

Teachings on Abortion in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Traditions and Contemporary Korean Practice

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I. Theravāda (Pāli) Textual Tradition

The first and most basic code of Buddhist ethics or training rules for correct conduct for both lay people and the ordained sangha in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions is the Five Precepts (*pañcasīla*, 五戒律). These moral precepts are a canonical formulation derived from the first sutta of the thirteen sutta Collection of Moral Practices (*Sīlakkhandā Vagga*) of the Long Discourses (*Dīgha Nikāya*) of the Pāli Canon. This sutta is called Discourse on Brahma's Net (*Brahmajāla Sutta*, 梵網經). The major preceptual codes of Buddhism of all schools appear to be abstracted summaries of the Culla Vagga within the Brahmajāla Sutta designed to meet specific groups of believers. The Five Precepts are especially pertinent to the layman. (D. Keown, 1992:25-31) The set of five moral guidelines can also be found in the early text of the *Dhammapada* (法句經).¹

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The Five Precepts are: 1) To refrain from taking life (*pāṇātipāta*), 2) To refrain from taking which is not given (*adinnādānā*), 3) To refrain from sexual misbehavior (*kāmesu-micchācāra*), 4) To refrain from lying (*musāvādā*), and 5) To refrain from intoxicants which induce heedlessness (*surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā*).

Of most immediate concern in discussions of Buddhism and abortion is the strong emphasis which Buddhism places on the prohibition against taking life. "To refrain from taking life" is the first among the Five Precepts which all Buddhists recite in both private and group devotions. In Theravāda countries it is chanted in the following familiar Pāli verse:

"pāṇātipāta veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi" often translated as "I undertake to observe the rule to abstain from taking life."

While The First Precept is clear enough for lay people in a generalized way, the rule against taking life for the ordained sangha in the *Mahākhaṇḍakā* of the *Mahāvagga* of the Theravāda *Vinaya Piṭaka* specifically includes abortion:

An ordained monk should not intentionally deprive a living thing of life even if it is only an ant. A monk who deliberately deprives a human being of life, even to the extent of causing an abortion (*gabbhapaṭiyo*), is no longer a true recluse (*samaṇa*). As a flat stone broken asunder cannot be put back together again, a monk who deliberately deprives a human being of life, is no longer a follower of the Buddha. This is something not to be done by you as long as life lasts. (*Vinaya*, D. Keown, 1995:93.)

It is quite clear from the above quotation that abortion is a *parajika* infraction, a grievous offense subject to disbarment from the sangha.

In commenting on another passage from the *Vinaya*, the great commentator Buddhaghosa explains that deliberately depriving a human

1 J.R. Carter and M. Paliawadana, *The Dhammapada*, (New York: Oxford University, 1987), Chapter XVIII Stains (Malavaggo) verses 246-247, pp. 288-289. See also Bhikkhu Kuala Lumpur Dhammajoti, *The Chinese Dharmapada*, (Singapore: Man Fatt Lam Buddhist Temple, 1991) Chapter 26 Taints verses 10-11, p.116.

being of life refers to separating it from life, either at the first stage in the development of the embryo (*kalala*) whether by scorching, by crushing, or by the use of drugs or at some later stage of development by a similar kind of assault. (*Vinaya- Atthakathā* II.437f) Thus, any monk who participates in performing an abortion is guilty of depriving a human being of life and loses his claim to being a follower of the Buddha.

According to Pāli scholarship there are seven cases of acts of abortion recorded in the *Vinaya* (律藏) in all. The first is a case of a woman who became pregnant by her lover while her husband was away from home. She appealed to a monk who was close to the family to bring her a potion or substance which can induce miscarriage (*gabbhapatana* - abortifacient). He gave this to her and the child within the womb died. Although the monk was remorseful, he was guilty of an offence involving defeat for which he had to pay the penalty of expulsion from the sangha (monastic order).

