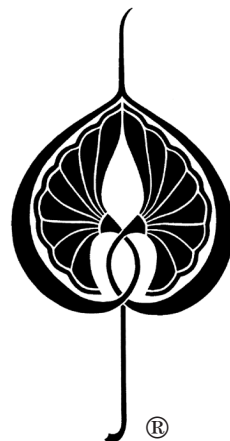


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**Treatise Resolving Doubts About the Pure Land
(Jingtu jueyi lun 淨土決疑論) By Master Yinguang 印
光 (1861–1940)***

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Master Yinguang (印光, 1861–1947) is one of the four most influential Buddhist monks in modern Chinese history, along with the modernizer and reformer Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), the monastic precepts master Hongyi 弘一 (1880–1942), and the meditation master Xuyun 虛雲 (1840–1959). During a period when some who were aligned with the Chan school attacked Pure Land Buddhist teachings as vulgar, shallow, and suited only to the needs of the uneducated, superstitious classes,¹ Yinguang worked to define the tradition and its practices on a solid theoretical basis. His classical education, erudition, wide knowledge of Buddhist scriptures, and simple devotion earned him a following throughout the Chinese Buddhist world. Upon his death, he was widely acclaimed as the thirteenth patriarch (zu 祖) of the Pure Land school.

The arguments presented in this treatise, which takes the form of a debate between Yinguang and an unnamed Chan monk, occur in the context of two separate and competing streams of Pure Land thought. The first, called “Consciousness-only Pure Land” (*weishi jingtu* 惟/唯識淨土) or “Mind-only Pure Land” (惟/唯心淨土), took its cue from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*, which teaches that the land in which a buddha dwells is innately pure; any apparent impurity in it arises from the deluded mind of the observer. Thus, when the disciple Śāriputra wonders why the realm of his master, Śākyamuni Buddha, seems so impure, the Buddha grants him the ability to see the world as a buddha sees it—where all appears pure and dazzling in all directions. As the Buddha explains, “Just so, Śāriputra, living beings born in the same buddha-field see the splendor of the virtues of the buddha-fields of the Buddhas

* A correction to the title of this article was made on November 9, 2020.

according to their own degrees of purity.”² The point of this, as critics of “superstitious and vulgar” practitioners of Pure Land Buddhism never failed to point out, is that the Pure Land cannot be localized at all, nor ought it to be conceived of as a place outside this impure world. Rather, purification of one’s mind through meditative practice brings about the purification of this present world. Purity is ultimately in the mind of the beholder.

Yinguang represented the other side of this debate. In postulating a pure land that was outside of the present impure world, which could be localized to the west of the present world, and which could not be reduced to a psychological state or fable, he belonged to the tradition referred to as “Western Pure Land” (*xifang jingtu* 西方淨土) or “other-direction Pure Land” (*tafang jingtu* 他方淨土). In this capacity, he strove against his unnamed adversary’s strategy (a venerable one in Chinese Buddhist history) of defining Pure Land practice in Chan terms, and of dismissing a literalist interpretation of the Pure Land as ignorant and dualistic. In fighting this view, Yinguang refers to scriptures that describe even the most realized bodhisattvas seeking rebirth in Amitābha Buddha’s Pure Land in the West, reinterprets Yongming Yanshou’s (永明延壽, 904–975) famous fourfold relation of Chan and Pure Land, and even quotes famous Chan masters and patriarchs to show that they were not quite as anti-Pure Land as they might have sometimes appeared to be. In the course of the debate, he gradually wears down his opponent, and in the end the Chan follower submits to Yinguang as his teacher and vows to seek rebirth himself in the Pure Land.

The text is of interest not only because of Yinguang’s eminence within the history of Pure Land Buddhism in China as a popularizer and author, but also because it straddles the divide between premodern and modern Buddhist concerns in China. This may well be the last text ever to debate the positions of “Western Pure Land” versus “other-direction Pure Land,” since at the time of its publication Taixu was proclaiming his new ideas about “Buddhism for human life” (*rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教), a set of ideas about finding a place for Buddhism in the midst of human affairs rather than in the worlds of gods or in the afterlife. Taixu’s ideas led eventually to the articulation of the new ideal of creating a “Pure Land in the human realm” (*renjian jingtu* 人間淨土).

In addition, within the text Yinguang takes on a venerable topic of Buddhist textuality: the authenticity of various versions of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經). While past authors had been able to

assert the text's scriptural status and cited it as an authority, Yinguang had to cope with rather modern textual-critical issues and, to address the text's redaction history, albeit reluctantly. Even an avowed traditionalist had to at least acknowledge and address the concerns of modernity at this point in time.

The translation that follows is based on Yinguang's text, the "Treatise Resolving Doubts About the Pure Land" (*Jingtu jueyi lun* 淨土決疑論), in *The Collected Works of Great Master Yinguang (Yinguang Dashi quanji* 印光大師全集), compiled and edited by Shi Guangding 釋廣定 (Taipei 臺北: Fojiao chubanshe 佛教出版社, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 357–371. My reading of the text was assisted by an annotated version prepared by the monk Chansheng 懺生, which appears in the same collection under the title "Patriarch Yinguang's Treatise Resolving Doubts About the Pure Land with Light Annotations" (*Yinguang zu jingtu jueyi lun qianjie* 印光祖『淨土決疑論』淺解), vol. 6, pp. 81–194.

THE TEXT

[p. 357] In medicine, there is no "expensive" or "cheap"; if it cures the disease, then the medicine is good. In the dharma, there is no "superior" and "inferior"; whatever answers to the present opportunity is marvelous. In the past, people's faculties were extraordinary, and their knowledge [was] like the [trees of] the forest. Following and practicing a single teaching, they could all attain the Way. But today, people's roots are inferior and their knowledge greatly diminished. If they abandon the Pure Land, then they will never attain liberation. I am ashamed that through many births spanning many *kalpas*, I put down few good roots. My fortune was meager and my intelligence shallow; the obstacles were severe and my [bad] karma ran deep. In my student years I did not meet with a good friend, and I never heard of the Way passed on by sages and worthies. I was struggling to swallow the anti-Buddhist poison of Han[Yu] and Ou[yang Xiu],³ but before I could complete my studies, the strength of my karma manifested itself. From this time I was afflicted with illness for several years, which left me unable to attend to my affairs.⁴

I thought deeply about "the gods and spirits of heaven and earth, and how eminent they are."⁵ The sages and worthies of the past and present are just as numerous. Besides, Buddhist teachings have no authority with which to intimidate people into following them; they must rely on holy ones, gentlemen, and sages (*sheng, jun, xian* 聖, 君, 賢) to

uphold them—only thus can they circulate throughout the world. If the teachings brought such results as Han Yu and Ouyang Xiu say, and went against the sagely Way (*sheng dao* 聖道), then they would bring harm to China. Not only that, but if all of the sages and worthies of the past and present were not able to accommodate [Buddhist teachings] in the world, would not the gods and spirits of Heaven and Earth have annihilated them long ago? Why would they have waited for Han Yu and Ouyang Xiu to refute them with empty words?

The Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhongyong* 中庸) says that in the Way of the sage as well as the way of foolish men and women there exist both knowledge and practice. Yet in their farthest extent even the sage is unable to know or put into practice [some things].⁶ Now, even though Han Yu and Ouyang Xiu were worthies (*xian* 賢), they were far from being sages (*sheng* 聖). And what is it that even worthies and sages cannot know or do? The very teachings of Buddhism, which common sentiment and worldly knowledge cannot infer.

Thus, I quickly altered my past mind, and left the household life to become a monk. I took stock of my abilities, [and saw that] if I did not rely on the power of the Tathāgata's all-encompassing vows, it would certainly be difficult to attain *samādhi* and leave the cycle of birth-and-death. From that time on, the Buddha was my only thought, the Pure Land my only goal.

For many years, I recklessly took to the lecture mat, and for a long time practiced Chan meditation.⁷ However, it was only for the purpose of shedding light on the first truths of the Pure Land and attain the necessary qualifications for a superior-rank (*shang pin* 上品) rebirth in the Pure Land.⁸ Regrettably, I was physically weak and frail, and had difficulty maintaining fierce and heroic practice. But since I had firmly taken hold of [the Buddha's] vows, all the lecturers and meditation teachers in the world [p. 358] could not shake it from my grasp. Even if all the buddhas were to appear and tell me to practice the other methods of cultivation, I still would not be willing to let go of this and take up that in violation of my original plan.⁹ However, my past karma was such that to the end I never achieved the state of a unified, undisturbed mind (*yi xin bu luan* 一心不亂) so as to attain for myself the *samādhi* of buddha-recollection (*nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧). My shame is so great!

One day, there was a senior monk who had long engaged in Chan meditation and had also penetrated deeply into Buddhist doctrines, and he was contemptuous of everything else.¹⁰ He had vowed to achieve the

realization of the One Vehicle, and imitated Sudhana's travels to many different teachers; in this way he had come to [Hong]luo Mountain (紅螺山, Yinguang's residence at that time) to ask for lodging.¹¹ At that time, I happened to be reading "The Essentials of the *Amitābha-sūtra*,"¹² a work whose words are deep and whose doctrines are wonderful, not suitable for those of childish understanding.¹³ I wanted to collect and edit [Tian]tai teachings, and assemble them point by point into a document in order that the beginning student could more easily make progress. It wasn't that I dared to mimic the way that the virtuous monks of old propagated and commented on the wonders of the Way; I just wanted to create better conditions for those who might enter the Way after me. I was glad of [this monk's] arrival, and I gave him a copy of the "Essentials" and told him of my intentions.

