterpoint, 2002). Chengguan (fa shi), trans., *Diamond Sūtra* (Vairochana Publishing, 2005).

¹⁵ Hsuan Hua, *The Diamond Sūtra: a general explanation of the Vajra Prajñā Sūtra* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1974). D. J. Kalupahana, Reviewed work(s): "The Diamond Sūtra and the Sūtra of Hui Neng," by A. F. Price; Wong Mou-Lam; *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Apr., 1971): 224-225.

¹⁶ Mary Evelyn Tucker, "The teachings of Mahayana Buddhism: central themes in the Heart Sūtra, the Diamond Sūtra, and the Vimalakīrti Sūtra." *Religion and Intellectual Life* 4, no. 4 (1987): 92-100. Gerald Doherty, "Form is emptiness: reading the Diamond Sūtra." *Eastern Buddhist* 16, no. 2 (1983): 114-123.

¹⁷ Thich Nhat Hanh: *The Diamond that Cuts Through Illusion: Commentaries on the Prajñāparamita Diamond Sūtra* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1992). Sybil Steinberg and Jonathan Bing, Reviews the novel 'Diamond Sūtra,' by Colin Hester. *Forecasts, Publishers Weekly*, vol. 244, issue 9 (1997): 66, 1/4.

¹⁸ Mu Soeng: *The Diamond Sūtra: Transforming the Way We Perceive the World* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2000). Red Pine, *The Diamond Sūtra: The Perfection of Wisdom; Text and Commentaries Translated from Sanskrit and Chinese* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2001).

works in 2010s such as the works of by Frances Wood and Mark Barnard,¹⁹ but it is very promising that more works may come out soon.

In short, by observing the works of translations, commentary, essay, and others on this sūtra statistically we can see that the translation period beginning in middle of the nineteenth century and still extending to the middle of 2000s. In the meantime, the commentary, essay, and others increase greatly during the 2000s and up to the present time. This indicates more interest in the sūtra scholastically in modern times. As discussed above, the *Diamond Sūtra* was a particular scripture for Shimano because he used its title for his international Zen center, Kongo Ji.

The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra (Ch. 楞伽經) is an important sūtra in Chinese Chan and its Japanese version, Zen. The sūtra recounts a teaching primarily between the Buddha and a bodhisattva named *Mahāmati* (Great Wisdom). Its setting location is in *Laṅkā*, modern day Sri Lanka, the island fortress capital of *Rāvaṇa*, the kingdom of *rākṣasas*. This text has enormous influence in the development of East Asian Buddhist thought. It unifies the teaching of the *Tathagata-garbha* (embryonic Buddha) with that of the *ālaya-vijñāna* (Storehouse consciousness) into a single entity that serves as the foundation of both human consciousness and the external world. It presented the doctrine of Mind-only (*citta-mātra*), which describes the world and all its contents as being the manifestations of the mind. As a result, the discrimination of the perceived subject and perceived object is false and the source of ignorance. Due to this important doctrine, it is also a pivotal work in the history of Chan Buddhism in China.

Bodhidharma (3rd-4th centuries), the first Chan Patriarch in China, was revered as a master of this

¹⁹ Frances Wood and Mark Barnard, *The Diamond Sūtra: The Story of the World's Earliest Dated Printed Book* (England: British Library, 2010).

sūtra. Record of the Masters and Disciples of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* is an early history text of the Chan School. It also served as the main text for the school *Faxiang* School 法相宗 in China and the Hossō school 法相宗 in Japan. In Chinese canon, there are three translations of *Guṇabhadra* 求那跋陀羅 in 443, *Bodhiruci* 菩提流支 in 513, and *Śikṣānanda* 實叉難陀. between 700 and 704.²⁰ Insofar, this sūtra is translated into English from the Sanskrit by D.T. Suzuki in 1932. In the same year, Dwight Goddard also translated and edited this sūtra based on D.T. Suzuki's work. The numbers of commentary, essay, article, and others on this sūtra are: five, from the early twenty century to the 1930s; two in the 1950s; three in 1970s; six in the 1980s; twenty in the 1990s; and eight in the 2000s to the present. It shows that there is more interest in this subject during the 1990s than other decades.

*The Platform Sūtra or Southern School Sudden Doctrine Supreme Mahāyāna great Perfection of Wisdom: The Platform Sūtra preached by the Sixth Patriarch Huineng at the Ta Fan temple in Shao-Chou.*²¹ The oldest and shortest version among six extant versions of this Sūtra was discovered in 1900 in the *Dunhuang* 敦煌 caves in Northwest China.²² However, the continued popularity of this work in China is shown by various versions that have appeared over the centuries. The traditional version, current today, which was printed some five hundred years after the present text, is greatly revised and expanded and is almost twice the size of the original.²³

²⁰ Damien Keown, *A dictionary of Buddhism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 154.

²¹ (Ch. 六祖壇經, 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺說法壇經).

²² Kenneth Kramer, *World scriptures: an introduction to comparative religions* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), 153.

²³ William Theodore De Bary, *Sources of East Asian Tradition: Premodern Asia* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 273.