Rivalry between two wives led to the second case of abortion in the *Vinaya*. One of the wives was barren and was intensely jealous of the other wife who could bear children. She did not wish the fertile wife to be favored and allowed to become head mistress of the entire household. In order to prevent this from happening, she asked a monk to provide an abortive concoction to the fertile wife. The drug succeeded and the fetus died. The mother survived, however. The offence is classified as one involving defeat and was punishable by being dismissed from the monastic community.

The circumstances of the other three cases are very similar but the outcomes differ. In the third case the mother dies but not the infant. It is important to note here that the resulting offence is not considered as serious as the earlier offences. It is not classified as entailing defeat (*pārājika*), but rather as a grave offence punishable by only a temporary suspension from the sangha (*thullaccaya*).

Clearly the difference in these examples is a matter of intention. There was no intended purpose to kill the mother, who was the only victim in the example of the failed abortion. This is consistent with the

interpretation of a murder case elsewhere in the *Vinaya*, where it is said that there is no offence (involving defeat) if it was unintentional, if he did not know, if he were not meaning death. (*Vinaya* III. 78.)

The principles at work here are comparable to the concept of 'complete action' found elsewhere in the Buddhist literature. A fully developed theory of complete karma is spelled out for the first time in Vasubandhu's *Sarvāstivādin* treatise, the *Abhidharmakośa* ² (although certain forerunners to this theory can be found in the Pāli texts). First is the idea that for an act to have karmic consequences, it had to be done with *conscious intent*. Indeed, karma is defined as an *intentional impulse* and the act that follows upon it. Related to this was the idea that for a deed to have the greatest possible effect, it had to be done with consideration, and not casually or accidentally.

In some instances, too, it appears at least to a certain extent, that *the ethical potential of a deed, whether good or bad, can be counteracted by repentance*. In the abortion cases discussed here, however, repentance does not play a mitigating role in determining the seriousness of the offense. In each instance we are told that the monk involved felt remorse, but this fact does not seem to reduce the level of offense. Remorse itself did not mitigate punishment. Perhaps we can infer from this, too, that remorse does not necessarily suggest that future karmic results will be lessened for the perpetrator of an ethical action such as abortion.

In the fourth case of abortion recorded in the *Vinaya*, both mother and infant die as a result of the action. In the fifth case neither infant nor mother die. Both survive the attempt to kill the baby in the womb. We assume that the fourth case is to be considered a *pārājika* offence since the perpetrator's intent is to kill the child in the womb even though the mother dies as well inadvertently. This judgement, however, is not clearly spelled out in the Pāli text.³

² This is spelled out in *Kośa* IV.140-141. For a detailed treatment of this concept, see J. P. McDermott, *Development in the Early Buddhist Concept of Kamma/Karma* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1984), 141-142.

³ A discussion of the penalty for this incidence of abortion is to be found in a chapter by J.P. McDermott in *Buddhism and Abortion* edited by D. Keown, (London:Macmillan,1998). See pp.166-167. In a nutshell, following Keown, we can state that the *Vinaya* text embraces all

The fifth case where both mother and child survive, there is no defeat but the act or offence is still considered grave, just as when the child survives but the mother succumbs. Although the intent existed and was followed up with serious steps to complete the act of abortion, no killing in fact occurred and no defeat is involved. It is classified as a *thullaccaya* offence.

In the sixth case a monk advises a pregnant woman who comes to him for help in having an abortion with a medical potion that the child in the womb can be killed instead by an alternate method. He suggests that she crush (*maddassu*) the fetus by strong physical pressure. In the seventh case of abortion, a monk suggests that a fetus be destroyed by scorching (extreme heat). The fetus dies in both of these cases of abortion consultation. Although the monks involved are remorseful, both are classified as *pārājika* offence.

It is important to note here for purposes of discussion regarding the role of the monastic community, as "socially engaged Buddhists" providing assistance to laymen, that in keeping with the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path's emphasis on right speech, the (Theravāda) monk's role in merely counselling abortion, where the advice is taken, is considered as serious a violation of the monastic rule as would be the case had he or she actively participated in the procedure itself. In other words, he or she is subject to expulsion from the monastic order just as if they had urged wanton murder or capital punishment.

