

# PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies



# PACIFIC WORLD

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## Editor's Preface

**Richard K. Payne**

Institute of Buddhist Studies

This special issue of *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai. Established in 1965 by the late Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, the society continues today under the guiding stewardship of his son Rev. Dr. Toshihide Numata. Dedicated to promoting the understanding of Buddhism globally, BDK's history is marked by an incredible array of accomplishments toward that end. These extend from its early project, *The Teaching of Buddha*, to translating and publishing the Buddhist canon, and the establishment of academic programs at sixteen schools and universities in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany. Originally, *Pacific World* was the name of a publication initiated by Yehan Numata in 1925 during the time that he was a student at the University of California, Berkeley. It continues to serve the goal of promoting "spiritual culture throughout all humanity."

Celebrating the BDK's fiftieth anniversary, this issue of *Pacific World* is devoted to one of the very most important texts of the Pure Land tradition, Tanluan's commentary on the Pure Land Discourse attributed to Vasubandhu.

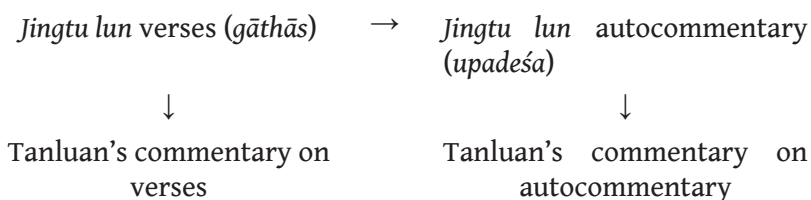
### TANLUAN AND THE JINGTULUN ZHU

The status of both Vasubandhu (Jpn. Seshin, 世親; fl. fourth century) and Tanluan (Jpn. Donran, 曇鸞; 476–542) as two of the seven masters in the Pure Land lineage stretching from Amitābha to Hōnen as established by Shinran is based on the *Jingtu lun zhu*. The *Jingtu lun*<sup>1</sup> (*Jōdō ron* 淨土論; T. 1524, full title: 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈) is attributed to Vasubandhu and said to have been translated by Bodhiruci. It is the text that is taken as evidence of Vasubandhu's commitment to the Pure Land teachings. The *Jingtu lun zhu* (淨土論註; T. 1819, full title: 無

量壽經優婆提舍願生偈註) is Tanluan's commentary or discourse on the *Jingtu lun*.

#### STRUCTURE: A TEXT IN FOUR PARTS

The text published here is an English translation of Tanluan's *Jingtulun zhu*, a commentary on the *Jingtu lun*. The *Jingtu lun* is itself a text in two parts, a set of verses (*gāthā*) and an autocommentary (*upadeśa*) on those verses. Tanluan follows that structure, and consequently there are four parts to consider, that is, the verses and autocommentary attributed to Vasubandhu, and Tanluan's commentary on each of those two parts. Diagrammatically:



The arrows indicate the derivation of the four parts. Both the autocommentary and Tanluan comment on the verses, and Tanluan comments on the autocommentary.

This layering of commentary on top of commentary means that there is a great deal of repetition—something mentioned in the verses is commented on in the autocommentary, also commented on by Tanluan directly, and then Tanluan comments on the autocommentary. In personal conversations with the late Roger Corless (1938–2007), he expressed frustration at what he considered to be the absence of general appreciation for the beauty of Tanluan's thought. He attributed that to the complex and repetitive character of Tanluan's work.

Corless wrote his dissertation on Tanluan at University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1973. This was titled "T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse" and included a translation of the *Jingtu lun zhu*. In order to make Tanluan more accessible to the ordinary reader Corless sought to revise his dissertation translation so as to reduce the complexity and eliminate the redundancy.

Over the last decade or more of his life, Corless attempted to "cut and paste" his translation of Tanluan's commentary, reorganizing and revising the text so as to be able to present the reader with a smooth and coherent discussion of the meaning and symbolism of the Pure



Land as understood by Tanluan. That he never completed this task, despite the loving attention he paid to the work, suggests to me that it was not just an interminable task, but that it was also an impossible task. The version we were left with upon Corless's death was no more accessible for the imagined "ordinary reader" that Corless hoped to reach than was the original translation found in his dissertation.

We have, therefore, chosen to retain the order of Tanluan's original. This required reorganizing a great deal of the revised version Corless had created. In addition to reorganizing the text, he sought to streamline the text by eliminating sections that he considered redundant.<sup>2</sup> These two steps together with the third step of updating the translation produced the manuscript with which Dr. Kameyama and I began. Here we can refer to that manuscript as the Corless "edition" of Tanluan's commentary.

#### THE CORLESS "EDITION" OF TANLUAN

As mentioned above Corless had worked repeatedly to restructure the text in accord with his own ideas of concision and clarity. He had, for example, a research appointment at Nanzan Institute for a year, during which time he worked on this project. After retiring, he came to live in the San Francisco Bay Area and was a regular visitor to IBS. Because of the importance of Tanluan for Shin Buddhism, we provided a research assistant—Rev. Richard Tennes—who worked with Corless until his death. In exchange, Corless agreed to our publication of the work.<sup>3</sup> That was the text, which is perhaps better referred to as an edition, rather than as a translation, with which we began the project culminating in the version you now hold.

Despite the years of effort, the project of restructuring the text was itself unfinished when Corless died. Rev. Tennes provided us with the various chapters of the manuscript as it was at that time. Understanding that Corless's own wishes had been to make Tanluan's Pure Land thought more widely available, and knowing that it would not be possible for us to do so in the form that he had imagined, it became clear that the first thing needed was to reorganize the sections of the revised translation of the Corless edition back to its original order. Christina Yanko worked on this task; however, because of her own educational career—completing her MA studies and moving on to doctoral work—the task of reorganization was itself left incomplete as well. Despite this, Ms. Yanko's efforts gave us an invaluable headstart,

in that she had done much to return the work to its original order, and at least as importantly had annotated the text with the section numbers from Inagaki's translation.

### WEDNESDAYS WITH KAMEYAMA

Over the course of the two years that Dr. Takahiko Kameyama of Ryukoku University was a postdoctoral fellow at the IBS (Japanese academic years 2013–2014 and 2014–2015), he and I met most Wednesday afternoons for anywhere from an hour and a half to sometimes two and a half hours to edit and revise the Corless “edition” of Tanluan’s commentary. Between those meetings Kameyama did a great deal of additional work. The order was restored and sections added on the basis of the translation found in Corless’s dissertation, and by consulting the Inagaki translation. Kameyama retranslated many of the sections, as well as correcting many instances of misrenderings of the Chinese. He also identified and provided new translations of sections where Corless had left out material from the dissertation translation. Because of the extent of Kameyama’s contribution to the present work, we are here identifying it as the “Kameyama–Corless translation.” My own contributions were largely limited to attempting to create more felicitous readings of the often obscure, misleading, or convoluted wording of the Corless edition. In the course of this work Kameyama learned a fair amount about the differences between British English of some half century ago, when Corless wrote his dissertation, and contemporary American English.

### THE ISSUE AT HAND

In addition to the Kameyama–Corless translation, we include here reprints of three additional essays. For the reader’s reference we include David Matsumoto’s translation and study of the Vasubandhu text as such. We have not, however, attempted to make the terminology of this translation consistent with that of the *Jingtu lun zhu* as translated here. While there would be some advantages to doing so, we believe that there is also a benefit to the reader to be able to see a different approach to translating the text at the foundation of Tanluan’s commentary. We also reprint here Corless’s own essay, “The Enduring Significance of T’an-luan,” from an earlier issue of this journal. That issue was devoted to Tanluan, and there are several additional essays from that issue available at the *Pacific World* website. Tanluan claims that the *Jingtu lun*

is a commentary on the *Larger Pure Land Sutra*. The relation between the *Jingtu lun* and the *Larger Pure Land Sutra* is examined in detail—and problematized—in another accompanying essay reprinted here, “The Five Contemplative Gates.” On the basis of that study it would seem that Tanluan’s claim has led to centuries of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the text attributed to Vasubandhu. The privileging of a doctrinal interpretation has apparently contributed to an inability to see the text of the *Jingtu lun* for what it is, a *sādhana* written in *gāthā* form—doubtless for ease of memorization—with an accompanying autocommentary that gives further details regarding the visualization practice. Looking for doctrine, one doesn’t see practice.

We sincerely hope that by making this translation available publicly, we are able to fulfill Corless’s desire to see Tanluan more widely recognized as an important figure in the history of Buddhist thought. At the same time, we also hope to contribute to a better understanding of the breadth and depth of the Pure Land tradition.

#### NOTES

1. The title is sometimes “backtranslated” into Sanskrit as *Sukhāvativyūhōpadeśa*. This is a reconstructed title however, as there are neither Sanskrit nor Tibetan translations. For this reason we will refer to the text here by its Chinese name.

2. In passing we will mention two other ways in which Corless had revised Tanluan’s text, both of which have been removed.

First, he highlighted words and phrases in Tanluan’s commentary in such a fashion as to recreate the words and phrases of the *Jingtu lun*. In trying to make sense of this, the editor concluded that Corless was treating Tanluan’s commentary as if it had been done in the Tibetan style of a “commentary of annotations” (Tib. *mchan ‘grel*, མཚན་འགྲེལ་), a commentarial style also referred to by Bu ston as a “word commentary” (Tib. *tshig ‘grel*, རྒྱུ་གྲེལ་). “These are commentaries in which the words of a basic text are printed either with small circles under them or in a larger size than the surrounding text, that surrounding text being an expansion on the words and/or syllables of the basic text” (Joe Bransford Wilson, “Tibetan Commentaries on Indian *Śāstras*,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson [Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1996], 134). There being, however, neither any reason to believe that Tanluan himself was following a commentarial model frequently employed in Tibet, nor any rationale provided by Corless for his own system of highlighting certain words and phrases, the editor determined that the emphases in the Corless edition should not be reproduced here. The study of commentarial styles is highly complex, and I would like to express my appreciation to Alexander Mayer (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

for his thoughts on this matter (personal communication, by email, 2 June 2015). My thanks also to Wendi Adamek, who noted that the style of commentary employed by Tanluan in this work, “embedding the source text in short sections followed by commentary, is seen in the Han if not earlier” (personal communication, by email, 8 June 2015). She also noted that the commentarial style of the *Rebirth Treatise* makes particular sense for an originally oral commentary in which sections of the source text are read first and then commented upon.

Second, in creating his edition, Corless had added accent marks to the *gāthās*, believing that these sections were chanted. While the *gāthās* are verses, we believe that the ease of recitation that this form facilitated was a mnemonic device created to assist the practitioner of the *sādhana*. The way that Corless marked the text, however, is that of plainsong, a style of chanting from the medieval period of Western Christendom, and which had a revival in 1950s Britain. Given the place and time, we may speculate that Corless had been exposed to the style in such a fashion that it held a religiously positive valence for him. Corless may have felt that translating the *gāthās* into English required a Western religious style of notation. While the *gāthās* may have been chanted, in somewhat the same fashion that Dōgen’s *Fukan zazengi* (a set of meditation instructions) are chanted in some Sōtō Zen monasteries, such chanting would not have followed Western styles of prosody. Additionally, since neither the *Jingtu lun* nor the *Jingtu lun zhu* themselves include chanting notation, these notations were also removed.

3. We also wish to express our appreciation to Paul Swanson of Nanzan Institute who agreed to forego any claim of privilege regarding the text based on Corless’s appointment there. In addition we would like to thank Robert Sharf for permission to reprint “The Five Contemplative Gates” from James H. Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, a title in the Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series of the University of California, Berkeley.

## The Enduring Significance of T'an-luan

Roger Corless†

T'an-luan is the sleeper of Pure Land Buddhism, perhaps even the sleeper of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a whole. The official biographies record that he had lay disciples while he was alive, but no one seems to continue his lineage. Tao-ch'o regarded himself as T'an-luan's disciple but, if we accept his traditional dates (562–645), he was born twenty years after T'an-luan had died (476–542). Chia-ts'ai (c. 620–680) knew of T'an-luan, and reports miracles which were said to occur at his death, but he does not seem to be influenced by him. T'an-luan's writings are referred to by Shan-tao (613–682) and, to a lesser extent, by Ching-hsi Chan-jan (711–782). This spotty attention by his countrymen is repeated in Japan, until he bursts into prominence when Shinran, writing half a millennium after T'an-luan's death, quotes him extensively and regards him as so important that he adopts the second character of T'an-luan's name (pronounced *ran* in Japanese) as the second character of his own name.

It is not my intention here to investigate why T'an-luan has been so neglected or to attempt a summary of T'an-luan's writings,<sup>1</sup> but to select a limited number of aspects of his teachings from his major work, *Wang-shêng Lun Chu* (A Commentary on the Treatise on Birth [in Sukhāvati]) and attempt to demonstrate that he was one of the greatest dharma masters of the Mahāyāna and that his message endures to this day.

In order to do this I will go straight to T'an-luan himself and present him in his own light, as a Chinese of the fifth to sixth century CE.<sup>2</sup> Then I will seek to extract his teaching from its cultural context and suggest what elements of it might be relevant to us today, as the dharma continues to become established in the West.

I believe that T'an-luan is of continuing importance first of all because of his dharmological sophistication. His explanation of how the “easy practice” of trust in Amita Buddha<sup>3</sup> is consistent with the great

philosophical systems of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra is intellectually satisfying and has yet to be surpassed.

Second, he records, apparently from his own experience, that the power of pure mind, manifested in Amita Buddha, is so great that we can trust it to work in us, we do not have to struggle and claw our way up the mountain of the bodhisattva levels, as the Mahāyāna normally instructs.<sup>4</sup>

This teaching, which T'an-luan calls other-power (Ch. *t'o-li*; Jpn. *tariki*), a term which has been misunderstood in the West as quasi-theistic, is once again presented by T'an-luan in sophisticated dharmological terms.

Third, T'an-luan offers a comprehensive program of practice, involving the whole person in body, speech, and mind. Later Pure Land Buddhism, especially in Japan, not only concentrated on a single practice, that of invoking the name of Amita Buddha (*nenbutsu*), it restricted itself to it. When this narrowing of the practice is unsupported by philosophical demonstration it may leave the reader with the mistaken impression that a grandly simple practice is merely simplistic.

Finally, T'an-luan's teaching about the double *dharmakāya*, compressed into a few densely argued lines, is a masterly insight which proposes a solution to the ultimate dilemma not only of Buddhism but, I believe, of all spiritual and religious systems. The dilemma is this: if the realm of liberation from suffering is the same as, or continuous with, the realm of suffering, there is no true liberation from suffering, only a temporary surcease. On the other hand, if the realm of liberation from suffering is different from this realm of suffering, there cannot be any liberation because there is no way to get from here to there. But if, as T'an-luan says, the two realms are non-dual, there is both the necessary connection and the necessary separation. Other dharma masters, and teachers of other traditions, have said something like this, but none, I dare to claim, have said it in a way that so powerfully and neatly joins our ordinary world of suffering both to the world of uplifting myth and temporary bliss, and to the unconditioned reality of pure mind.

#### DHARMOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION

The two great philosophies, or explanatory systems, of Mahāyāna are Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. They developed separately, one after the other, and Tibetan Buddhism, especially the Gelugpa lineage, keeps

them separate, balancing them as the systems relevant to, respectively, *prajñā* (wisdom) and *karuṇā* (compassion). Chinese Buddhism has favored a blending, although the connection of Mādhyamika and *prajñā*, and Yogācāra and *karuṇā*, is still discernible.

T'an-luan is thoroughly versed in Mādhyamika. His major commentarial source is the *Ta Chih Tu Lun* (Jpn. *Daichido-ron*, Skt. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*) and he makes frequent and intelligent use of the Chinese Mādhyamika Master Sêng-chao (374?–414).<sup>5</sup> His connection with Yogācāra is less clear. He does not seem to refer specifically to known Yogācāra texts. He does indeed regard the *Treatise on Birth*, the text on which his commentary is based and which is composed of verses (*gāthā*) with an autocommentary in prose (*upadeśa*), as having been written by Vasubandhu—after, we are no doubt supposed to assume, his conversion to Yogācāra—yet the *gāthā* and *upadeśa*, whoever wrote them, do not strike us as Yogācārin. There are many allusions in his work that suggest that he was familiar with some of the central doctrines of Yogācāra such as the store consciousness (Skt. *alayavijñāna*), although one might perhaps just as well argue that he is thinking in terms of *tathāgatagarbha* theory.

Be that as it may, the point is that T'an-luan's commentary is not a treatise on blind faith and mushy sentimentality, as the Pure Land tradition has sometimes been misrepresented in Western scholarship. His devotion to Amita and his belief in the efficacy of rebirth in Amita's Pure Land is strong, but, whereas the sutras merely assert the power of Amita and Sukhāvatī, T'an-luan explains and defends the power on rational grounds.

For example, the Bodhisattva Dharmākara, he says, made his forty-eight resolutions (Skt. *praṇidhāna*) when he had attained to the eighth level (Skt. *bhūmi*) in the ten-level scheme of the bodhisattva path. At that level, it is taught, the practitioner realizes that all phenomena are originally unarisen.<sup>6</sup> The view that all phenomena are originally unarisen (Skt. *anutpāda*) is a major teaching of Nāgārjuna and one of the foundations of Mādhyamika. In the full knowledge that nothing ever really arises, T'an-luan says, Dharmākara resolved to cause, as the fruit of his karmic activity, Sukhāvatī to arise. T'an-luan sees this moment of consciousness as establishing the nature (Ch. *hsing*) of Sukhāvatī as unarisen. Playing with the ambiguity of the Chinese character *shêng*, which can mean both the birth of a being as well as the arising of an object, he calls Sukhāvatī the Realm of Non-Arising (*wu-shêng chih*



*chieh*) and draws the conclusion that beings who go to birth there attain to no-birth, since the nature of Sukhāvātī must, being consonant with pure mind and which therefore cannot be sullied, purify the impure mind of the practitioner. That is, beings in this world of suffering make an aspiration to be born in Sukhāvātī, thinking that they will really be born there, but in fact, through the power of the nature of Dharmākara's consciousness at the time that he made the resolution, they are "not-born" and they lose all notions of coming and going, of leaving this world of suffering and arriving in the Pure Land. This is a very high realization, and it is attained by the Pure Land practitioner merely through concentrated faith.

In many similar ways T'an-luan shows how a simple practice has powerful results. The practitioner need know nothing about the mechanism of this liberation, just as the operator of a complicated machine need know nothing about the inner workings of the machine. It is sufficient to have learnt which buttons to push in order to have the machine perform various tasks. Many Buddhists are satisfied with this level of practice, of just saying the *nenbutsu*, and at that level it certainly appears simplistic.

But if we want to open the box, as it were, and inspect the mechanism, T'an-luan shows us how it works. When we do, we find that the mechanism underlying the simple practice is anything but simplistic.

#### ENLIGHTENING POWER

T'an-luan writes that merely by repeating the name AMITĀBHA the confusion and darkness of the practitioner's mind is cleared.<sup>7</sup> Wisdom comes into the practitioner's mind through the intrinsic power of the name, which not only means immeasurable light and wisdom but actually is immeasurable light and wisdom. "How could this be?" he allows himself to ask. T'an-luan imagines a questioner objecting that a name is just an arbitrary label for something and that it is powerless to do anything of itself. The questioner compares words to fingers pointing at the moon and accuses T'an-luan of claiming that it is the finger, not the moon, that gives light. T'an-luan's reply moves the question to a different level by offering a theory of language which recognizes the existence of what we might call efficient words or power words.

There are, he says, two sorts of names (words or nouns, *ming*)—those which are different from things (Ch. *ming i fa*) and those which are the same as things (Ch. *ming chi fa*). The first sort of names are



found in language as we ordinarily use it. They are indeed merely indicators and can be compared to fingers pointing at the moon. But, he says, we know that there are other sorts of words, words which have power in themselves. Taoist texts such as the Pao P'u-tzu are full of spells which, T'an-luan reminds his Chinese audience, we have all used and found to be effective—and what is a spell but words which make something happen merely by being recited? Even more powerful than Taoist spells, which can at most relieve intra-samsaric troubles, are the Buddhist mantras which lead us to liberation. The names of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and therefore especially the name of Amita, is such an efficient name or power word.

We can, I think, appreciate the force of what T'an-luan is claiming without accepting his belief in the power of spells. The arbitrary nature of words is obvious, particularly when we acquire another language, in which we learn to use a new label for a familiar object. Whether we allude to a dog or *un chien*, our Anglophone or Francophone listeners will understand that a canine is in question. However, the arbitrary nature of words is not an adequate understanding of language as a whole, despite what we are told by many theorists. Poetry explicitly tries to break out of the univocal prison of plain, descriptive prose. It is meant to be evocative, calling up a feeling or a vision, often enough by the use of neologisms and onomatopoeia. Song, or poetry set to music, is even more evocative. Instrumental music is evocative without having any clear relationship to words—we even call some pieces songs without words. Music can stimulate the emotions in many different ways, and it can make us think differently. Confucius knew this long ago, but now at last it has been proved by science and it has been given a trendy name—the Mozart Effect.

What T'an-luan seems to be saying is that mantras are closer to music than to descriptive prose. Mantras are, in any case, an irritation to grammarians. They seem to be on the verge of making sense but they are very bad Sanskrit. For example, the mantra of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion—O MAṆI PADME HŪṂ—is gibberish. It cannot mean, as many textbooks solemnly assure us, “Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus.”<sup>8</sup> However, when recited, it has a rippling, smooth sound with a calming effect that very well may, as it is claimed, resonate with, and therefore stimulate, the compassionate aspect of the practitioner's buddha mind.

This, then, is what the sound AMITĀBHA does. It is an invocation

which is not only an evocation of the light and wisdom of the Buddha, it also actualizes it in the speaker.

T'an-luan goes further and attributes transformative power not only to the name of Amita but to Sukhāvātī in general for, as we saw above, being the non-product of the pure mind of non-production it has the nature of purity. The underlying assumptions are that pure mind cannot be defiled and that, further, pure mind is purifying. These assumptions, although often overlooked, are found in all Mahāyāna lineages (and even, to an extent, in Theravāda), and are given special emphasis in Vajrayāna lineages. In general Mahāyāna, pure mind has a unique and privileged status. It is intrinsically pure and totally unmixed with the defilements of *saṃsāra*, therefore, it can never be defiled. Even when it is taught that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are non-dual it is never said that pure mind, *bodhi* mind, or buddha mind (as it is variously called) is in any way mingled with the defilements of *saṃsāra*. Certain texts, such as the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Ta-ch'êng ch'i-hsin Lun*) teach the "mysterious pervasion" (and therefore purification) of *saṃsāra* by the *dharmadhātu* (as it calls the realm of pure mind). Again, the doctrine of the triple body of the Buddha (Skt. *trikāya*), which is taught in all lineages of the Mahāyāna, holds that the human manifestation of a buddha is an emanation of his essential purity.<sup>9</sup> In Vajrayāna lineages, the teaching on the purifying effect of the properly visualized *maṇḍala* or the correctly performed *sādhana* is so common it is almost a cliché.<sup>10</sup> For T'an-luan, these assumptions form a rational basis for the demonstration of other power.