This senior monk then said to me, "I've looked at the 'Essentials' before. Look here where it says, 'None of the marvelous treasures of Huayan [teachings], the secret marrow of the *Lotus [Sūtra]*, the essential mind of all the buddhas, and the guidance of the ten thousand bodhisattva practices go beyond this.' If the 'this' (i.e., Pure Land teachings) is so broad that one cannot count all instantiations of it, then this is to suppress the teachings of all the individual schools of Buddhism and praise the Pure Land too much, to slander the wheel of the orthodox dharma, and to mislead the people. A hundred million Great Teacher Ouyi [Zhixu]s, using a thousand rarely seen knowledges and insights, do not match the direct pointing to the human mind and the propagation of calm abiding and insight meditations. Quite the opposite: in grasping at this 'Essentials' the way that common people grasp at magic amulets to protect their bodies, all the clergy and laypeople in the world will clutch at a single method and abandon the ten thousand practices [of Buddhism], taking the puddle and abandoning the great sea. This is the same as entering into the wrong way and turning one's back on the road to enlightenment, extirpating all the seeds of buddhahood, an offense that would fill all of space! Someone who genuinely wants to repay the Buddha's kindness will waste no time in utterly exterminating [this teaching]. And to write a document to help it gain currency—it is just too much!" His voice was filled with indignation, as if he were facing an enemy.

I waited until he had calmed down, and then gently answered him, saying, "So you look on this 'Essentials' of Ouyi [Zhixu] as a mire of offense. But you only know the end of its stream; you don't know its

source. This is like a stupid dog chasing after a clod [of earth], and not like the king of geese who chooses milk.¹⁴ You should know that the transcendent truth is not in this ‘Essentials’ by Master Ouyi; rather, it is in Śākyamuni Buddha, Amitābha Buddha, and all the buddhas of the ten directions, along with the three Pure Land sūtras, the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, the *Lotus Sūtra*, and all Mahāyāna sūtras. It is in Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Aśvaghōṣa, Nāgārjuna, [Tiantai] Zhiyi, Shandao, Qingjing, Yongming [Yanshou], and all the great masters and bodhisattvas.¹⁵ If you consider yourself a dharma king, then please correct their fault. [p. 359] Put what you have just said into practice throughout the world; if you don’t, then people will take a common bumpkin from the fields and mistakenly address him as ‘your Majesty,’ taking the law into their own hands and betraying the kingship. In no great time they will exterminate the households and destroy the people.

“Do not talk this way, slandering the Buddha, slandering the dharma, slandering the monastic community, lest you fall into the Avīci hell, there to suffer for interminable eons without respite. You are presuming upon the small amount of good fortune you accumulated in former lives to create endless eons of bitter retribution. When all the buddhas of the past, present, and future speak of the one who is most to be pitied, they will mean you.”

Alarmed by this, he said, “Master, you say that the fault extends to Śākyamuni Buddha, Amitābha Buddha, and so forth. What kind of extraordinary statement is this? Please lay out your reasoning; if it is convincing, then dare I not submit?”

I responded, “The Tathāgata appears in the world because of the causes and conditions arising from one great matter. The term ‘causes and conditions arising from one great matter’ means his desire to lead all beings to open their perception and enter into a buddha’s vision of wisdom and straightaway become buddhas themselves, that’s all. Could there be any other [cause]?”

“It is inevitable that beings will have roots either great or small, and delusions either shallow or profound, and so it is not feasible to elaborate the Buddha’s original desire directly. Consequently, he lays out his teachings according to beings’ abilities, and prescribes medicines according to the disease. For the sake of truth he sets forth provisional [teachings], and by means of the provisional he manifests the truth. Within the one-vehicle dharma, he makes all manner and variety of explanations. If there are those whose roots of virtue are ripe, then he causes them to reach the shore of enlightenment, and if there

are those whose evil karma is deep and thick then he causes them to gradually emerge from their defilements and vexations. He stoops to meet and lead them, bringing them step by step to a right understanding. All the mothers and fathers of Heaven and Earth cannot compare with even a portion of his [kindness and skill].

“Furthermore, all of the dharma gates depend upon one’s own power, so that even if one’s karmic roots are deep and thick, one must cause them to thoroughly see their own minds. If there remains even the slightest degree of delusion in one’s own view of either principle or phenomena, then in dependence upon this preexisting karma one will not emerge from the wheel of birth-and-death. Moreover, they will have once again entered the darkness of the womb, and having made contact they will give rise to grasping. Those who proceed from awakening to awakening are few, while those who go from delusion to delusion are many. If even those of the highest capacities are like this, then we need not even bring up those of middling and inferior capacities. Trying to cut off delusions about principle is like trying to cut off a river forty *li* wide; how much more [difficult would it be to cut off] delusions about phenomena? Penetrating birth and casting off death—how could this be easy? Because of this, one cannot mediate the Buddha’s original intention universally to beings of the three kinds of roots (i.e., superior, middling, and inferior).

“Only the Pure Land teachings set forth exclusive dependence upon the power of Amitābha Buddha’s great vows. Regardless of whether or not one’s good roots have ripened, or whether one’s bad karma is light or heavy, one need only be willing to generate faith and make the vows and recite the Buddha’s name, and at the end of one’s life, Amitābha Buddha will compassionately descend to meet and guide one to rebirth in the Pure Land. This is in order that those whose good roots have ripened may immediately attain to the sudden fruition of perfect buddhahood, while those whose evil karma is heavy may enter the holy stream. This is the essential path by which the buddhas of the past, present, and future save all beings, [p. 360] and this is the marvelous dharma practiced by holy ones and worldlings alike. All of the Mahāyāna scriptures derive their fundamental teachings from this, and there is no patriarch or master in history who has not practiced it.

“You have taken refuge in meditation and doctrinal study, and foolishly say that those who propagate Pure Land teachings slander the orthodox wheel of dharma and cut off their seeds of buddhahood. This is adequate proof that demons have attached themselves to your

body and you have taken leave of your senses. These are the hell-seeds of seeing delusion as enlightenment, and pointing to the truth while calling it heresy.

“Now, distant eons in the past, Śākyamuni Buddha and Amitābha Buddha generated great vows to lead all sentient beings to liberation. The first manifested in the impure world, so that by means of impurity and suffering he could break its hold on beings and impel them to escape from it. The other establishes his Pure Land so that by means of its purity and joy he could gather them all in and then bring them along.¹⁶

“Your knowledge is limited to the ignorant men and women who can [only] recite the Buddha’s name, and this leads you to denigrate the Pure Land. But why not look at the *Gaṇḍavyūha* section of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, where Sudhana, after attaining equality with all buddhas, is taught by Samantabhadra to generate the ten great vow kings, and dedicate the merit of these acts to rebirth in the Western Paradise, there to attain perfect buddhahood, and moreover to urge [these vows on] all the assembly of the Lotus Sea?

“Now among the assembly of the Lotus Sea, there are no worldlings, nor are there two vehicles [to salvation]. All the great *dharmakāya* masters at all forty-one stages¹⁷ have broken through ignorance, realized their dharma nature, and can ride the wheel of the Original Vow to manifest as buddhas in any world that lacks a buddha. Among this Lotus Sea assembly, there are pure lands without number, and so it must be that those who dedicate merit toward attaining rebirth in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss can be assured that, having gained this rebirth, they have taken the hidden gate out of suffering and the short path to becoming a buddha.

“That is why, from ancient times until the present, [those in] all monasteries, whether devoted to meditation, doctrinal study, or monastic precepts, recite [Amitābha] Buddha’s name in their morning and evening chanting services, and seek rebirth in the West. How is it that you, with all the time you have spent participating in monastic life, now turn around and seek to destroy and slander your own daily practice? Surely there has never been anyone to whom the Confucian dictum ‘he participates but does not revere, he uses it daily but does not know’ applied more aptly!¹⁸

“Now the *Avatamsaka* is considered the king of scriptures, reigning over the entire canon. One who does not believe the *Avatamsaka* is an

icchantika. Even though you may not fall into the Avīci hell, in the end you will certainly sink lower and lower without respite. I wish to escape from suffering and seek rebirth in the Pure Land, while you desire to look for suffering by destroying and maligning the *Avatamsaka*. You keep to your intention, and I will tread my own path. The general does not come down from his horse; each must press ahead of his own accord. There is no common ground between us. You can go! I will not speak with you.”

He said, “The Way is precious and reaches to all, and doubts must be analyzed and resolved. Master, what is the view that you reject so deeply? Listen to this: ‘Vairocana [Buddha] permeates everywhere, and the abode of his buddhas is called ‘Eternal Quiescent Light’ (*changji guang* 常寂光).’¹⁹ [p. 361] However, wherever the *dharmakāya* is attained, that place is the ‘Pure Land of Quiescent Light’ (*jiguang jingtu* 寂光淨土). So what need is there to let the mind of production and cessation forsake the East and choose the West, considering this a gain?”

I said, “Easier said than done! Although it is true that this very place is the Pure Land of Quiescent Light, still, one who has not attained perfect wisdom and thoroughly cut off all vexations and perfectly realized the *dharmakāya* of Vairocana cannot thoroughly gain it and apply it. The forty-one stages of abodes, practices, dedications of merit, grounds, and awakening to equality in the perfect teaching still involve progressive attainments.²⁰ If you have perfectly realized the *dharmakāya* of Vairocana, then you could very well say that this very place is [the Land of] Quiescent Light. But for those who have not [yet attained to this], this is like telling them to eat jewels. They would inevitably starve and die.”