Recently Yanagida has stated that, whatever the origins of the *Platform Sūtra*, there are no traces of Huineng's doctrine and lineage that can be separated from the writings of Shenhui 神會 (668–760).²⁴ It is the only Buddhist writing in China that is ever called a sūtra, which shows its importance and the respect Huineng commands over people's minds.²⁵ It is an important early Zen text purporting to be the teachings of Huineng 惠能 (638-713), the Sixth Chinese Patriarch of Zen. Although there is no word of the Buddha in the text, it qualified to be called as sūtra because in Zen perspective, an enlightened Zen master such as Huineng is no different from a Buddha. Hence, his teaching may be regarded as a sūtra. This sūtra is divided into two sections, an autobiographical account of the Sixth Patriarch's early life and enlightenment and sermons presented by him to his disciples.²⁶ It also has generally four types of works: autobiography of Huineng; sermon on the identity of *prajñā* and *Samādhi*, on the sudden awakening of no-thought, and seeing directly into one's own nature; stories often critical of Pure Land doctrines; and verses.²⁷

The first, and apparently the only published translation into English of this sūtra was completed by Wong Mou-Lam in 1930, and published in the form of a paper-covered book by the Yu Ching Press of Shanghai.²⁸ Six other translations of the sūtra are produced by Wing-Tsit

²⁴ Wendi Leigh Adamek, *The mystique of transmission: on an early Chan history and its contexts* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 180.

²⁵ Harry C.S. Lam, *The Zen in modern cosmology* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Co. Pte. Ltd, 2008), 29.

²⁶ Helen Josephine Baroni, *The illustrated encyclopedia of Zen Buddhism* (New York, NY: Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2002), 256.

²⁷ Kenneth Kramer, *World scriptures: an introduction to comparative religions* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), 153.

²⁸ Wong Mou-Lam, trans., *The Sūtra of Hui Neng: Sūtra spoken by the Sixth Patriarch on the high seat of The Treasure of the Law* (China: Buddhist Library of China, Buddhist Youth Association Ltd., 1952), 5.

Chan in 1963, Philip B. Yampolsky in 1967, and others.²⁹ The numbers of commentary, essay, article, and others about this sūtra are as followings: two in the 1960s; two in 1970s; two in 1980s; three in 1990s; and seven in 2000s to the present. Statistically, we see there are more writings about this sūtra in the twenty-first century.

The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, one of the most sublime Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtra, an early Mahāyāna anti-institutionalism at its highest, and an extremely varied *Ratnakūṭa* collection, has a profound influence on Zen.³⁰ The Sanskrit original is lost, but a Tibetan, a Sogdian, and three Chinese versions still exist.³¹ The center figure of this sūtra is not a Buddha or Buddhas, but a wealthy townsman of Śākyamuni's time, *Vimalakīrti*, who understands, practices and epitomizes the ideal lay Buddhist. This sūtra appears to be a product of the early years of the Mahāyāna moment with unknown time, place, and person who composed it. The earliest Chinese translation was done in 188 A.D that has been lost. The sixth translation of *Kumārajīva* in 406 is the most popular and influential Chinese translation, from which the English translation.³² Although the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* is neither a popular devotional text nor a base for subsequent schools as in the cases of the *The Lotus Sūtra (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra)*, the *Pure Land Sūtras (Sukhāvāṭīvyūha-sūtra, Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra)*, and *Flower Garland Sūtra (Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra)*, it is considered as one of the most important and favorite sūtras in East Asian Mahāyāna tradition with its non-dual principles and its elaboration on the *Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā)* literature through the unsurpassed eloquence and thunderous silence of the lay man *Vimalakīrti*. This great bodhisattva, who has relinquished the “pure land”

²⁹ Wing-Tsit Chan, *Platform Scripture* (New York, NY: 1963, St John's University Press, 1963), 1. Philip Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch by Hui-neng* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1967).

³⁰ *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* or *The Sūtra of the Teaching of the Layman Vimalakīrti* (Ch. 維摩詰經).

³¹ Charles Prebish, *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective* (USA: The Pennsylvania State University, 1975), 108.

³² Burton Watson, trans., *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), 3.

of the Buddha *Akṣobhya* to take the rebirth in this world in order to teach sentient beings, manifests skillfully as an ideal religious literati and cultivator. In spite of having family and children, he remains celibate. In spite of being rich, he has no desire. In spite of being a layman and manifesting as a sick person, he defeats everyone, including the monastics and lay people, who come to engage in religious conversation with him, except the Buddhas. His main episode starts with the raining of heavenly flowers, instantaneous gender reversals, and the appearance of *Akṣobhya* Buddha teaching through the means of fragrance in the *Wondrous Joy (Abhirati)* country. As in the *Flower Adornment Sūtra*'s description of a dust mote containing three worldly systems, his tiny chamber accommodates limitless numbers of celestial Bodhisattvas, heavenly beings, and other visible beings, who share their seats without overlapping each other on magnificent thrones with unimaginable sizes. Similarly, this tiny chamber contains a separate world-system with all of its mountains, continents, rivers, and oceans. To accord with sentient beings' potential and to bring benefit for them, he encourages them to embark on either the paths of self-enlightenment of Arahantship or the Ultimate enlightenment of Buddhahood mostly through the monastic trainings.