#### A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF PRACTICE

T'an-luan does not restrict his attention to the practice of the recitation of the name of Amita. Expanding on a structure in the *Treatise on Birth*, he proposes a comprehensive program of practice called the five gates of *nien* (Ch. *wu nien-mên*). *Nien* is a complex term which he explains as meaning meditation or mindfulness (corresponding to the Sanskrit term *smṛti*), recitation or invocation (corresponding to the Sanskrit term *japa*), and a very short interval of time (corresponding to the Sanskrit term *kṣāṇa*). Only the first two meanings are relevant to T'an-luan's Pure Land practice. I will here translate *nien* as mindfulness which, although not really satisfactory as a single equivalent for both *smṛti* and *japa*, seems to come closest to T'an-luan's general meaning. Gate (Ch. *mên*) means a teaching (as in the stock phrase "the

dharma gates (i.e., the teachings) are numberless”), but I keep the literal translation since T'an-luan explicitly plays with that meaning—the five mindfulness gates are portals through which one approaches the Pure Land and then leaves it to re-enter *samsāra* so as to continue the bodhisattva practice of liberating all beings.

The five mindfulness gates may be translated into English as nouns or, since they are activities, as verbs. Suitable noun equivalents might be: worship, praise, resolution, visualization, and distribution (of merit). As verbs we might translate: bowing, chanting, resolving, visualizing, and distributing (of merit). Because of a special meaning that T'an-luan gives to the word that normally means the distribution of merit, I translate the last practice, as explained below, as the “gate of turning towards.”

The first mindfulness gate, worship or bowing (Ch. *li-pai*), relates to a practice of some antiquity that continues to the present day in most monasteries of the Mahāyāna tradition. Tibetans and those influenced by Tibetan culture tend to favor bowing as an individual practice and to perform full prostrations, whereas the Chinese (and therefore the Koreans and the Vietnamese) prefer communal bowing sessions and use a form of the kowtow, but in either case, the bowing is repetitious, prolonged, and strenuous. The Japanese are perhaps the only major Mahāyāna group in which bowing as a spiritual practice (rather than a social courtesy) has largely died out. The effect of so much bowing is to bring the body into the Way in no uncertain manner. The mind resists, the body protests, but, in time, body and mind accept each other and realize their interdependence.

The second mindfulness gate, praise or chanting (Ch. *tsan-t'an*), is intimately connected with the first gate. Whenever Buddhists use bowing as a practice they recite an appropriate text, phrase, or mantra. Chanting, whether or not connected with bowing, is common in all monasteries and temples, both Mahāyāna and Theravāda, and it survives in Japan. Chanting for T'an-luan means the recitation, or invocation, of the name of Amita. In his liturgical text, *Canticles to Amita Buddha*,<sup>11</sup> T'an-luan presents us with a series of stanzas with invocations of Amita under terms such as Immeasurable Light, Boundless Light, Unhindered Light. All of the stanzas contain some mention of bowing, either implicitly or explicitly. It seems clear that he wrote the *Canticles* to be used in a combined practice of bowing and chanting, joining the first and second gates.

The third and fourth mindfulness gates, resolution or resolving (Ch. *tso-yüan*) and visualization or visualizing (Ch. *kuan-ch'a*), are given a special twist by being linked with the meditative practices of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. These terms, which we might translate into English as calming and insight, usually refer to stabilizing the mind and then using the stable mind to inspect and clearly see a selected phenomenon. In Chinese they are translated respectively by *chih* and *kuan*, characters which literally mean “stop” and “look,” and which form a general word for Buddhist meditation when used together as a compound.

T'an-luan's explanation of *chih*, “stop,” is distinctive—even, perhaps, unique. After dismissing its general meanings concerned with *śamatha* (calming or stabilizing meditation) as insufficient he says that, in Pure Land practice, *chih* refers to the power of Amita and Sukhāvatī, which stops the impure actions of body, speech, and mind, along with the deficient aspiration for Hīnayāna liberation, i.e., liberation of oneself only without making the bodhisattva resolve to liberate all beings. He is able to make sense of *chih* as relating to the gate of resolving by emphasizing that the practitioner's resolution to be born in the Pure Land is done, as he shows in his *Canticles*, by singlemindedly and repeatedly calling on Amita and Sukhāvatī, thus, as explained above, drawing their pure power into the practitioner's impure mind such that the purity stops, or overwhelms, the impurities of the ordinary mind.

T'an-luan's explanation of *kuan* is more traditional. He knows that it is used in general Buddhism to refer to analytic meditation on intrasamsaric phenomena, by means of which one can, for example, experientially realize that the body is marked by the four signs of being (impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and not-self) but, as in the case of *chih*, he says that such a meaning is incomplete. He wishes to redirect, or perhaps we can say restrict, its meaning in Pure Land practice to gazing on, or visualizing, the Pure Land and its inhabitants, Amita Buddha and the bodhisattvas. Visualization is uncommon in Theravāda but is a prominent feature in many forms of Mahāyāna (with the notable exception of Zen) and it is even more prominent in Vajrayāna, with which Pure Land Buddhism has many similarities.<sup>12</sup> It is so important for T'an-luan that he devotes far more space to it than any other practice, so much so, in fact, that one could almost regard his *Commentary* as a treatise on visualization. He adds his own touch by dividing up the visualization practice into a “before” and an “after.” Before one attains birth in the Pure Land one visualizes it and its inhabitants mentally,

gains merit by the practice, and thus becomes assured of being born there. Having attained birth there, one sees Amita and the bodhisattvas actually, no longer as mental representations (Skt. *nimitta*), and as a result one reaches “the quiescence which is always-so” (Ch. *chi mieh p'ing têng*) along with bodhisattvas of the highest attainment.

The fifth mindfulness gate is called *hui-hsiang*. This is the Chinese term regularly used to translate *pariṇāma*, distributing (literally, turning over) any merit (Skt. *puṇya*) gained from a practice to aid in the welfare and the liberation of all beings. T'an-luan accepts this meaning, but only for practitioners in this life, before birth in Sukhāvātī. After birth in Sukhāvātī, he says, the meaning changes. Having been liberated oneself, one turns around and re-enters *saṃsāra* so as to aid all beings directly. He calls these two meanings the going (into Sukhāvātī) and the returning (into *saṃsāra*) aspects of *hui-hsiang*. Because of the way he plays with the characters in Chinese, which mean, separately, turn and towards, an elegant English equivalent is difficult to find. I suggest the rather cumbersome and literalistic “turning towards” as a phrase that carries some of the richness of T'an-luan's understanding of *hui-hsiang*.

Taken as a whole, the five practices are time consuming and are only really suitable for monastics and those laypeople who are relatively free of everyday duties. The rest of us might find ways that we could borrow some features of some of the practices, perhaps a little from each or a fair amount from two or three. If we are physically able, we could find a way to combine some sort of bowing with chanting the Name of Amita, perhaps using T'an-luan's *Canticles*. The gate of resolution will take care of itself so long as we are persistent and concentrated in our practice. Instead of the detailed visualizations of every aspect of the Pure Land, Amita, and the bodhisattvas, we might use a reproduction of a great work of Pure Land art and place it on our shrine as the focus of our chanting and bowing. The art work that we choose could range all the way from single figures of Amita and his attendant bodhisattvas to complete representations of the Pure Land such as the Taima *Maṇḍala*.<sup>13</sup> Gazing at these pictures combines the fourth practice with the “going” aspect of the fifth practice.

T'an-luan's recommendations focus on meditation (*samādhi*), one element of the triple practice (Skt. *trīśikṣā*). The elements missing from the five gates are conduct (Skt. *śīla*) and study or wisdom (*prajñā*). Although T'an-luan does not discuss these he clearly expects them to

be present. As a monk, he was required to control his conduct, and his writings show him to be a man of great learning. All three elements of the triple practice are assumed, and we need not omit them simply because of T'an-luan's silence. Pure Land Buddhism has been accused, at various times, of antinomianism and anti-intellectualism, especially when it has concentrated on the invocation of Amita as the sole practice and as the only efficacious practice. When the invocation of Amita is central, but positioned explicitly in the context of T'an-luan's other four practices, and within Buddhist practice as a whole, neither accusation has any force.

#### A SOLUTION FOR THE ULTIMATE PROBLEM

Buddhism is one of a number of religions which hold that our present reality is profoundly problematic and that true happiness can only come by escaping from this reality. Such religions may be called soteriological (religions of salvation) or, to use a less Christian term, lysiological (Greek *lusi*, liberation).<sup>14</sup> Lysiological religions ask, and then proceed to answer in their different ways, three questions: What is the problem? What is the solution? What is the way from the problem to the solution? In Buddhism, these questions are formulated as *duḥkha* (suffering), *nirodha* (the extinction of suffering), and *mārga* (the path to the extinction of suffering). In the familiar set of the four noble truths, *samudaya* (the arising or origin of suffering) is inserted between *duḥkha* and *nirodha*. This adds precision but does not affect the general three-fold outline.

Early Buddhism seems to have taught a strict and real separation of *saṃsāra*, the realm of *duḥkha*, and *nirvāṇa*, the realm wherein *duḥkha* is extinguished. That *nirvāṇa* was regarded as in some sense a place is shown by the use in the Pāli texts of the term *nibbāna-dhātu* (realm of *nirvāṇa*). With the rise of the Mahāyāna, this separation was called into question. The extended and sophisticated critique can be summarized as follows. If a realm of no suffering exists it must have no admixture of suffering at all, and in order to have no admixture of suffering at all it must exist as a separate reality absolutely unconnected with the realm of suffering, but if there is no connection, how can beings leave the realm of suffering and go to the realm of no-suffering? If, on the other hand, there is a connection, a bridge between them, the realm of no-suffering is part of the realm of suffering and there can be no true liberation. The bold solution which the Mahāyāna advanced to solve

this dilemma was to assert both propositions and their opposites—that the two realms are separate but not different, and that the two realms are the same but not identical. They must be separate for a place of true liberation to exist, but they cannot be different or there is no way to get from one to the other. They must be the same for it to be possible to go from one to the other, but they cannot be identical or there is no realm of liberation outside of the realm of suffering. This teaching was proclaimed as a middle truth (Skt. *madhyama-satya*) which simultaneously rejects and accepts the rival views of the identity and difference of the realms of suffering and liberation. The term “non-duality” is used to deny a separation (the philosophical view of dualism) without affirming an identity (the philosophical view of monism). Under the name emptiness (S. *śūnyatā*) this view became established as the foundation of all later Mahāyāna teaching.

Philosophically, the standard Mahāyāna teaching on emptiness (or transparency as I prefer to call it) is elegantly simple and logically compelling, but it hardly stirs the blood. It has indeed often been mistaken, both inside and outside of Buddhism, for nihilism. In order to correct this mistake, some forms of Mahāyāna, especially in Tibet, have sought to balance the raw teaching on transparency, which they identify with the Mādhyamika school, with teachings on compassion, which they ascribe to the Yogācāra school. The buddha-mind in its fullness is completely wise and perfectly compassionate, and an overemphasis on transparency is criticized as an overemphasis on wisdom.

T'an-luan, as we have seen, is at home in both the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools, and he balances their teaching in a unique way in his short but very significant teaching on the double *dharmakāya*. Standard Mahāyāna maintains the doctrine of the *trikāya* or triple embodiment of the buddhas—the formless *dharmakāya*, the gigantic and glorious *saṃbhogakāya*, and the human *nirmāṇakāya*. T'an-luan is writing before the general acceptance of this formula and he seems to be aware of many different views on how the formless *dharmakāya* manifests in the world of suffering.<sup>15</sup> His most distinctive view is that all buddhas and bodhisattvas have a *dharmakāya* which is composed of an unmanifest aspect called the *dharmatā dharmakāya* (*fa hsing fa shên*), and a manifest aspect called the *upāya dharmakāya* (*fang pien fa shên*). “These two,” he says, “are different but indivisible, one but not the same.”

The *dharmatā dharmakāya*, which we might translate as the essential *dharmakāya*, is mentioned in the *upadeśa* of the *Treatise on Birth* as



“the unconditioned *dharmakāya* of true knowledge” (*chên shih chih hui wu wei fa shên*) and so it is clearly associated with the wisdom aspect of buddha-mind. The *upāya dharmakāya* is not mentioned in the *upadeśa* and so, therefore, neither is the double *dharmakāya*. T’an-luan states his view without reference or support, as if it were well known, but we have no record of it elsewhere. The *upāya dharmakāya* appears to be related to the compassion aspect of buddha-mind. So far, so good, and, in fact, rather unremarkable. But then T’an-luan surprises us. It is best to quote him in full and then unpack his dense logic.

True knowledge is knowledge of the true marks. Because the true marks have no marks, true knowledge has no knowing. The unconditioned *dharmakāya* is the *dharmatā dharmakāya*. Because *dharmatā* is quiescent, the *dharmakāya* has no marks. Because it has no marks, there is nothing which it does not mark. Therefore, the *dharmakāya* is none other than that which is adorned with the marks and signs. Because it has no knowing, there is nothing which it does not know. Therefore, true knowledge is the same as omniscience. If knowledge is classified as true, it is clear that knowledge is neither created nor uncreated. If the *dharmakāya* is categorized as unconditioned it is clear that the *dharmakāya* is neither with form nor formless.

The structure of T’an-luan’s argument here is that of the Mādhyamika master Sêng-chao, but the content is Yogācāra, or at least quasi-Yogācāra.<sup>16</sup> First, following Sêng-chao, he establishes the nature of true knowledge, or wisdom. Things are known to be what they are because of certain distinguishing characteristics or marks (*lakṣaṇa*). The Abhidharma schools generated elaborate lists of such marks so that the practitioner could understand reality and escape from suffering. Mahāyāna, especially the Mādhyamika school, reduced all marks to one—transparency. The true marks are then no-marks, and when true knowledge inspects these no-marks it finds no inherently existing objects. Consequently, says Sêng-chao, because true knowledge knows nothing, there is nothing which it does not know. This is not verbal legerdemain. Ordinary, or false knowledge, knows things as they are conditioned by other things, and so it is restricted to particulars. Wisdom sees without conditions, and so its knowledge is unrestricted or universal.

T’an-luan then applies this epistemological structure to the ontological question of how buddhas manifest in our suffering reality, that is, he moves from Mādhyamika to Yogācāra mode. If the *dharmakāya* is identified with unconditioned wisdom then it has no marks and, as



a consequence, nothing which it does not mark. This means that the unmanifest *dharmatā dharmakāya* is the same as “that which is adorned with the marks and signs,” i.e., the form body (*rūpakāya*) of the buddhas which exhibits, by tradition, thirty-two major distinctive characteristics or marks (*lakṣaṇa*) and eighty minor distinctive characteristics or signs (*anuvyañjana*). Thus the *dharmakāya* can be neither formless (as traditionally taught) nor with form. It must, in fact, be both as well as neither, for it maintains a unity-in-difference with the *upāya dharmakāya*.

T'an-luan has established the non-duality of the wisdom and the compassion aspects of the buddha-mind, but he has one more trick up his sleeve. The *dharmatā dharmakāya*, he says, produces or generates (*shēng*) the *upāya dharmakāya*, while the *dharmatā dharmakāya* emerges from (*ch'u*) the *upāya dharmakāya*. T'an-luan relates the two aspects of the *dharmakāya* to a feature of the text on which he is commenting. The *upadeśa* states that the adornments of Sukhāvātī and its inhabitants are “the marks of the wonderful realm of ultimate truth” which are “here explained one at a time in sixteen lines and one line.” The “one line” is the stanza in the *gāthās* which runs:

Thus, I gaze on the marks of that realm which surpasses the triple-world's Way.

In this stanza, the author (putatively Vasubandhu) is visualizing the distinguishing characteristics or marks (*lakṣaṇa*) of Sukhāvātī which surpass, or transcend, the conditions or understanding (way, *tao*) of *saṃsāra*. *Saṃsāra* is conventionally referred to as the triple-world (*trailokya-dhātava*) since it is composed of the three realms of sensual desire (*kāma-dhātu*), form (*rūpa-dhātu*), and formlessness (*arūpya-dhātu*). “This couplet” says T'an-luan earlier in his commentary, “concerns the most important point ... the purity of the adornments. This purity is a feature of all [the adornments].” This, indeed, is why Sukhāvātī is called the Pure Land. It is unmixed with any of the impurities of body, speech, and mind which are inescapable as long as we continue to be reborn within the triple-world.

This “one line” concerning the primary and universal feature of purity is then described in detail in the *gāthā* and *upadeśa* in “sixteen lines,” each concerned with a specific adornment of Sukhāvātī, Amita Buddha, and the bodhisattvas. Through all of this the patient reader has worked, and now we are told that this “line about purity” is a summary of the “sixteen lines” which are an amplification of the “one

line.” The terms he uses for summary (*lüeh*) and amplification (*kuang*) make it fairly clear that he is thinking in terms of an important feature of indigenous Chinese cosmology, essence and manifestation, *t’i* and *ying*, according to which everything that a phenomenon (a text, a living being, or whatever) manifests is contained *in potentia* or *in parvo* in its essence. This is a thoroughly un-Buddhist notion but it is so basic to the Chinese worldview that it turns up in Chinese Buddhist texts quite frequently, albeit surrounded by caveats so as remove the suspicion that a version of inherent existence is being taught. By relating the two *dharmakāyas* in this way T’an-luan subtly preserves the ontological primacy of the *dharmatā dharmakāya* without jeopardizing its identity with the *upāya dharmakāya*.

This densely argued philosophical point has a practical value. T’an-luan states that “if bodhisattvas do not understand the mutuality of the amplification and the summary, they can neither benefit themselves nor others.”

This is to say, surely, that if Pure Land practitioners do not live in the conscious awareness of the unity-in-difference of wisdom and compassion, form and formlessness, suffering and liberation, their practice will be ineffective. The balance of wisdom and compassion is a general Buddhist teaching. T’an-luan’s distinctive contribution is that he not only makes them non-dual, he makes them non-dual as Amita Buddha. The universal buddha-mind thus has a particular face. T’an-luan gives us a way in which we can relate to the wisdom of the buddha-mind as a loving and compassionate parent who embraces each of us individually. This is a transparency which is not only philosophically satisfying but which stirs the blood.

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## NOTES

1. For that, see my "T'an-luan: The First Systematizer of Pure Land Buddhism," in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, no. 3 (Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, 1996), 107–137.
2. In doing so I am of course setting aside the interpretations of him by Shinran and the various branches of Shinshū. Readers interested in this question may wish to consult my "Shinran's Proofs of True Buddhism," in *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 6 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 273–289.
3. In this article I use the Sanskrit spelling, Amita Buddha, in preference to Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese spellings, all of which are merely attempts to reproduce the sound of the Sanskrit syllables.
4. Mahāyāna in general, and East Asian Buddhism in particular, exhibits a tension between sudden and gradual teachings, or subitism and gradualism. According to gradualism, which is favored in Tibet, there is progress along a path, usually the ten stage or ten level path of the bodhisattva, from suffering to liberation. Subitism regards such progress as wholly or partly illusory, and maintains that liberation is a sudden realization of our already existing nature. There is a great amount of literature in this topic.
5. For a detailed discussion of T'an-luan's textual sources see my "T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1973), 43–46.
6. Technically, the practitioner attains *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, the "serene acceptance of non-arising."
7. For T'an-luan it is the name AMITA itself which is effective. The invocation formula Nan-mo A-mi-t'o Fo and its variants in Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, which have become standard, is not found in his writings.
8. For the serio-comic story of how this mantra has been richly misunderstood by Western researchers see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), chap. 4, "The Spell."
9. For a discussion of the implications of "mysterious pervasion," the *trikāya*, and similar doctrines, see my "Self-Power Practice with Other-Power Attitude: An Interpretation of Mind in Shin Buddhism," *The Pure Land*, n.s., nos. 8 and 9 (December 1992): 166–205.

10. I attempt to relate purification in Vajrayāna and Pure Land Buddhism in my “Pure Land and Pure Perspective: A Tantric Hermeneutic of Sukhāvati,” *The Pure Land*, n.s., no. 6 (December 1989): 205–217.
11. For a translation, see my “T’an-luan’s Canticles to Amita Buddha,” *The Pure Land*, n.s., no. 6 (December 1989): 262–278, and no. 7 (December 1990): 124–137.
12. See, for example, my “Pure Land and Pure Perspective: A Tantric Hermeneutic of Sukhāvati.”
13. Much of this art is available cheaply in poster format or can be downloaded from the World Wide Web. For example, the magnificent sequence of images of the Pure Land maṇḍalas by Hisao Inagaki is available, with English or Japanese text, at [www.net0726.ne.jp/~horai](http://www.net0726.ne.jp/~horai).
14. Traditional religions (those which we used to call “primitive”) are, as a rule, more accepting of the world as we find it and less concerned, or entirely unconcerned, with release from it. The afterlife, for most traditional religions, is a more glorious continuation of this life.
15. See the discussion in my PhD dissertation, 61–65.
16. See Sêng-chao’s essay “Prajñā Has No Knowing,” trans. Richard Robinson, in *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 212–221.

## **Jōdoron 淨土論: Discourse on the Pure Land**

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### INTRODUCTION

Vasubandhu, the great Indian Buddhist thinker of the fifth century CE made major contributions to the development of Hīnayāna as well as Mahāyāna thought through the profusion of works which he produced during his lifetime. Among those texts was his *Sukhāvatīvyūhopadeśa*, a discourse on the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*, one of the essential sutras of the Pure Land tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Translated by Bodhiruci in 529 as 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈 (*Discourse on the Sutra of Eternal Life and Gāthā of Aspiration to Be Born in the Pure Land*), the text today exists only in its Chinese form. However, both Hōnen and Shinran considered Vasubandhu's work to be one of the fundamental texts of the Pure Land teaching along with the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* 佛說無量壽經, the *Amitāyur-dhyāna sūtra* 佛說觀無量壽經, and the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* 佛說阿彌陀經.

Although the *Discourse on the Pure Land* 淨土論, as it is commonly called, directly expounds the method of religious practice to be performed by one following the bodhisattva path, it nevertheless constitutes an important cornerstone for the later development of the Pure Land teaching of salvation for the ordinary person who is unable to perform such disciplines.