He said, “[My] school has always affirmed mind-only Pure Land, and the self-nature Amitābha; this cannot be wrong.”²¹

I replied, “What [your] school says refers exclusively to the nature of principle (*lixing* 理性); it does not refer to practice in the phenomenal realm (*shixiu* 事修). What this means is that you want people to begin by realizing the principle that one is born a buddha without involving [false dualities of] cause and effect, practice and attainment, worldlings and holy ones, and only afterward begin practicing the causes and attain the fruit, transcendence of the worldly and entrance into the holy. This is to say that sentient beings *as sentient beings* attain the buddha Way. This is how you misconstrue ‘principle’ and ‘phenomena’ and turn the view of wisdom on its head!

“Again: You consider ‘forsaking the East and choosing the West’ to be ‘production and cessation.’ What you do not know is that to grasp at the East and disparage the West is nihilism. Now, without having attained subtle enlightenment, who can dispense with choosing [one] and forsaking [the other]? During three incalculable eons of practice, in one hundred *kalpas* of cultivating the causes [of enlightenment], in seeking [from those] above and converting [those] below, in cutting off delusion and attaining truth, where would there be no choosing [one thing] and forsaking [something else]? You must realize that the Tathāgata wishes to lead all sentient beings to the realization of the *dharmakāya* and the [Land of] Quiescent Light, and thus he specially recommends the recitation of the Buddha’s name in order to seek rebirth in the West.”

Question: “Elder Zaobo Li 棗柏李長者 (i.e., Li Tongxuan 李通玄, 635–730), in his *Avataṃsaka-sūtra with Exposition*,²² says that the Western Pure Land is [a concept for] worldlings who still grasp at the characteristics of phenomena and do not yet believe in the true principle of the emptiness of *dharma*s. It concentrates their minds in recollection, partially purifies their minds, and enables them to attain rebirth in the Pure Land. It is provisional, not the [absolute] truth. So why would the Lotus Sea assembly desire to go together for rebirth [in this Pure Land]? Master Zaobo achieved sainthood during his own lifetime, and possessed inconceivable supernormal perception and wisdom. He was surely a manifestation of one of the bodhisattvas of the Lotus assembly, and his words cannot be erroneous.”

Answer: “Even though Master Zaobo was a manifestation of a bodhisattva, the scripture had not yet been fully transmitted [to China], and he had no way of prejudging [how it would end]; that is why he spoke in this way. Zaobo composed his *Exposition* during the Kaiyuan reign period of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang (i.e., between 713 to his death in 730). He died after finishing the work. Over fifty years later, during the eleventh year of the Zhenyuan reign period of Emperor Dezong of the Tang (i.e., 795), the king of the south Indian kingdom of Odra sent over a forty-fascicle Sanskrit copy of the *Chapter on the Practice of Samantabhadra’s Vows* (*Puxian xingyuan pin* 普賢行願品), [p. 362] and it was not until 798 that it was translated and began to circulate.²³ The first thirty-nine fascicles correspond to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* of the eighty-fascicle *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, and it adds some details. In its eighteenth fascicle, Sudhana’s attainments, gained through Samantabhadra’s

authority and power, become equal to those of Samantabhadra and all buddhas. Samantabhadra then proclaims *gāthās* praising the miraculous merits of the Tathāgata. The text is incomplete, and closes on an inconclusive note.

“Then the *Chapter on the Practice of Samantabhadra’s Vows* arrived, and in its fortieth fascicle, Samantabhadra counsels Sudhana and the entire Lotus Sea assembly to dedicate the merits from the practice of the ten great vow kings to rebirth in the Western Paradise. After this counsel, the Tathāgata gives his approbation, and the great assembly puts it into practice. Thus the text was finally complete.²⁴ That is why ancient masters appended this one fascicle onto their commentaries on the eighty-fascicle *Avatamsaka*. They desired that later practitioners would all receive and support the scripture in its entirety.

“The ancient masters explained that this one method of seeking rebirth in the Pure Land was something that only the Buddha with the other buddhas could penetrate completely. The fact that bodhisattvas of the first ground cannot know even a fraction of it is due to just this. Consequently, the Pure Land takes in all those of superior roots and sharp faculties. The *Great Collection Sūtra* (*Da ji jing* 大集經) says: ‘In the time of the Final Dharma, myriads and myriads of beings will cultivate religious practices, but only a few will attain the Way. Only in dependence upon [the practice of] reciting the Buddha’s name can they escape the cycle of birth-and-death.’²⁵ Thus, all humans and gods, and all beings in the six realms of rebirth, are entangled in worldliness, but the Pure Land encompasses them all without exception. Now, you believe Master Zaobo, but you do not believe the *Chapter on the Practice of Samantabhadra’s Vows* or the *Great Collection Sūtra*. This is like obeying a temporary county ordinance while violating the eternal decree of the emperor. How is it that you do not know [how to distinguish] elder and junior, trivial and important?”

Question: “But if [Master Zaobo] was a manifestation of one of the bodhisattvas of the Lotus Sea assembly, why would he have had to wait for the transmission of the sūtra [into China] before he knew this?”

Answer: “Spreading the Buddha’s teachings is no easy matter. It can only be believed on the basis of evidence. The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* transcends the collection of [all other] scriptures by far and there is no way to categorize it, so it must be taken on its own merits.”

Question: “Then how could Master Daosheng have known and advocated the teaching that even *icchantikas* have buddha-nature before

the complete text of the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* arrived? Are you saying that Master Zaobo was not the equal of Master Daosheng?”²⁶

Answer: “*Icchantikas* are living beings, and all living beings have buddha-nature; anyone with wisdom could have foreseen that. No scripture asserts that rebirth [in the Pure Land] is the perfect fulfillment of the fruit of buddhahood. Who would dare to set up such a strange teaching on the basis of their own thinking? The two are incommensurable in principle and in their particulars, and they cannot be drawn upon for proof. As for the attainments of the two masters, that is not something that anyone in my generation of worldly beings can know. How could I dare to discuss it? Surely you must know [p. 363] that when bodhisattvas propagate the teachings, sometimes it goes against the grain [of their hearers], and sometimes with the grain, so that they have many, many kinds of expedient means. It is inconceivable! So would it necessarily not be the case that Master Zaobo [merely] acted as if he did not know in order to strengthen future generations in their belief?”

Question: “All the masters of the Chan school deny the Pure Land. What do you say to that?”

Answer: “The masters of the Chan school all transmit nothing but the buddha-mind. All their sayings and explanations point upward to enlightenment. You have practiced Chan for many years and you still do not know this? If so, then all your explanations are merely defective views that damage the Chan school.”

Question: “How dare ignorant beings all over the world be so arbitrary! The sincere words of the patriarchs are absolutely reliable. The Sixth Patriarch [Huineng 惠能] said, ‘When people in the East commit wrong, they recite the Buddha’s name to gain rebirth in the Western Pure Land. When people in the West (i.e., those who are already in the Pure Land) commit wrong, they will recite the Buddha’s name to gain rebirth in which land?’”²⁷

“Zhaozhou said, ‘I do not like hearing the word “buddha,” and again, ‘If a senior monk recites the name of the Buddha just once, he should rinse his mouth for three days.’”²⁸ Many patriarchs of the Chan school have spoken in this manner. What do you say to that?”

Answer: “The Sixth Patriarch was pointing directly to enlightenment, leading people to apprehend their own minds. You have taken [his words] as maxims for explaining doctrines, or arguments about methods of practice. [Like] the proverbial mistaking a donkey’s saddlebone for your grandfather’s jawbone,²⁹ how wrong can one be?”

“You should know that the inhabitants of the West[ern Pure Land] have thoroughly purified thoughts and perceptions, and are advancing toward breaking the delusions of attachment to emptiness and finally ignorance itself.³⁰ As long as they progress in their practice, they cannot possibly commit wrong.³¹

“As to [the question of] the land in which they aspire to be reborn: within this space, those who have not thoroughly cut off [false] thoughts and perceptions and attain rebirth in reliance upon the Buddha’s compassion while still bearing the burden of karma will be reborn in the ‘Pure Land Where Worldlings and Sages Dwell Together’ (*fan-sheng tongju jingtu* 凡聖同居淨土). After a lifetime in that land, the delusions of thoughts and perceptions are thoroughly extinguished. Like a snowflake that melts away before it even reaches the furnace, so do all vulgar thoughts cease when virtuous people come together. When they have completely purified thoughts and perceptions, they then gain rebirth in the ‘Pure Land of Expedient Means With Remainder’ (*fangbian youyu jingtu* 方便有餘淨土). Having partially eliminated ignorance, they then attain rebirth in the ‘Pure Land of True Recompense and Non-obstruction’ (*shibao wu zhang’ai jingtu* 實報無障礙淨土). When they have thoroughly eliminated all ignorance, then they attain rebirth in the ‘Pure Land of Eternally Quiescent Light’ (*chang ji guang jingtu* 常寂光淨土). If this is so for those who practice here, how much more so for those who practice in that land (i.e., the Pure Land)?³²

“Why do you think too much about the place of nonproduction so that you obstruct yourself and others, and remain unwilling to seek rebirth [in the Pure Land]? Refusing to eat because you fear choking, you will lose your very life! Among all the idiotic people under Heaven, is there anyone worse than you?