In all seven Vinaya cases described above the offence was considered "depriving a human being of life." The infraction against the rule of killing was in no way lessened by the circumstances of the child being in an embryonic stage within its mother's womb at the time of death. (*Vinaya* iii, 83 ff.)

One should mention another case in the Vinaya which indirectly

possible outcomes of abortion and logical decisions incumbent on the sangha regarding punishment for infraction of its rules. Keown notes in a personal correspondence with McDermott:

1. Child dies; mother lives- *pārājika*
2. Child lives; mother dies- *thullaccaya*
3. Both die; (missing judgment) *pārājika*
4. Neither dies- *thullaccaya*

involves abortion. It offers us another chance to better imagine the kind of social environment which the monastic community was a part of in the days of the Buddha in India. Incidents arise which can be shocking to modern readers but are not so different from what we read about in our daily newspapers. They also provide insight into the actual workings of the early sangha.

This incident is described in the *Cullavagga*.(Vinaya II.267-268) as follows. A woman, who has become pregnant by her lover while her husband is away from home, aborts her own fetus, and afterwards asks a bhikkhuṇi who is dependent on her for support to become an "accessory after the fact" and to dispose of the aborted infant. The nun agrees to help and places the fetus in her begging bowl and covers it with her outer robe. While carrying the fetal corpse away hidden in her bowl, she meets a monk who has vowed not to eat his own alms food without first sharing it with another monk or nun. Three times he offers the bhikkhuṇi a share of his meal; but each time she refuses, finally explaining the situation and begging him to keep silent about the matter. He refused to do so, however, and criticizes her among his fellow monks. The more modest among them reported the matter to the Buddha who, in response decreed that a fetus should never be taken away in a bowl by a nun! A bhikkhuṇi who violates this rule is guilty of an act of wrong doing (*dukkata*). The Buddha further allowed monks the right to inspect the bowls of bhikkhuṇis whom they should encounter on their rounds. The concern seems to be about maintaining the purity of the monastic order. Besides *Vinaya* texts and commentaries, other texts in the Pāli tradition provide teaching regarding the act of killing the fetus in the womb and its karmic consequences. According to the *Samkicca Jātaka*, for instance, those who oppress the weak and those who are guilty of abortion (*gabbhapatiyo*) are reborn in Mahāniraya and cannot escape the river Vetaraṇī's cutting waters which are sharp and bitter like razors.(*Jātaka* V. 269 (#530).) Acts of abortion initiate cycles of retribution like other acts of depriving humans of life.

There are also stories from the *Petavatthu* (*Stories of the Deceased*)

which also describe karmic retribution for abortion and provide some extra details of relevance to modern discussions of the subject. I will paraphrase two stories as follows. In two similar stories, a jealous wife engages an abortion specialist to cause her rival wife to miscarry. When confronted by the husband and the victim's other relatives, the guilty wife protested her innocence and denied her involvement in causing the abortion. To prove her good faith, the guilty woman is asked to take an oath, which she falsely swears. Shortly thereafter she dies and is reborn as a naked, ugly, foul-smelling *petī* (i.e. unhappy ghost), covered with flies and doomed time after time to eat her own children. When asked the reason for her misfortune, she explains that her heart is scorched and smokes with hunger and thirst because she caused the miscarriage of her rival's unborn baby. In verse she continues:

I, even I, took the terrible oath falsely:
 'May I eat the flesh of children if it was done by me.'
 In consequence of both the deed and the perjury,
 I devour the flesh of children, stained with the blood
 of the past.(Petavatthu: Pv 1.6 vss 8-9)

A significant difference exists between the similar stories at *Petavatthu* I.6 and I.7. In the version at *Petavatthu* I.6 the abortion occurs in the second month of pregnancy. As a consequence, 'when the embryo was two months old just blood flowed forth.' In contrast, in the version at Pv I.7, the guilty *petī* describes her offense and its outcome as follows:

Then my husband was angry and married another wife. And
 when she became with child, I meditated evil against her. And
 I with mind corrupted caused the fall of her unborn child.
 This fell in the third month, foul and bloody.(*Petavatthu* I.7
 vss.7-8)

As a result of her offence, she too is reborn as a suffering ghost doomed repeatedly to devour her own offspring. The significance lies in the fact that while both acts of abortion result in similar karmic

retribution, the offences occur at different stages of embryonic development.