The text begins with a *gāthā*, which is followed by a prose section in which the significance of the *gāthā* is explained. In the *gāthā*, Vasubandhu first of all declares his single-minded entrusting in Amida Buddha and his aspiration to be born in the Pure Land of that Buddha. He then describes the virtues of that land in terms of twenty-nine adornments which he organizes into three types: seventeen adornments of the land itself, eight of Amida Buddha, and four of the bodhisattvas in that land. Briefly, those adornments are as follows:

*Adornments of the Buddha Land*

1. Purity 清淨
2. Immeasurability 無量
3. (Essential) Nature 性
4. Appearance 形相
5. Various Things 種種事
6. Marvelous Colors 妙色
7. Tactile Objects 觸
8. the Three Objects (Water, Earth, Space) 三種：水、地、虛空
9. Rain 雨
10. Light 光明
11. the Wondrous Voice 妙聲
12. the Master 主
13. the Family 眷屬
14. Nourishment 受用
15. the Absence of Adverse Conditions 無諸難
16. the Mahāyāna Gate 大義門
17. the Fulfillment of All Wishes 一切所求滿足

*Adornments of Amida Buddha*

1. (Amida's) Seat 座
2. (Amida's) Bodily Activity 身業
3. (Amida's) Verbal Activity 口業
4. (Amida's) Mental Activity 心業
5. (Amida's) Great Multitudes 大眾
6. (Amida's) Leadership 上首
7. (Amida as) Master 主
8. (Amida's) Infallible Sustaining Activity 不虛作住持

*Adornments of the Bodhisattvas*

1. Manifesting transformed bodies throughout the ten quarters while remaining unmoved 不動而至
2. Reaching throughout the ten quarters in the instant of one thought-moment 一念遍至
3. Making offerings and praising the virtues of all buddhas in all worlds 供養讚歎
4. Sustaining the three treasures—Buddha, dharma, and sangha 三宝住持

Vasubandhu extols these adornments as the perfections of the virtues of Amida Buddha's primal vow to create a Pure Land into which all sentient beings can be born. At the end of the *gāthā*, Vasubandhu states that, in composing the *Discourse*, he aspires to see Amida Buddha and to be born in the Pure Land together with all other beings.

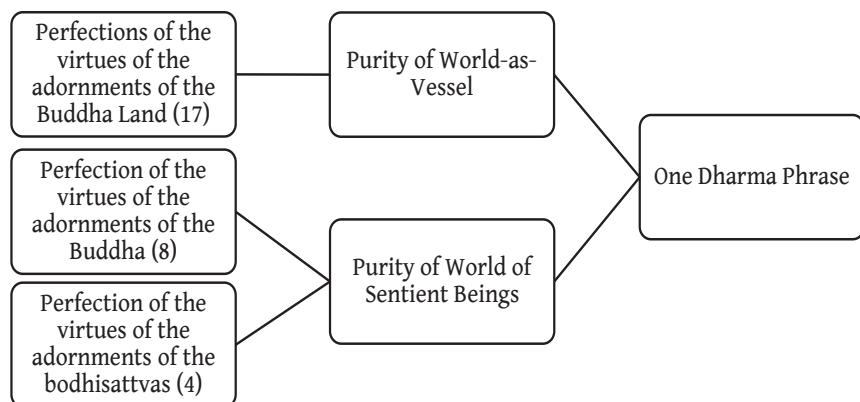
In the prose section, Vasubandhu begins by stating that, by contemplating Amida Buddha's Land of Peace and Bliss, the practitioner of the bodhisattva path will see the Buddha and gain birth in that land. He then goes on to explain that the practitioner is able to contemplate, as well as give rise to, the single pure faith through the perfection of the practices of the five gates of mindfulness 五念門. That is, these five gates are presented as forms of practice by which Pure Land followers may all attain birth in the Pure Land. The five gates of mindfulness are:

1. The Gate of Worship 礼拝
2. The Gate of Praise 讃嘆
3. The Gate of Aspiration 作願
4. The Gate of Contemplation 觀察
5. The Gate of Merit Transference 回向

The first three gates constitute practices performed with one's three karmic activities. One worships Amida Buddha with one's body, praises the Buddha's name with one's mouth, and aspires to be born in the Pure Land by single-mindedly concentrating one's thoughts (*śamatha* 奢摩他). Thereupon, in the fourth gate one contemplates the adornments of the Pure Land with insight into their true nature (*vipaśyanā* 毗婆舍那).

Those adornments are not material objects, but instead constitute phenomena arising out of and giving expression to dharma-nature itself. Vasubandhu represents this dharma as the virtue of the adornment of purity, that is, the One Dharma Phrase 一法句. Stated more precisely, the adornments of the Buddha Land, Amida Buddha, and the bodhisattvas all constitute the perfections of the virtues of the Buddha's vow and right practices. They are expressions of the perfections of the Buddha's virtues of self-benefit and benefiting-others, and, as such, represent purity. Specifically, the seventeen adornments of the Buddha Land represent the Purity of the World-as-Vessel 器世間清淨, while the eight adornments of the Buddha and the four adornments of the bodhisattvas represent the Purity of the World of Sentient Beings 衆生世間清淨. Vasubandhu states that the perfections of these two types of purity "enter into the One Dharma Phrase" 入一法句.

That is, the One Dharma Phrase—the aspect of purity 清淨句—is the unconditioned dharma body of true and real wisdom 真實智慧無為法身 which has given rise to the Land, Buddha, and bodhisattvas in order to save all sentient beings. Schematically, the relationship is as follows:



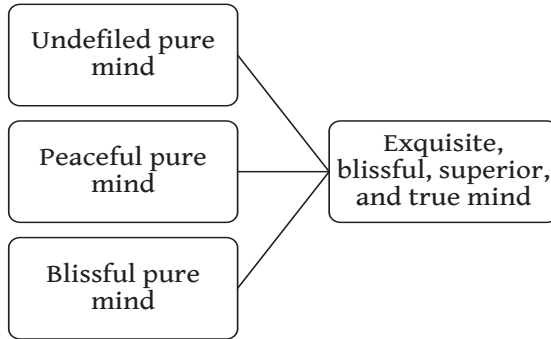
Further, Vasubandhu explains that, through the perfection of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* both fully 広 and in condensed forms 略 as set forth above, the practitioner will attain the perfection of the fifth gate of transference of merits to others through skillful means. By fulfilling the practices of the five gates of mindfulness, the practitioner amasses good roots of merit and virtue. With them the practitioner does not seek pleasure for one's own sake, but instead desires to eliminate the suffering of all sentient beings and wishes that they may all be born in the Pure Land together.

Through the perfection of the gate of transference of merits, the practitioner thereupon abandons three things which contradict the *bodhi* gate, that is, things which obstruct the way to enlightenment. Correspondingly, the practitioner fulfills three things which accord with the *bodhi* gate. First, the practitioner abandons the mind of being greedily attached to oneself, thereby no longer seeking one's own happiness. Vasubandhu calls this the undefiled pure mind 無染清淨心, which is actually the perfection of the mind of wisdom 智慧. Second, the practitioner abandons the mind of not giving peace to others, thereby seeking to eliminate the suffering of all sentient beings. This is referred to as the peaceful pure mind 安清淨心 and is equivalent to the perfection of the mind of compassion 慈悲. Third, the practitioner abandons the mind of worshipping, praising, and venerating oneself, thereby pitying all

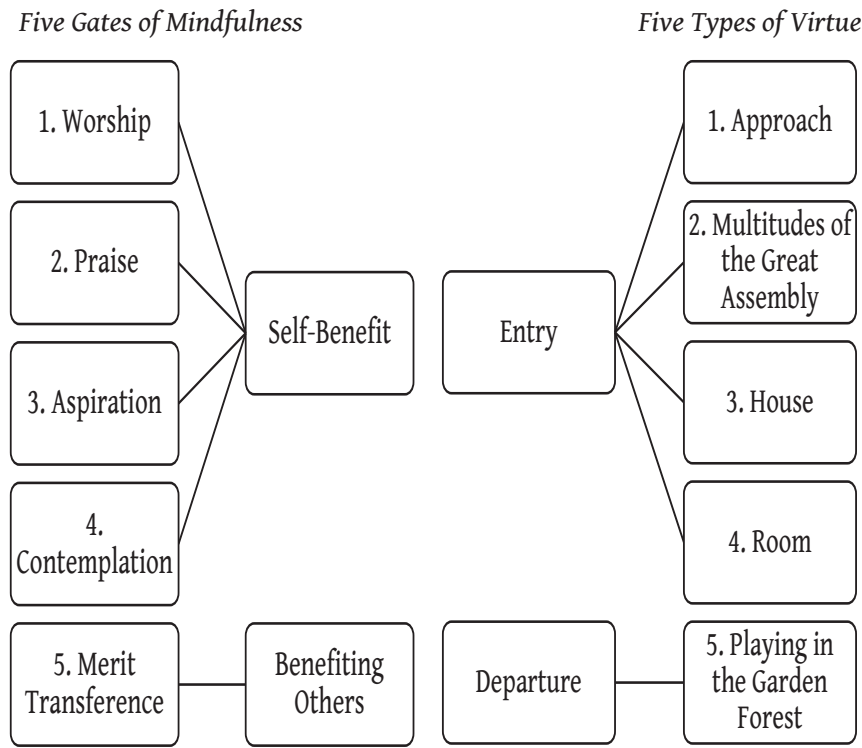


beings. This Vasubandhu calls the blissful pure mind 樂清淨心, explaining that it corresponds with the perfection of the mind of expediency 方便 which allows one to benefit all beings without hindrance.

Vasubandhu goes on to state that these three pure minds are all condensed into the one exquisite, blissful, superior, and true mind 妙樂勝真心. Stated in another way, the three fulfilled minds of wisdom, compassion, and expediency all comprise the single mind of *prajñā* 般若.



Vasubandhu explains another aspect of this relationship by stating that the five gates of mindfulness respectively perfect five types of virtues 五功德門. Through the perfection of the activity of worship the practitioner perfects the gate of approach 近門, thereby gaining birth in the Pure Land. The perfection of the gate of praise leads to inclusion within the multitudes of the great assemblage 大會衆門 there. Through the perfection of the activity of aspiration the practitioner perfects the gate of the house 宅門, which refers to entry into *samādhi*. The perfection of contemplation in turn perfects the gate of the room 室門, wherein the practitioner attains insight. In this way, Vasubandhu states, the practitioner perfects the four activities of self-benefit and thereby perfects the virtue of entry 入功德. Through the perfection of the fifth gate of benefiting others through merit transference, the practitioner perfects the virtue of departure 出功德 whereby one returns to the world of *saṃsāra* to teach other beings the way to enlightenment. This Vasubandhu refers to as the gate of playing in the garden and forest 園林遊戲地門.



Vasubandhu ends his *Discourse on the Pure Land* by stating that, by perfecting the practices of the five gates of mindfulness, the practitioner will perfect the virtues of self-benefit and benefiting-others and quickly obtain the highest enlightenment, or *prajñā*. The significant conclusion is that all of this is due to the power of Amida Buddha's primal vow.

T'an-luan's 曇鸞 later commentary on *Vasubandhu's Discourse of the Pure Land* is said to have directly provided the philosophical foundation for the development of Pure Land thought as a teaching for the salvation of the ordinary being who is not otherwise capable of performing bodhisattva practices. Nevertheless, it is also clear that Vasubandhu's text is in itself of great importance to that movement in its presentation, albeit for the sake of sages, of a method of bodhisattva practice which arises precisely within the context of the working of Amida Buddha's primal vow to have all sentient beings obtain birth in the Pure Land.



## Discourse on the Sutra of Eternal Life and Gāthā of Aspiration to Be Born in the Pure Land

Composed by Bodhisattva Vasubandhu

Chinese Trans. Bodhiruci of the Latter Wei Dynasty

English Trans. David Matsumoto

### GĀTHĀ

O World-Honored One, I, with single-mindedness, take refuge in the Tathāgata whose unhindered light exhaustively fills the ten quarters and aspire to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss.

I, in accordance with the embodiments of true and real virtues revealed in the *Sutra of Eternal Life*, will now present an all-comprehensive *gāthā* of aspiration to be born and thereby correspond with the *buddhadharma*.

In contemplating the manifestations of that world, I realize that its excellence surpasses the paths of the three worlds. Ultimately, it is just like empty space, vast and boundless.

It has arisen from the roots of supramundane good, namely, the great compassion of the right path. Its pure light is full, just like a mirror, the sun, or the moon.

It is endowed with the nature of all rare jewels and possesses marvelous adornments. Its undefiled light brilliantly illuminates that world clearly and purely.

Grasses, having virtues in the nature of jewels, are soft and tender, waving to the right and left. One who touches them receives great pleasure, surpassing that of the *kācīlindika*.<sup>1</sup>

Ten million varieties of jeweled flowers cover completely the lakes, streams, and springs. When a soft, gentle breeze moves the flowers and leaves, reflected rays of light intermingle and dance.

Palaces and many towers overlook the ten quarters of the universe without obstruction. A miscellany of trees having different colors and shades are all encircled by jeweled railings.

Innumerable nets of jewels, twisting and intermingling, cover the sky. Within them all manner of bells emit ringing which proclaims the exquisite sounds of the dharma.

From the sky rain the adornments of flowers and garments. Innumerable fragrances pervade everywhere. The wisdom of the buddha, as clear and pure as the sun, eliminates the darkness of the foolishness of the world.

Its sacred voice which enlightens all is deep and profound. It is exquisite and is heard throughout the ten quarters. Amida Buddha, the perfectly enlightened Dharma King, resides there and sustains that land well.

The multitudes of beings there, the pure flowers of the Tathāgata, are born transformed from the blossoms of perfect enlightenment. They delight in the taste of the *buddhadharma*, and take *dhyāna* and *samādhi*<sup>2</sup> as nourishment.

They are forever free from physical pain and mental anguish and always receive happiness without cease. This world of the good roots of the Mahāyāna is one of equality; there are no slanderous or loathsome names.

Women and persons with imperfect organs, as well as those having the seeds of the two vehicles will not be born there.<sup>3</sup> The sentient beings' aspirations for happiness will all be fulfilled.

Therefore, I aspire to be born in Amida Buddha's Land. There is a delicate and pure flowered seat-pedestal made up of the most precious and immeasurably magnificent of jewels.

The light of Amida Buddha's countenance extends one fathom. His form and figure far surpass those of sentient beings. The sacred tone of the Tathāgata's exquisite voice is heard throughout the ten quarters.

In the same manner as earth, water, fire, wind, and space, he is without a mind of discrimination. The many *devas* and human beings who are unshakable are born from the pure wisdom-ocean.

Just like Sumeru,<sup>4</sup> the king of mountains, Amida Buddha is supreme, wondrous, and unsurpassed. *Devas*, humans, and heroic beings venerate, circumambulate, and look up in reverence to Amida.

In contemplating the power of the Buddha's primal vow, I realize that no one who encounters it will pass by in vain. It enables one to quickly attain the great treasure-ocean of virtues.

The Land of Peace and Bliss is pure and bodhisattvas constantly turn the undefiled dharma wheel. Manifested buddhas and bodhisattvas are like the sun, or like Mount Sumeru in its steadfast immovability.

In a single moment of time, the undefiled, sublime light of the bodhisattvas universally illuminates all of the assemblages of buddhas and benefits all of the sentient beings therein.

By raining heavenly music, flowers, garments, and marvelous fragrances they equally give offerings to and praise the virtues of all the buddhas. In so doing they have no discriminating thoughts.

If there are any worlds which are without the virtuous treasures of the *buddhadharma*, they vow, "I aspire to be born in them all, revealing the *buddhadharma*, just as the Buddha does."

By writing a discourse and composing this *gāthā*, I aspire to see Amida Buddha and, together with all sentient beings everywhere, to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss.

#### EXPOSITION

I have generally explained with this *gāthā* the passages of the *Sutra of Eternal Life*.

In comment, I state: What significance does this *gāthā* of aspiration clarify? It reveals that, by contemplating the World of Peace and Bliss, one will see Amida Buddha and will aspire to be born in that land.

How does one contemplate? How does one produce pure faith?<sup>5</sup> If a good man or woman practices the five gates of mindfulness and if that person's practice is perfected, ultimately that person will obtain birth in the Land of Peace and Bliss and will see Amida Buddha. What are the five gates of mindfulness? The first is the gate of worship. The second is the gate of praise. The third is the gate of aspiration. The fourth is the gate of contemplation. The fifth is the gate of merit transference.

How does one worship? With one's bodily actions, one worships Amida Tathāgata, *arhat* and *samyaksaṃbuddha*<sup>6</sup> with the intention of being born in that land.

How does one praise? One praises with one's words. One calls the name of that *tathāgata* in accordance with that *tathāgata*'s light, which is the embodiment of wisdom, and in accordance with the significance

of the name, for one wishes to practice in accordance with reality and attain unity with it.

How does one aspire? One aspires constantly in one's heart and mind. With single-mindedness one exclusively thinks about ultimately being born in the Land of Peace and Bliss, wishing to practice *śamathā*<sup>7</sup> in accordance with reality.

How does one contemplate? One contemplates with wisdom, correctly thinking about and visualizing that land and Buddha, for one wishes to practice *vipaśyanā*<sup>8</sup> in accordance with reality. There are three types of contemplation. What are the three types? The first is to contemplate the virtues of the adornments of that Buddha Land. The second is to contemplate the virtues of the adornments of Amida Buddha. The third is to contemplate the virtuous adornments of all of the bodhisattvas in that land.

How does one transfer merits? Without abandoning any suffering sentient being, one aspires constantly in one's heart and mind. By making merit transference the foremost matter, one will be able to perfect the mind of great compassion.

How does one contemplate the virtues of the adornments of that Buddha Land? Because the virtues of the adornments of that Buddha Land possess inconceivable power, they are in nature like the *maṇi* jewel,<sup>9</sup> for it is a thing which resembles and is comparable to them. As for contemplating the perfection of the virtues of the adornments of that Buddha Land, there are seventeen kinds of adornment virtues. This you should know. What are the seventeen?

The first is the perfection of the virtue of the adornment of purity.

The second is ... immeasurability.

The third is ... (essential) nature.

The fourth is ... appearance.

The fifth is ... various things.

The sixth is ... marvelous colors.

The seventh is ... tactile objects.

The eighth is ... the three objects (water, earth, and space).

The ninth is ... rain.

The tenth is ... light.

The eleventh is ... the wondrous voice.

The twelfth is ... the master.

The thirteenth is ... the family.

The fourteenth is ... nourishment.

The fifteenth is ... the absence of adverse conditions.

The sixteenth is ... the Mahāyāna gate.

The seventeenth is ... the fulfillment of all wishes.

As for the perfection of the virtue of the adornment of purity, it is stated in the *gāthā*, “In contemplating the manifestations of that world, I realize that its excellence surpasses the paths of the three worlds.”

As for ... immeasurability, ... “Ultimately, it is just like empty space, vast and boundless.”

As for (essential) nature, “It has arisen from the roots of supra-mundane good, namely, the great compassion of the right path.”

As for ... appearance, ... “Its pure light is full, just like a mirror, the sun, or the moon.”

As for ... various things, ... “It is endowed with the nature of all rare jewels and possesses marvelous adornments.”

As for ... marvelous colors, ... “Its undefiled light brilliantly illuminates that world clearly and purely.”

As for ... tactile objects, ... “Grasses, having virtues in the nature of jewels, are soft and tender, waving to the right and left. One who touches them receives great pleasure, surpassing that of the *kācilindika*.”

As for the perfection of the virtue of the adornment of the three objects, there are three kind of objects. This you should know. What are the three? The first is water. The second is earth. The third is space.

As for the perfection of the virtue of the adornment of water, it is stated in the *gāthā*, “Ten million varieties of jeweled flowers cover completely the lakes, streams, and springs. When a soft, gentle breeze moves the flowers and leaves, reflected rays of light intermingle and dance.”

As for ... earth, ... “Palaces and many towers overlook the ten quarters of the universe without obstruction. A miscellany of trees having different colors and shades are all encircled by jeweled railings.”

As for ... space, ... “Innumerable nets of jewels, twisting and intermingling, cover the sky. Within them all manner of bells emit ringing which proclaims the exquisite sounds of the dharma.”

As for ... rain, ... “From the sky rain the adornments of flowers and garments. Innumerable fragrances pervade everywhere.”

As for ... light, ... “The wisdom of the Buddha, as clear and pure as the sun, eliminates the darkness of the foolishness of the world.”

As for ... wondrous voice, ... “Its sacred voice which enlightens all is deep and profound. It is exquisite and is heard throughout the ten quarters.”

As for ... master, ... “Amida Buddha, the perfectly enlightened Dharma King, resides there and sustains that land well.”

As for ... family, ... “The multitudes of beings there, the pure flowers of the Tathāgata, are born transformed from the blossoms of perfect enlightenment.”

As for ... nourishment, ... “They delight in the taste of the *buddha-dharma*, and take *dhyāna* and *samādhi* as nourishment.”

As for ... the absence of adverse conditions, ... “They are forever free from physical pain and mental anguish and always receive happiness without cease.”

As for ... the Mahāyāna gate, ... “This world of the good roots of the Mahāyāna is one of equality; there are no slanderous or loathsome names. Women and persons with imperfect organs, as well as those having the seeds of the two vehicles will not be born there.”

The recompense of the Pure Land is free from two kinds of slanderous and loathsome imperfect things. This you should know. The first is substances. The second is names. There are three types of substances. The first is persons of the two vehicles. The second is women. The third is persons with imperfect organs. Because there are none of these imperfections in that land, it is said that it is free from loathsome substances. There are also three types of slanderous names. It is not just that there are none of the three substances in that land, but also one does not hear the names of those three types, that is, persons of the two vehicles, women, and persons with imperfect organs. Because of that it is said that it is the land which is free from slanderous names and loathsome imperfect things. “Equal” refers to the aspect of overall and undivided equality.

As for the perfection of the virtue of the adornment of the fulfillment of all wishes, it is stated in the *gāthā*, “The sentient beings’ aspirations for happiness will all be fulfilled.”

Briefly, I have expounded on the perfection of the seventeen kinds of adornments of the Land of Amida Buddha, thereby revealing the perfection of the Tathāgata’s self-benefiting great merit power, as well as the perfection of the virtue of benefiting others. The adornments of the Land of the Buddha of Eternal Life are the embodiments of that



wondrous World of the Highest Truth. I have expounded in terms of sixteen aspects and one aspect. This you should know.

How does one contemplate the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the Buddha? In contemplating the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the Buddha there are eight kinds of aspects. This you should know. What are the eight? The first is the perfection of the virtue of the adornment of (Amida's) seat.

The second is ... (Amida's) bodily activity.

The third is ... (Amida's) verbal activity.

The fourth is ... (Amida's) mental activity.

The fifth is ... (Amida's) great multitudes.

The sixth is ... (Amida's) leadership.

The seventh is ... (Amida as) master.

The eighth is ... (Amida's) infallible sustaining activity.

What is the perfection of the virtue of the adornment of (Amida's) Seat? It is stated in the *gāthā*, "There is a delicate and pure flowered seat-pedestal made up of the most precious and immeasurably magnificent of jewels."