“So you know how Zhaozhou 趙州 said ‘I do not enjoy hearing the word “buddha”’? Why do you not quote the rest of the text: ‘A monk asked, “Are [we] then to consider the master as [only] human or not?”, and [Zhao]zhou answered, “a buddha, a buddha”’?³³ You only wish to rely on his saying ‘If one recites the Buddha’s name once he ought to rinse his mouth for three days,’ but why not [also] rely on this: ‘A monk asked, “If the master were to receive a great king who came to give offerings, how would he respond to him?” [Zhao]zhou said, [p. 364] “Recite the Buddha’s name.”’ Why do you not refer to the story where a monk asks Zhaozhou whether the buddhas of the ten directions themselves have a teacher and Zhaozhou answers yes. When the monk asked who is the teacher of all buddhas, Zhaozhou replied,

‘Amitābha Buddha, Amitābha Buddha.’³⁴ You assert that all the masters of the Chan lineages mostly have sentences and phrases like this. You do not know that a Chan master’s words spoken in response to a specific situation is called ‘the opportune point’ or ‘the turning word.’³⁵ The question contains the answer, and the answer contains the question. You do not know about ‘reversing the illumination to return to the light,’³⁶ or to ‘go to oneself for teaching.’³⁷ Up until now, you have only been greedily devouring wine dregs and chasing clods of dirt for such a long time!

“I have been a monk now for over thirty years, and everyone has been propagating phrases like ‘[ought to] rinse their mouths’ or ‘I don’t like to hear’ with a single voice. But I have yet to hear anyone say one word about ‘to be human by “Buddha, Buddha,”’ or ‘repay kindness by reciting the Buddha’s name,’ or ‘Amitābha is the teacher of all buddhas of the ten directions.’ But let me put in a word here—if you are to regard the one as true and reliable, then the other must also be true and reliable. How can you say that the disparaging [remarks] are reliable but the supportive [remarks] are inadmissible? To say that the one is reliable while the other is inadmissible is self-contradictory!

“As to Zhaozhou’s words, they all lead back to [one’s] original nature. ‘I don’t like to hear the word “Buddha”’ and ‘recite the Buddha’s name’ are equal, since they both count as ‘turning words.’ Only if one can achieve direct consciousness of one’s own mind can one know that Zhaozhou is communicating what is beyond feeling, that his speech transcends the ordinary. There is not enough time to recite the Buddha’s name diligently! But if one is unable to see Zhaozhou directly, then it would be better to recite the Buddha’s name as one’s primary means of self-cultivation than to rely on disparaging the Buddha as a means of gaining the advantage in a debate.

“The result of buddha-recitation is rebirth [in the Pure Land], escape from the cycle of birth-and-death, and a guarantee of attaining buddhahood in the future. The result of disparaging the Buddha is that one slanders the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. In the present life one accumulates a mountain of guilt, while all of one’s good fortune and wisdom melt away. At the end of life one falls into the Avīci hell to suffer for long *kalpas* of time. The difference between the benefit [of buddha-recitation] and the harm [that will result from disparaging the Pure Land], the profit and loss, is as great as the distance between the heavens and the ocean floor.

“Generally, people today are of meager fortune and shallow wisdom, with heavy karma and profound impediments. Toward that which could benefit them, they act as if they were hearing slander, and toward that which inflicts harm they act as if it were the crown of the whole body. The words in the ‘opportune points’ of the masters are all like this—they never tire of devising explanations.

“You assert that the earnest words of all the masters are completely reliable. Why do you not rely on Baizhang [Huaihai] 百丈懷海 (749–814) when he says, ‘Buddha-recitation is the most secure form of practice’? And why do you not rely on him when he established rules for praying over a sick monk or dispatching a deceased monk, stating that all of the merits of the service were to be dedicated toward attaining rebirth in the Pure Land? Will you argue that Baizhang only ordered the dead to gain rebirth, and did not order the living to seek rebirth? Also, why do you not rely on the fourteenth Indian patriarch, [p. 365] Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva? The Tathāgata predicted that he would gain rebirth, and in the [undersea] palace of the *nāga* [king] he brought forth the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. He composed a broad variety of treatises, but praised the Western [Pure Land] in particular, calling it the ‘Path of Easy Practice and Quick Arrival’ in his *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā-śāstra*.³⁸

“Also, why do you not rely on the twelfth Patriarch Aśvagoṣa Bodhisattva? At the end of his *Awakening of Faith*, he demonstrates the greatest of all expedient means in order to lead people to contemplate the Buddha and seek rebirth in the West, to wait constantly on Amitābha Buddha and never regress.³⁹ Also, why do you not rely on the second patriarch Ānanda and the first patriarch Kaśyapa, who knit together the Tripiṭaka along with all of the Pure Land sutras? If the Pure Land teachings are deficient and can harm the world, then how is it that they did not know the good from the bad but handed them down to later generations, bringing guilt upon themselves?

“Also, all of the Mahāyāna sutras praise the Pure Land, while the Hināyāna sūtras do not say the first word about it. Will you claim that the Mahāyāna sutras are deficient in their teaching?

“Again, when the Buddha preached the *Amitābha-sūtra*, all the buddhas of the six directions appeared, numberless as the sands of the Ganges, and putting forth one long and expansive tongue, they counseled faith in this sutra.⁴⁰ Will you claim that all the buddhas of the six directions passed [these erroneous teachings] down to humanity, creating [for themselves] a mire of guilt?

“If you say that [devotees] cannot fail to put their faith in the Sixth Patriarch [Huineng], Zhaozhou, and so on, then how much more must they put their faith in Nāgārjuna, Aśvaghoṣa, Ānanda, Kaśyapa, Śākyamuni, Amitābha, all the buddhas of the six directions, and all the Mahāyāna scriptures. [However,] if you assert that all the buddhas, all the patriarchs, and all the scriptures are not trustworthy, then how much more must you say this of the Sixth Patriarch and Zhaozhou? You see what is close at hand but not what is distant; you know the small but you do not know the great. You are like a rustic who is in awe of the county magistrate but does not know of the emperor’s majesty. A small child will pick up a copper coin as soon as he spots it, yet he will walk past the wish-fulfilling jewel without paying it any mind.

“Do you even know about Yongming [Yanshou 永明延壽, (904–975)]’s ‘Four Alternatives’ (*si liao jian* 四料簡), which speaks of the [potential] benefits and harms, gains and losses, that accrue from either having or not having Chan or the Pure Land?⁴¹ Now, Yongming was a manifest body (*huashen* 化身) of Amitābha, so how could he be willing to pass this mire of guilt down to people, to ‘slander the wheel of orthodox dharma,’ to ‘mislead the people,’ and to ‘cut off the seeds of buddhahood?’⁴²

He replied, “Yongming’s ‘Four Alternatives’ is too tangled in incoherence to be considered an adequate teaching. Why do I say this? He claims, ‘Having both Chan and the Pure Land, one is like a tiger with horns. Such a person will be a teacher in the present life, and a buddha or patriarch in future lives.’ If we speak like this, then [we observe that] among those in the Chan school nowadays there are many types [of people], and everyone knows who is practicing *nianfo*. There are also some who live in the buddha-recitation hall and recite the Buddha’s name for many long years. Are they *all* capable of being ‘teachers in the present life, and buddhas and patriarchs in future lives’? Also, [the verse] says, ‘Lacking Chan but having the Pure Land, ten thousand out of ten thousand who practice it will go. However, having seen Amitābha, why worry about not attaining enlightenment?’ Now, among the foolish [p. 366] men and women of today, you find some practicing *nianfo* exclusively everywhere you go. However, there has yet to be seen one who manifests auspicious omens at the time of death, or whom the Buddha comes to meet and conduct to rebirth in the West. Thus, we can be sure that Yongming’s ‘Four Alternatives’ is a deficient teaching.”

I said, “How could you have gobbled down the whole fruit and not tasted any of its flavor?!”⁴³ Yongming’s ‘Four Alternatives’ is a distillation of the scriptures and a divining mirror for practice. First, however, we must agree on the meaning of ‘Chan,’ ‘Pure Land,’ ‘having’ and ‘lacking.’ After that, we can analyze the text and know that each word is ‘as Heaven and Earth devised,’ without one single inappropriate word, and without one single word that could be altered. For many decades now I have heard the Chan masters give talks, and they are all like you: not a little extraordinary. With views like theirs, it is not surprising that their Chan and their Pure Land [practice] both grow more feeble by the day.”

Question: “What do we call ‘Chan’ and ‘Pure Land,’ ‘having’ and ‘lacking’? Please condescend to make this clear.”

Answer: “Chan is a person’s inherent suchness and buddha-nature, or, as the Chan school puts it, ‘one’s original face before one’s mother and father were born.’ The words of this school [by themselves] do not reveal it, so they lead people to practice and attain it for themselves. That is why they speak in this way: the truth is devoid of subject and object; it is serene and illuminating spiritual knowledge apart from [discursive] thought, the pure, true substance of mind.

“The Pure Land means to believe in [Amitābha’s] vows and to hold to his name, seeking rebirth in the West. It does not one-sidedly mean ‘Mind-only Pure Land’ (*weixin jingtu* 唯心淨土) or ‘the Amitābha of one’s own self-nature’ (*zixing mituo* 自性彌陀).⁴⁴

“To ‘have Chan’ is to practice and penetrate to the limits of your ability, with thoughts serene and passions stilled, and to thoroughly see your original face before your father and mother were born—with a luminous mind to see one’s own nature.

“To ‘have the Pure Land’ means to genuinely generate the mind of enlightenment, to engender faith, to make vows, to hold to the recitation of the Buddha’s name, and to seek rebirth in the West.