Regarding the translation work, there are several English translations: Charles Luk in 1972; Etienne Lamotte and Sara Boin-Webb in 1976; Burton Watson in 1997; Robert A. F. Thurman in 2000; and John R. McRae in 2004.³³ A Japanese scholar, Hokei Idzumi, translated and wrote six articles on this sūtra with the title “*Vimalakīrti*'s discourse on emancipation” in the

³³ Etienne Lamotte and Sara Boin-Webb, trans. from Chinese & Tibetan to French and English, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti: Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (Pali Text Society, 1976). Charles Luk, trans. from Kumārajīva's Chinese, *The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* (Berkeley and London: Shambhala, 1972). John R. McRae, trans. from Kumārajīva's Chinese, *The Sūtra of Queen Śrīmālā of the Lion's Roar and the Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2004). Robert Thurman, trans. from Tibetan, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahayana Scripture*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). Burton Watson, trans. from Kumārajīva's Chinese, *The Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

East Buddhist journal in 1923, 1924, 1926, and 1927.³⁴ The numbers of commentary, essay, and article on this sūtra as followings: three in 1960s; six in 1970s; four in 1980s; three in 1990s; and one in 2000s to the present. By looking at the statistical numbers, we see that only a few scholars paid attentions on this sūtra.

The Śūraṅgama Sūtra is one of the main texts used in Chinese Chan Buddhism.³⁵

According to tradition, this sūtra was translated in 705 by Śramaṇa Pāramiti from Central India and reviewed by Śramaṇa Meghashikara from Oḍḍiyāna. It was given certification by Śramaṇa Huai Di, and then polished and edited by Empress Wu Zetian's recently banished minister Fang Yong.³⁶ The *Shurangama Sūtra* has been widely studied and commented on, especially in Chan Buddhism. There are at least 127 commentaries on the *Shurangama Sūtra* in Chinese.³⁷ Many Chan masters such as Changshui Zixuan (長水子璿, n.d) from the Song Dynasty 宋朝 and Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清; 1546-1623) from the Ming Dynasty 明朝 used it as meditative reference. It was also the only sūtra that Ven. Master Hsu Yun (虛雲; 1840–1959) wrote a commentary on. This sūtra was first translated into English by Charles Luk in 1966.³⁸ The second translation was done by the Buddhist Text Translation Society with commentaries of Venerable Hsuan Hua in 1977.³⁹ Except two papers on this sūtra done by Donald Bishop in

³⁴ Hokei Idumi, trans. “*The Vimalakirti Sūtra*.” *Eastern Buddhist*, vol 4, no. 3-4 (1927-1928): 348-366.

³⁵ *Shurangama Sūtra*, or *Surangama Sūtra*, or *The Summit of the Great Buddha, The Final Meaning of Verification though Cultivation of the Secret Cause of the Tathagata, and [Foremost] Shurangama of All Bodhisattvas' Ten Thousand Practices Sūtra* (Ch. 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經, 大佛頂首楞嚴經, 楞嚴經, Taisho no. 975).

³⁶ Hsuan Hua, *The Shurangama Sūtra with commentary*, vol 1 (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003), vi, 68, 69.

³⁷ <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/authenticity.htm>. (accessed October 29, 2010).

³⁸ Charles Luk, trans., *The Surangama Sūtra* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1966).

³⁹ Hsuan Hua, *The Shurangama Sūtra with commentary*, vol 1 (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1977).

1970, Chen Yo Bin in 1998, and Lambert M. Surhone, Miriam T. Timpledon, and Susan F. Marseken in 2010, most of its commentaries, essays, and articles were done by Venerable Hsuan Hua and his followers⁴⁰ from the early 1970s to 1990s.⁴¹ Venerable Hsuan Hua, an important figure in Mahāyāna Buddhism, was one of the major proponents of the *Shurangama Sūtra*, which he commented and used in his instructions on protecting and supporting the Proper Dharma. There are not many scholars writing on this Sūtra except the detail commentaries of Venerable Hsuan Hua because his view of its authenticity and importance for the survival of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment has its origins within the Chan school 禪宗 and Huayan school 華嚴宗 circles of learning, probably composed in China around the early eighth century.⁴² It was extremely popular and influential within the meditation schools such as Chinese Chan and Korean Seon. This text has twelve chapters and a short introduction, which introduces the teaching's location and its main participants. The state of deep meditative concentration (*Samādhi*) is the location; the main figures are the Buddha and one hundred thousand great bodhisattvas; among them are twelve eminent bodhisattvas who act as spokesmen and take turn to ask the Buddha about doctrine, practice, and enlightenment. Actually, this sūtra is organized in a tight format and focused discussions of the most important theoretical issues concerning the

⁴⁰ David Rounds, "Rescuing Ānanda: an overview of the Śūrangama Sūtra." *Religion East & West*, no 7 (2007). Ronald Epstein, "The Shurangama: A reappraisal of its authenticity" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society, March 16-18, 1976, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 16-18, 1976). <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/authenticity.htm>. (accessed October 29, 2010).

⁴¹ Donald Bishop, "The Surangama Sūtra." *Journal of Religious Thought*, no 1-27 (1970). Chen Yo Bin, *Research on Authenticity of Surangama-Sūtra*, (M.A. Thesis, Institute of Oriental Humanities, Huafan University, Shih Tin, Taipei Hsien, Taiwan: 1998). Lambert M. Surhone, Miriam T. Timpledon, and Susan F. Marseken, *Shurangama Sūtra: Mahayana, Sūtra, Zen, Chinese Buddhism, Chinese Language, Taisho, Bodhisattva* (2010).