What is ... (Amida's) bodily activity? ... "The light of Amida Buddha's countenance extends one fathom. His form and figure far surpass those of sentient beings."

What is ... (Amida's) verbal activity? ... "The sacred tone of the Tathāgata's exquisite voice is heard throughout the ten quarters."

What is ... (Amida's) mental activity? ... "In the same manner as earth, water, fire, wind, and space, he is without a mind of discrimination."

What is ... (Amida's) great multitudes? ... "The many *devas* and human beings who are unshakable are born from the pure wisdom-ocean."

What is ... (Amida's) leadership? ... Just like Sumeru, the king of mountains, Amida Buddha is supreme, wondrous, and unsurpassed."

What is (Amida as) master? ... "Devas, humans, and heroic beings venerate, circumambulate, and look up in reverence to Amida."

What is ... (Amida's) infallible sustaining activity? "In contemplating the power of the Buddha's primal vow, I realize that no one who encounters it will pass by in vain. It enables one to quickly attain the great treasure-ocean of virtues."

That is to say, upon seeing that Buddha, the bodhisattva who has not yet realized the pure mind will ultimately attain the realization of the dharma-body of equality. In the same manner as the bodhisattva

of pure mind and all of the bodhisattvas of the upper stages do, that bodhisattva will ultimately attain tranquility and equality.

Briefly, I have expounded the eight aspects, thereby revealing in order the perfections of the adornments of the Tathāgata's virtues of self-benefit and benefiting-others. This you should know.

How does one contemplate the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the bodhisattvas? As for the contemplation of the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the bodhisattvas, in contemplating those bodhisattvas, there are four kinds of perfections of the virtues of right practices. This you should know. What are the four?

The first is that, although their bodies remain unmoved in one buddha land, bodhisattvas, by manifesting various transformed bodies throughout the ten quarters and practicing in accordance with reality, constantly perform Buddhist activities. It is stated in the *gāthā*, "The Land of Peace and Bliss is pure and bodhisattvas constantly turn the undefiled dharma wheel. Manifested buddhas and bodhisattvas are like the sun, or like Mount Sumeru in its steadfast immovability." This is because they cause the lotus flowers growing in the mud of all sentient beings to bloom.

The second is that the bodhisattvas' transformed bodies at all times, simultaneously and in an instant of one thought-moment, radiate great light, all of which is able to universally reach the worlds of the ten quarters and teach sentient beings the *buddhadharma*. They perform various practices of expedient means, thereby extinguishing and eliminating the suffering of all sentient beings. It is stated in the *gāthā*, "In a single moment of time, the undefiled, sublime light of the bodhisattvas universally illuminates all of the assemblages of buddhas and benefits all of the sentient beings therein."

The third is that bodhisattvas, in all worlds without exception, illuminate all assemblages of the buddhas. All of the great assemblages which are, without exception, vast and immeasurable, make offerings, pay homage, and praise the virtues of all of the buddhas and *tathāgatas*. It is stated in the *gāthā*, "By raining heavenly music, flowers, garments, and marvelous fragrances they equally give offerings to and praise the virtues of all the buddhas. In so doing they have no discriminating thoughts."

The fourth is that, in all worlds in the ten quarters in which the three treasures do not exist, bodhisattvas sustain and adorn the ocean-like treasures of virtues—Buddha, dharma, and sangha. Universally,

they reveal the *buddhadharma*, bringing beings to understand the practice which accords with reality. It is stated in the *gāthā*, “If there are any worlds which are without the virtuous treasures of the *buddhadharma*, they vow, ‘I aspire to be born in them all, revealing the *buddhadharma*, just as the Buddha does.’ “

Further, I have above expounded the contemplation of the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the Buddha Land, the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the Buddha, and the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the bodhisattvas. These three types of perfections are adorned by the mind of aspiration. This you should know.

Briefly, I will explain how these perfections enter into the one dharma phrase. The one dharma phrase is the aspect of purity. The aspect of purity is the unconditioned dharma-body of true and real wisdom. Within such purity, there are two types. This you should know. What are the two types? The first is the purity of the world-as-vessel. The second is the purity of the world of sentient beings. The purity of the world-as-vessel is like the above-mentioned seventeen varieties of perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the Buddha Land. These are called the purity of the world-as-vessel. The purity of the world of sentient beings is like the above-mentioned eight varieties of perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the Buddha and the four varieties of the perfections of the virtues of the adornments of the bodhisattvas. These are called the purity of the world of sentient beings. In this way, the one dharma phrase embraces the significance of the two types of purity. This you should know.

Thus the bodhisattva, by performing *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, both fully and in condensed form, perfects the soft and gentle mind, thereby, in accordance with reality, knowing the dharmas fully and in condensed form. In this way, the bodhisattva perfects the transference of merits through skillful means.<sup>10</sup> What is the bodhisattva’s transference of merits through skillful means? The bodhisattva’s transference of merits through skillful means is as follows:

With all of the good roots of merit and virtue which have been amassed through the practice of the above-mentioned five types of practices of worship, and so on, the bodhisattva does not seek pleasure for his own sake, but instead desires to eliminate the suffering of all sentient beings. The bodhisattva aspires that, by embracing all sentient beings, they will together and in the same way be born in the

Buddha's Land of Peace and Bliss. This is called the bodhisattva's perfection of the transference of merits through skillful means.

The bodhisattva, by knowing well in this manner the perfection of the transference of merits, is able to abandon the three types of things which contradict the *bodhi* gate.<sup>11</sup> What are the three types of abandonment? The first is that, due to the gate of wisdom, one does not seek one's own happiness, but instead one abandons the mind of being greedily attached to oneself. The second is that, due to the gate of compassion, one eliminates the suffering of all sentient beings, for one has abandoned the mind of not giving peace to sentient beings. The third is that, due to the gate of expediency,<sup>12</sup> one pities all sentient beings, for one has abandoned the mind which worships, praises, and venerates oneself. This is called the abandoning of the three types of things which contradict the *bodhi* gate.

The bodhisattva, by abandoning these three types of such things which contradict the *bodhi* gate, attains the fulfillment of the three types of things which accord with the *bodhi* gate. What are the three types of fulfillment? The first is the mind which is undefiled and pure due to the fact that one does not seek various pleasures for oneself. The second is the mind which is peaceful and pure due to the fact that one eliminates the suffering of all sentient beings. The third is the mind which is blissful and pure due to the fact that one brings all sentient beings to the attainment of great *bodhi*. Through the embracing of sentient beings, the bodhisattva causes sentient beings to be born in that land. This is called the fulfillment of the three types of things which accord with the *bodhi* gate. This you should know.

The above-mentioned three types of gates of wisdom, compassion, and expediency all comprise *prajñā*.<sup>13</sup> *Prajñā* embraces expediency. This you should know. The above-mentioned three types of things, namely, the abandoning of the mind of being greedily attached to oneself, the abandoning of the mind of not giving peace to sentient beings, and the abandoning of the mind which worships, praises, and venerates oneself are all the abandoning of the obstructions to the attainment of the *bodhi* mind. This you should know. The above-mentioned three types of minds, namely, the undefiled pure mind, the peaceful pure mind, and the blissful pure mind are condensed into one which is the perfection of the exquisite, blissful, superior, and true mind. This you should know.

In this way, through the mind of wisdom, the mind of expediency, the mind without hindrances, and the superior and true mind,

the bodhisattva is able to be born in the Pure Buddha Land. This you should know. This is called the bodhisattvas' and *mahāsattvas*' compliance with the five types of dharma gates and fulfillment of their actions freely and according to their wishes. As mentioned above, their bodily activity, verbal activity, mental activity, activity of wisdom, and activity of expedient wisdom all accord with the dharma gates.

Furthermore, the five types of gates perfect in order the five types of virtues. This you should know. What are the five gates? The first is the gate of approach. The second is the gate of the multitudes of the great assemblage. The third is the gate of the house. The fourth is the gate of the room. The fifth is the gate of playing in the garden and forest. Of these five types of gates, the first four types of gates perfect the virtue of entry. The fifth gate perfects the virtue of departure.

As for the first gate of entry, because one worships Amida Buddha in order to be born in that land, one will obtain birth in the World of Peace and Bliss. This is called the first gate of entry.

As for the second gate of entry, because one praises Amida Buddha and calls the Tathāgata's name in accordance with the significance of the name and practices in accordance with the Tathāgata's light which is the embodiment of wisdom, one will obtain entry into and be numbered among the multitudes of the great assemblage. This is called the second gate of entry.

As for the third gate of entry, because, by single-mindedly thinking and aspiring, one will be born in that land and will practice *śamatha* and the tranquility *samādhi*, one will obtain entry into the Lotus-Storehouse World.<sup>14</sup> This is called the third gate of entry.

As for the fourth gate of entry, because, by solely thinking and contemplating those exquisite adornments, one practices *vipaśyanā* one will be able to reach that land and will enjoy the happiness of the various tastes of the dharma. This is called the fourth gate of entry.

As for the fifth gate of departure, one contemplates all suffering sentient beings with great compassion, manifests oneself in a transformed body, turns and enters into the garden of birth and death and the forest of blind passions, playing with miraculous powers and thereby reaching the stage of teaching. Since this is all due to the transference of merits through the power of the primal vow, it is called the fifth gate of departure.

The bodhisattva, by entering the four types of gates, perfects the self-benefiting practices. This you should know. The bodhisattva, by

departing through the fifth gate, perfects the practices of benefiting others through the transference of merits. This you should know. The bodhisattva, in this way performing the practices of the five gates, will accomplish self-benefit and benefiting-others and quickly obtain the perfection of the highest, perfect enlightenment.<sup>15</sup>

I have now finished briefly explaining the significance of the *Discourse on the Sutra of Eternal Life and the Gāthā of Aspiration to be Born in the Pure Land*.

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#### NOTES

1. *Kācilindika* 迦旃隣陀. A mythical grass of India. It was said that anyone who touched this soft and gentle grass would receive great pleasure and happiness. It was often used as a metaphor for the Pure Land. Also a variety of water fowl, with extremely soft and fine feathers.

2. *Dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

*Dhyāna* 禪. Meditation or concentration. Practice whereby the mind is focused upon an object of meditation so that all other intellectual and emotional activities are cut off. In this way, the mind is cleared and purified, thereby allowing one to directly experience true reality.

*Samādhi* 三昧. The mental state attained through *dhyāna* practice wherein one is able to visualize transcendental existence and realize true reality.

3. Women and persons with imperfect organs, as well as those having the seeds of the two vehicles will not be born there.

It can be said that this notion reflected attitudes which prevailed in Indian society since early days. Women not only occupied a lower social position, but were said to possess deeper karmic evil than men. For this reason, it was said that women could not become Brahman, Indra, Devil King, Cakravartin King, or Buddha 五障. However, since such discriminatory notions contradicted the fundamental Mahāyāna teaching that all sentient beings can become buddha, the notion that women take on male form when born in the Pure Land was devised. Examples can be seen in the thirty-fifth vow of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* 變成男子の願 as well as in the present text. In Jōdo Shinshū, men as well as women are seen as beings of deep and heavy karmic evil who are equally carried to the Pure Land and brought to enlightenment by Amida Buddha's vow.

Persons with imperfect organs 根缺 refers to those who are deficient in eye, ear, nose, mouth, body, or mind. This again may be said to reflect societal values prevalent in India at that time which discriminated against disabled

persons. Another interpretation of the phrase is that it refers to those who lack the good roots to become buddhas.

Those having the seeds of the two vehicles 二乗の種 refers to those possessing the seeds (種子, *bīja*) or karmic potential to become *śrāvaka* 声聞 or *pratyekabuddha* 縁覚. *Śrāvakas* are disciples who reach attainment by listening to a teacher. *Pratyekabuddhas* are those who attain emancipation by themselves through realization of the twelve links of causation. Both are Hīnayāna sages who are said to attain only self-benefit, without regard for benefiting others. They are therefore said to be excluded from the Mahāyāna gate of the Pure Land.

It is perhaps possible to interpret this entire phrase to mean that, within the Mahāyāna gate, all who enter are ultimately equal. Since Vasubandhu states in the prose section that not only the substances, but even the names of these three types of beings are not present in the Pure Land, it is possible to infer that this means that no distinctions such as man-woman, etc., are made there. The land, being the perfection of Amida Buddha's vow to save all sentient beings, is therefore one of "overall and undivided equality."

4. Mount Sumeru 須弥山 is, in Indian Buddhist cosmology, a mammoth mountain, towering over all other peaks and standing resolute within a great ocean in the center of the world. Around it revolve the sun and the moon. The realm of heavenly beings exists both above and upon the surface of the mountain. On four sides of its base lie four great continents which represent the realm of human beings.

5. "Pure faith" actually appears as 信心 (*shinjin*) in the text. 信心 is often translated as faith, believing mind, entrusting mind, or mind of serene faith. A debate presently exists in Shinshū circles over the proper translation of the term. While some prefer one of the above English translations or a variation thereof, others prefer to leave the word untranslated as "*shinjin*." In the latter case, "*shinjin*" is used to express Shinran's understanding of 信心 as the true and real mind of the Buddha.

Here, "pure faith" has been chosen. It is important to note that, in the *Discourse*, the term 信心 appears only once, i.e., at the beginning of the prose section. From the context the term can be taken to refer to the mind attained by the perfection of the five gates of mindfulness, i.e., the exquisite, blissful, superior, and true mind 妙樂勝真心 which is the union of the undefiled pure mind 無染清淨心, the peaceful pure mind 安清淨心, and the blissful pure mind 樂清淨心. T'an-luan, in turn, interpreted the passage in question, stating, "By contemplating these seventeen types of adornments, one is able to produce true and real pure faith and, without fail, attain birth in the Buddha Land of Peace and Bliss" (*Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho*, vol. 1, 328). Accordingly, it was felt that here the term 信心 should be translated as "pure faith," that is, the true and real mind of pure faith which is ultimately produced in the practitioner by the activity of the primal vow.



6. *Tathāgata*, *arhat*, *samyaksaṃbuddha*. *Tathāgata* means one who has gone into thusness 如去, as well as one who has come from thusness 如来. *Arhat* 阿羅漢 is often used to refer to a Hīnayāna sage who has achieved the fourth and highest stage of attainment. Here, the term 応 is an abbreviation of 応供 which means one who is worthy of offerings. *Samyaksaṃbuddha* 正遍知 means one who has realized true enlightenment. All three terms are among the ten appellations of the Buddha 十号 and here all refer to Amida Buddha.

7. *Śāmatha* 奢摩他 means to concentrate the mind on a single object in order to eliminate all extraneous, confused thoughts and achieve a mind of tranquility.

8. *Vipaśyanā* 毗婆舍那 means, once having attained a tranquil mind through concentration and meditation, to freely and clearly contemplate an object, or the truth, with insight into its true nature.

9. *Maṇi* jewel (摩尼如意宝, Skt. *viśvarūpacintā-maṇi*). A mythical jewel which, it was said, could bring to fruition all that one desires, such as the elimination of suffering, etc.

10. Skillful means (方便, Skt. *upāya*). The term means expediency, means, method, device, and so on. It has been used to express, among other things, (a) a superior, skillful method of teaching and saving sentient beings; (b) a dharma gate which has been temporarily and provisionally provided to lead sentient beings ultimately to the true and real teaching; (c) relative wisdom which arises out of and gives expression to absolute wisdom; (d) all religious practices leading to enlightenment.

In the *Discourse*, 方便 is presented as that which allows the bodhisattva of wisdom and compassion to benefit all beings without hindrance. As such, wisdom, compassion, and skillful means (expediency) must necessarily be perfected together in the fulfillment of the virtues of self-benefit and benefiting-others.

11. *Bodhi* gate 菩提門. *Bodhi* means wisdom and enlightenment. The *bodhi* gate is the way to enlightenment.

12. Expediency. See n10. Skillful means.

13. *Prajñā* 般若 means transcendental wisdom, inherent wisdom, and that which is true and real. Having realized *prajñā*, one is able to grasp totally the entirety of existence.

14. Lotus-Storehouse World 蓮華藏世界. The Recompensed Pure Land of Amida Buddha, perfected and fulfilled through the vows and practice of Dharmākara Bodhisattva. In the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, it is the land of Vairocana Buddha.

15. Highest perfect enlightenment (阿耨多羅三藐三菩提, Skt. *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). The unsurpassed, perfectly fulfilled wisdom of the buddhas.



# The Five Contemplative Gates of Vasubandhu's *Rebirth Treatise* as a Ritualized Visualization Practice<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Rebirth Treatise*<sup>2</sup> is one of the central texts in the development of Pure Land Buddhism in East Asia. For example, Hōnen included it as one of “the four texts which directly expound the Pure Land teaching,”<sup>3</sup> and because the text is attributed to Vasubandhu, he is counted as one of the seven patriarchs of Jōdo Shinshū.<sup>4</sup> The work comprises two parts, a set of *gāthās* and an autocommentary, and is generally understood to be related to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra*. The work presents a set of five practices which are called the five contemplative gates (Ch. *wu nien men*; Jpn. *go nen mon*).<sup>5</sup> These five are:

1. bodily worship;
2. praise of Amitāyus, interpreted as verbal recitation of Amitāyus' name;
3. mental resolve to be born in the Pure Land;
4. visualization of the Pure Land, Amitāyus, and his retinue of bodhisattvas; and
5. transfer of merit.

Prior to examining the five contemplative gates, the traditional understanding of the *Rebirth Treatise* as specifically linked to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* will be discussed.<sup>6</sup> A close examination of the *Rebirth Treatise* in comparison with the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* seems to indicate that this association is problematic. Second, the structure of the practices prescribed by the *Rebirth Treatise* is analyzed in order to demonstrate that the five contemplative gates form a single visualization practice, i.e., a *sādhana*. The third section seeks to explicate the assumptions concerning the soteriological efficacy of the kind

of visualization practice described in the *Rebirth Treatise*, particularly in connection with the Yogācāra associations of the text.

#### THE REBIRTH TREATISE AND THE LARGER SUKHĀVATĪVYŪHA SUTRA

The *Rebirth Treatise* is often described as having a special connection to the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*.<sup>7</sup> One of the meanings of *upadeśa* in the Sanskrit reconstruction of the title of the *Rebirth Treatise* (*Sukhāvatīvyūha upadeśa*) is commentary, yet the *Rebirth Treatise* is not a commentary in the ordinary sense of an exposition of the meaning of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*. It does not seek to expound the meaning of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*, nor are explanations of terms, phrases, or other sections of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* to be found in the *Rebirth Treatise*. Also, it is much shorter than the text upon which it is supposedly commenting, giving it the superficial appearance of a condensation, abridgement, or summary.

An examination of the contents of the text reveals further difficulties with viewing the *Rebirth Treatise* as specifically focused on the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*. If that were the case, then one would expect the description of Sukhāvatī in the *Rebirth Treatise* to match that found in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*. This is not the case, however. Indeed, the description of Sukhāvatī found in the *Rebirth Treatise* is closer to the description of pure lands in general which is found in the *Mahāyānasaṅgraha*.

The *Rebirth Treatise* focuses on three sets of “merits.”<sup>8</sup> These are the seventeen merits of the Pure Land, the eight merits of Amitāyus, and the four merits of his retinue of bodhisattvas. These twenty-nine merits are first presented in the verse section, then summarized and explained in the prose section.<sup>9</sup> Paraphrasing the verses, these are:

##### *Seventeen Merits of the Pure Land:*

1. That world surpasses the ways of the three worlds.
2. It is broad and limitless, like space.
3. Wholesome roots which transcend *saṃsāra* produce great compassion of the right path.
4. It is filled with pure light, like a mirror, or the sun or moon.
5. It has the qualities of precious jewels, and is complete with sublime glories.

6. Its undefiled lights are vigorous and bright, purifying the world.<sup>10</sup>
7. The grasses there have jewel-like qualities and when touched produce an ecstatic experience like touching soft cloth.
8. There are ten million kinds of jewel flowers, covering all things; from the towers there one has an unimpeded view of the trees which emit lights and the jewel-railings which surround the trees, the colors of all blending together; Indra's net covers the entire sky with bells at every knot ringing out the sound of the true dharma.
9. Glorious flower-robos rain down, perfuming all things.
10. The Buddha's wisdom shines forth like the sun, eliminating the world's delusions, darkness, and ignorance.
11. The sacred words heard here are subtle, and no matter how faint are heard everywhere.
12. Amitāyus abides there as the *dharmarāja*.
13. Bodhisattvas are born there.
14. The bodhisattvas enjoy the "flavor of the *buddha-dharma* and nourish themselves on *dhyāna* and *samādhi*."<sup>11</sup>
15. Their enjoyment is unbroken.
16. All born there are equal: no one is born there as a woman, having defective sense organs, or as a member of the lineages of the two lower vehicles (*śravakayāna* and *pratyekabuddhayāna*).
17. All that is wished for is fulfilled.

*Eight Merits of the Buddha:*

18. The king is adorned with innumerable jewels and sits on a lotus throne.
19. His marks shine to the distance of an arm's length.
20. His voice is heard everywhere in the Pure Land.
21. He makes no discriminations.
22. The bodhisattvas are born from the sea of his wisdom.
23. He stands exalted and unsurpassed.
24. The bodhisattvas "pay homage, surround, and adore"<sup>12</sup> him.
25. He is available to all.

*Four Merits of the Bodhisattvas:*

26. The wheel of the dharma is constantly turned by the bodhisattvas.
27. The beneficial light of the Pure Land penetrates everywhere.
28. The offerings and praises are made without discrimination.
29. The bodhisattvas seek rebirth in worlds lacking the buddha and dharma jewels.

I have detailed these merits of the three objects of visualization as described in the *Rebirth Treatise* so as to highlight the discrepancy which exists between this description of Sukhāvātī and the descriptions found in the *Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha Sutra*. The most specific description of Sukhāvātī in the *Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha Sutra* is in the vows of Amitāyus. Vow number four is that humans and *devas* will be of one appearance, having no difference in beauty.<sup>13</sup> This is somewhat similar to the sixteenth merit above, that all are born equal. The sixteenth merit goes on to say that no one is born there as a woman, which is also similar to vow thirty-five: that women who have heard the name of Amitāyus rejoice, awaken the desire for awakening and choose to renounce womanhood will not be born again as women.<sup>14</sup> Also somewhat similar are the twenty-fourth vow, that bodhisattvas may “perform meritorious acts of worshipping the buddhas with the offerings of their choice,”<sup>15</sup> and the twenty-eighth merit, that offerings and praises are made without discrimination. Again, there is a marginal similarity between vow number twenty-five, that bodhisattvas will “be able to expound the dharma with the all-knowing wisdom,”<sup>16</sup> and the twenty-sixth merit, that the bodhisattvas constantly turn the wheel of the dharma. There is a general similarity between the descriptions of the magnificence of Sukhāvātī found in vow number thirty-two<sup>17</sup> and merit eight, though none of the specifics actually match. Finally, there is some similarity between vow number thirty-eight,<sup>18</sup> that fine robes are spontaneously provided for humans and *devas* in Sukhāvātī, and merit nine, that flower-robos rain down, perfuming all things.