From these stories we must be led to believe that there is no difference in the moral status of the unborn at these two stages of development in the second and third months of the first trimester of pregnancy. More generally, there is nothing in the early Buddhist texts (we have found so far) to suggest that abortion was seen as less reprehensible at an earlier as opposed to a later stage of fetal development.

II. Mahāyāna Tradition

An example of the First Precept for lay people as interpreted in more detail within the Mahāyāna tradition is cited below. It has a characteristic Mahāyāna emphasis on compassion and the close inter-relatedness of all life. This is a commentary in the Temple Rules of the Kwan Ŭm Zen School by the influential Korean master Venerable Seung Sahn (崇山 李行願):

The First Precept: I vow to abstain from taking life.

Killing roots out our seeds of love and mercy.

To kill another is to feast on one's friends and relatives. Some day we shall be in one of the three painful realms, in payment for our killing, for it is by bestowing life that we receive human life in return.(Kwan Ŭm Zen School, 1989:54)

In a similar spirit to the above commentary on the First Precept of the Mahāyāna pañcasīla is the Bodhisattva Precepts for monks and nuns within the *Chinese Brahmajāla Sūtra (Fan Wan Ching)* which are studied at present in the Mahāyāna tradition of China and Korea (Kumārajīva's translation of the *Pōmmang gyōng nosana pulōl posal simji gye p'unjip*).⁴ These guidelines are recited every fifteen days in monastic

4 *The Bodhisattva Precepts (Brahmajala Sutra -Pōm Mang Kyōng)*, Songgwangsa Monastery: International Meditation Centre. Translated by Venerable Sōngil (Martine Fages) mainly prepared from *The Profound Mirror of the Bodhisattva (Posal hyōngam)* compiled, edited and

convocation as in the earliest *prātimokṣa* tradition. The Sūtra and its rules emphasize repentance for any preceptual infringements which may have occurred since the last recitation and stress the urgent need to make the most of the rare opportunity of human birth in order to achieve liberation. The danger of moral lassitude on the path of purification is also stressed. Compassion and the goal of the bodhisattva vow of leading all beings to spiritual freedom is articulated throughout the text. The text claims that its origin is the Buddha Himself who uttered the precepts which are always recited when one first gives rise to the mind (which aspires for enlightenment).(Pöm Mang Kyöng, 1997:6) The text goes on to teach the equivalence of living beings with Buddha-nature.

Because all sentient beings are endowed with the Buddha-nature, they possess form, thought and consciousness. Thought and consciousness are thus contained within the ethical principles of the Buddha-nature. And because this basic cause (i.e. the Buddha-nature) is always present (in beings), the Dharma-body is likewise always there. Due to these conditions, the ten major ethical precepts come into being. All sentient beings throughout the three worlds should respectfully observe the Dharma-precepts. Once they have been received, they should be carefully guarded.(Pöm Mang Kyöng, 1997:6)

The first of the ten major bodhisattva precepts which should be carefully guarded is the same as that of the lay Five Precepts code: Refrain from taking life. The *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, however, goes on in great detail to explain the fuller meaning of this precept for monks and nuns in the following manner:

1) Refrain from Taking Life

A son of the Buddha must refrain from taking life either by performing the act of killing himself, by causing someone else to do it, by doing it in a roundabout way, by "praising" death, (i.e. encouraging someone to take his own life,) or by use of spells and mantras. One must never intentionally kill a living

rendered into vernacular Korean by Venerable Chaun, 1977. Photocopied manuscript. See L. Lancaster and S.B. Park, *The Korean Buddhist Canon* (Berkeley: University of California, 1979) K 527 p.175.

creature by creating the causes or conditions for death, by developing a means for taking life, or by engaging in the actual deed of killing. It is a duty of a bodhisattva to be always compassionate and respectful towards others and to lead them all to liberation by whatever means possible. If, on the contrary, a bodhisattva were to take a great deal of pleasure in killing others, this would be an extremely serious transgression for him(Pöm Mang Kyöng, 1997:9).