⁴² Skt. *Mahāvaiṣṭya pūrṇabuddhasūtra prassanārtha sūtra*; Ch. 圓覺經, 大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經).

nature of enlightenment. Combining with the antecedents Buddhist texts such as Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith and *Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*, it has Chinese indigenous elements of *Tiantai* school's 天台宗 and *Huayan* school's 華嚴宗 doctrines as well as the Confucianism's and Taoism's thought systems. Also, it provides highly practical and concise orientation consisting of direct instruction on matters of meditation and related religious issues such as monastic ritual, confession, and others. Reading the major part of meditation related explanations provides the meditative exercise. Besides it explains the "as-illusion *Samādhi*" ground, it guides practitioners going through the exercise focused at the attainment.⁴³ This *sūtra* is first formally listed in the *Kaiyuan lu* 開元錄 Catalog of Buddhist text in 726 with an obscure translator, *Buddhatrāta* 弗陀多羅多. It has at least four commentaries and became popular after the writing of Chinese Buddhist scholar, Zongmi 宗密 (780-841).⁴⁴ Insofar, we have three English translations of Charles Luk in 1962, Lok To in 1995, and Charles Muller in 1999.⁴⁵ Except one article of Whalen Lai in 1978, there are three book reviews about the translation of Charles Muller in 2000s.⁴⁶

Having discussed the transmission and translation of some major Zen related scriptures, let us move to the second part to talk about the scriptural roles in American Zen through the

⁴³ Charles Muller, translated with an introduction. *The Sūtra of perfect enlightenment: Korean Buddhism's guide to meditation, with commentary by the Son monk Kihwa* (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 1999), 3, 4, 41.

⁴⁴ Muller, *The Sūtra of perfect enlightenment*, 14, 15.

⁴⁵ Charles Luk, trans., *The Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment: with Te Ch'ing commentary* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1962). Lok To, trans., *Three Sūtras on Complete Enlightenment* (USA: Sūtra Translation Committee, 1995). Charles Muller, translated with an introduction, *The Sūtra of perfect enlightenment: Korean Buddhism's guide to meditation* (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 1999).

⁴⁶ Whalen W. Lai, "Illusionism (Māyavāda) in Late T'ang Buddhism: A Hypothesis on the Philosophical Roots of the Round Enlightenment Sūtra (Yüan-chüeh-ching)." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Jan., 1978).

efforts of the immigrant Buddhists, i.e. the Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese, and the American Buddhist converters.

In order to substantiate the authenticity of the Zen tradition, D.T. Suzuki advocated the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, which legendarily was transmitted from Bodhidharma, who advocated “a special transmission outside the scriptures and without depending on words and letters,” to Huike 慧可 (487–593) as part of dharma transmission and official recognition of enlightenment and lineage holder of the Zen or the *Laṅkāvatāra* school in China.⁴⁷ According to D.T. Suzuki, this sūtra carries three unique characteristics which conjoin with the Mahāyāna Zen approaches: it is devoid of all supernatural phenomena, but discusses extensively the abstruse nature of the subject matter in a deep philosophical and religious ideas concerning the central teaching of the sūtra; it is in the form of dialogues exclusively between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva *Mahamati*, while in other Mahāyāna sūtras the main characters are generally more than one besides the Buddha himself; it contains no *Dhāraṇī* or Mantras, which are usually used for invoking miraculous power; and the whole book is a series of notes of various lengths because the subject-matter is not systematically developed as in most other sūtras. In short, his advocacy

⁴⁷ D.T. Suzuki, an exemplary disciple of Soyen Shaku, is the most important figure to promulgate the Zen’s prevalence in America prior to its exponent growth from the late 1950s onward. Being recognized internationally as a scholar and a prolific writer, D.T. Suzuki worked tirelessly to bring the awareness of Zen and Mahāyāna Buddhism (including the Indian Mahāyāna’s *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, and Pure Land Buddhism), Chinese thought, Japanese culture, and the comparative study of Buddhism and Christian mysticism to the West that penetrated into various aspects of Western learning and cultures and touched the lives of many thinkers, scholars, philosophers, theologians, and other around the world such as Thomas Merton, Paul Tillich, Carl Jung, Allen Ginsberg, and others (Masao Abe, ed., *A Zen Life: D.T. Suzuki Remembered* (New York, NY: John Weatherhill, 1986), xv). In general, his scholastic and missionary efforts were favorable; especially, it provided a ‘serious’ Zen amidst the curious “Beat Zen” and “Square Zen” during the 1950s (Charles Prebish, *American Buddhism* (Belmont, CA: Duxbury Press, 1979), 9). His extensive research into Buddhist-related fields and voluminous publications are not much significance than his achievements of sparking a radical change in Western approaches of thinking and promoting a fresh reevaluation of traditional spirituality for his fellow Japanese country men (Abe, xvi). Specifically, he challenged the Western approaches of dualistic, conceptual, and analytical ways of subject and object, being and nonbeing, good and evil, and life and death to recognize the non-dualistic, non-discriminative, and intuitive wisdom and awakening as the most fundamental realization and authentic way of thinking and living for human being, or the Zen way, which also lifts the genuine spirit of Zen out of the traditional stereotyped interpretation of Zen (Abe, xvi-xvii).

of this *sūtra* reflected his objective to state the orthodox status of the Zen tradition and literature that he was translating and writing even he might have known that this *sūtra* is not the only scripture being circulated within Zen tradition and its development.⁴⁸