The *Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha Sutra* also contains additional descriptions of Sukhāvātī in later sections.<sup>19</sup> However, these at best can only be considered to have a general similarity to the descriptions found in

the *Rebirth Treatise*, similarities which might be expected in almost any description of any buddha's pure land.

It is also worth noting some of the significant differences between the *Rebirth Treatise* and the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra*. While vow number two declares that there will be no evil rebirths<sup>20</sup> in Sukhāvati, i.e., no hell-beings, animals, or hungry ghosts, the *Rebirth Treatise* does not. The *Rebirth Treatise* makes no mention of being reborn as the result of even as few as ten *buddhānusr̥ṣṭi*, i.e., vow eighteen. Similarly, vows nineteen, that adherents will see Amitāyus at death, and twenty, that all adherents who desire rebirth will attain it, are not mentioned in the *Rebirth Treatise*.<sup>21</sup> These three vows together constitute the core for later Pure Land soteriology, especially as formulated by Shinran. If the *Rebirth Treatise* were so specifically linked to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* as it has been understood to be in East Asian Pure Land Buddhism, one would expect that at least a mention of these central ideas would be made. Another difference is the treatment of the rebirth of the bodhisattvas. Vow number twenty-two asserts that all bodhisattvas born in Sukhāvati reach the stage of becoming a buddha in one more lifetime, except those “who wish to teach and guide sentient beings in accordance with their original vows.”<sup>22</sup> What is described as an exception in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* is somewhat similar to the twenty-ninth merit of the *Rebirth Treatise*, which says that all of the bodhisattvas seek rebirth in worlds lacking the buddha and dharma jewels. What is the norm according to the *Rebirth Treatise* is the exception according to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra*. Other differences are even more pronounced. The *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* makes at least three references to the presence of *śrāvakas* in Sukhāvati,<sup>23</sup> whereas the *Rebirth Treatise* specifically denies the presence of either *śrāvakas* or *pratyekabuddhas* in merit sixteen. The two bodhisattvas who are described as the “most dignified”<sup>24</sup> in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* and who come to play an important role for Pure Land piety are Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Yet the *Rebirth Treatise* makes no specific mention of these two bodhisattvas, nor does it name any other bodhisattvas. As a final example, vow twelve says that Amitāyus' light illuminates “at least a hundred thousand koṭis of nayutas of Buddha-lands,”<sup>25</sup> whereas, while it may not be exactly the same thing, the *Rebirth Treatise* asserts in merit twenty-seven that it is the beneficial light of the Sukhāvati itself which penetrates everywhere, while according to merit nineteen Amitāyus' marks shine (only) to a distance of an arm's length.

The absence of identity or consistency, and the many significant differences between the descriptions of Sukhāvatī in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* and the *Rebirth Treatise*, make it appear highly unlikely that the latter is particularly linked to the former. A similar comparison with the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* leads to the same conclusion.

There is another source which describes the characteristics of pure lands generally, i.e., not specifically Sukhāvatī, and which is firmly in the Yogācāra tradition with which the *Rebirth Treatise* is associated: the *Mahāyānaśāṅgraha* of Asaṅga.<sup>26</sup> While not a perfect match, we do find here several characteristics which are very similar to those given in the *Rebirth Treatise*. These include: (1) The fourth characteristic listed by Asaṅga is “Its domain transcends the triple world,”<sup>27</sup> which seems almost identical with the first characteristic given by the *Rebirth Treatise*: that world surpasses the ways of the three worlds. (2) Asaṅga’s third characteristic is “Its horizon is unlimited,”<sup>28</sup> which matches the second characteristic of the *Rebirth Treatise*: it is broad and limitless, like space. (3) Asaṅga’s fourth characteristic is “It arises from good roots that are transcendent and [good roots] even beyond those”<sup>29</sup> which is at least similar to the third characteristic of the *Rebirth Treatise*: wholesome roots which transcend *saṃsāra* produce great compassion of the right path. (4) Asaṅga’s first characteristic is “The Buddha dwells in a great palace which is ornamented with seven luminous gems, and there emits a great light, completely filling immeasurable world-realms.”<sup>30</sup> This is similar to the fourth and fifth characteristics of the *Rebirth Treatise*: it is filled with pure light, like a mirror, or the sun or moon, and it has the qualities of precious jewels, and is complete with sublime glories. (5) The tenth of Asaṅga’s characteristics is “It is sustained by great enjoyment and delight in the taste of the doctrine,”<sup>31</sup> which is similar to the first part of the fourteenth characteristic described in the *Rebirth Treatise*: [bodhisattvas who are born there] enjoy the “flavor of the *buddha-dharma*.” (6) And, finally, the eleventh characteristic given by Asaṅga is “It is the foundation for bringing about all benefit for sentient beings”<sup>32</sup> has at least a similar ring to the seventeenth characteristic given by the *Rebirth Treatise*: all that is wished for is fulfilled.<sup>33</sup> In terms of these six items, then, the *Rebirth Treatise* appears to be at least as close to the *Mahāyānaśāṅgraha* of Asaṅga as to the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra*. This has two implications. First, the idea that the *Rebirth Treatise* is a commentary on the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*

*Sutra* is made more doubtful, and the association of the *Rebirth Treatise* with the Yogācāra tradition is strengthened.

At one place the *Rebirth Treatise* does say that it is an exposition of the “sutra of Limitless Life” (*Wu-liang-shou hsiu to lo*). This seems to have been interpreted to mean the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* because of the Chinese rendering of the title of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* as the *Sutra of the Buddha of Limitless Life*, i.e., Amitāyus. However, there are two points of ambiguity. First, it is possible that it is not the singular, *sutra*, which is meant, but rather the plural, *sutras*. In fact, Nishu Utsuki does read the text as meaning the plural,<sup>34</sup> as does Roger Corless in his translation of T’an-luan’s commentary on the *Rebirth Treatise*.<sup>35</sup> Second, *Wu-liang-shou* is itself ambiguous, being not only a translation of Amitāyus, but also a translation of Aparimitāyus.<sup>36</sup> Aparimitāyus is another Pure Land buddha whose cult appears to have been virtually contemporaneous with Amitāyus in India.<sup>37</sup> There is a corpus of about a dozen works extant in Tibetan and three works in Chinese devoted specifically to Aparimitāyus. Hence, it certainly seems possible that the *Rebirth Treatise* is oriented to several sutras including not only the *Larger* and *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sutras*, but also the Aparimitāyus corpus as well.<sup>38</sup>

If the *Rebirth Treatise* is neither a commentary on the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* in the normal English sense of commentary as explaining the meaning of a text, nor specifically linked to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra*, how then can it be understood? Kiyota notes that another meaning of *upadeśa* is “instruction,”<sup>39</sup> and the *Rebirth Treatise* seems to focus on the practices of an Amitāyus cult. Further, the practice described in the *Rebirth Treatise* constitutes, I believe, a single five-fold, ritualized visualization practice.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE PRACTICE OF THE FIVE CONTEMPLATIVE GATES

The *Rebirth Treatise* itself distinguishes the first four of the contemplative gates, which are described as being for one’s own benefits, from the last, which is described as being for the benefit of others. This distinction has led to a division of the five contemplative gates into two groups, the first four being interpreted as preparatory to the final gate, the transfer of merit, which is seen as being the most important of the five. However, an examination of the relative amount of attention given to each of the five contemplative gates in the *Rebirth Treatise* itself calls this interpretation into question. A comparison of the five



contemplative gates with the Shingon Jūhachidō ritual shows a structural similarity between the two. The similarity may indicate both that a three-fold division of the five contemplative gates reveals the third gate, the visualization gate, to be the most important, and that the five contemplative gates constitute a single, ritualized visualization practice, a *sādhana*.

The five contemplative gates are presented by Vasubandhu in the following order: bodily worship, verbal recitation, mental resolve, visualization, and transfer of merit. The autocommentary distinguishes the first four of these from the last, explaining that the first four “perfect the virtue of Entry. The fifth Gate perfects the virtue of virtue of Departure.”<sup>40</sup> This distinction between “Entry” and “Departure” is explained as the first four contemplative gates are directed toward the benefit of oneself, while the last is directed toward the benefit of others. T’an-Iuan’s commentary on the *Rebirth Treatise* says, “The first four Recollections are the *Entrance Gates* to Sukhāvatī, while the last Recollection is the *Exit Gate* of teaching and converting [beings] out of compassion.”<sup>41</sup> On the basis of this twofold division, Minoru Kiyota has interpreted the practice as culminating in the final act, the transfer of merit: “The four (worship, praise, vow, and meditation) are prerequisites to the final practice, the transferring of merit.”<sup>42</sup> Purification of body, speech, and mind are “preparatory items to perfect the bodhisattva practices,”<sup>43</sup> i.e., the transfer of merit. In Kiyota’s interpretation, both resolve and visualization only serve to purify the mind in preparation for the transfer of merit. This manner of dividing the five contemplative gates does not mean, however, that transfer of merit was itself originally understood as the soteriologically effective part of the practice.

Certainly Vasubandhu views the transfer of merit as important in the development of the qualities of a bodhisattva: wisdom, compassion, and skillful means. According to Yuichi Kajiyama, Vasubandhu’s view is that “the transfer of merits by a Bodhisattva in Sukhāvatī is his skillful means (*upāya-kauśalya*) by which he, transferring merits accumulated by his five kinds of practices to all suffering sentient beings, lets them all be born in Sukhāvatī, without using the merits for the benefit of his own happiness.”<sup>44</sup> The transfer of merit is of course a very common Mahāyāna practice, manifesting the compassion of a bodhisattva. However, this does not necessarily mean that the transfer of merit is considered to be the most important aspect of the five



contemplative gates, only that as a Mahāyāna practice it needs to include the transfer of merit.<sup>45</sup> If the transfer of merit were the most important element in the practice, one would expect it to receive the greatest amount of attention. This, however, is not the case.

The weight of attention is given to the fourth contemplative gate, visualization. Vasubandhu's description of the visualization is much more developed and complex than any of the other four contemplative gates, clearly indicating that the visualization is the key item in the five contemplative gates. Just how important the visualization is considered to be is indicated by the fact that almost seven times as much space is devoted to detailing and explaining the visualization than is to introducing the five contemplative gates in their entirety. Later in the text there is a discussion of the transfer of merit per se, but again, the amount of space devoted to describing the details of the visualization is about six times as much as is devoted to the discussion of transfer of merit. Additionally, other than the opening and closing stanzas, the *gāthās* are entirely devoted to describing the merit of the Pure Land, which is the visualization.

In addition to the relative amount of attention Vasubandhu gives to the visualization section, a comparison with Shingon rituals suggests a three part division of the five contemplative gates. The Jūhachidō ("eighteen ways," referring to the original form which utilized eighteen *mudrās*) provides a useful comparison, both because it is a relatively concise practice and because it is the paradigmatic Shingon ritual. It is the first ritual a Shingon priest in training learns to perform, and the rest of the training rituals and the majority of other Shingon rituals have the same structure—they can be analyzed either as expansions upon or abbreviations of the Jūhachidō. Traditionally, the ritual has been divided into five parts: purification, construction, encounter, identification, and dissociation. Purification involves the preparation of the practitioner, including prostrations. Construction is the preparation of the ritual site, as well as reiteration of vows and the assertion of one's intention to achieve full awakening. Encounter involves the invitation, greeting and feasting of the deities evoked, and recitation of their mantras. Identification is the ritual identification between the practitioner and the chief deity.

Dissociation includes separation from the deity, the leave-taking of the deities, transfer of merit, dissolution of the ritual site, and departure of the practitioner.<sup>46</sup> Several of the specific actions of the Jūhachidō are

the same as those of the five contemplative gates: prostrations, vows, mantra, and transfer of merit, though the order is slightly different and they are embedded in a more complex ritual.

Identification is held to be the most important part of the Jūhachidō, as it is with all tantric rituals. Despite being the fourth of the five parts just described, identification is structurally central because the final part, dissociation, replicates in reverse order and in abbreviated form the actions in the first three: purification, construction, and encounter. Given that identification is central—both in terms of Shingon soteriology and in terms of the structure of the ritual—everything prior to identification is preparation, while everything subsequent is termination of the ritual.<sup>47</sup> By analogy, this would serve to explain why if the visualization is the most important part of the practice it is not the central action, i.e., the third gate. Abbreviation of the terminal actions is very common in Shingon rituals and may serve to explain why in the five contemplative gates the visualization is preceded by three preparatory actions and followed by only one terminal action.

Thus, there is a structural similarity between the five contemplative gates and the Jūhachidō: both have five components, of which the first three are preparatory, the fourth is the main activity and the fifth terminates the ritual practice. There is an important difference, however, in soteriological conceptions indicated by the difference in the two central actions—identification and visualization. While the five contemplative gates are a practice associated with the cult of Amitāyus, the Jūhachidō is a tantric Buddhist practice.<sup>48</sup>

#### PRACTICE AND SOTERIOLOGY<sup>49</sup>

What soteriological preconceptions are implicit in the practice of the five contemplative gates? First, one interpretation of the *Rebirth Treatise* as centering on “faith” will be examined. While the use of such connotatively laden terms as “faith” in English translations of Buddhist works has been the subject of much discussion,<sup>50</sup> our attention here will be on the difference between the East Asian Pure Land use of the concept and the meaning coming from the Indian sources. Second, the five contemplative gates will be examined against the background of other visualization practices. Finally, a suggestion concerning the relation to Yogācāra soteriology will be explored.

It has been asserted by Kiyota that “Birth in the Pure Land is realized through faith,”<sup>51</sup> and, that faith is the meaning behind the five

contemplative gates. The phrase which leads Kiyota to place faith as central to the *Rebirth Treatise* is at the beginning of the prose auto-commentary: “How should we meditate and awaken Faith?”<sup>52</sup> The term Kiyota is translating as “Faith” is *hsin hsin* (*shinjin*), which of course becomes central to East Asian, and especially Japanese, Pure Land Buddhist thought. However, the term only appears once in the text, and furthermore, Kiyota’s translation is itself informed by T’an-luan’s commentary. While the Buddha Amitāyus is the central figure of the visualization practice prescribed by the *Rebirth Treatise*, this does not automatically entail a soteriology of faith in the vow, as developed through the works of such later figures as T’an-luan, Shan-tao, Hōnen, and Shinran, nor a kind of Buddhist devotionism, as Kiyota and others have taken it. In the case of the *Rebirth Treatise*, it would seem to be more appropriate that the term *hsin hsin* be understood within the context of soteriological concepts which predate the *Rebirth Treatise*, e.g., Yogācāra, rather than by reference to soteriological concepts which postdate it.

The Sanskrit for *hsin hsin* is *prasāda* (or, *cittaprasāda*)<sup>53</sup>, which according to Monier-Williams primarily means “clearness, brightness, pellucidness, purity,” and also “calmness, tranquillity, absence of excitement, serenity of disposition.”<sup>54</sup> This is the meaning in which Vasubandhu himself uses the term in his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* when he defines *śraddhā*, another term often translated as “faith,” as “clarification of the mind.”<sup>55</sup> In other words, what is sought is a calm mind, a clear mind, i.e., one which is not disturbed by anxiety. This would seem to point to understanding the opening question of the autocommentary by reference to the meanings which Vasubandhu makes explicit as the import of the third and fourth of the contemplative gates respectively: *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. *Śamatha* is the mental tranquillity attained through meditative practices. Not only then do (*citta*-)*prasāda* and *śamatha* have almost identical meanings, but the first part of the question which opens the autocommentary concerns how to “meditate.” The term Kiyota renders as “meditate” is *kuan*, a common translation for *vipaśyanā*,<sup>56</sup> i.e., insight, which carries the sense of directly seeing the true nature of all of existence—either its emptiness or its identity with the *dharmadhātu*.<sup>57</sup> The opening question then is “How can we see [what is true]? How can we [even<sup>58</sup>] produce a calm mind?” The five contemplative gates, then, are Vasubandhu’s answer to the

question of the means for calming the mind in order to perceive what is true, in this case the *dharmadhātu* manifest as the Pure Land.

The soteriology of seeing the Pure Land points to the significance of this ritual as a visualization practice. The origins of the Pure Land tradition seem to share in the use of visualization common to a wide variety of Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism.<sup>59</sup> The *Visualization Sutra* is an important source for understanding Mahāyāna visualization practices. In the *Visualization Sutra* Śākyamuni Buddha describes a series of visualizations to Queen Vaidehī in response to her expressed desire to “perceive a place where one can be born by performing pure and undefiled acts.”<sup>60</sup> Śākyamuni explains the purpose of visualizing the Buddha Amitāyus, the eighth visualization, saying:

Each *buddha-tathāgata*, as the body of the *dharmā*-realm, pervades the mind of all sentient beings. Therefore, when you perceive a buddha in your mind, it is your mind which possesses the thirty-two prominent features and the eighty secondary attributes; your mind becomes buddha; your mind is a buddha; and the wisdom of the buddhas—true, universal and ocean-like—arises from this mind. Therefore, you should single-mindedly fix your thoughts and clearly perceive the *Buddha, Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyak-sambuddha*.<sup>61</sup>

In other words, the visualization is not something derivative from sensory experience and therefore ontologically lesser, but rather is a way of making present to consciousness that which is most fundamental to consciousness, that which is ontologically greater than the discriminative consciousness, the enlightened consciousness which can be seen as the Pure Land, Amitāyus and his retinue of bodhisattvas.<sup>62</sup> Malcolm David Eckel has discussed this relation as understood by Bhāvaviveka: “When a lesser person contemplates the Buddha, the Buddha’s crucial characteristic is not his own seeing. It is his ability to illuminate the minds of others who have not yet seen.”<sup>63</sup>

Thus, the *Rebirth Treatise* shares with the *Visualization Sutra* a soteriology of visualization, i.e., of seeing the Pure Land, the Buddha and the bodhisattvas, as a means of being reborn there.<sup>64</sup> This is in keeping with a story concerning the monk Hsüan-tsang who, when facing death at the hands of pirates intending to sacrifice him to Durgā, visualizes Tuṣita Heaven.<sup>65</sup> Alan Sponberg has summarized the soteriological assumptions of Hsüan-tsang’s actions, saying, “Clearly Hsuan-tsang’s aspiration is to gain a vision of Maitreya now, the best guarantee of being reborn later with him in Tuṣita after one’s death.”<sup>66</sup>

This conception of the soteriological efficacy of visualization may in turn point to the more psychologically formulated soteriology of the Yogācāra. If visualization of the Buddha realizes the fundamentally enlightened quality of pure consciousness, then is this practice a means of achieving the “fundamental transformation” (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*)<sup>67</sup> which plays a central role in the soteriology of the Yogācāra school?

Even if the attribution of authorship to Vasubandhu is not accepted, it must at least be accepted that there was some good reason as to why the text was so attributed. As Kiyota says, “The *Upadeśa* displays strong traces of Yogācāra thought.”<sup>68</sup> The concept of fundamental transformation seems to have been central to the soteriological theories of the Yogācāra throughout its history, both in Indian Asia and in East Asia. For example, in his study of the early origin of the *ālayavijñāna* concept, Schmithausen notes that, according to the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*, *āśrayaparivṛtti*<sup>69</sup> is not “a form of mind on its own,” despite the fact that for *arhats* it has entirely replaced the *ālayavijñāna* and the “badness” (*dauṣṭhulya*) with which the *ālayavijñāna* “is bound up or of which it consists.”<sup>70</sup> According to the *Ch’eng Wei-shih Lun* of Hsüan-tsang, “That which the Bodhisattva acquires as a result of revelation by Paravṛtti is Mahāparinirvana.”<sup>71</sup> Further, while *mahāparinirvāṇa* is revealed by *āśrayaparavṛtti*, *mahābodhi* is produced by it.<sup>72</sup> Fundamental transformation, which leads to full and total awakening, is the proximate goal of practice in the Yogācāra.

In the *Rebirth Treatise* Vasubandhu initiates his explanation of the visualization by saying that one should visualize the “merits which glorify Buddha-land,” because such visualization perfects “the power [*bala*] beyond conceptual thought [*acintya*], which is like a wish fulfilling jewel.”<sup>73</sup> The power beyond conceptual thought can also be identified as consciousness beyond discrimination. Discussing this latter concept in the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*, Florin Sutton says that “all discrimination is entirely due to mental functioning, and its spurious nature becomes evident only in the higher state of self-absorption, when the mind turn[s] back upon itself (*parāvṛtti*).”<sup>74</sup> Here Sutton understands *parāvṛtti* as the mind turning back upon itself, i.e., taking itself as its own object.

This, then, provides one way of understanding the soteriological concepts underlying the visualization practice of the *Rebirth Treatise*. By creating a mental image of the Pure Land, Amitāyus and his retinue of bodhisattvas (which is the mind’s own inherently awakened form)

to meditate upon, the mind is turning back upon itself, taking itself as its own object. This turning back upon itself reveals the fundamentally awakened character of mind to itself, leading to a fundamental transformation of mind.

#### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Thus, the *Rebirth Treatise* can be seen as a Yogācāra text describing a single, five part practice which employs Pure Land symbolism as a means of leading the mind to confront itself, producing a fundamental transformation. This understanding of the *Rebirth Treatise* accords with the soteriology of its own time, rather than being created retrospectively through interpretations based on the later developments of the Pure Land tradition in China and Japan. Seeing the text in this light also gives us access to the question of what did the Yogācāra practitioners actually do? A great deal has been written on Yogācāra philosophic theories, but little seems to be available on the practices in which Yogācāra followers engaged. Rather than seeing the *Rebirth Treatise* as representing a third stage in the life of Vasubandhu,<sup>75</sup> I think that it can be understood as a manifestation of the practical side of Yogācāra thought.

One objection to my reading may be that there are inadequate details concerning the actual performance of the ritualized visualization practice to see the five contemplative gates as such a practice. For example, the autocommentary does not specify what kind of “bodily action [*kāya-karma*]”<sup>76</sup> is to be performed. Nor does it specify what form of “vocal action [*vāk-karma*]”<sup>77</sup> one should perform, other than reciting the name of the *tathāgata*. By analogy with contemporary practices, one can assume that full-body, or “five point,” prostrations were meant, and that recitation of the name was in the form of a mantra. The lack of details in the section of the autocommentary in which the five contemplative gates are described as a set may indicate that Vasubandhu assumed that the reader shared a common body of knowledge concerning the performance of such a practice, and that it was not necessary for him to specify these aspects of the practice. If this is the case, then what is highlighted is the visualization of the Pure Land, Amitāyus and his retinue of bodhisattvas, which is the novel aspect of the practice prescribed. Perhaps future research will reveal more information about the specifics of ritual practices in late Indian Buddhism which will shed light on this question.