“‘Chan’ and ‘Pure Land’ [by themselves only] have to do with teachings and principles. ‘Having Chan’ and ‘having the Pure Land’ refer to capabilities and cultivation. Teachings and principle are always the same; a buddha cannot add to them, nor can a worldling detract from them. Capabilities and cultivation must give rise to practice based on teachings, and when practice reaches its limit, then one attains principle, and causes its true existence to [manifest in] all. Although the two phrases (i.e., “Chan” and “having Chan,” “Pure Land” and “having

Pure Land”) look similar, in reality they are very different. One must attend carefully to details; one cannot stop at generalities.

“If one practices Chan without reaching enlightenment, or is only partially enlightened, then one cannot call this ‘having Chan.’ If one practices *nianfo*, then none of the following may properly be called ‘having Pure Land’: grasping one-sidedly at ‘Mind-only Pure Land’ and not really believing in the vows [of Amitābha]; having faith in the vows that is not wholly sincere and practicing in a perfunctory manner; practicing diligently while one’s mind is still in love with the dust of this world; seeking only a better rebirth in a wealthy or noble household so as to enjoy the pleasures of the five desires; merely seeking rebirth in Heaven [p. 367] so as to enjoy the pleasures of the gods; seeking ordination as a cleric in the next life so as to be enlightened a thousandfold upon hearing [the teachings] a single time, attain the quintessence of the buddha-dharma,⁴⁵ propagate the teachings and the Way, and universally benefit all beings.”

Question: “Where is the fault in leaving the household life to become a monk or a nun in order to propagate the teachings and benefit all beings? Please clarify this.”

Answer: “If one has already cut off all views and thoughts, penetrated the cycle of birth-and-death, mounted the wheel of the Great Vow [in order to] show beings the defiled world, evangelize those above and convert those below, and carry sentient beings over to liberation, then it is all right. [However,] if in spite of having wisdom and aspirations one has still not cut off views and thoughts, then while he may be free of delusion at the beginning of his life, it will be difficult to maintain this state to the end of several more rebirths. One may be able to spread the teachings, but without having realized the Unborn, the seeds of passion will remain, and it will be difficult to avoid delusion while still in contact with sense objects and involved in conditionality. There is not even one or two in ten thousand who can attain enlightenment quickly while following the delusions of the sensory realm. Truly, there are many who roam from one delusion to the next, unable to extricate themselves, floating along and sinking for endless ages!

“Because of this, the Tathāgata leads people to rebirth in the Pure Land, where they can see the Buddha and hear the teachings, and realize the forbearance of the Unborn.⁴⁶ Afterward, riding on the power of the Buddha’s compassion and the wheels of their own aspiration, they can reenter the *sahā* world and bring other sentient beings to

liberation. They will always progress and never regress; always gain, never lose. Other schools permit those who have not yet cut off all views and thoughts to propagate the dharma in this [world], but the Pure Land school would never ever allow this!

“Most people in the world think that practicing Chan is ‘having Chan,’ and that practicing *nianfo* is ‘having Pure Land.’ Not only do they not know ‘Chan’ and ‘Pure Land,’ they do not even know the meaning of these phrases. Failing to live up to the kind of compassionate mind of Yongming and the buddhas of old, they cut off a shortcut out of suffering for later generations of practitioners. Deceiving themselves and others, what extreme damage they cause! As when people say, ‘to mistake the balance point of a steelyard’ (*cuoren ding pan* 錯認定盤), if there is even one hair’s width of error, then it [might as well be] as far apart as Heaven and Earth.”

He said, “Now I have an idea of the meaning of ‘Chan,’ ‘Pure Land,’ ‘having,’ and ‘lacking.’ Now please explain in detail the profound meaning of these four verses.”

I said, “The lines, ‘Having both Chan and the Pure Land, one is like a horned tiger. Such a person will be a teacher in the present life, and a buddha or patriarch in future lives,’ refer to a person who is thoroughly enlightened in the Chan school, who has illuminated his mind and seen his nature, and who has entered deeply into the scriptures so as to understand the Tathāgata’s teachings both direct and expedient. From among all [Buddhist] teachings, such a person takes the teaching of having faith in [Amitābha’s] vows and practicing *nianfo* as the quick path and the correct practice for benefiting both himself and others. When the *Meditation Sutra* speaks of practitioners who attain the highest rebirth in the highest grade,⁴⁷ who read and chant the Mahāyāna [scriptures] and understand the primary meaning, this is the kind of person to which it refers.

“Such a person possesses great wisdom, will be skilled in debating, and the mere mention of his name will strike terror into the hearts of heretical demons and partisans of other teachings. Like a tiger with horns, he will be fierce and in a class by himself. When someone comes to him for teaching, he will be able [p. 368] to instruct him according to his capacities. In response to one who is capable of the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land, he will guide him in the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land. In response to one who is capable only of Pure Land practice, he will guide him exclusively in Pure Land practice. Regardless of

whether they have superior, middling, or inferior roots, his grace will cover them all without exception. Could such a one not be ‘a teacher of gods and humans’?

“At the end of his life, the Buddha will come for him, and he will attain the highest grade of rebirth. After only a brief moment, his lotus will open and he will see the Buddha, and attain to the forbearance of the Unborn. At the very least he will attain to the first abiding of the perfect teachings, and will quickly vault over all other positions to attain the enlightenment of equality. Within the first abiding of the perfect teachings, one is able to manifest one’s body in a hundred world-systems as a buddha, so how much more will one gain many times in eminence as one progresses directly to the forty-first position of the enlightenment of equality? This is why [the verse] says, ‘in the next life one will be a buddha or a patriarch.’⁴⁸

“The line, ‘Lacking Chan but having the Pure Land, ten thousand out of ten thousand who practice it will go; having seen Amitābha, why worry about not attaining enlightenment?’, refers to a person who has not yet illuminated their mind or seen their nature but who resolves [to do so] upon rebirth in the Pure Land. Many long *kalpas* ago, the Buddha made his great vow that he would gather in all sentient beings, as a mother remembers her children. Therefore, if one can conscientiously and sincerely think of the Buddha, as a child recalls its mother, then the ways of that person’s entreaty and the Buddha’s response will coincide, and they will benefit from [the Buddha’s] in-gathering of all beings.

“Those who strenuously cultivate *samādhi* and wisdom will of course attain rebirth. Just so, [those who have committed] the five unpardonable deeds and the ten evil acts but, oppressed by suffering at the end of their lives, experience great shame and call out the Buddha’s name ten times, or even just once before death, can also count on the Buddha to meet them and conduct them to rebirth. Is this not indeed ‘ten thousand out of ten thousand who practice it will go?’ However, even if [such a person] does not recite [the Buddha’s name] very many times, he or she can still reap this great benefit because of their fierce determination. You cannot compare the sheer number of repetitions between one such as this and another who recites [the name often but] listlessly. One born in the West, having seen the Buddha and heard the preaching, even though there may be differences in how quickly [one progresses], still, one is then part of the holy stream and will never again return to samsara. According to the depth of one’s roots, one

will attain to all of the stages of the path either gradually or suddenly. Having done this, it goes without saying that one is enlightened. This is what ‘having seen Amitābha, why worry about not attaining enlightenment?’ means.

“As to the line, ‘Having Chan but lacking the Pure Land, nine out of ten will stray from the road. When the realm of shadows appears before them, they will instantly follow it’: Even though a person may be thoroughly enlightened and may have illuminated the mind and seen into their own true nature within a Chan lineage, they still cannot easily cut off the disturbances of views and thoughts. One must practice continually for a long period of time and bring oneself to the point where one is completely and utterly purified; only then can one cut off samsara and find escape. It does not matter if [only] a single hair’s-breadth remains to be cut off. One is still a hair’s-breadth away from complete purification; one will revolve in the six paths as before and escape will be difficult. The ocean of samsara is deep and the road to wisdom long. [p. 369] The end of their lives comes, and they still have not made it home. Out of ten who have attained great enlightenment, nine are like this, and that is why the verse says, ‘nine out of ten will stray from the road.’ ‘Stray’ here means ‘to lose precious time’; in common parlance, it is ‘to be delayed.’

“The phrase ‘the realm of shadows’ refers to the period between the end of one life and the beginning of the next. At the end of one’s life, one enters a realm in which all the power of the good and evil karma accumulated over long *kalpas* manifests. When this realm manifests, then, in the twinkling of an eye, one goes to rebirth in a good or evil path as determined by the most powerful karma, whether good or bad, that manifests in that instant, and one has no power to determine the outcome. Like someone who is heavily in debt, the strong[est karmic force] will lead one to fall one way or the other. ‘Wuzu [Shi]jie again is Dongpo, and Caotang [Shan]qing returns to be Lugong; is this similar to their prior [existences]?’⁴⁹ That is why the verse says, ‘When the realm of shadows appears before them, they will instantly follow it.’

“The pronunciation and meaning of the word ‘shadows’ (*yin* 陰) is the same as the word *skandhas* (*yin* 蔭), and means to cover and conceal. From this we can explain that the power of karma covers up one’s true nature so that it cannot manifest. The word ‘instantly’ (*pie* 瞥) is pronounced like the word *pie* (撇), and means ‘in the twinkling of an eye.’ Some take the words ‘go astray’ (*cuo* 蹉) to be ‘err’ (*cuo* 錯), and ‘the

realm of shadows' to mean 'realm of the demons of the five *skandhas*' (*wu yin mo jing* 五陰魔境).⁵⁰ Generally, it is because they are not aware of [the significance of] the words 'Chan' and 'to have' that they can spout such ridiculous nonsense. How could it be that nine out of ten people who had achieved a great awakening would take the wrong road—that is, follow along behind the demons of the five *skandhas*, grasping at them and losing their right minds? Now, to grasp at demons and lose one's right mind means that one does not know the doctrines and principle, does not see clearly into one's own mind, and has piled up the seeds of pride through blind practice. If one heaps [such accusations] upon someone who is greatly and thoroughly awakened, would that not mean that he could not tell good from bad? This is an important point, and we cannot keep it out of the debate.