A related precept in the Forty Eight Minor Precepts of the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* section is also of great relevance to understanding and clarifying the essential Mahāyāna Buddhist position regarding abortion. This scriptural source can explain the significance behind many Mahāyāna rituals such as *Pangsaeng* ceremonies (Releasing Life 放生) which is incorporated in ceremonies for auspicious rebirth (ch'ōndo-je, 薦度齋) that are offered to aborted children by some Buddhist clergy in Korea. It can certainly be read as a "pro- life" statement with an emphasis on the interconnectedness and interdependency of all life rather than a Christian or Catholic theological reference to allowing "God's will to be done."

From *The Forty Eight Minor Precepts*

20) *Save the Lives of Living Creatures and
Set Loose Those Who Are About to be Killed*

Out of his compassion a son of the Buddha must set free living creatures. Since all male creatures have at one time been one's father, they should all be regarded as one's father. And since all female creatures have at one time been one's mother, they should be regarded as one's mother. In each life they have been those who have given birth to one. Therefore, all sentient beings throughout the six realms can be considered as one's father and mother. Thus to catch and eat any living creature is surely equivalent to killing one's own parents and eating one's old body. Furthermore, the four great elements of earth, water, fire and air are the components of both one's own and others' bodies. For these reasons, one should give life to others by setting them free. The simple fact of one's taking a physical body in every birth and in every world indicates the law of one's nature being eternal. If one wishes to avoid being killed

oneself, then one should cause living creatures to be set loose even if this entails ordering others to set them loose. When one sees someone trying to kill an animal, one should use all means possible to save the animal from such misfortune. Furthermore, one must also save living beings by always telling them of the bodhisattva precepts and instructing them (in their meaning). On the days when a memorial service is held for one's parents or siblings, one must invite a Dharma teacher to read the Sūtras and pray for the future happiness of the departed ones in order that they may encounter the Buddha and take birth in the human and celestial realms. To not do any of the things stated above results in a minor offense(Pōm Mang Kyōng, 1997:19-20).

In the *Changsu myōl choi hoje dongja darani gyōng* (*Chang shou mieh tsui hu chu t'ung tzu t'o lo ni ching*, 長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經)⁵, Buddha says that there are five grave offenses of which retribution is very difficult to avoid and which will cause a person to suffer forever in *Avīci Hell* (無間地獄). They are 1) to kill one's father, 2) to kill one's mother, 3) **to kill a baby in the womb**, 4) to make a buddha's body to bleed and 5) to break the harmony of the sangha(*Pult'a-ūi Karuch'im*, 1995:149).

III. Scriptural Teachings Regarding Human Birth

Pāli Sources

The Monastic rule or *Vinaya* in the Theravāda tradition defines the term "human being (*manusso*)" in this way:

A human being exists in the interval between the first moment when mind arises in the mother's womb (that is to say) the first manifestation of consciousness (*viññāna*), and death(D. Keown, 1995:93)

In no uncertain terms, too, it is spelled out that life is assumed

5 Lancaster and Park, *The Korean Canon*, *ibid.*, p. 484-485. This small text of one chuan was translated by Buddhapali in the Tang dynasty. It has an appendix by Chongyon of the Goryeo dynasty, 1278 A.D.

to begin at the moment of conception in the womb when sperm, egg and *viññāna* come together according to the *Majjhima Nikāya* i. 256(D. Keown, 1995:69):

Monks, it is on the conjunction of three things that there occurs the descent of a *gabbha* (embryo or intermediate being) into the womb. If the parents come together in union, but it is not the mother's proper season, and the intermediate being is not present, then there will be no conception. If the parents come together in union and it is the mother's proper season but still the *gabbha* is not present again there will be no conception. But when the parents come together in union, it is the mother's proper season and the intermediate being is present, then on the conjunction of these three things the descent of the intermediate being takes place. Then, monks, the mother for nine or ten months carries the fetus in her womb with great concern for her heavy burden.