Related to this is the question of the setting in which the ritual was performed. For example, toward the end of the autocommentary, there is a description of five “entrance gates,” “five teachings which gradually [enable the bodhisattvas to] perfect merits.”<sup>78</sup> These five are an expansion on the five contemplative gates. The first is nearing the Pure Land, which is the result of bodily worship. The second is joining the group of bodhisattvas praising Amitāyus, which is the result of verbal recitation. The third is entering Amitāyus’ domain, which results from mental resolve to be born in the Pure Land and from *śamatha-samādhi*. The fourth is entry into the palace, resulting from *vipaśyāna*, i.e., the visualization. The fifth is entry into the garden of *saṃsāra* and working as a bodhisattva for the benefit of others, which results from the transfer of merit. The spatial characteristics of the metaphor and the kind of stages which it describes—nearing the Pure Land, joining the retinue, entering the domain, entering the palace, and entering the garden—are similar to what one might find if one were describing movement through a mandala. It may be that the practice prescribed in the *Rebirth Treatise* was associated with a visual representation of Amitāyus’ Pure Land in the form of a mandala.

Also left unanswered is the question of the model upon which the five contemplative gates of the *Rebirth Treatise* was based. As Kiyota says, “The textual source on which the five items are based is uncertain.”<sup>79</sup> He goes on to point in a general way to a similarity with

the general practice-prescription of the *Ta chih tu lun* (Nagārjuna’s commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*), the *Bodhicitta-śāstra* (*The Awakening of Enlightenment*), and many other Mahāyāna texts: i.e., the purification of body (*kaya*), speech (*vāc*), and mind (*manas*) as preparatory items to perfect the bodhisattva practices.<sup>80</sup>

Kajiyama has suggested the *triskandhaka*, a ritual practice found in early Mahāyāna, as the basic model of practice which was expanded into the five contemplative gates.<sup>81</sup> The three parts of the *triskandhaka* are expressions of repentance, gratitude, and entreating the Buddha to remain in the world.

Although additional research is needed, there is another possible source for the structure of the five contemplative gates—the five paths. Vasubandhu seems to have been very familiar with the five paths system.<sup>82</sup> The five paths describe the progress of a practitioner from the most basic level found in the path of accumulation of merit, through the paths of preparation, seeing, and meditation, until he/



she reaches the path of no more learning.<sup>83</sup> First, there is a correlation between the number of contemplative gates and paths.<sup>84</sup> Second, the structure of the two is similar:

“Accumulation of Merit” corresponding to “Prostrations”: the path of the accumulation of merit (*saṃbhāramārga*) is marked by activities which establish a relation between the practitioner and the lineage of “holy ones.”<sup>85</sup> Similarly, prostrations are actions which serve to establish such a relation.

“Preparation” corresponding to “Recitation of Amitābha’s Name”: in the path of preparation (*prayogamārga*), the practitioner acquires “the four ‘wholesome roots contributing to penetration’ . . . [which are] of a higher quality whose object is no longer the general marks of dharmas, but the four noble truths and their sixteen aspects.”<sup>86</sup> Recitation of the name of Amitāyus Buddha would similarly give the practitioner an object of meditation whose status is higher than mundane dharmas.

“Seeing” corresponding to “Mental Resolve to Be Reborn”: entry into the path of seeing (*darśanamārga*) is considered to be the point at which the practitioner shifts from being an ordinary, foolish person (*prthagjana*) to being a holy one (*ārya*).<sup>87</sup> In the Mahāyāna this would correspond with the arising of *bodhicitta*, and hence here to the resolution to be reborn in the Pure Land.

“Meditation” corresponding to “Visualization of the Pure Land”: the path of meditation (*bhāvanā-mārga*) is “defined as repeated confrontation” and “prolonged effort” in relation to the four noble truths, by which one’s innate passions are destroyed.<sup>88</sup> Certainly the Pure Land would be thought to be free from such innate passions, and—as discussed above—visualization of the Pure Land would give rise to that purified condition within the mind of the practitioner.

“No More Learning” corresponding to “Transfer of Merit”: traditionally, the path of no more learning (*aśaikṣamārga*) is understood as the attainment of the status of *arhat*.<sup>89</sup> Again, however, as understood in the Mahāyāna, the goal is the bodhisattva who acts compassionately for the benefit of all sentient beings. The transfer of merit (*pariṇāmana*<sup>90</sup>) as the closing portion of the ritualized visualization engages the practitioner in just such a compassionate action, one which can only be effective because at the end of the visualization practice—by the very act of having gained entry into the Pure Land—the practitioner has become a bodhisattva.



Beyond these considerations of similarity between the two structures, there is what I believe to be a fundamental psychological principle underlying the construction of at least some of the meditative and visualization rituals in the Buddhist tradition. This is the idea that ritual practice is a replication in miniature of the entirety of the path. As Stephan Beyer has noted in passing, "The ritual act takes on the dimensions of the entire Bodhisattva Path."<sup>91</sup> Buddhist ritual practice is in this way complete, and it is the repeated practice of the visualization ritual which provides the stimulus for movement along the path as such. The study of Buddhist ritual and its relation to soteriology is an area requiring further exploration, but one which deserves much greater attention than it has been given in the past. Despite the common tendency of much of Buddhist studies scholarship to focus on doctrines, most Buddhists have been primarily concerned with ritual and practice. Hence, the reading of texts needs to give proper attention to the ritual and practice implications of the text.

#### NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was originally presented at the 1991 meeting of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies in Berkeley. That version was translated into Japanese by Atsushi Yoshida, "A Structural Analysis of Vasubandhu's *Ching tu lun*," *The Study of Western Shin Buddhism*, vol. 1 (July 1993): 12-27. This present version is a thorough revision of the earlier one as several of the ideas I put forward there are, I now believe, mistaken.
2. *Wang-sheng lun*, also called *Ching t'u lun* the "Pure Land Treatise," and in full the *Wu-liang-shou ching yu-po-t'i-she yüan-sheng chieh*, "The Treatise on the Sutra of the [Buddha] of Immeasurable Life and the Verses on the Aspiration for Rebirth," Skt. reconstruction: *Sukhāvatīvyūha Upadeśa* (T. 1524). Cf. Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine: Ching-ying Hui-yüan's Commentary on the Visualization Sutra* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 49-50. No Sanskrit or Tibetan version is extant. I know of three English translations: Nishu Utsuki, trans., "The Discourse on Buddhist Paradise," in *Selected Texts of Shin Buddhism*, ed. Nishu Utsuki, posthumously compiled by English Publication Bureau, Buddhist Publication Series, no. 1 (Kyoto: Honpa Hongwanji, 1953), 31-63; David Matsumoto, trans., "Jōdoron: Discourse on the Pure Land," *The Pure Land*, n.s., no. 3 (December 1986): 98-120 [reprinted in this issue of *Pacific World*]; and Minoru Kiyota, trans., "Buddhist Devotional Meditation: A Study of the *Sukhāvatīvyūhopadeśa*," in *Mahayana Buddhist Meditation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Minoru Kiyota (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978), 249-296. Regarding the Chinese rendering of the title, see Roger Corless, "T'an-luan: The First Systematizer," in *The Pure*

*Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 111, where he discusses Tan-luan's reservations about using *lun* to translate *upadeśa*. Also, note that the five contemplative gates differ from Shan-tao's five right practices. see David W. Chappell, "The Pure Land Movement in China" in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 162.

3. Quoted in Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation from Chinese* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1994), 70.

4. There continue to be disagreements, however, as to whether the work is properly attributed or not. Since the issue of attribution is not the main issue addressed in this paper, I am at this point content to accept the traditional attribution, and will, therefore, refer to the author as Vasubandhu.

5. Corless translates these as the "recollection teaching-gates"; cf. "T'an-luan," 112.

6. I am grateful to Atsushi Yoshida (cf. n1) for the suggestion to more closely examine this aspect of the *Rebirth Treatise*.

7. See, for example, Kiyota, "Buddhist Devotional Meditation," 274; and Inagaki, *Three Pure Land Sutras*, 71.

8. This term is usually explained as focusing attention on the origin of the qualities described in the meritorious actions of Amitāyus, rather than on the characteristics per se, or "Those adornments are not material objects, but instead constitute phenomena arising out of and giving expression to dharma-nature itself" (Matsumoto, "Jōdoron," 101 [this issue of *Pacific World*: p. 25]).

9. Kiyota gives charts of the merits, showing their groupings ("Buddhist Devotional Meditation," 261–262).

10. Kiyota interpolates that the world purified is *saṃsāra*, though this seems to be an assumption on his part.

11. *Ibid.*, 276.

12. *Ibid.*, 277.

13. Inagaki Hisao, trans., "The Larger Sutra: The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life Delivered by Śākyamuni Buddha," in *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, ed. Inagaki Hisao (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1994), §7, 241.

14. *Ibid.*, 246–247.

15. *Ibid.*, 245.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, 246.

18. Ibid., 247.

19. See, for example, §11 through §17, and §20 through §23.

20. Inagaki, trans., “*The Larger Sutra*,” 241.

21. There is mention of the “power of the primary vow (*pūrva-praṇidhāna-bala*) of the Buddha” in the eighth merit of the Buddha in the *gāthās*. However, even in the autocommentary, there is no mention of the content of the vow. Kiyota notes that “The *Upadeśa*, however, does not identify the eighteenth vow as the primary one. That, as said, is a view entertained by Shan-tao, Hōnen, and Shinran, and endorsed by Japanese Pure Land believers.” Kiyota, “Buddhist Devotional Meditation,” 256.

22. Ibid., 244.

23. Ibid., 243, 257, and 261.

24. Ibid., 275.

25. Ibid., 242.

26. The association between the *Rebirth Treatise* and the *Mahāyānaśaṃgraha* being suggested here might be questioned, given Fujita Kōtatsu’s discussion of what he calls “a major criticism of Pure Land Buddhism” found in the *Mahāyānaśaṃgraha* (“Pure Land Buddhism in India,” in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996], 33). The section of the *Mahāyānaśaṃgraha* cited by Fujita (Étienne Lamotte, *La Somme du Grand Véhicule d’Asaṅga*, 2 vols. [Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, Université de Louvain, 1973], 1:41; 2:130), however, does not seem to support this understanding. The section referred to by Fujita is a discussion of the varieties of the Buddha’s speech, which includes *kālāntarābhiprāya*, “reference to another time.” The two examples of this kind of speech given in the text do include invocation of the name of a *tathāgata* and vowing to be reborn in *Sukhāvatī*. There is not, however, any criticism of Pure Land Buddhism. Perhaps the criticism Fujita discusses both drew its name from this kind of speech and claimed the authority of the *Mahāyānaśaṃgraha* simply because of the examples given. Indeed the tenor of the criticism as described by Fujita sounds as if it were in response to Chinese developments of Pure Land thought, rather than having arisen in the India of Asaṅga.

27. Paul J. Griffiths, trans., et al., *The Realm of Awakening: A Translation and Study of the Tenth Chapter of Asaṅga’s Mahāyānaśaṃgraha* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 211.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 212.

30. Ibid., 209.

31. Ibid., 215.

32. Ibid.

33. Immediately preceding the description of the “perfectly purified Buddha land” Asaṅga also lists seven recollections of the Buddha (ibid. 198–207), but these do not match the eight merits of the Buddha as given in the *Rebirth Treatise*. There appears to be no section specifically devoted to the bodhisattvas, at least in the tenth chapter of the *Mahāyānasāṅgraha*.

34. Utsuki, “The Discourse,” 40.

35. Roger Jonathan Corless, “T’an-luan’s Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse: An Annotated Translation and Soteriological Analysis of the *Wang-shêng-lun chu* (T. 1819),” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973), 197.

36. See *Répertoire du Canon Bouddhique Sino-Japonaise*, ed. Paul Demiéville, Hubert Durt and Anna Seidel (Paris and Tokyo: L’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Institut de France, 1978), s.v. 360, 363. Cf. also, 361, 362.

37. Assuming that these are in fact two separate cults, and not simply two different names for the same figure.

38. Note that Fujita Kōtatsu states that “The scriptural basis of this work [i.e., the *Rebirth Treatise*] is unclear” (“Pure Land Buddhism in India,” 34). For further information on Aparimitāyus, see Richard K. Payne, “The Cult of Ārya Aparimitāyus: Similarities and Differences Between Proto-Pure Land and Vajrayāna in Indian Buddhism,” presented at The First Conference of The International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, North American Branch, September 24, 1994, Berkeley, California.

39. Kiyota, “Buddhist Devotional Meditation,” 249.

40. Matsumoto, trans., *Jōdoron*, 116 [this issue of *Pacific World*: p. 39].

41. Corless, “T’an-luan’s Commentary,” 214.

42. Kiyota, “Buddhist Devotional Meditation,” 257.

43. Ibid.

44. Yuichi Kajiyama, “Transfer of Merits in Pure Land Buddhism: Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, and T’an-luan,” in *Y. Kajiyama: Studies in Buddhist Philosophy (Selected Papers)*, ed. Katsumi Mimaki, et al. (1986; repr., Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co., Ltd., 1989), 31. For general background on the development of the idea of transfer of merit, see also Yuichi Kajiyama, “Transfer and Transformation of Merits in Relation to Emptiness” (an original essay appearing in the same volume).

45. The only exceptions to the general practice of ending a ritual with the transfer of merit within the Shingon ritual corpus of which I am aware are

some of the rituals for feeding the hungry ghosts, which are in a sense already in their entirety for the benefit of others.

46. For more a detailed description of the Jūhachidō, see Taisen Miyata, *A Study of the Ritual Mudras in the Shingon Tradition* (Sacramento: Northern California Koyasan Temple, 1984). For further information on the structural analysis of the ritual and its relation to other Shingon rituals, see Richard K. Payne, *The Tantric Ritual of Japan*, Śata-piṭaka series, no. 365 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Adityaprakashan, 1991).

47. For a similar analysis, cf. Stephan Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā*, Hermeneutics: Studies in the History of Religions, no. 1 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1973), 30–31.

48. Roger Corless (“Pure Land and Pure Perspective: A Tantric Hermeneutic of Sukhāvātī,” *The Pure Land*, n.s., no. 6 [December 1989], 205–217) has also suggested that the five contemplative gates form a single unified practice. Working from Tan-luan’s commentary on the *Ching t’u lun*, he attempts to reconstruct the outline of the five contemplative gates as a *sādhana* by comparison with a Tibetan tantric ritual. Corless makes two specific points of comparison. First, there is a loose similarity in structure and content. Second, a similarity between Tan-luan’s explanation of the soteriological efficacy of the five contemplative gates and the explanation of the soteriological efficacy of the tantric *sādhana* given by the lama who taught it to Corless, Khenpo Karthar Rimpoche. While Corless’ comparison of the five contemplative gates and the tantric *sādhana* directed to Amitābha is suggestive, his main concern is with a more general comparison between Pure Land Buddhism and Buddhist tantra.

49. In the absence of a more neutral term, “soteriology” is employed here—despite its association with Christian conceptions of salvation from sin—with the meaning “the goal of life as understood by a religious system.”

50. Matsumoto, *Jōdoron*, 118–119n5 [this issue of *Pacific World*: p. 41n5].

51. Kiyota, “Buddhist Devotional Meditation,” 256.

52. *Ibid.*, 278.

53. Hisao Inagaki, *A Trilingual Glossary of the Sukhāvativyūha Sūtras: Indexes to the Larger and Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sūtras* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1984), 236.

54. Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1899; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), s.v. “prasādhā.”

55. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, trans., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, English trans. Leo M. Pruden (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988), 191. De La Vallée Poussin explains that the calm quality of the mind, i.e., *cittaprasāda*, is the result of *śraddha*: “In other words, *śraddha* is the *dharma* by which (*yadyogāt*) the mind, troubled by the *kleśas* and *upakleśas*, becomes clear, as

troubled water becomes clear by the presence of a gem which purifies water (*udakaprasādakamaṇi*). Same example in *Atthāsalinī*, 304." Ibid., 336n20. I wish to thank Steven D. Goodman for calling my attention to this source.

56. See Malcolm David Eckel, *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness* (1992; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 137.

57. Regarding the relation of these two understandings of what is seen, see Paul M. Harrison, "Buddhānusmṛti in the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvathita-Samādhi-Sūtra," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6 (1978): 46–52.

58. Taking the order here as rhetorical, since it is the reverse of the two gates to which the question is referring.

59. The practices actually go back to the *āgamas*. See Paul M. Harrison, "Buddhānusmṛti," 36–38. For a related discussion, see the first two chapters of George J. Tanabe, Jr., *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism*, Harvard East Asian Monographs, no. 156 (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992).

60. I.13. Ryukoku translation, p. 17.

61. III.8. Ryukoku translation, p. 51.

62. It is worth noting that Julian F. Pas, discussing Shan-tao's commentary on this section of the *Visualization Sutra*, dismisses the understanding developed here. Pas, however, assumes that mental images are ontologically lesser than "objective reality" ("Shan-tao's Interpretation of the Meditative Vision of Buddha Amitāyus," *History of Religions* 14, no. 2 [November 1974]: 114). (One wonders if there is not some resonance of St. Anselm in Pas' comments.) This assumption is not necessarily shared by the author(s) of the *Visualization Sutra*. Pas also seems to confuse what is true with what is realized. The sutra is referring to something which is fundamentally true of human consciousness, rather than of something which "would only happen in the highest form of *samādhi*" (pp. 114–115). Such an understanding of the soteriological efficacy of visualization is in keeping with the assumptions basic to Yogācāra. Conze summarizes these assumptions, saying that:

when in a prescribed and disciplined manner and with spiritual intent we move in a trance away from the empirical reality of a given stimulus, we do not thereby move off into a realm of mere phantasy, but come into contact with something ... truer to what is really there than that which we found in the sensory world. (Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India* [1967; repr., Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperback, University of Michigan Press], 254)

63. Eckel, *To See the Buddha*, 139.

64. Another early source which emphasizes visualization is the *Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra*. While in the *Visualization Sutra* the goal is rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitāyus and the means by which it is achieved is a vision of that Buddha and his Pure Land, this complex is only referred to once in the *Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra*. In general “the desire for fortunate rebirth is criticised as being immoral; the goal of the good bodhisattva is nothing short of Buddhahood and the salvation of his fellow-beings.” Harrison, “Buddhānusmṛti,” 52. In the case of the *Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra* the goal is being able to hear the teachings of those buddhas who do exist even now, despite the absence of Śākyamuni in this present time. Ibid., 52–54.

65. The story is repeated in Alan Sponberg, “Meditation in Fa-hsiang Buddhism,” in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Peter N. Gregory, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 4 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 23–24. The story is also discussed by Eckel in his *To See the Buddha*, 131–137.

66. Sponberg, “Meditation,” 26.

67. Ronald Mark Davidson’s translation, “Buddhist Systems of Transformation: Āśraya-parivṛtti/parāvṛtti among the Yogācāra” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1985; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985), 154. Eckel translates the term as “change of standpoint” (*To See the Buddha*, 105). This is suggestive in that visualizing being in the Pure Land would involve visualizing a “change of standpoint.” Further research on the relation between *āśrayaparāvṛtti* as an element of Yogācāra soteriology and Pure Land praxis should include an examination of the place and function of *prañidhāna* in the systems of *bhūmis* and *pāramitās*. (I wish to thank Steven D. Goodman for this suggestion.)

68. Kiyota, “Buddhist Devotional Meditation,” 254.

69. For a discussion of the variant forms, *āśrayaparāvṛtti* and *āśrayaparivṛtti*, see Davidson, “Buddhist Systems of Transformation,” 151–155.

70. Lambert Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*, *Studia Philologica Buddhica*, Monograph Series IVa, b (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1987), 1.81.

71. Hsüan Tsang, *Ch’eng Wei-Shih Lun: The Doctrine of Mere Consciousness*, trans. Wei Tat (Hong Kong: The Ch’eng Wei-Shih Lun Publication Committee, 1973), 759. The *Ch’eng Wei-Shih Lun* devotes an extensive section to discussing *āśrayaparāvṛtti* (pp. 749–759).

72. Ibid.

73. Kiyota, “Buddhist Devotional Meditation,” 279; note that Kiyota understands this phrase differently, interpolating that interpretation with



the opening phrase “We speak of....” I believe that my interpretation is better supported, given the context of the question to which this is the reply. The question is a practical one concerning meditation.

74. Florin G. Sutton, *Existence and Enlightenment in the Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra: A Study in the Ontology and Epistemology of the Yogācāra School of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 198.

75. See for example, Kiyota, “Buddhist Devotional Meditation,” 252–253.

76. *Ibid.*, 278.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*, 289.

79. *Ibid.*, 257.

80. *Ibid.*

81. Personal communication, 1 July 1991. It has also been pointed out that the first three of the gates correspond to body, speech, and mind (James Sanford, personal communication, ca. 1992), and may therefore have been organized as a means of purification or preparation prior to entry into the visualization.

82. See Stefan Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor*, Religions of Asia Series, no. 4 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 200, where Anacker notes that knowledge of the five paths “is presupposed in the *Commentary on the Separation of the Middle from Extremes*.” Also, as Paul Williams notes, “The schema of five ‘paths’ to enlightenment is known from non-Mahāyāna sources” (*Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* [London and New York: Routledge, 1989], 205), i.e., from sources predating Vasubandhu. If the five paths are not the structure upon which the five gates is based, then perhaps the discussion given here may be considered an exegesis of the five gates in terms of the five paths. Such exegeses are of course common in the history of Buddhism.

83. Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1976), 206; also, Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śāka Era*, trans. Sara Webb-Boin, Publications de l’Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, no. 36 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988), 613–618.

84. However, there are many groups of five. As Alex Wayman has noted in relation to tantric Buddhism, “five-fold symbolism is ubiquitous in the Buddhist Tantras” (“The Five-Fold Ritual Symbolism of Passion,” in Alex Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism* [New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973], 204).

85. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 613.



86. Ibid., 614.

87. Ibid., 613.

88. Ibid., 616.

89. Ibid., 617.

90. For further discussion of this concept, see Gadjin M. Nagao, "Usages and Meanings of Pariṇāmanā," *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*, trans. and ed. Leslie S. Kawamura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 83–90.

91. Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā*, 30. The idea that the ritual practice recapitulates the whole of the path does provide one possible way of linking the five paths to the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*: the description of Dharmākara's actions. He gives bodily reverence to Lokeśvararāja, praises Lokeśvararāja, vows to become a buddha, is shown eighty-one hundred thousand *niyutas* of *koṭis* of buddha-lands and visualizes his own (followed by the detailed description in the vows), and accumulates a huge stock of merit which he uses for the benefit of living beings. If not the source of the five gates structure, such an interpretation would not be incompatible with the five paths as the source described *supra*.