Besides, in the East the lay people often recite the Zen related scriptures such as Heart Sutra or Diamond Sutra as talismans for magical and meritorious powers with less concern of understanding the doctrinal content of these texts. On the other hand, Zen related sutras are usually performed in English and specifically so that everyone can understand in America. For example, in American Zen sessions, after periods of meditation, group chanting is emphasized, and the *Heart Sūtra* is often used.⁴⁹ Also, America Buddhists usually recite the *Heart Sūtra* in English so that everyone can understand and learn from it. It moves from serving as the meritorious or even magical text in East Asian Buddhist countries to one with a teaching role. Namely, Americans place emphasis on learning the meaning of the sutra while they use it as a ritual text. The recitation of the text also serves as a spiritual dedication and expressive gesture. It includes the didactic elements to help reconcile the ambivalence many American Zen followers feel about “empty ritual.”⁵⁰ For instance, the abbess of Great Vow Monastery in Oregon altered the words “created or destroyed” into “nothing is born or dies” in the Heart Sutra for the ritual ceremony for pregnancy losses in order to carry a meaning that she hopes participants will take away with them. The change suggests that the primary concern is the deliverance of specific philosophical ideas to the mass, and the meritorious power is only secondary concern. Also, Kennett Roshi of the Shasta Abbey in California translated the final mantra in the Heart Sutra: “O Buddha, going, going, going on beyond, and always going on beyond, always becoming

⁴⁸ D.T. Suzuki, *Essay in Zen Buddhism* (London, England: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1950), 87-88.

⁴⁹ John Newport, *The New Age Movement and the biblical worldview: conflict and dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 85.

⁵⁰ Jeff Wilson, *Mourning the unborn dead: a Buddhist ritual comes to America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 96.

Buddha. Hail! Hail! Hail!” to remind the readers not to attach anything, which assists them to attain kensho (an enlightenment experience) without any difficulty.⁵¹ Namely, the use of the sutra is to remind each individual the ability to attain enlightenment, not to obtain meritorious power. One of the reasons Thich Nhat Hanh’s teaching style is so successful in the West is that he addresses various current issues in most of his commentaries on the Zen related and Mahayana Buddhist sutras. In his commentary on the *Heart Sūtra*, he uses the paradoxical images of rose and garbage and the United States and Soviet Union (two great powers during the Cold War) to illustrate their interdependencies. For instance, he points out that the rose cannot be separated from the garbage because we can use garbage as a fertilizer to grow the rose’s plant; the garbage comes from the rose, whenever we throw them away. Also, both the United States and Soviet Union are dependent on one another in the web of life: economy, politics, culture, and others. Both countries cannot function well without other. Again, the rose and garbage and the United States and Soviet Union are two sides of the coins mutually and interdependently.⁵² Also, he says that “emptiness” means empty of a separate self, because it is full of life and everything: because other people are here, we are here; if others are not here, we will not be here.⁵³ In the same tone, he explains the “rose is not the rose” in his commentary on the *Diamond Sūtra* to illustrate the language of non-attachment in Zen tradition; the rose is composed by many non-rose elements such as water, dirt, sun light, and others.⁵⁴

In addition, in his zeal to make Zen truly American and less exotic, Kapleau decided to translate the famous *Heart Sūtra* into English, but his teacher, Yasutani Roshi, protested

⁵¹ Charles Prebish, *American Buddhism* (Belmont, CA: Duxbury Press, 1979), 163.

⁵² Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of Understanding: commentary on the Prajñā paramita Heart Sūtra* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax, 1988).

⁵³ Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of Understanding*, 16, 17.

⁵⁴ Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Diamond That Cuts Through Illusion: commentaries on the Prajñā paraita Diamond Sūtra* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax, 1992), 56.

vigorously, and that was an event eventually splitting them in 1967.⁵⁵ Here we have the conflict in master-student relationship concerning the issue of translation the Zen related texts versus the importance of retaining them traditional canonical languages. Here we have a Japanese master, Yasutani Roshi, who preferred to use the traditional canonical language for the Heart Sutra, whereas his student, Philip Kapleau wanted to translate it into modern English language for American followers. Probably, for Yasutani Roshi, retaining the Heart Sutra in canonical language is not to broadcast its meaning, but rather to produce spiritual merit for subsequent ritual offering and dedication to a variety of beings and purposes.⁵⁶ Conversely, his student, Phillip Kapleau insisted on translating this sutra into English so that it can be understandable, and accessible for average American Buddhists as discussed above. Actually, many prominent Zen masters and scholars advocate the second option, translating and lecturing Zen related sutras into modern English such as Venerable Hsuan Hua and Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh. Venerable Hsuan Hua organized and supported the translation of the entire Buddhist canon into English and other Western languages.⁵⁷ Venerable Hsuan Hua mentioned that when Buddhism first came to China from India, the translation of the Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese was one of the most important tasks for the establishment of Chinese Buddhism. Due to the efforts of many individuals such as Kumarajiva (fifth century), who led an assembly of over eight hundred people to work on the translation of the Tripitaka for over a decade, and others, almost the entire Buddhist canon have been translated and preserved in Chinese. So, he said that the same

⁵⁵ Charles Prebish, *Luminous passage: the practice and study of Buddhism in America* (Berkeley, CA University of California Press, 1999), 18-19.

⁵⁶ Wilson, 96.