The translation of the term *gandhabba* as 'intermediate being' is a matter of controversy, however. The Theravāda tradition, following Buddhaghosa is very careful to explain that there is no intermediate state being (like a permanent soul) which passes between birth and death between different lives. In his interpretation of the passage *Majjhima Nikāya* just quoted above, Buddhaghosa, for example, explains the term *gandhabba* as referring to a being about to enter the womb (*tatrūpakasatta*), ready to exist (*paccupatthito hoti*), driven on by the force of karma.⁶ This interpretation is not to be taken as implying the existence of an intermediate-state being (*antarābhava*) between one physical incarnation of a being and the next, however; for elsewhere Buddhaghosa maintains that it is only those who are confused about the process of death and rebirth, who consider it to involve a 'being's transmigration to another incarnation 'a lasting being's manifestation in a new body'.⁷ Theravāda Buddhism was vocal in its denial of the

6 *Majjhima-Nikāya-Atthakathā* II. 310. (*Papancasudani: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Majjhima Nikāya*. Eds. J.H. Woods and D. Kosambi, I, 1924. II, 1925, Ed.I.B. Horner, III, 1933. IV, 1937. V, 1938.) On the concept of the *gandhabba*, see O.H. De A. Wijesekera, 'Vedic Gandharva and Pāli Gandhabba,' University of Ceylon Review, Vol.III(April, 1945), pp.73-107.

7 *Visuddhamagga (The Path of Purification)* of Buddhaghosa XVII.113-114. See English translation by

existence of an intermediate-state being between death and rebirth, as can be seen from the debate recorded in the *Points of Controversy* (*Kathāvatthu*) at VIII.2.⁸ They were joined in this opinion by the *Vibhajjavādins*, *Mahāsāṅghikas*, *Mahimsāsakas*, who offered no clear alternative to the concept of the intermediate-state being which they rejected.⁹ Buddhaghosa, however, elaborates on the process of rebirth in terms of a concept of 'rebirth-linking' (*paṇisandhi*).

J.P. McDermott has written that Buddhaghosa maintains that in the normal state of human death, the body gradually withers away like a green leaf in the sun, the sense faculties cease, and the consciousness that remains is supported by the heart-basis alone. This last moment of consciousness before death is known as the *cuti viññāna*. Immediately on its cessation, contingent upon some kamma, conditioned by the *cuti viññāna*, and driven by craving and ignorance not yet abandoned, there arises in the mother's womb the first stirring of consciousness of the succeeding birth. It is known as the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṇisandhi viññāna*). Not being carried over from the previous life, this rebirth-linking consciousness newly arises at the precise moment of conception. In other words, *transmigration of consciousness* is not posited here, but rather a *causally linked stream (sota) of discrete moments of consciousness*. Buddhaghosa likens the relationship between *cuti viññāna* and *paṇisandhi viññāna* to that between a sound and its echo, or a signature-seal and its impression.¹⁰

A Buddhist controversy concerning the moment at which fetal consciousness develops is debated in the *Kathāvatthu* (*Points of Controversy*). (*Kathāvatthu* (Th.) XIV.2.) The issue concerns when the six sense mechanisms (*āyatana*; lit. 'spheres') arise. These consist of the five

Bhikkhu Nanamoli, *The Path of Purification*, Vol. Two, (Berkeley: Shambala, 1976) p. 625.

8 Cf. *Kathāvatthu* A VIII.2. On the intermediate-state dispute, see Alex Wayman, 'The Intermediate-State Dispute in Buddhism,' *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974), pp. 227-237.

9 See Andre Bareau, *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Vehicule* (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1955), p. 283.