**A Commentary on *The Upadeśa on the Sutras of  
Limitless Life with Gāthās on the Resolution to Be Born*  
Composed by the Bodhisattva Vasubandhu:**

**Expository Commentary by the Monk Tanluan**

Trans. by Roger Corless†

Trans. revised and updated by Takahiko Kameyama

Ed. by Richard K. Payne

**ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTES**

Vasubandhu's *gāthās* and *upadeśa* appear in italics

Footnotes and bracketed material by Roger Corless, unless noted

RKP = Richard K. Payne

TK = Takahiko Kameyama

T. = *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*

K. = Kashiwabara Yūgi, *Shinshū Tsūge Zensho*, cited by page number and (sometimes) note number in the *jige* sections of vol. 1

S.B.E. = *Sacred Books of the East*. Cited by volume, part (if applicable), and page

Morohashi = Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kan-Wa Jiten*, cited by entry number

The Comma = Vasubandhu's text

v.l. = *varia lectio*, variant reading: a character that appears in the Apparatus (T. footnote) rather than the text

## [FIRST JUAN, T. 40:826A–834C]

## [INTRODUCTION, 826A28–827A1]

## [General Purport and Authenticity of the Work, 826a28–b28]

I respectfully refer to the *Explanation of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva Path* (*Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā śāstra*)<sup>1</sup> written by the Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna,<sup>2</sup> who tells us that there are two ways in which a bodhisattva may attain to the stage from which one never regresses (*avaivartika*, *apibazhi* 阿毘跋致).<sup>3</sup> The first is the path of difficult practice (*nanxing dao* 難行道) and the second is the path of easy practice (*yixing dao* 易行道).

By the path of difficult practice he means that, during the five dark ages (*wuzhuo zhi shi* 五濁之世),<sup>4</sup> at the time when there is no buddha, it will be difficult to attain the stage from which one never regresses.

1. *Shizhu piposha lun* 十住毗婆沙論 (T. 1521:26).

2. The *Explanation of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva Path*, attributed to Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250 CE), whose quotation at the head of Tanluan's exposition has led him to be regarded as the first patriarch of Jōdo Shinshū 淨土真宗.

3. This section paraphrases T. 1521:26.40c–47a [TK: specifically 41b2–5] in Tanluan's own words. Bodhisattvas who go to the seventh level (*bhūmi*) and beyond are incapable of falling back into unfavorable rebirth and henceforth are known as "great bodhisattvas" (*mahābodhisattva*); they are certain to go on to "full enlightenment" (*samyaksaṃbodhi*). See Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 289ff.

4. Lit., "the world of the five muddies," called in Sanskrit *kaṣāya*, "earth-colored." At the end of a world-cycle, the universe is subject to five deteriorations, viz.:

- (i) *kalpa-kaṣāya*: the deterioration of the time;
- (ii) *drṣṭi-kaṣāya*: the deterioration of metaphysical viewpoints;
- (iii) *kleśa-kaṣāya*: the deterioration characterised by the predominance of the base passions;
- (iv) *sattva-kaṣāya*: the deterioration causing misery to beings;
- (v) *āyus-kaṣāya*: the gradual deterioration of human lifespan to ten years.

No buddha appears at such a time and the way to liberation is very hard to find. See Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 122a; and Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 4n4.

The difficulties are many, but roughly speaking there are five which I would like to mention.

- (1) The superficial goodness of non-Buddhists (*waidao* 外道) thwarts the bodhisattva teaching (*bodhisattvadharmā*).
- (2) The self-benefit (*zili* 自利) of the *śrāvakas* obstructs great compassion.<sup>5</sup>
- (3) People are untroubled by evil, and destroy the superb virtue of others.
- (4) Good results may follow from wrong-headed views (*diandao* 顛倒),<sup>6</sup> damaging the holy practice (*brahmacaryā*, *fanhang* 梵行).
- (5) People rely on their own strength and are not supported by other-power (*tali* 他力).

We see such things as these everywhere. It is like walking painfully overland on foot.

The path of easy practice means that, simply by faith in the Buddha, one resolves to be born in the Pure Land (*Sukhāvātī*, *jingtu* 淨土), and, by availing oneself of the power of the Buddha's resolution, one attains birth in that Pure Land. Maintained by the Buddha's power, one enters into the company of those who are firmly settled in the Mahāyāna (*zengding zhi ju* 正定之聚).<sup>7</sup> Firmly settled (*zengding* 正定) means not regressing (*avaivartika*). It is like riding happily over water in a boat.

5. *Śrāvakas* (*shengwen* 聲聞), those who hear the Buddha but stop short at saving themselves by their own efforts, not going on to the great compassion which aims to save all beings by relying on the other power of the Buddha. Mahāyāna Buddhists who practice only for their own benefit are called Hīnayānists. It bears repeating that Hīnayāna does *not* refer to Theravāda Buddhism.

6. *Viparyāsa*, the four topsy-turvy views of  
 (i) regarding that which is impermanent (*anitya*) as permanent;  
 (ii) regarding that which is unsatisfactory (*duḥkha*) as satisfactory;  
 (iii) regarding that which is non-self (*anātman*) as self;  
 (iv) regarding that which is ugly (*āsubhā*) as beautiful.

7. *Zengding zhi ju* 正定之聚 translates *niyatās samyaktve* [TK: This equivalent is not confirmed. Other sources give these Sanskrit equivalents: *niyama*, *niyāma*, *samyaktva-niyata*], “those who are fixed in what is right,” i.e., *avaivartika*. This is clear from T. 1819:40.844a8, where the sūtra is quoted. See Ashikaga, *Sukhāvativyūha*, 12, lines 17–18.

This *Upadeśa on the Sutras of Limitless Life*<sup>8</sup> discusses the highest teaching of Mahāyāna<sup>9</sup> which sails with the wind and reaches perfection without turning back. “Limitless Life” (*Amitāyus*, *Wuliangshou* 無量壽) is the epithet of the Tathāgata who has the serenely blissful Pure Land [as his realm].

Śākyamuni Buddha gave teachings on the merits of the adornments<sup>10</sup> of Buddha Amitāyus to great crowds of people, in the city of Rājagṛha and in the city-state of Śrāvastī.<sup>11</sup> That buddha’s name is given to the sutras because he embodies them.<sup>12</sup>

Later, a holy man, Vasubandhu Bodhisattva, “wearing on his breast” (*fuying* 服膺)<sup>13</sup> the Tathāgata’s teaching of great compassion, and staying close to the sutras, composed the *Gāthā on the Resolution*

8. [TK: According to Inagaki, the *Sutras of Limitless Life* (*Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經) refers to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* (*Larger Sutra*, *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經) and the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* (*Smaller Sutra*, *Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經). He also points out that in Tanluan’s interpretation all the three Pure Land sutras are implied. See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 293n6.]

9. *Shangyan* 上衍 is a combined translation-transliteration of Mahāyāna. See Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 6n9.

10. [TK: This phrase (*wuliangshou fo zhuangyan gongde* 無量壽佛莊嚴功德) also can be understood to mean “merits adorning the Buddha Amitāyus.” Cf. Hayashima and Ōtani, *Jōdoron chū*, 57–59.]

11. The *Larger Sutra* and the *Contemplation Sutra* (*Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經: T. 365:12) claim to have been preached at Rājagṛha, and the *Smaller Sutra* at the city-state of Śrāvastī. Thus, the commentary is on all three sutras, each of which has the name of Amita [-āyus] “embodied” in the title.

12. [TK: The translation of the passage 即以佛名號爲經體. In accordance with following information, we should more literally translate it as “Thus, that Buddha’s name is the substance of the sutras.” In his dissertation, Corless translates the same passage as “Thus, that Buddha’s Name embodies the Sutras.” Inagaki translates it as “The essence of the sutras expounded at that time is the Name of [Amida] Buddha.” According to Hayashima and Ōtani, the passage also can be interpreted as follows: “The name of the Buddha Amida is the essence (or principle) of *Larger Sutra*.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 122, and Hayashima and Ōtani, *Jōdoron chū*, 57–59.]

13. *Fuying* 服膺 is a reference to *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸), chap. 8: “The Master said, ‘This was the manner of Hui—he made choice of the Mean, and whenever he got hold of what was good, he clasped it firmly, as if wearing it on his breast, and did not lose it’” (Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 1:389). Thus, the phrase is a figure for “prizing greatly.”

to Be Born [in the Pure Land]. He then wrote an interpretation of it in prose, which he called, in Sanskrit, *upadeśa*.<sup>14</sup> We don't have a proper translation equivalent of this word in the language of this country (i.e., Chinese), but if we "lift up one corner" (*juyiyu* 舉一隅)<sup>15</sup> we could call it a "discourse" (*lun* 論).

There is no proper translation equivalent because we have never had a buddha in China. In our country, we have the documents edited by Confucius, which we call "classics" (*jing* 經), and the compositions of others, called "masters" (*zi* 子). Then, there are the "state histories" (*guoshi* 國史) and the "private chronicles" (*guoji* 國紀), each in a different style. On the other hand, the sayings of the Buddha are classified into the "twelvefold classics" (*dvādaśa-aṅga-dharma-pravacana*, *shierbu jing* 十二部經),<sup>16</sup> in which there are commentaries called *upadeśa* (*youtishe* 優婆提舍). If the disciples of the Buddha expound the teaching of the Buddha's "classics" in accordance with the Buddha's essential meaning, he permits them [their expositions] to be called *upadeśa*, because they enter into what pertains to the *buddhadharma*. In China we call them "discourses" (*lun*), and that is straightaway taken to mean "discourses on the meaning" (*lunyi* 論議). How can one arrive at a proper translation with that word?

To put it another way, a woman is called "mother" by her son and "sister" by her brother. Different names are given depending upon the context. If we use the word "woman" to speak in general about mothers and sisters, we shall not err as to the general meaning of the word "woman," but we will not be able to be specific about her rank [in the

14. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 2:135a defines *upadeśa* as "name of a type of Buddhist literature, one of the *pravacana* . . . lit., instruction."

15. *Juyiyu* 舉一隅 is a reference to *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) 8.8 (Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 1:197): "If I hold up one corner and a man cannot come back to me with the other three, I do not continue the lesson" (Waley, *Analects of Confucius*). Thus, the phrase is a figure for "approximation" or "allusion."

16. *Dvādasāṅga* [TK: or *dvādaśāṅga*]: see Malalasekara (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, 616–619, sub *aṅga*. A common classification of Buddhist writings by style rather than by content is the twelve "limbs" (*aṅga*). In that classification, *gāthā* and *upadeśa* are distinguished as separate *aṅgas*.

larger family system].<sup>17</sup> The case of speaking of a “discourse” is similar. Therefore, we keep the Sanskrit pronunciation and say *upadeśa*.

[Outline of the Work, 826b28–c3]

This discourse, taken as a whole, is broadly divided into two parts: a summary and an explanation. The summary comes first, and continues to the end of the stanzas of five characters per line. The explanation begins with the words “The discourse says. . .” and continues to the end of the prose. Since there are two parts, the interpretation has two parts:<sup>18</sup> one of the stanzas (*gāthā*) and another of the discourse (*upadeśa*). The stanzas are a précis of the sutras suitable for chanting, while the discourse is an explanation of the meaning of the stanzas.

[Meaning of the Title and the Author’s Name, 826c3–18]

“*Limitless Life*” refers to the Tathāgata of Limitless Life (*Amitāyus*), whose lifespan is so long that its limits are inconceivable. “Sutras” (*jing* 經, i.e., classics) signifies “constant” (*chang* 常).<sup>19</sup> That is to say, the merits of the pure adornments (*zhuangyan* 莊嚴) of the Buddha and the bodhisattvas in the Pure Land, and the merits of the pure decorations (*zhuangyan*) of the land itself, are able to bring great benefit to beings (*zhongsheng* 衆生), enabling them to practice “constantly” (*chang*) in the world. This is why the texts are called “sutras” (*jing*, i.e., classics and constant).

17. [TK: Chinese is much richer than English in words for family relationships. For example, there are separate words for “older sister,” “younger sister,” and so on, but no word for “sister” without any indication of seniority.]

18. [TK: The translation of the Chinese passage 所以爲二重者有二義. Though this translation may be relatively correct, it is not completely correct. See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 123.]

19. *Jingzhe changye* (經者常也): this definition appears in Konganguo’s 孔安國 Preface to the “Old Text” of the *Book of Filial Piety* (*Guwen xiao jing*, Konganguo xu 古文孝經 · 孔安國序) and is used by Sengzhao 僧肇 in the first volume of his *Commentary on the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (*Zhu weimo jing* 註維摩經, T. 1775:38). It is said to be based upon *The Book of Documents*, II.2, xii (*Shu jing* Dayu mo 書經 · 大禹謨), where *jing* 經 means “according to the rule”: 與其殺不辜。寧失不經。 “Rather than put to death an innocent person, [Your Majesty] will run the risk of irregularity and error” (Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 3:59). *Jing* is therefore equivalent to the Greek κανών, “the regulating text which itself does not change.” Tanluan’s further interpretation of this seems to be his own.



“Upadeśa” means “discourse on the meaning” (*lunyi*) of the Buddha’s sūtra.

“Vow” (*praṇidhāna*, *yuan* 願) means aspiring, and “born” means that Vasubandhu Bodhisattva resolved to be born in the blissful Pure Land, and was [indeed] born [there], out of a pure [lotus] flower of the Tathāgata.<sup>20</sup> This is why he says, “resolution to be born.”

“Gāthā” (*ji* 偈, i.e., stanza) signifies “lines” (*jushu* 句數).<sup>21</sup> They are called “gāthā” because they are a précis of the Buddha’s sūtras in five-character lines, suitable for chanting.

“Vasu” is translated as “divine” (*tian* 天), and “bandhu” is translated as “a relative” (*qin* 親). The history of the patriarchs called *Fufazang jing* 付法藏經 (*Sūtra on the Transmission of the Buddhist Teachings*)<sup>22</sup> gives his name as Tianqin 天親.<sup>23</sup>

20. One is born into Sukhāvātī by metamorphosis (*aupapādika* [TK: *aupapāduka*]), emerging from a lotus bud symbolizing the purity of that land. Death as a human is thus, for a believer in Amitābha, “true birth.” Similarly, the death-day is regularly called *dies natalis* in the *Martyrologium Romanum*.

21. The character 偈, read *ji*, regularly translates Sanskrit *gāthā* and is not used for native Chinese verse forms.

22. Full title: *Fufazang yinyuan jing* 付法藏因緣經, “Sūtra on the Nidāna or Cause of Transmitting the Dharmapīṭaka” (Nanjio, *Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, 1340; T. 50.297–322). [TK: In the Taishō canon, the full title of the text is *Fufazang yinyuan chuan* 付法藏因緣傳 (T. 2058)]. A history of the patriarchal succession, translated in Northern Wei 北魏 (though Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 165b says Yuan 元), in which Vasubandhu appears as twentieth in a list of twenty-three patriarchs from Mahākāśyapa to Śiṃha Bhikṣu. For a discussion of this and similar lists, see Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 1–57.

[TK: Corless’s work does not have a clear translation of *shi* 事. Inagaki translates the passage 此人字天親事在付法藏經 as follows: “...and so the author is called ‘Tenjin’ 天親 in Chinese. His biography appears in the *Fuhōzōkyō* 付法藏經.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 125. Inagaki interprets the Chinese character *shi* as the “biography” (a series of events in his life). The Japanese commentary divides the forementioned passage, which consists of eleven Chinese characters, into two parts and interprets its meaning: 此人字天親 (“This person is called Tianqin”) and 事在付法藏經 (“His events or occurrences are [described] in *Fufazang jing*).”]

23. The name of Shinran, the founder of Jōdo Shinshū (1173–1262 CE), is compounded from the final elements of the name Tianqin (Jpn. Tenshin) and Tanluan (Jpn. Donran).

“Pusa” 菩薩 (i.e., *bo[dhi]sat[tva]*): the complete Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit word is *putisaduo* 菩提薩埵 (*bodhisattva*). *Bodhi* is the way of the buddhas and *sattva* means both a being (*zhongsheng*) and a hero (*yongjian* 勇健). Because beings who follow the way of the buddhas possess the strong will of a hero, we call them *bodhisattvas*.<sup>24</sup> Here, we just have the abbreviated form “*pusa*.”<sup>25</sup>

“*Composed*” (zao 造) is an honorific term for “made” (zuo 作). We use the word “compose” for works by important dharma teachers.

This explains why the text is called the “*Upadeśa on the Sūtras of Limitless Life with Gāthā on the Resolution to Be Born*, composed by the Bodhisattva Vasubandhu.”

This concludes the explanation of the title of the discourse.

#### [Outline of the Summary, 826c18–827a1]

The stanzas (*ji* 偈)<sup>26</sup> are divided into five gates of recollection (*wunian men* 五念門), which is followed by an interpretation in prose. The first section, of four lines, incorporates three gates of recollection: the first three lines on the gates of prostration (*libai* 禮拜) and praise (*zantan* 讚嘆), and the last lines on the gate of making the resolution (*zuoyuan men* 作願門). In the second section, the master of the discourse<sup>27</sup> tells us, “I have composed the discourse by relying on the Buddha’s sūtras, and it accords with the Buddha’s teachings.” Here we are presented with the inner meaning.<sup>28</sup> This statement therefore ex-

24. This definition supports the contention of Har Dayal (*Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 9) that *bodhisattva* means “heroic being, spiritual warrior.”

25. [TK: This is the translation of the Chinese passage 今但言菩薩譯者略耳. It seems that Corless does not translate the word 譯者. Inagaki translates the same passage as follows: “Here the text says ‘*bosatsu*,’ simply because the translator used the abridged form.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 125.]

26. [TK: We have used “verse” for a single line of five characters and “stanza” for four lines of five characters. This is in keeping with English poetic terminology.]

27. *Lunzhu* 論主, i.e., Vasubandhu.

28. [TK: The translation of the Chinese passage 所服有宗 (T. 1819:40.826c21–22). While Corless regards the passage as Tanluan’s commentary on the words of the “master of the discourse” 我依佛經造論與佛教相應 (T. 1819:40.826c21), Inagaki interprets it as a part of Vasubandhu’s words, and translates it as follows: “...and he [TK: “author” = Vasubandhu] makes it clear that in so doing, he depended on an authoritative source.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 126. Inagaki

plains the title *upadeśa*. It also closes the first three gates and leads up to the last two gates, which are therefore spoken of next. From section three to section twenty-one<sup>29</sup> is the gate of visualization (*guancha men* 觀察門), and last of all, there is one section on the gate of turning [the merit] towards [beings] (*huixiang men* 迴向門).<sup>30</sup>

This concludes the portion on the divisions within the stanza section.

[THE SUMMARY (COMMENTARY ON THE STANZAS), 827A2–833C19]

[The First Three Gates: Worship, Praise, Resolution, 827a2–827c3]

*O Thou Honored of Worlds! With single mind  
I take refuge in that great Tathāgata  
whose radiance fills all regions;  
in that joyful land may I be born!*

“Honored of Worlds” (*shizun* 世尊): this is a general epithet for a buddha. When we talk of his wisdom, we mean there is nothing which he does not understand, and when we speak of his destruction [of the defilements],<sup>31</sup> we mean he has destroyed the defilements [TK: thoroughly]. Through the combination of his wisdom and his destruction of the defilements he is able to benefit the worlds, therefore the worlds honor him and he is called “Honored of Worlds.”<sup>32</sup>

Here, it means “to take refuge in Śākyamuni Tathāgata.”<sup>33</sup> How do we know this? The next line says, “I rely on the sūtras.” Vasubandhu Bodhisattva lived during the [time of] Śākyamuni Tathāgata’s shadow

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seems to accord with the interpretation of the Japanese commentary written by Hayashima and Ōtani, *Jōdoron chū*, 68–70.]

29. Emend *si* 四 to the v.l. *yi* 一.

30. This cumbersome translation of *pariṇāmanā* is necessary to bring out, in English, Tanluan’s quite individual explanation of its meaning (below, T. 1819:40.836a20–27).

31. [TK: The translation of a character *duan* 斷.]

32. This explains the Chinese epithet 世尊 (*shizun*), taking no cognizance of its being the normal translation of Bhagavān, “he who possesses blessedness.”

33. [TK: A translation of the Chinese passage 此言意歸釋迦如來 (T. 1819:40.827a5). Though Corless interprets the character 歸 (*gui*) as “to take refuge” here, Inagaki interprets it as “to refer to,” and translates the passage as follows: “‘The World-Honoured One’ refers to Śākyamuni Buddha.” See

dharma (*xiangfa* 像法),<sup>34</sup> and therefore, in accordance with the teaching of Śākyamuni Tathāgata's sutras, he resolved to be born [in the Pure Land]. The resolution to be born is the main point [of those sutras]. Therefore, we know that the phrase means here "to take refuge in Śākyamuni." Though it has this meaning here, there is no objection to its being used to address all the buddhas.

Now, a bodhisattva takes refuge in the Buddha in the way that a filial son goes for refuge in his father and mother and a loyal minister goes for refuge in the emperor and empress, giving up his own will in regards to moving around or staying put, and relying on them for promotion and demotion. This is why it is proper to begin with it [i.e., the words "Honored of Worlds"].<sup>35</sup>

Again, such a resolution is not a light one. If the Tathāgata did not add his majestic divine power,<sup>36</sup> how could it be effected? Therefore, he looks up and addresses the Buddha, and begs him to add his divine power.

"With single mind I": in this phrase, Vasubandhu Bodhisattva admonishes himself. He says he will recollect that "Tathāgata whose radiance fills all regions," wishing to "be born in that joyful land." He applies his mind to his mind, unmixed with any other thoughts.

QUESTION: In the *buddhadharma* there is no I (wo 我). How can he say "I" here?

ANSWER: The word "I" can be used in three ways. First, in the language of those with deluded views (*xiejian* 邪見); second, in the

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Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 127. Though both interpretations are possible, Inagaki's seems correct.]

34. *Pratirūpadharma-kāla*: the first stage of decay from *saddharma*, "the true dharma," during which the stern practices of "self-help" become more difficult, but not impossible, as they will be in the time of *paścimadharma*, "final dharma" (or "latter day dharma," as Richard Robinson called it).

35. This passage extolling the virtue of reverencing one's betters blends Buddhist and Confucian ideas in a combined reference to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (*Dazhi du lun* 大智度論, T. 1509:25) and the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記). See Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 10n2.

36. *Jiaweishen* 加威神, "added awesome spirit," translates *adhiṣṭhāna* ("basis, controlling power," etc.: Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 15b–16b): often rendered by the Latin Christian term "grace" (*gratia*), it is in fact closer (especially in its tantric sense) to the Eastern Orthodox Christian equivalent, "synergy" *συνεργία*.

language of self-aggrandizement (*zida* 自大); and third, in the language of ordinary conversation. Here, with the word “I,” Vasubandhu Bodhisattva indicates himself, using the language of ordinary conversation, not that of deluded views nor that of self-aggrandizement.