⁵⁷ Ronald Epstein, "The Heart Sūtra and the Commentary of Tripitaka Master Hsüan Hua." (Master' Thesis, University of Washington, 1969). Ronald Epstein, "The Śūraṅgama-sūtra with Tripitaka Master Hsüan-hua's Commentary An Elementary Explanation of Its General Meaning: A Preliminary Study and Partial Translation." (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1975).

translation work is being done from Chinese into English to support the establishment of Buddhism firmly in the West. In 1970, he found the Buddhist Text Translation Society to translate the Buddhist sutras with his commentaries on those texts from Chinese into English. He advised his students to follow the ancient translation assemblies' guidelines in which a complete translation work must go through four processes of primary translation, revision, editing, and certification.⁵⁸ Within most of the translation works, the Buddhist Text Translation Society puts eight ideal guidelines of Venerable Hsuan Hua to the volunteer translators such as they must free themselves from motives of personal fame and profit, and so forth.⁵⁹ In fact, Venerable Hsuan Hua had said that if we translated the Buddha dharma (i.e. Buddhist scriptures) into English so that everyone can understand Buddhism and practice accordingly, then there will not be any Last Day of the world. Namely, because he recognized the language and cultural barriers in transmitting Buddhism in the West, he advocated the task of doing translation works on Mahayana Buddhist sutras.⁶⁰ Hence, throughout the years, he and his organization have translated several Mahayana Buddhist texts, including Zen related texts, such as the Heart Sutra, The Shurangama Sutra, and others. However, one of his setbacks is that in those sutras he provided his traditional commentaries, which may not address much of the current modern issues in the West. For example, concerning the *Shurangama Sūtra*, he said: "In Buddhism all the sūtras are very important, but the *Shurangama Sūtra* is even more important. Wherever the *Shurangama Sūtra* is, the Proper Dharma abides in the world. When the *Shurangama Sūtra* is gone, that is a sign of the Dharma Ending Age. In the *Extinction of the Dharma Sūtra* it says that in the Dharma Ending Age, the *Shurangama Sūtra* will become extinct first. Then gradually the

⁵⁸ Hsuan Hua, *Record of High Sanghans, Vol 1* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1983), 153.

⁵⁹ Hsuan Hua, *The Shurangama Sutra with Commentary, Vol 2* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003), xii.

⁶⁰ Ronald Epstein, "The Venerable Master Hsuan Hua Brings the Dharma to the West." *In Memory of the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, Volume One* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1995), 70.

other sūtras will also become extinct. The *Shurangama Sūtra* is the true body of the Buddha; the *sarira* (relics) of the Buddha; the stupa of the Buddha.”⁶¹ Besides, Venerable Hsuan Hua exhorted his followers to recite the *Shurangama Mantra*: “As long as there is someone who can recite the *Shurangama Mantra*, the demon kings, the heavenly demons and those of externalist teachings will not dare come into the world to play their tricks and to make trouble. The *Shurangama Mantra* is the most miraculous mantra for helping the world.”⁶² Generally, according to him, preserving the *Shurangama Sutra* is considered as protecting the proper dharma. Also, reciting its mantra can dispel demonic obstruction. Except for a handful of his followers and conservative Buddhists who are really concerned about the Buddhist development in the country, these monist and magical related views might not being well received by many American Buddhists who may care more about the practical applications of the sutras rather than preserving the proper dharma or concerning the mystical elements of the mantras.

Besides the Buddhist Text Translation Society of Venerable Hsuan Hua, the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research also works on the translation for many Mahayana and Zen related scriptures with the collaboration of many scholars and translators such as John McRae, Charles Willemen, and others. The Numata Center was found by Dr. Yehan Numata who said that: “It is my greatest wish...to make the translations available to the many English speaking people who have never had the opportunity to learn about the Buddha’s teachings.” Dr. Numata also found the BDK Tripitaka Translation Series in 1982 to fulfill his dream of bringing the Chinese Mahayana Tripitaka to the English speaking world. Initially, the Translation

⁶¹ Hsuan Hua, *The Shurangama Sūtra: Sūtra text and supplements with commentary by Hsuan Hua* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003), vi.

⁶² Hsuan Hua, *Buddha Root Farm: pure land talks: dharma talks* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003), 24. The *Shurangama Mantra* (Ch.楞嚴咒) is a well-known and popularly chanted in East Asian Buddhism.

Committee, including thirteen eminent Buddhist scholars, selected one hundred thirty-nine major texts from India, China, and Japan for the First Series, which includes the participation of nearly one hundred eminent Buddhist scholars around the world. The estimated time for translating the entire Chinese Tripitaka canon is about one hundred years.⁶³

Having discussed about the immigrant Buddhists who emphasized on the important role of the scriptures, let us examine the perspective of some converted American Buddhists to see how much interest they have on the Zen related scriptures.

Instrumental in the innovational formation of Americanization of Zen during the 1960s is Philip Kapleau, who spent eleven years in Japan to study Zen under the guidance of Yasutani and other teachers. In 1965, Philip Kapleau published *The Three Pillars of Zen*, which introduced to Americans the actual Buddhist practice of Yasutani.⁶⁴ He compiled this book to set

⁶³ <http://www.numatacenter.com/default.aspx?MPID=50>. (accessed, November 22, 2010).

