

**THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSALITY, AS SEEN IN THE
JINZANGLUN COMPILED IN MEDIEVAL TIMES IN CHINA,
AS THE METHOD OF SPREADING BUDDHISM**

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I will consider the method of spreading Buddhism by using the text of the *Jinzanglun* 金藏論. The *Jinzanglun* was compiled by Daoji 道紀 during the late Northern dynasties period in China, with the aim of teaching Buddhism to the laity. Therefore, we can understand the method of propagation of Buddhism in medieval times in China by analyzing this text. Buddhism was spread by teaching the principle of causality to the laity. In medieval times, both China and Japan accepted the principle of this cause and effect. This is probably the underlying belief of the culture of East Asia.

In my opinion, not many people are aware of the *Jinzanglun* because of the following two reasons: (1) the complete original text of the *Jinzanglun* has not been preserved and (2) the Chinese catalogues of Buddhist scriptures do not mention it. However, several extant scrolls were discovered in Japan about 70 years ago. Furthermore, some pieces were recently found among the Dunhuang manuscripts.

The *Jinzanglun* scrolls which can now be found in Japan are as follows. First, scrolls 1-2 in the possession of Otani University—formerly a part of the Horyu-ji 法隆寺 Temple’s collection. It can be said, based on the last inscription, that these scrolls were copied in 1134. (This was done through transfer copying in the possession of the Kyoto University Library.) Second, **scroll 6** (the initial part is missing) is in the possession of the Kofuku-ji 興福寺 Temple; the reverse side of the scroll has the *Nihon-ryo-i-ki* 日本靈異記, the anthology of Buddhist tales of Japan, that was designated as a national treasure. These have been common knowledge among the researchers of Japanese literature, because they were considered as the sourcebook of the *Konjyaku-monogatari-syu* 今昔物語集, which is one of the most famous anthologies of Buddhist tales of Japan compiled in the twelfth century. Although most researchers of Buddhism were unaware of the text for a long time, the situation changed drastically in the past several years.

Currently, the following scrolls, including those discovered by Dr. Arami Hiroshi 荒見泰史 and Dr. Fang Guangchang 方廣錫, are available: (1) B. 1322 (爲 86, BD3686) • Д x 00977 in Russia • D156 in Beijing University, (2) B. 8407 (鳥 16, BD7316), (3) S. 3962 and (4) S. 4654. These are equivalent to scrolls 5 and 6 of the *Jinzanglun*. According to its preface, the complete original text consisted of 7 scrolls (although another description states that it comprised **9 scrolls**), **24 chapters** and 192 tales. Finally, we succeeded in collecting **10 chapters** and **49 tales** from old Japanese and Dunhuang manuscripts. Hereafter, we will discuss the research conducted to date on the *Jinzanglun*, which provides precious information about Chinese Buddhism in medieval times.

The *Jinzanglun* is written in the ‘leishu 類書’ style; leishu is a term used in the traditional classification of Chinese books and is typically translated as an encyclopedia. Leishu contains many excerpts from the Chinese canon, which are classified into different categories. Moreover, every excerpt has a note concerning its source. Even the Buddhists made many Buddhist leishus; one of the most famous leishus is the *Fa-yuan-zhu-lin* 法苑珠林. The *Jinzanglun* follows a style similar to that of the *Fa-yuan-zhu-lin*, and both the books have the same textual content. However, there is a difference in both the books. While *Fa-yuan-zhu-lin* tends to classify and arrange the knowledge on Buddhism and comprises 100 scrolls and 100 chapters (篇), the *Jinzanglun* comprises only 7 scrolls and 24 chapters (緣). This is because the *Jinzanglun* was compiled and used at the time of the preaching in order to revive Buddhism after the reign of Emperor Wu 武帝 of the Northern Zhou 北周 Dynasty who persecuted Buddhism. This has been recorded in the biography of Daoji.¹ Even the theme of the *Jinzanglun* indicates that it was an anthology to propagate Buddhism. The following are the chapters of the *Jinzanglun*:

Scroll 1 Chapter 1: Wrong view (邪見緣第一) 3 tales.

Chapter 2: Killing and injuring (殺害緣第二) 7 tales.

Scroll 5 Chapter 15: Buddhist stupas (〔塔〕緣第十五²) 9 tales.

Chapter 16: Buddha statues (像緣第十六) 5 tales.

Chapter 17: Incense and floral tribute (香花緣第十七) 4 tales.

¹ 「道紀傳」, *Xu-goaseng-zhuan* 續高僧傳 Vol.: 30 (Taisho, Vol. 50, 701a-b.)

² Since the title for the chapter was missing, we have added a possible title based on the contents.

Chapter 18: Votive candles (燈緣第十八) 4 tales.

Scroll 6 Chapter 19: Decoration using flags and canopies (幡蓋第十九) 4 tales.

Chapter 20: Leaving the household life (出家緣第二十) 5 tales.

Chapter 21: The Buddhist robe (袈裟緣第二十一) 4 tales.

Chapter 22: Filial devotion (孝養緣第二十二) 3 or 4 tales.