"As to the verse, 'Lacking both Chan and the Pure Land, it will be the iron beds and bronze pillars [of hell] for ten thousand *kalpas* and one thousand lifetimes with no one to turn to,' this refers to those who lack both Chan and Pure Land [practice] and who immerse themselves in creating karma without cultivating good. They are in grave error. Now, the teachings have innumerable entrances, but only those of Chan and the Pure Land coincide most with people's capacities. These are people who have not achieved a thorough enlightenment and who do not seek rebirth in the Pure Land either. They practice other dharma gates carelessly and perfunctorily. They do not cultivate meditation, wisdom, and impartiality to cut off confusion and awaken to the truth, nor do they rely on the power of the Buddha's compassion to go to rebirth bearing their karma.

"By spending one's life performing meritorious works, one may reap the reward of rebirth as a human or a god in the next life. If in this present life one lacks true wisdom, then in the next life one will follow one's reward around and around, indulging in the five desires (i.e., for food, sex, fame, wealth, and sleep) and creating extensive bad karma. Creating evil karma, they cannot easily escape the retribution of evil. Before the next moment even arrives, one falls into hell, where he or she will pass long *kalpas* laying on the piercing iron beds or embracing the bronze pillars in recompense for their previous evil deeds of greed for sounds and forms, for killing, or for other types of evil karma. [p. 370] Even though all the buddhas and bodhisattvas descend out of compassion [to aid them], they will reap no benefit because of the obstructions of their evil karma. This is the reason that the ancient

masters referred to those who cultivated religious practices without having true faith in or seeking rebirth in the West as ‘those who would groan in the three worlds’ (i.e., of past, present, and future).

“Because of religious practices done in the present life, one will reap good fortune in the next; then, relying on that good fortune, one will proceed to do evil, and will then fall. One may enjoy some temporary pleasure in this life, but suffering is handed down through long *kalpas*. Once the karma that landed one in hell is used up, one then proceeds to rebirth as a hungry ghost or an animal. If one wants to come back in a human birth, that is the most difficult of all. Thus, the Buddha picked up a handful of earth and said to his disciple Ānanda, ‘Is the dirt in my hand greater, or is the whole earth greater?’ Ānanda answered, ‘The dirt of the whole earth is greater.’ The Buddha said, ‘Those who attain a human rebirth are like the dirt in my hand, while those who lose it are like the whole earth.’ The phrase ‘for ten thousand *kalpas* and one thousand rebirths with no one to turn to’ is a simpler way of expressing this same idea.

“All the gates of teaching rely exclusively on self-power [for success]. But the Pure Land teaching gate relies exclusively on the power of [Amitābha] Buddha (夫一切法門，專仗自力。淨土法門，專仗佛力). The practices of all other teaching gates take one to liberation from birth-and-death only if one thoroughly purifies all past karma. The Pure Land teaching gate allows one to attain to the stream of holiness while still bearing all of one’s karma. The great master Yongming [Yanshou] composed this verse to demonstrate this, fearing that the world did not realize it. One can think of him as a precious amulet in this labyrinth of delusion, a master to guide one on a dangerous road. It uplifts the people of this world out of pity; even if one reads it carelessly, one will never plumb its depths. Ah, the sympathy he felt for the evil karma of all sentient beings alike!”

[The Chan monk] said, “What guilt have I incurred from of old, that earlier I was blind to the true explanation? What [good] fortune have I stored up, that now I have heard the essentials? I wish to become your disciple, and wait upon your table.”

I said, “What virtue do I have, that I would presume to accept such talk? All that I have said is but the teaching of all buddhas and all patriarchs. If you will only reverence the buddhas and patriarchs by propagating the Pure Land [teachings], then there is no virtue that will go unrewarded, and no guilt that will go unexpiated. Early in his

life, Vasubandhu Bodhisattva slandered the Mahāyāna, but later, by propagating [Pure Land teachings], he made good his fault. If you can follow in his worthy tracks, then I would abandon my own body to make offerings [to you].”

[The Chan monk] rose from his seat, prostrated himself before the Buddha, and made the following vow: “I, [So-and-so], from this day forward, will practice pure karma⁵¹ exclusively. I ask only that when I die, I may be reborn in the highest grade, so that upon seeing the Buddha and hearing the teachings I may at once attain to the Unborn. Afterward, without separating from the Pure Land, I will enter into all ten directions universally. With the stream or against it, using all manner of expedient means, I will carry this teaching to all places and liberate all beings. Not a single moment will I rest during all future times. In space without limit, I vow to reach the furthest extremity. May Śākyamuni, Amitābha, and all of the eternally abiding Three Jewels have pity on my foolishness and sincerity, and all come to receive and enfold me.”

I said, “On the phenomenal level, the Pure Land is a great causal condition. On the noumenal level, [p. 371] it is the great secret treasury. Your ability to receive it in faith and put it into practice is to adorn yourself with the Buddha’s own adornment.”

He then arose and took his leave. These questions and answers have been recorded so that those who do not know this teaching may take counsel.

NOTES

1 For an example of one of the most informed and sustained of these attacks, see Yinshun 印順, “Jingtu xin lun” 淨土新論 (“A New Discussion on the Pure Land”), in *Jingtu yu Chan* 淨土與禪 (*Pure Land and Chan*) (Taipei: Zhengwen, 1970), pp. 1–75. In this work, Yinshun singles out Yinguang for criticism, which caused a widespread and intense reaction. Yinshun’s books were burned in some localities in Taiwan, and he resigned as abbot of Shandao Temple in Taipei as a result of the controversy. This demonstrates both the popularity of Pure Land practice and the esteem in which Yinguang is held. For an account of this incident, see Charles B. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660–1990* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), pp. 124–135.

2 Robert A. F. Thurman, trans., *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 19.

3 Han Yu 韓愈 (786–824) and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) were Confucian scholars who blamed the social and political ills of their time on the displacement of Confucianism by Buddhism and Daoism. Both men wrote bitter polemics

against Daoism and Buddhism. Samples of their anti-Buddhist rhetoric may be found in William de Bary, et al., comp., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 369–393.

4 Shi Jianzheng says that at this time Yinguang was afflicted with his first bout of severe conjunctivitis, which almost left him blind. See Shi Jianzheng 釋見正, *Yinguang Dashi de shengping yu sixiang* 印光大師的生平與思想 (*The Life and Thought of the Great Master Yinguang*) (Taipei: Dongchu Chubanshe, 1989), p. 17.

5 Ven. Chansheng, in commenting on this passage, says that this is a quotation from Han Yu. The full quotation is, “The gods and spirits of heaven and earth are eminent and arrayed as thickly as [the trees of] the forest; they are not such as can be added to.” The meaning was that the gods and spirits of the state religion are so numerous that they cannot accommodate the further importation of buddhas and bodhisattvas. Shi Guangding, comp. and ed., *Yinguang Dashi quanji* (*The Collected Works of the Great Master Yinguang*) (Taipei: Foijiao Chubanshe, 1991), vol. 6, p. 84.

6 *The Doctrine of the Mean*, chapter 12. A translation by James Legge can be found on the Chinese Text Project website, <http://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong>. Accessed on June 18, 2013.

7 In fact, Yinguang never did either of these things, and his commentator Chansheng had some difficulty explaining why Yinguang would write such transparent falsehoods. He explains that Yinguang intended this essay as an expedient means, not as a strictly factual account, but then quickly reassures the reader that everything else contained in this essay is true. See Shi Guangding, *Yinguang Dashi quanji*, vol. 6, p. 87.

8 In other words, Yinguang desires to attain the highest of the nine grades of rebirth in the Pure Land described in the *Contemplation of Amitāyus Sūtra* (*Guan wuliangshou fo jing* 觀無量壽佛經), T.365.12:344cff. For an English translation of the relevant passage, see Hisao Inagaki. *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995), pp. 110–117.

9 I have translated *chuxin* 初心 here as “original plan” because a more literal translation such as “original mind” or “beginner’s mind” would have too much of a Chan flavor to it. In this context, Yinguang is clearly referring to his first intention to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

10 *Yan kong si hai* 眼空四海 is an idiom meaning “to have contempt for everybody and everything.” This monk had engaged in an ill-advised mixture of meditation and doctrinal study such that, far from mutually reinforcing each other and leading to liberation, these two endeavors had undercut each other and led the monk to increased pride and arrogance.

11 “One Vehicle” is an image from the second chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, and here means that the monk had vowed to discover the single truth of the Buddha’s teaching that lies behind all apparent differentiation of Buddhism

into various sects and interpretations. See Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 23–46. Sudhana is a character in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* section of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* who travels to meet fifty-five different buddhas and bodhisattvas to receive the teachings.

12 This is the *Amituo Jing Yao Jie* 阿彌陀經要解 (T.1762.37:363ff), composed by the Ming dynasty Pure Land master Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655) as a simplified commentary on the *Amitābha-sūtra*. This work by the ninth patriarch of the Pure Land school in China had a formative influence on Yinguang’s Pure Land theology.

13 The meaning of the phrase *bu bian tongmeng* 不便童蒙 is unclear to me. This is my best guess, based on Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo Daijiten* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki Kabushiki Shakai), p. 1013b. He gives the meaning of *tongmeng* (which uses a variant character for *meng*) as “childish, ignorant,” and glosses another phrase, *tongmeng xing* (with the same character for *meng*) as a term used in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* for the First Noble Truth of suffering.