⁶⁴ Hakuun Yasutani (安谷 白雲; 1885 - 1973) was born into a devoted Buddhist family in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan. When he was five years old his parents sent him to live and study at the temple to receive religious education for future priesthood career. Under the guidance of a Rinzai priest, Tsuyama Genpo, he attended the primary school, received education in fundamental Buddhism, and did the chores of a novice until twelve years old. On his thirteenth birthday, he became a novice at a large Soto temple. Then, he followed two more years of public school education, five years at a seminary run by the Soto sect at Denshin Ji at the age of sixteen and was trained under many Buddhist leaders throughout his twenties and thirties, and four years at a teacher's training school. At thirty, he married and raised a family with five children. He worked as an elementary school teacher to support his growing family for six years and became principal for another four years. He still continued to do the zazen under various teachers even though he was busy with his secular responsibilities. At forty, after the meeting with Sogaku Harada-roshi, he resigned from his principalship, became a priest, and began attending sesshin regularly at his new teacher's monastery, Hosshin Ji. With the koan Mu, he attained kensho (見性; enlightenment experiences) during his second sesshin (Kapleau, *The Three pillars of Zen*, 29-31). He was transmitted the dharma transmission in 1943. In 1954 he established his own school, *Three Treasures Association (Sanbo Kyodan)*, which broke the connection to both Soto and Rinzai. However, he still utilized the *zazen* of Soto and *kōan* of Rinzai to train his lay followers in a flexible way to fit their temperaments and daily busy schedule. He minimized the linguistic and social barriers for non-Japanese cultivators as well as the ceremonial life in the traditional temple. He lived a life of simplicity and was indifference to finery, wealth, and fame as the distinguished Zen masters in the past (Kapleau, 29-31). In 1962, he began a number of visits to North America. In the 1990s, it was shocking for the Zen community after his political polemical excerpts from some of his World War II were translated into English. Especially, he admired Japanese's right wing of the imperial authoritarian state and distasted for Japan's labor movement and institutions of higher learning, specifically the Western-style of social sciences (Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War*. 2nd. (USA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 168, 169). His use of anti-Semitic sentiment and attacks on bourgeois democracy were the most offensive writings. He supported fully the imperial authoritarian state and the Nazi Germany's domination. Because of his apparent anti-Semitic polemic view, some argue that he could not have

forth the authentic doctrines and practices of Zen from the oral transmissions of the Rinzai and Soto masters, who grounded their Zen method and techniques on the highest teaching of the Buddha that have been transmitted from India to China and from China to Japan continuously through many centuries.⁶⁵ In 1966, in Rochester of New York, he established one of the earliest American Zen centers to train Americans according to their lifestyle and convention such as keeping American dress, providing his American followers an Anglicized dharma name, and using English translations of sūtras in Zen trainings.⁶⁶ Generally, he is one of the most sincere, hard-working, and effective Zen teachers in America.⁶⁷ He wrote several Zen related books: *Zen: dawn in the West*; *The three pillars of Zen: teaching, practice, and enlightenment*; *Awakening to Zen*; *To cherish all life: a Buddhist case for becoming vegetarian*; and *the Zen of living and dying: a practical and spiritual guide*. Basically, he dedicated his life in studying and teaching Zen, he did neither translate nor write commentary on any Zen related scriptures.

Robert Aitken, another of Yasutani's remarkable students, is considered as a forefront of the Americanization of Zen, a dean of American Zen in translating many Zen literatures and Buddhist hymns that have been used in many Zen centers in daily services, a consistent supporter of Native Hawaiian, gay and lesbian, and women's rights issues, and a representative of the liberal and left political and social inclinations. After his initiated interest in studying Zen in a Japanese internment camp during World War II, Aitken briefly studied with Nyogen Senzaki in

experienced awakening. Others suggest this criticism certainly reveals a common misconception of what awakening is or is not (James Ishmael Ford, *Zen master who?: a guide to people and stories of Zen* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publication, 2006), 150, 151). However, his teachings left a deep imprint on American Zen directly through his American students, including Jews, political liberals, and most anti-Vietnam War activists, such as Philip Kapleau and Robert Aitken, who played important role in the surge of Zen during 1960s era (Richard Hughes Seager, *Buddhism in America* (New York: NY, Columbia University Press, 1999), 93). His organization, the Sanbo Kyodan (the Society of the Three Treasures), has many official representative in North America (Ford, 152).

⁶⁵ Philip Kapleau, ed. and compiled, *The Three Pillars of Zen* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1967), xv-xvi.

⁶⁶ Seager, 93-94.

⁶⁷ Prebish, 12.

Los Angeles after the war and seriously learnt and practiced Zen with Yasatani in the mid-1950s. In 1959, Aitken and his wife Anne co-founded the *Diamond Sangha* in Hawaii, which led the Zen groups to transform from a mystical fascination with Buddhism to the more practice-oriented interests. After its establishment, the *Diamond Sangha* has developed its affiliated network of Zen centers in Hawaii, California, and Australia.⁶⁸ At the beginning, his center served as a gathering place for young people, who were from the counterculture and had the interest in an illuminative religion with a sense of wholeness and essence, a love of nature, and a devotion to poverty and asceticism. However, virtually all of those young people had tried LSD, mescaline, or psilocybin, because of their disconnection with the real world. Hence, his Zen center provided a corrective path for them to live properly.⁶⁹ Aitken also co-founded the Buddhist Peace Fellowship with Gary Snyder, one of the most famous Beat Buddhist poets, and Joanna Macy, an intellectual and an American Buddhist leader.⁷⁰ At the height of the anti-war movement during the 1960s, Aitken became actively involved in it.⁷¹ Insofar, Aitken wrote several Zen related books: *Taking the path of Zen; the mind of clover: essays in Zen Buddhist ethics; the Morning Star: New and Selected Zen Writings; Zen Master Raven: Sayings and Doings of a Wise Bird; the Dragon who never sleeps: Verses for Zen Buddhist practice; The practice of Perfection: The Paramitas from a Zen Buddhist; A Zen wave: Basho's haiku and Zen; Miniatures of a Zen Master; Zen Master Raven; Encouraging Words; and The Gateless Barrier*. Although Aitken had written these Zen related books, he neither translated nor wrote commentary on any particular Zen related scripture.