Next, I would like to look at the contents of the *Jinzanglun*. Since I wish to clarify the basic structure of the tales on the cause and effect theme of the *Jinzanglun*, I shall discuss the first two tales in detail.

Chapter 1 (Wrong view) explains that a wrong view—rejection of Buddhist teachings—produces an adverse result. In my opinion, the tales in this chapter helped people understand the importance of investing faith in Buddhism following the period of Buddhist persecution.

The first tale in **Chapter 1** describes the story of KumAra Kassapa who used to teach PAyAsi; this tale uses analogies to show that the latter's distrust of causality is wrong (迦葉為蜚肆王說邪見過惡譬喻緣). Since PAyAsi did not display any faith in the law of causality, his view was considered to be wrong. Conversely, the Buddhist monk explained to him that one would be born in hell if he/she engaged in evil deeds and in the heavenly realm if he/she did well. This is the basic belief of Buddhism. Here, it is important to note that causality is explained in relation to the 'SaMsAra' or cycle of re-births. The basic structure of the tales suggests that one's activities in the previous life lead to the various events in the present life. Thus, the tales of the *Jinzanglun* are referred to as 'avadAna'.

The second tale in **Chapter 1** talks about an aged servant in Sudatta's house who suffered as a result of having held a wrong view in her past life (須達家老婢過去起邪見得惡報緣). In this tale, it is explained that an aged servant in Sudatta's house in the present was the monk who had fallen into the hell because had not believed the teaching of the 'SUNyata' or the concept emptiness of Buddhism in her past life. Such a description of retribution—'A' in the previous life is 'B' in the present life—is a typical example and is introduced in many tales of the *Jinzanglun*.

The third tale in **Chapter 1** mentions the destruction of the three treasures—Buddha, Dharma and SaMgha—suggesting that those who hold a wrong view

are met with an adverse result (邪見毀滅三寶得惡報緣). This tale refers to five fundamental grave sins related to Buddhist persecution or engaging in something which is strongly admonished in Buddhism. Moreover, it is said that those who commit such sins will become victims of natural disasters. The connection between the present life and the past one is not elucidated in this tale. As mentioned above, the *Jinzanglun* includes an uncommon tale which is lacking in the basic structure needed to explain the causality. However, it is important to note that the persecution of Buddhist was considered to be evil. Thus the tale is suitable at the end of **Chapter 1**.

Next, **Chapter 2** (Killing and injuring) includes tales which suggest that killing and injuring would lead to adverse results. Destruction of life is forbidden in Buddhism. This chapter is compiled in order to make people understand this fundamental precept of Buddhism. Furthermore, I believe that it has been influenced by the emotions of people who desired peace and detested the war that continued during the period of the late Northern dynasties.

Next, we will discuss **Chapters 15-22** of **scrolls 5 and 6**. As stated previously, this part is found in several Dunhuang manuscripts, implying that this part circulated widely.

Chapter 15 (Buddhist stupas) includes tales suggesting that the construction or renovation of Buddhist stupas would lead to beneficial results. It is considered a virtuous act for a Buddhist to build a Buddhist stupa. In my opinion, the tales of this chapter reflected the condition of the Buddhists in those days, who hoped that Buddhism would prosper once again, to restore temples because they were destroyed by Emperor Wu during the Northern Zhou Dynasty. There are nine tales in this chapter—more than in any other chapter. This implies that the teachings of this chapter might be extremely important.

Chapter 16 (Buddha statues) includes tales which suggest that one would enjoy greater benefits as a result of the construction of Buddha statues or adoration of his image.

Chapter 17 (Incense and floral tribute), **Chapter 18** (Votive candles) and **Chapter 19** (Decoration using flags and canopies) are related to worship and offering.

It was believed that the act of listening to the tales included in **Chapters 15-17**, related to worshipping and offering in the past life, led to virtues in the next life and strengthened people's faith in Buddhism.

Chapter 20 (Leaving household life) includes tales which suggest that leaving a household or lay life would lead to acquiring virtue. **Chapter 21** (The Buddhist robe) includes tales which describe the type of mysterious powers that

the clothes of Buddhist monks possessed. These tales encouraged people to take up Buddhist monkhood. Moreover, they made people respect Buddhist priests.

Chapter 22 (Filial devotion) includes tales which encourage filial devotion towards one's parents. Although filial piety was an important virtue in Indian society as well as in lay Buddhists ethics, it never acquired the central role which it had in traditional China.

Although the contents of the *Jinzanglun* have been discussed, we shall re-examine an important element. Most tales in the *Jinzanglun* explain that one's actions in the past life lead to one's state in the present life. People who listened to these tales were expected to attempt to engage in good deeds. Causality serves not only as a Buddhist principle but also as a tool for the propagation of Buddhism.

However, in China, this is not restricted to the medieval times. We are aware of the fact that the *Jinzanglun* was very popular not only in China but also in Japan (it influenced Buddhist literature such as *Konjyaku-monogatari-syu*). It was due to such tales of retribution that Buddhism gained popularity in East Asia.