14 The phrase “goose king who chooses milk” (*ze ru zhi e wang* 擇乳之鵝王) refers to a common image in Chinese Buddhist literature of the goose that, when presented with milk and water mixed together, can drink the milk and leave the water behind. This is a metaphor for the enlightened being who while living in the impure *sahā* world is not defiled by it, and thus leaves behind the “water” (i.e., the world of ordinary experience) and chooses the milk (i.e., the enlightenment of the Buddha). See Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian* (*Encyclopedia of Buddhism*), vol. 7, p. 6651a.

15 Chansheng’s commentary states the matter this way: the “Essentials of the *Amitābha-sūtra*” is a commentary on a *sūtra*, not a free-standing treatise. Therefore, to impugn it is to impugn the *sūtra* on which it comments, which is the word of the Buddha. Therefore, the Chan monk’s derogation of Ouyi’s work is implicitly a derogation of the Buddha’s own teaching, and that of all the other great figures of the past who have commented upon this *sūtra*. See Shi Guangding, *Yinguang Dashi quanji*, vol. 6, p. 92.

16 *Jun tao* 鈞陶, a term that literally means to turn pots on a potter’s wheel, but which can be used metaphorically to mean nurture and raise people, according to Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kanwa Jiten* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1984, reprint), vol. 11, p. 507b.

17 It is important to Yinguang’s argument that these forty-one stages (i.e., ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications of merit, ten grounds, and attainment of enlightenment) are occupied only by bodhisattvas of the highest levels of attainment. By this he seeks to rebut the claim that only vulgar people engage in Pure Land practices. See Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 2, p. 1628b.

18 The first quotation is from Mencius, *Jin Xin* 盡心 A, 5. 孟子曰：「行之而不著焉，習矣而不察焉，終身由之而不知其道者眾也。」 Mencius said, “To act

without understanding, and to do so habitually without examination, pursuing the proper path all the life without knowing its nature—this is the way of multitudes.” Translation by James Legge on the Chinese Text Project website, <http://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i>. Accessed on June 18, 2013. I have not found the second phrase, though it is possible that it is a loose paraphrase of the last clause of this quotation.

19 This is a direct quotation from the *Meditation on the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra’s Practice of the Dharma* (*Guan Puxian Pusa Xing Fa Jing* 佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經), T.277.9:392c. The significance of the name “Eternal Quiescent Light” is that this land does not undergo any transformations of production and cessation, and so it is constant and eternal. It is free of all disturbances and vexations, and so it is serene and quiescent. Finally, it radiates wisdom, and so it is light.

20 According to Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 5, p. 4529a, Chinese Buddhist texts and authors at various times have affirmed the view that, regardless of the undifferentiated permeation of all reality by the *dharmakāya*, there are still distinctions between the individual bodhisattvas who dwell in the Pure Land of Quiescent Light as they all inhabit one or the other of these forty-one stages of the bodhisattva path. Yinguang’s implication here is that not even these advanced bodhisattvas have succeeded in completely transcending all distinctions, thus one could not reasonably expect the ordinary Buddhist practitioner to do so.

21 In other words, the Pure Land is only this very world when apprehended by an enlightened mind, and Amitābha is only one’s own self-nature when purified by enlightenment and the purging of all ignorance. This view controverts Yinguang’s view that the Pure Land is an actual place different from this world, and that Amitābha is an actually existent buddha different from the practitioner.

22 This refers to Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635–730), a lay Buddhist of the Tang dynasty. He specialized in the study of Fazang’s new translation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, and wrote many lengthy commentaries on it. The work cited here (T. 1739) was produced by a monk named Zhining 志寧, who took Li Tongxuan’s forty-fascicle *New Exposition of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Xin Huayan Jing Lun* 新華嚴經論) and interpolated it into the eighty-fascicle translation of the *sūtra* made by Śikṣānanda during the Tang dynasty. For more information, see Robert Gimello, “Li T’ung-hsüan and the Practical Dimensions of Hua-yen,” in Robert Gimello and Peter Gregory, eds., *Studies in Ch’an and Hua-yen* (Honolulu: Kuroda Institute and University of Hawai’i Press, 1983), pp. 321–387.

23 According to Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 5, pp. 4179a–b, Odra is in present-day Orissa, and the copy of this scripture that the king sent to the Tang court was one that he had copied out himself.

24 This account is confirmed in Mochizuki Shinkō, *Mochizuki Bukkyō Daijiten* 望月佛教大詞典, “Daihōkō butsu kegon-gyō” 大方廣佛華嚴經 (Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai, 1933–1936, revised ed.), vol. 4, pp. 3404b–3407b, especially p. 3406c.

25 A search of the *Great Collection Sutra* on CBETA failed to locate this quotation.

26 Yinguang is claiming that Master Zaobo could not have revealed the ending of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* section of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* before its transmission to China because it would have lacked adequate scriptural documentation. He knew about the Pure Land teachings of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* but could not reveal them at that time. The opponent is claiming that the same situation obtained in Daosheng’s time, and yet he revealed the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*’s teachings on *icchantikas* before that text was completely transmitted. Therefore, Zaobo cannot be excused for keeping silent simply on that basis. For a synopsis of Daosheng’s part in the *icchantika* controversy, see Kenneth Ch’en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 113–116.

27 See text in Ding Fubao 丁福保, commentator, *Liu Zu Tan Jing Jianzhu* 六祖壇經箋註 (*The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch with Annotations*) (Taipei: Tianhua, 1992, second ed.), p. 39a. See also Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 157.

28 These quotations may be found in several texts and were apparently widely known and disseminated. Both may be found in *The Recorded Sayings of Ancestral Master Zhaozhou* (*Zhaozhou zushi yulu* 趙州祖師語錄), in the *Jiaxing Canon* (嘉興大藏經), number B137 at 24:361b06 24:357a15, respectively. See http://taipei.ddbc.edu.tw/sutra/JB137_001.php, accessed April 12, 2013.

29 *Ren liu an qiao* 認驢鞍橋. According to Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 4, 3665a–b and vol. 7, 6977b–c, this is an old idiom used in the Chan school to upbraid a monk for failing to distinguish true from false. It refers to the story of a son whose father went off to fight in a war. When the son goes to be battlefield later to look for his father’s remains, he finds a donkey’s saddlebone (so named because of its curved shape), and mistakes it for his father’s mandible.

30 “Views and perceptions” (*jiansi* 見思), “attachment to emptiness” (*chensha* 塵沙), and “ignorance” (*wuming* 無明) are three types of delusion (*san huo* 三惑) that the Tiantai 天台 tradition opposed to the three truths it propounded. The first involves a failure to see the emptiness of self and phenomena; the second is attachment to the notion of emptiness such that one sees the suffering of other beings as illusory and is not moved to try and relieve it; the third is the failure to see the truth of the middle, in which one simultaneously affirms both emptiness and conventional phenomenality. See Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 1, p. 624a–c.

31 Thus Yinguang refutes the *Platform Sutra*’s statement, immediately prior to

that quoted by his opponent, to the effect that those already in the Pure Land can incur guilt if their minds are tainted by the slightest impurity.

32 This entire paragraph makes use of a fourfold categorization of pure lands devised by Zhiyi 智顛 of the Tiantai school and elucidated in his commentaries on various scriptures. The first is a subdivision of the “Land Where Worldlings and Sages Dwell Together,” which has two types: first, the “Defiled Land Where Worldlings and Sages Dwell Together,” which refers to the present *sahā* world where one may encounter both buddhas and worldlings; and second, the “Pure Land Where Worldlings and Sages Dwell Together,” which refers specifically to Amitābha’s Western Pure Land, where again one may encounter both buddhas and unenlightened worldlings. The other three lands mentioned are pure lands whose inhabitants show progressively greater accomplishments.

33 This quotation comes from the eighteenth fascicle of the *Zu Tang Ji* (*Patriarch’s Hall Collection*), one of the earliest histories of the Chan lineage dating from 952 C.E. See the reprint of this work, *Zu Tang Ji* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1987), p. 334. For more information on this work, see Ono Gemmyō, *Bussho Kaisetsu Daijiten* (*Annotated Encyclopedia of Buddhist Literature*) (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1932–1936), vol. 7, p. 5b. On the *Zu tang ji*’s history, see Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), chapter four, pp. 59–114.

34 This quotation is from *The Recorded Sayings of Master Zhaozhou* (*Zhaozhou heshang yulu* 趙州和尚語錄), The original quotation from the *Jiaxing Canon* 嘉興大藏經 reads 問和尚受大王如是供養將什麼報答師云念佛. See *Zhaozhou heshang yulu*, p. 24: 365c09. Found online at http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/J24nB137_002, accessed April 18, 2013.

35 According to Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 7, p. 6253a–b, “opportune point” (*jifeng* 機鋒) means a word or phrase spoken in response to a particular listener’s needs and abilities. It is so named because it “pricks” the listener and commands their total attention. It thus denotes the transmission of living Chan rather than dead words and letters. “Turning phrase” (*zhuanyu* 轉語) is similar in meaning. This is a word or phrase that turns the student from perplexity toward enlightenment. See *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, p. 6624a.

36 The phrase *fan zhao hui guang* 返照回光 occurs in several Chinese Buddhist texts, some of which belong to the Chan school. For example, the phrase occurs in *The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Yuanwu Foguo* 圓悟佛果禪師語錄, fasc. 12, at T.1997:47:770b8.