⁶⁸ Seager, 94-95

⁶⁹ Field, 252-253.

⁷⁰ Seager, 95.

⁷¹ Field, 265

Another Maezumi's student, Bernard Tetsugen Glassman, becomes the most well-known innovator in transforming the Zen tradition into the Zen's social engagement. A former aerospace engineering before studying Zen in the 1960s, Glassman moved from Los Angeles to New York in 1979 to establish the *Zen Community in New York*, which utilized Zen as a main force for social change. He and his wife, Sandra Jishu Holmes, ran a bakery to provide employment for the needy, homeless, and unskilled. They also opened housing a facility to provide shelter, child care, and job training for the local community. They offered "street retreats" in run-down neighborhoods of New York City as for the Zen practice for social transformation. In 1998, they left their centers in the care of their senior students to relocate to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to build a new institution, the *Zen Peacemaker Order*, which implemented American Zen's spirit base on three core principles: not-knowing, thereby giving up fixed ideas about ourselves and the universe; bearing witness to the joy and suffering of the world; and healing ourselves and others.⁷² He has written the book "Infinite circle: teachings in Zen" and with Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi on the title "On Zen practice: body, breath, mind," and "The hazy moon of enlightenment: on Zen practice III," with Rick Fields on the title "Instructions to the cook: a Zen master's lessons in living a life that matters." He neither translates nor writes commentary on any Zen relates scriptures.

Among Kapleau's best-known students going to establish their own Zen centers in Vermont, Denver, and overseas in Poland, is Toni Packer, who broke with Kapleau and his center to set up Springwater Zen center in central New York. Eventually, in the 1990s following the trend of many American teachers who had Americanization the Japanese Zen's doctrine, tradition, and ethos, Packer proclaimed herself as an independent teacher and cut off the connection with the Harada-Yasutani lineage, apparently through the title of her organization, the

⁷² Seager, 104-105.

Springwater Center for Meditative Inquiry and Retreats.⁷³ Insofar, Toni has written several Zen related books: *The work of this moment; The Wonder of Presence: And the Way of Meditative Inquiry; Seeing without knowing: and, What is meditative inquiry?* She is a co-author with John Canfield in the book “The Silent Question: Meditating in the Stillness of Not-Knowing,” and with Joan Tollifson in the book “The Light of Discovery.” In general, she neither translates nor writes commentary on any Zen related scripture.

In short, by examining the short biographies of the above prominent converted American Buddhists, we recognize that they might not have much interest in translating and writing commentary on any particular Zen related scripture. Probably it is the trend of American Zen’s approach, which deemphasizes the scripture because of the influence of Bodhidharma’s teaching of pointing directly to one’s mind to see one’s own true nature without relying on the scriptures.⁷⁴

In short, in the first part, I have discussed generally the transmission and translation of some important Zen related scriptures in the America. In the West generally and in America particularly the order of popularity of Mahāyāna Zen texts published in English from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present can be categorized as following: *Heart Sūtra, Diamond Sūtra, Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, Platform Sūtra, Śūraṅgama Sūtra, and Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment*. The earliest translated sutra is the *Diamond Sūtra*, which was rendered from Chinese into English in the middle of the 1860s. Total numbers of the sutra translation, commentary, essay, book review, and others are: one hundred and fifty-one for the *Heart Sūtra*; sixty for the *Diamond Sūtra*; forty-seven for the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*; thirty-six for

⁷³ Seager, 94.

⁷⁴ 菩提達摩(480-520) is considered the twenty-eighth Indian Chan patriarch and the first Chinese Chan patriarch (Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History in India and China*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988), 85).

the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*; twenty-three for the *Platform Sūtra*; twelve for the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*; and seven for the *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment*. The decades that have numbers of translations and writings of the sutra are in the order as followings: eighty-nine during 1990s; eighty-seven during 2000s to the present; forty-four during 1970s; forty-three during 1980s; fourteen during 1960s; thirteen from mid of nineteen century to 1950; and three during 1950s.

In the second part, I have examined the scriptural roles in the transmission of Zen to the West through the efforts of the immigrant Buddhists, i.e. the Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese, and the converted American Buddhists. In fact, we have Venerable Hsuan Hua, who put a great emphasis on the translation, teaching, and practicing of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* because of its Mahayana doctrine of *The Four Purity* (for preserving moral conduct), *The Fifty –states of Demonic Obstruction* (for developing Samadhi and wisdom), and the esoteric element of its mantra (for dispelling demonic obstruction). Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh uses the *Heart Sūtra* and the *Diamond Sūtra* as the short Zen scriptures to expound the concepts of emptiness, interdependence, and so forth. D.T. Suzuki translated the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, one of his earliest works on Zen literature, to characterize it as an authentic transmission of Zen tradition to the West the same as that of Bodhidharma’s transmission of four fascicles of this sutra to Huike.⁷⁵

In the third part, I have made the argument that the immigrant Buddhists tend to emphasize the scriptures more than that of the converted American Buddhists. In fact, by comparing the works of the above three prominent Zen masters and scholars, Venerable Hsuan Hua, Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, and D.T Suzuki, who represent the immigrant Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese Buddhist respectively, and that of the works of the converted American Buddhists, i.e. Philip Kapleau, Robert Aitken, Bernard Grassman, and Toni Packer, I can draw the conclusion that the immigrant Buddhists tend to emphasize more on the importance

⁷⁵ Huike 慧可(487–593).

of the scripture through their translation and commentaries than that of the converted American Buddhists.

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