10 James P. McDermott, 'Karma and Rebirth in Early Buddhism,' in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, editor, *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 169. See also his chapter 'Abortion in the Pali Canon and Early Buddhist Thought' in D. Keown, *Buddhism and Abortion*, (London: Macmillan, 1998).

physical sense organs, with the mental base, consciousness, or 'better' the coordinating organ (*manāyatana*) as sixth. The key point for our purposes is from the commentary's treatment of this controversy. (*Kathāvatthu* (Th.) XIV.2.) The commentator maintains that the sphere of touch and the mental coordinating organ alone of the sense mechanisms are reborn at precisely the moment of conception, with the remaining four taking seventy-seven days to develop.

IV. Mahāyāna Sources in Chinese

Chinese Buddhist canonical literature also contains references to three conditions for conception in the womb- the mother's health, spiritual and physical union of the parents and the manifestation of *vijñāna* (K. sik, 識). The theory of the harmony or conjunction of the three conditions (三事和合說) cited above can be found in the *Ekottarāgama Sūtra* (增一阿含經; T.2, v.12, 602-603) and the *Garbhāvākṛāntinirdeśa Sūtra* (佛說胞胎經; T.11, 886). The latter puts special emphasis on the spiritual union of the parents and includes explanations of fetal development from the first week of conception to thirty eight weeks. (T.11, 887-889) The *Mahāratnakūta Sūtra* (大寶積經) includes the *Garbhāvākṛāntinirdeśa* (佛為阿難說處胎會) which teaches how very rare causal conditions (因緣) it is to enter a womb with the three proper conditions (T. v.55, 323).

The *Abhidharmamahāvibhāsaśāstra* (阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論) (T.27, v70, 363) and the *Abhidharmakośaśāstra* (阿毘達磨俱舍論) (T.29, 44) also deal with the harmony of the three conditions. More importance is put on the mother's health than the father's in these texts because normal and healthy growth of the fetus from conception to birth depends on the health of the mother. Since conception depends on the spiritual harmony of the mother and father as well as the presence of the *vijñāna*, the fertilized egg is not exclusively an organic body: a spiritual entity (sik) exists in it already (Kim Myoju, 1997:478).

There are a number of *Vijnāptimātra Sūtras* and commentaries such as the *Sandhīnirmocana Sūtra* (解深密經) and the

Yogācāryabhūmiśāstra (瑜伽師地論) which provide details of the intermediate state between lives, the maturing embryo, its sense organs and consciousness and all the complex karmic linkages between stages. Let it best be said in summary that "a spiritual entity (*ālayavijñāna* which is the subject of *samsāra*) dwells in the womb from the moment of conception. Therefore, abortion is next to killing."(Kim Myoju, 1997:490)

Glossary of Chinese Terms

* Notes : S=Sanskrit C=Chinese K=Korean

Avici 無間地獄

Abhidharmamahāvibhāsaśāstra 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論

Abhidharmakośaśāstra 阿毘達磨俱舍論

Brahmajāla Sutta 梵網經

Changsu myōl choi hoje dongja darani gyōng

(C: Chang shou mieh tsui hu chu t'ung tzu t'o lo ni ching) 長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經

ch'ōndo-je 薦度齊

Culla vagga 小品

Dhammapada 法句經

Digha Nikāya 長部

Ekottarāgama Sūtra 增一阿含經

gandhabba 中陰身

Garbhāvkrāntinirdeśa 佛為阿難說處胎會

Kathāvatthu 論事論

Mahāratnakūta Sūtra 大寶積經

Mahāsāṅghika 大眾部

Mahāvagga 大品

Mahimsāsaka 化地部

Majjhima Nikāya 中部

pangsaeng 放生

pārājika 波羅夷

Petavatthu 餓鬼事經

Samkicca Jātaka 本生經
 Sandhūnirmocana Sūtra 解深密經
 Sarvāstivāda 一切有經
 Silakkhanda Vagga 戒蘊品
 thullaccaya 偷蘭庶罪
 Vinaya Piṭka 律藏
 Yogācāryabhūmiśāstra 瑜伽師地論

Abbreviation

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