37 The phrase *kou ji er can* 叩己而參 does occasionally occur in Chan literature with the meaning of being self-reliant. For example, in the *Wu deng quan shu* 五燈全書, we find the Chan master Deqing saying this: “[The master] taught the assembly: ‘I have a qualm that I want to lay bare before all people. Avoid seeking words or asking for phrases from other people. You are all unwilling

to lay aside your whole body and seek teaching from yourselves.” 湖州德清吉祥愚山藏禪師：示眾。我有一疑。要與諸人說破。免向人前求言覓句。你諸人不肯全身放下。叩己而參。 Found in XZJ 1571, p. 82:501b16–18; found on CBETA, http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/X82/1571_090.htm, accessed on April 19, 2013.

38 *Shizhupiposhalun* 十住毘婆沙論, T. 1521. In the ninth chapter of this treatise, Nāgārjuna explains that just as one can either struggle to travel overland or joyfully sail down a stream, so in Buddhist practice there is a difficult path and an easy path (T.1521.26:41b3–4). The difficult path consists of traditional Buddhist methods of self-cultivation such as meditation, morality, giving, and so on, while the easy path consists of calling upon the 108 buddhas and 144 bodhisattvas to come to one’s assistance. Because of Nāgārjuna’s putative authorship of this treatise, it has always been a standard proof-text in the arsenal of Pure Land apologists.

39 The passage to which Yinguang refers appears in Yoshito Hakeda, trans., *The Awakening of Faith Attributed to Āśvaghōṣa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 102:

[T]he sutra says, “If a man meditates wholly on Amitābha Buddha in the world of the Western Paradise and wishes to be born in that world, directing all the goodness he has cultivated [toward that goal], then he will be born there.” Because he will see the Buddha at all times, he will never fall back. If he meditates on the Dharmakāya, the Suchness of the Buddha, and with diligence keeps practicing [the meditation], he will be able to be born there in the end because he abides in the correct samādhi.

Two things must be said here. First, Hakeda considers this passage to be an interpolation in a text that is already probably spurious. Second, it does not point to the kind of faith-based Pure Land practice that Yinguang wishes to defend, but to the practice-based versions found in the *Pratyutpannasamādhisūtra* and the *Pure Land Meditation Sūtra*. See Hakeda, *The Awakening of Faith*, pp. 102; 116, n. 55.

40 In Luis O. Gómez’s translation of the Chinese version of this scripture, the following appears:

[Various buddhas named in the scripture] extends his broad and long tongue, encompassing all worlds [. . .] proclaiming these true words: “O living beings, you should believe in this discourse, which praises inconceivable virtues—the discourse called Receiving the Protection of All Buddhas.”

It is interesting to note that in this context the buddhas themselves do not appear. Rather, Śākyamuni reports to his audience what these buddhas are doing and saying. See Gómez, *The Land of Bliss: the Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light. Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvativyūha Sūtras* (Honolulu and Kyoto: University of Hawai‘i Press and Higashi Honganji Shinshū Ōtani-ha, 1996), p. 150.

41 This refers to a set of four verses attributed to Yongming Yanshou, a Chan master who is credited with formulating the “Dual Practice of Chan and Pure Land” (*Chan-jing shuangxiu*) (my translation):

1. Having Chan but lacking the Pure Land, nine out of ten will stray from the road. When the realm of shadows appears before them, they will instantly follow it.
2. Lacking Chan but having the Pure Land, ten thousand out of ten thousand who practice it will go.
However, having seen Amitābha, why worry about not attaining enlightenment?
3. Having both Chan and the Pure Land, one is like a tiger with horns (i.e., doubly capable).
Such a person will be a teacher in the present life, and a buddha or patriarch in future lives.
4. Lacking both Chan and the Pure Land, it will be the iron beds and bronze pillars [of Hell]
For ten thousand *kalpas* and one thousand lives with no one to turn to.

Shih Heng-ching points out that this verse does not appear in any of Yongming Yanshou’s extant works, however. Rather, it appears first in a 1393 work by Dayou 大佑 called the *Jingtu zhiguiji* 淨土指歸集 (*Collected Instructions Indicating the Pure Land*), now found in ZZ 108:114–198. The Four Alternatives appear at 108:135a. See Shih Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch’an and Pure Land Buddhism* (New York: P. Lang, 1992), pp. 142–175.

42 Yinguang is throwing his opponent’s earlier words back at him.

43 *Ru he hulun tun zao, bu chang ziwei zhi ruo shi ye*, 汝何囫圇吞棗, 不嘗滋味之若是也. A Chinese idiom for reading books hastily and uncritically, thereby misunderstanding the contents.

44 This is the crux of Yinguang’s contribution to the revival of Pure Land devotionalism in China, and the point at which he parts company ideologically with Yongming Yanshou, Yunqi Zhuhong, and other past masters who advocated the “dual practice of Chan and Pure Land.” They combined the practices by interpreting the Pure Land as a purified environment that reflects a purified state of mind. Likewise, they reinterpreted Amitābha Buddha as a manifestation of the inherent buddha-nature possessed equally by all beings. Thus, the Pure Land was a manifestation of one’s innately pure mind, and Amitābha was a manifestation of one’s own buddha-nature. It is a mistake to look for the Pure Land in an actual location somewhere to the west, and it was also a mistake to think that the Buddha was outside of one’s own mind. Proponents of this version of Pure Land practice generally appealed to the first chapter of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*, in which the Buddha demonstrates that the purity of one’s abode reflects the purity of one’s mind by showing the audience the way in which the present world appears to him. (For an English version of this episode, see Thurman’s translation from the Tibetan, *The Holy*

Teaching of Vimalakīrti, pp. 15–19.) Yongming Yanshou himself supported such a view by quoting the *Pratyutpannasamādhī-sūtra*. (Shih Heng-ching, “The Syncretism of Chinese Ch’an and Pure Land Buddhism,” in David Kalupahana, ed., *Buddhist Thought and Ritual* [New York: Paragon House, 1991], p. 75.)

In China, Chan masters incorporated this view of the Pure Land into their teachings. For example, Yunqi Zhuhong quotes the Chan master Zhiche:

Again, there is the qualm that the practice of Chan and the recitation of the Buddha’s name are not the same. Such a one does not know that Chan is merely the attempt to gain awareness of the mind and see [one’s buddha-] nature, while the *nianfo* practitioner is awakening to the Amitābha of his own nature, the Pure Land of Mind-Only. How could there be two principles? (Fujiyoshi Jikai, trans. and ed., *Chan Guan Ce Jin* [A *Spur to Enter the Barrier of Chan*] [Tokyo: Kankon Eikyo, 1970], p. 99.)

As Shih Heng-ching points out, these accommodations were initiated from the Chan side, and had the effect of assimilating Pure Land practice into a Chan framework (“The Syncretism of Chinese Ch’an and Pure Land Buddhism,” pp. 74–76). Not all Pure Land masters appreciated this new interpretation of their practices, and here it is clear that Yinguang will also have none of it. In this section, he affirms that the Pure Land is a place to which devotees can legitimately aspire to go, and that they may accomplish this through faith in the Buddha’s original vows and by calling upon his name. Yinguang explicitly rejects the teaching that the Pure Land is none other than the devotee’s own purified mind, or that the Buddha is their own self-nature.

45 This phrasing is tentative. According to *The Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (accessed March 15, 2013), the term *zongchi* 總持 means to hold to the good and to prevent evil, or it may mean *dhāraṇī*. In the *Fo shuo sheng da zongchi wang jing* 佛說聖大總持王經 (T.1371), the term appears in the title and the Buddha preaches about *dhāraṇī*. However, in the argument within which Yinguang places it, I believe it more likely to mean “attaining the good.”

46 The fourth of the five forbearances, in which the aspiring bodhisattva realizes the unproduced and unborn nature of all phenomena, and thus breaks free of all delusions. See Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 2, p. 1097b.

47 For a discussion of the meaning and significance of the “three grades and nine births” mentioned in the *Meditation Sutra*, see Julian Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvātī: Shan-tao’s Commentary on the Kuan Wu-liang-shou-fo Ching* (Albany, NY: State University of New York [SUNY] Press, 1995), pp. 215–223, 251–252, 263–264, 278–283.

48 In the Mahāyāna scheme that divides enlightenment into fifty-two stages, the enlightenment of equality was the fifty-first stage and last before the attainment of perfect buddhahood for the Huayan tradition, and the forty-first for the Yogācāra school. A bodhisattva in this position will certainly attain complete enlightenment and buddhahood in his next incarnation.

Yinguang thus appears to accept the Yogācāra schema. *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, accessed June 10, 2013

49 This is an extremely obscure sentence. Wuzu Shijie and Caotang Shanqing are both Song dynasty Chan masters of the Yunmen and Linji lines, respectively. Dongpo may refer to the Northern Song poet and calligrapher Su Shi (1036–1101), who advocated the joint practice of Chan and Pure Land (see Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 7, p. 6787c); Lugong is the style name of several talented painters of the Tang and Qing dynasties (see Morohashi, *Dai Kanwa Jiten*, vol. 12, p. 725b–c). However, all of these identifications are tentative, and none of them help to make any sense of the statement. One can only assume that here Yinguang raises examples of two eminent Chan masters who failed to attain liberation from samsara and came back as other personages.

50 According to Ciyi, ed., *Fo Guang Da Ci Dian*, vol. 2, pp. 1854b–1855b, this is one of four groups of tempters, or *skandha-māras*, that afflict beings and steal their stores of life and wisdom. This particular group infests the five *skandhas*; the other three types are the *māras* of death, affliction, and those born of the gods.

51 In Pure Land texts, the term “pure karma” (*jingye* 淨業) is usually synonymous with Pure Land practice.

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