“Take refuge in that great Tathāgata whose radiance fills all regions”: “Take refuge” is the gate of prostration (*libai men* 禮拜門). “In that great Tathāgata whose radiance fills all regions” is the gate of praise (*zantan men* 讚嘆門).

How do we know that “take refuge”<sup>37</sup> is the same as prostration? Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva, in the verses praising Amita Tathāgata<sup>38</sup> [which he intersperses with the prose of his *Explanation of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva Path*], sometimes says, “I bow down my head in worship,”<sup>39</sup> sometimes, “I take refuge,” and at other times, “I worship by taking refuge.”<sup>40</sup> In the prose section of the present discourse, he speaks of the practice of the five gates of recollection, among which prostration is the first. Since Vasubandhu Bodhisattva resolved to be born in the Pure Land, how could he permit himself not to worship? This is how we know that “take refuge” is prostration.

Whereas prostration is simply adoration,<sup>41</sup> and does not have to mean taking refuge, taking refuge necessarily entails prostration. If this is so, we can infer that taking refuge also means reverencing.<sup>42</sup> The

37. *Guiming* 歸命, translating *śaraṇāgama* [TK: *śaraṇa-gamana*], “going for protection in the household of someone.” In the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經) the character *gui* 歸 is used of a bride “going home” to her husband.

38. [TK: In this text, Tanluan uses three different Chinese terms: *Wuliangshou rulai* 無量壽如來, *Wuaiguang rulai* 無礙光如來, and *Amituo rulai* 阿彌陀如來. “Amita Tathāgata” is the translation of the third term, *Amituo rulai*.]

39. [TK: The translation of *qishou li* 稽首禮.]

40. The “verses praising Amita Tathāgata” are verse sections interspersed with the prose of the “Chapter on the Easy and Difficult Ways” of the *Explanation of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva Path* (*Daśabhūmīkavibhāṣā śāstra*: T. 1521:26.40c–47a), quoted at the very beginning of the present text. Tanluan here quotes exactly the last few characters of lines 16, 18, and 22 of T. 1521:26.43a.

41. *Gongjing* 恭敬, *pūjā*.

42. *Zhong* 重. [TK: Though, with regard to the passage 若以此推歸命爲重, Corless translates the character *zhong* 重 as “reverencing,” Inagaki (*Ōjōronchū*, 129) interprets it as “a deeper meaning,” and translates the passage as follows: “From this one can infer that ‘taking refuge’ has a deeper meaning.”]

stanzas report Vasubandhu's own state of mind, and he fittingly uses the words "take refuge." The discourse explains the meaning of the stanzas in an expanded discussion of prostrating. The stanzas and the discourse together perfectly reveal the full meaning.

How do we know that, "that great Tathāgata whose radiance fills all regions" is the gate of praise (*zantan men*)? Below, in the prose, it says:

*What is praise? It means invoking the Tathāgata's name. As that Tathāgata's radiance is the image of his wisdom, so his name is [the image] of his essence: thus we wish to practice in accord with the truth and with this correspondence [of name and essence].*<sup>43</sup>

According to the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha*<sup>44</sup> preached in the state of Śrāvastī, the Buddha [Śākyamuni] explained Amita Tathāgata's name thus: "Why is his name Amita? That Buddha's radiance is measureless (*amita*, *wuliang* 無量), illuminating the lands in the ten directions without being hindered: therefore his name is Amita. Again, the lifespan of that buddha together with that of the inhabitants is a measureless (*amita*) and boundless *asaṃkhyeya-kalpa* (*asengqijie* 阿僧祇劫).<sup>45</sup> Therefore his name is Amita."<sup>46</sup>

QUESTION: You claim that the radiance of Amitābha Tathāgata (*Wuaiguang rulai* 無礙光如來) measurelessly illumines the lands in the ten directions without being hindered: but, then, how do the beings here amongst us not obscure the radiance? And if the radiance has that which it does not illumine, how is it that there is not a hindrance?

ANSWER: The hindrance is on the part of beings, it is not that the radiance is hindered. It is like the sun's radiance, encompassing the four corners of the world,<sup>47</sup> yet a blind man does not see it: it is not

43. T. 1819:40.835b11 and b13–14. This text is discussed further *in loco*.

44. [TK: *Foshuo amituo jing* 佛說阿彌陀經, T. 366.]

45. *Asengqijie*, "an incalculable aeon," the longest of the aeons.

46. Strictly, he has two names: Amitābha ("Measureless Light"), symbolizing measureless wisdom, and Amitāyus ("Measureless Life"), symbolizing measureless compassion, as Tanluan eventually explains. He here quotes the phrases in the reverse order of the text as we know it. See S.B.E., 49(2):97ff. [TK: This is the quotation from T. 366:12.347a25–29.]

47. [TK: The "four corners of the world" is the translation of *si tianxia* 四天下.]

that the sun's radiance does not encompass him.<sup>48</sup> Again, it is like dark clouds, massed together and raining, yet resistant stone is not fecundated: it is not that the rain does not irrigate it.<sup>49</sup> If we say that there is one buddha who rules the three thousand great chiliocosms (*sanqian daqian shijie* 三千大千世界),<sup>50</sup> that is as explained in the treatises of the *śrāvakas*: but if we say that there are many buddhas ruling throughout measureless and boundless worlds in the ten directions,<sup>51</sup> that is as explained in the Mahāyāna treatises.

When Vasubandhu Bodhisattva here says, “that great Tathāgata whose radiance fills all regions,” he is basing himself on that Tathāgata's name [of “Amitābha”], and praises him [saying], “that Tathāgata's radiance is the image of his wisdom.” Thus we know that this line is the gate of praise.

“In that joyful land may I be born”: this line is the gate of making the resolution. Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's meaning is “taking refuge.” The complete meaning of “joyful” will be found below, in the gate of visualization.

QUESTION: In the Mahāyāna sūtras and *śāstras* it is explained in many places that beings are absolutely unborn (*anutpāda*, *wusheng* 無生), like space (*ākāśa*, *xukong* 虛空).<sup>52</sup> How then can Vasubandhu Bodhisattva use the words “may I be born”?

ANSWER: There are two ways of saying that, “beings are unborn, like space.” First, according to the understanding of ordinary people,<sup>53</sup> there are really beings. According to ordinary people, what they see is really born and really dies. But in the final analysis, those things that

48. The simile is drawn from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (*Dazhi du lun*, T. 1509:25.116b28–29). See also below, T. 1819:40.828c19–25.

49. *Ibid.*, T. 1509:25.125c.

50. *Sanqian daqian shijie*, 三千大千世界, translating *trisāhasra-mahāsāhasraṃ-lokadhātavaḥ* [TK: *trisāhasra-mahāsāhasra-loka-dhātu*], i.e., a very large, yet finite, series of world-systems.

51. *Shifang wuliangwubian shijie*, 十方無量無邊世界, i.e., an infinite series of world-systems.

52. That “space” is “unborn” because it is “unmade” (*asaṃskṛta*) was a doctrine maintained by the Mahāsaṃghika and rejected by the Sthaviravāda. See Bareau, *Les sects bouddhiques du petit véhicule*, 285, 288, and references there given.

53. *Fanfu* 凡夫, *prthag-jana*, someone who has not begun on the path to enlightenment.



are seen are without being. They are like tortoise hairs (*guimao* 龜毛),<sup>54</sup> like space. Secondly, because it is said that all dharmas (the elements of existence) are born in mutual dependence, they are therefore unborn.<sup>55</sup> Like space, they are without being. Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's vow to be born is made on the level of mutual dependence. On the level of mutual dependence, therefore, he provisionally calls it "birth," but he is not following the understanding of ordinary people that there are really beings who are really born and who really die.

QUESTION: On what principle do you rely when you speak thus of going to be born (*wangsheng* 往生)?

ANSWER: In regard to those amongst us whom we provisionally call human beings,<sup>56</sup> there are those who practice the five gates of recollection. [They know that] causation is [just] the product of the junction of past and future moments, and so, whether in defiled or pure lands, those we provisionally call human beings do not get fixed on sameness (*yi* 一) or difference (*yi* 異), nor on thoughts of past and future. How is this? If there were sameness,<sup>57</sup> there could be no cause and effect. If there were difference,<sup>58</sup> there could be no interdependent arising. This

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54. A common simile (*drṣṭānta*) in Indian logic for something which is illusory because it does not in fact exist. It does not seem necessary to follow Uesugi (*Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 16n14) in trying to fasten this to a specific passage in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (*Dazhi du lun*, T. 1509:25), though the argument is clearly Śūnyavādin (*Mādhyamaka*).

55. Since everything depends upon everything else in transcendental interrelationship (*pratītyasamutpāda*), nothing is "born" of itself, or of another, or any way at all: all is "void" (*śūnyatā*). This is the central concern of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ*, typified in the famous *Vandana* and XXIV.18.

56. Those who see clearly perceive that human beings are in fact nothing more than the conjunction of the five "heaps" (*skandha*) or of "innerness-and-outerness" ("name-and-form," *nāma-rūpa*). So, the term "human beings," for them, is merely provisional (*prajñapti*).

57. [TK: That is to say, "If everything were joined together in a seamless whole" (monism).]

58. [TK: That is to say, "If everything were absolutely distinct from everything else" (pluralism).]



principle is discussed in the meditation on sameness and difference in Nāgārjuna's discourse.<sup>59</sup>

This concludes the explanation of the three gates of recollection in the first section.

[Bridge Section, 827c3–29]

Next, we explain the title *upadeśa*, closing the previous section and leading up to the stanzas:

*I rely on the sūtras<sup>60</sup> and marks  
truly virtuous<sup>61</sup> singing a stanza  
on the resolution which is firm and complete,  
in accord with the teaching of Buddha.*

This section explains the title *upadeśa*, and how we close the previous three gates and approach the following two gates.

The stanzas say, “I rely on the sūtras ... in accord with the teaching of Buddha.” “Sūtras” (*xiuduoluo* 修多羅) mean the Buddhist classics (*jīng*). We discuss the meaning of the Buddhist classics in accord with those classics, and because we enter into what pertains to the *buddha-dharma*, the discussion can be called an *upadeśa*.<sup>62</sup>

This concludes the explanation of the title. We now close the previous three gates and approach the following two gates.

What does [Vasubandhu] rely on? Why does he rely on them? How does he rely on them? What does he rely on? He relies on the sūtras. Why does he rely on them? Because of the Tathāgata, that is, his truly virtuous marks (*zhenshi gongde xiang* 真實功德相). How does he rely on them? By practicing in accordance with the five gates of recollection.

This concludes the closing of the former section, and leads up to the following section.

59. K. 306n4 says the word *lun* 論 here refers to the *Madhyamaka śāstra*, *Dvādaśadvaya śāstra*, and *Śata śāstra* (i.e., the three basic texts of the Sanlun [“Three Text”] or Mādhyamika school), and the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*. [TK: To which text *lun* refers is not given by name, and its identity is the subject of academic debate. I have followed the most recent scholarship, which identifies it as the *Pratītya-samutpāda-hṛdaya* (Essentials of Interdependent Arising).]

60. [TK: Text here uses phonetic “*xidiuluo*” rather than *jīng* 經.]

61. [TK: Corless changes word order for the rhythm of the *gāthā*.]

62. This repeats the explanation given above at T. 1819:40.826b20–23.

“Sutras”: In the twelve classics (*shierbu jing*), the texts which give the actual words [of Buddha Śākyamuni] are called sutras. They are the four *āgamas*<sup>63</sup> in the threefold subdivision known as the *tripiṭaka*. Mahāyāna classics, outside of the *tripiṭaka*, are also called sutras. Herein, when [Vasubandhu] says, “relying on the sutras,” he is referring to the Mahāyāna sutras outside of the *tripiṭaka*, not to the classics in the *āgamas*.<sup>64</sup>

“Truly virtuous marks”: There are two kinds of virtue (*gongde* 功德).<sup>65</sup>

First, there is the virtue of those with defiled minds,<sup>66</sup> not in accord with true nature (*dharmatā*, *faxing* 法性).<sup>67</sup> It refers to the good done by ordinary people, by humans and deities, and their fruiting of karma (*guobao* 果報). Both the cause (the good) and effect are deluded and futile, and are therefore called false virtue (*bushi gongde* 不實功德).<sup>68</sup>

Secondly, there is the virtue of a bodhisattva’s wise and pure actions, embellishing the work of Buddha. Dependent upon true nature,

63. The four *āgamas* are the *Dirghāgama* (22 vols.), *Madhyāgama* (60 vols.), *Samyuktāgama* (50 vols.) and *Ekottarāgama* (51 vols.), which basically correspond to four parts of the fivefold *sutta-piṭaka* of the Pāli canon, itself one part of the threefold *tripiṭaka* (Skt. *tripiṭaka*). They are printed in T. 1 and 2.

64. The “twelvefold classic” is a term for the twelve styles of the Buddhist writings, referred to above, considered as a canonical unit. The four *āgamas* in the *tripiṭaka* are Chinese translations of texts which appear in a different recension in Pāli as the four *nikāyas* in the *tipiṭaka*. The similarity between the *āgamas* and the *nikāyas* may have led to the mistaken identification of Hīnayāna and Theravāda.

65. The characters *gongde* 功德 mean both moral virtue (*guṇ*) and the merit (*punya*) which, according to Buddhism, accrues to virtuous action.

66. *Youlouxin* 有漏心, *sāsrava-citta*, those whose minds are subject to the *āsrava*, or data/response interchange by which there is built an interface separating “me in here” from “that out there.” That this is a learned ability has been shown by Piaget in, e.g., *Child’s Construction of Reality*, 3–9. When one perceives truly, this building is seen to be a mirage, according to Buddhism.

67. *Faxing* 法性, “dharma-ness,” that which pertains to the absolutely unarism.

68. [TK: Corless’s original translation is as follows: “It refers to the good done by ordinary people, by humans and deities. Locked into cause and effect and the fruiting of karma, it is confused and futile, and is therefore called ‘false virtue.’” In accordance with Inagaki’s translation and Japanese commentary, we revised the translation. See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 135.]

it enters into what pertains to purity, so it is not deluded or futile, and it is called true virtue (*zhenshi gongde* 真實功德).

Why is it not deluded? Because it is dependent upon the true nature and it accords with the twofold truth (*satya-dvaya*, *erdi* 二諦).<sup>69</sup> Why is it not futile? Because it encompasses beings, making them certainly enter purity.

[This stanza finishes with:]

*... singing a stanza  
on the resolution which is firm and complete,  
in accord with the teaching of buddha.*

“Firm” (*zhi* 持) means not being prolix or wandering from the point.<sup>70</sup> “Complete” (*zong* 總) means to encompass much in little. “Stanza” (*ji*) refers to the five-character line verses. “Resolution” means aspiring to the blessedness of rebirth.<sup>71</sup> “Singing”<sup>72</sup> is to say, recounting the stanzas and the discourse. [Vasubandhu] calls it “complete” because he is speaking of the resolution to be born in a stanza which completely grasps firmly (*zongzhi* 總持) the Buddhist classics, in accord with the teaching of Buddha. “In accord with” is like a container and its lid fitting together.

69. The twofold truth (*satya-dvaya*, *erdi* 二諦): the conventional truth (*saṃvṛti-satya*) that things exist because of causes and conditions, and the further truth (*paramārtha-satya*) that nothing exists absolutely. When both truths are experienced simultaneously one’s viewpoint is in accord with the true nature of reality (*dharmatā*).

70. [TK: The translation of the Chinese characters 不散不失. In his dissertation, Corless used “not scattering nor slipping,” a more literal rendering of the characters.]

71. [TK: The translation of the Chinese passage 願名欲樂往生 (T. 1819:40.827c26). Corless interprets the characters *yu* 欲 and *le* 樂 respectively as “aspiring to” and the “blessedness.” Inagaki, however, regards *yule* as one word which means “wish,” and translates the passage as follows: “‘Gan’ (‘wish’) means ‘to wish to be born (in the Pure Land).’” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 135. Inagaki’s interpretation and translation seem correct.]

72. *Shuo* 說, literally *speaking* or *proclaiming*.

[The Gate of Visualization, 827c29–833c14]

[Outline of the Section on Visualization, 827c29–828a2]

*Thus, I gaze on the marks of that realm  
which surpasses the triple world's ways*<sup>73</sup>

This opens the fourth gate, of visualization (*guancha* 觀察). This gate is divided into two: first, visualization of the perfection of the decorations of the furnishings<sup>74</sup> of that realm;<sup>75</sup> second, visualization of the perfection of the adornment of the beings<sup>76</sup> in that realm.<sup>77</sup>

[Contemplation of the Attributes, 828a2–831b13]

[828a2–5]

The section from this line down to “I resolve to be born in the land of the Buddha Amita”<sup>78</sup> is concerned with the visualization of the perfection of the wondrous decorations of the furnishings of that realm. Within the visualization of the furnishings of that realm, we further distinguish seventeen parts. Each is followed by a comment under the proper heading.

73. For the commentary on these lines, see the section immediately following.

74. *Qi* 器 broadly means the stage-set or “props” of Sukhāvātī. Tanluan plays on its meaning of “receptacle” below (T. 1819:40.841c14–1).

75. [TK: The translation of *guancha qi shijian zhuangyan chengjiu* 觀察器世間莊嚴成就. *Qishijian* 器世間 (*bhājana-loka*) literally means “natural world” or “container world.”]

76. *Zhongsheng* 衆生, *sattva*. However, the word *sattva* implies a being within *saṃsāra*, while Sukhāvātī is described as being outside of *saṃsāra* (“it surpasses the triple-world ways”): Tanluan addresses himself to this problem.

77. [TK: The translation of *guanchazhongshengshijianzhuangyanchengjiu* 觀察衆生世間莊嚴成就.]

78. [TK: This phrase refers to the verse 是故願生彼阿彌陀佛國 (“Therefore I resolve to be born in the land of the Buddha Amita”) by Vasubandhu, which Tanluan comments on in T. 1819:40.831b. See below, p. 123.]

*[Discussion of the Seventeen Attributes, 828a5–831b13]*

*[1. The Purity, 828a5–b1]*

These two lines concern the primary phenomenon,<sup>79</sup> which is called the visualization of the perfection of the merits of the purity of

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79. *Diyishi* 第一事 means both “the first phenomenon in the list” and “the most important phenomenon,” as emerges in the section below (T. 1819:40.841b4–c27) on “the purity entering into the resolved mind.”

the decorations.<sup>80</sup> This purity<sup>81</sup> is a universal feature [of the decorations]. The Buddha originally conceived (*qi* 起) the merits of the purity of the decorations because he saw that the triple world (*sanjie* 三界)<sup>82</sup>

80. *Guanchazhuangyanqingjinggongdechengjiu* 觀察莊嚴清淨功德成就. This galumphing compound, with occasional variations in the position of *zhuangyan* and serial changes in the *qingjing* slot appropriate to the phenomenon being considered, occurs as the standard formula introducing each phenomenon. Its interpretation is not entirely straightforward, and its elegant Englishing quite beyond me. In the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha*, I find the compound *buddhakṣetra-guṇālaṃkaravyūhasaṃpadas* (Ashikaga, *Sukhāvativyūha*, 9, lines 19–20), which I take to mean “the perfection of the array of the decorations which are excellent in the field of Buddha.” From this, it appears that *chengjiu* represents *saṃpadam* and means “complete, the full amount” and that *zhuangyan* represents *vyūha*, signifying the glittering spectacle caused by the scintillation of light on the weapons of a distant army drawn up in battle array. But, according to Hisao Inagaki of the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, who is working on a glossary of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* [RKP: since published as *A Tri-lingual Glossary of the Sukhāvativyūha Sūtras*], *zhuangyan* also means *alaṃkāra*, *alaṃkāravūha*, and *vyūhalaṃkāra*, that is, “ornament,” “ornamental array,” and “majestic ornament,” respectively (letter to the author dated November 18, 1972). However, that Tanluan does not take *zhuangyan* in the sense of “majestic” (i.e., as a modifier) seems clear when he says, at T. 1819:40.837b5–6, “Therefore from the six great elements and the five elements those which can be decorations are selected” (是以六大五類中取有而可莊嚴). The case of *gongde* is more obscure. Inagaki suggests that, especially in the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha*, it means *guṇa* and proposes “excellent quality of the decorations” for *zhuangyan gongde*. From the Sanskrit, this is certainly what we might expect but, as I have already pointed above (n65), Tanluan sometimes uses *gongde* as if it meant *puṇya*. This seems clearest at T. 1819:40.836a9–12, where he says, “the practitioner obtains true merit” (修行者亦得如實功德) from the “excellent decorations” (莊嚴功德) which are “true” (如實), and because of this is born in Sukhāvātī. This ambiguity of *gongde*, together with the metatheses already noted (which Inagaki thinks do not change the essential meaning), I take as one more indication that Tanluan was not directly familiar with the Sanskrit language. Thus, I translate *gongde* variously as “merit,” “virtue,” and “excellent,” according to context.

81. [TK: *qingjing* 清淨.]

82. With minor variations in wording, the formula giving the rationale for the existence of a decoration in Sukhāvātī is: “The Buddha originally (*foben* 佛本) (i.e., when he was making his resolutions as the Bodhisattva Dharmākara) summoned up the decoration of X, because he looked at the world and found it deficient in respect of quality Y and therefore decided that Sukhāvātī should

is characterized by futility, turning and re-turning interminably, like a caterpillar going round in circles, like a cocooned silkworm wrapping itself up. He pitied beings bound to the triple world, perverted and impure, and wished to set them in a place that was not futile, not turning and re-turning interminably, a large, pure place where they would certainly attain blessedness. Therefore, he conceived these merits of the purity of the decorations.

Perfection (*chengjiu* 成就) means that this purity cannot be destroyed, cannot be defiled. It is not as in the triple world, characterized by defilement and decay.

“Gaze on” (*guan* 觀) is visualize (*guancha*). “That” is Sukhāvātī.

“The marks of that realm” means what pertains to the purity of Sukhāvātī. The marks will be treated individually, later.

“Surpasses the triple world’s ways”: “ways” (*dao* 道) means penetrating (*tong* 通).<sup>83</sup> Such and such a cause has such and such an effect; such and such an effect is the result of such and such a cause. Penetrating the cause, one arrives at the effect: penetrating the effect, one returns to the cause. Therefore it is called “ways.”

“The triple world”:

(i) The first is the world of desire (*kāmadhātu*, *yujie* 欲界), that is to say, the six heavens of desire (*devaloka*, *liuyutian* 六欲天) and the four earthly states of men, animals, ghosts (*preta*, *egui* 餓鬼), and the denizens of hells.

(ii) The second is the world of form (*rūpadhātu*, *sejie* 色界), that is to say, the heavens of the first *dhyāna*, second *dhyāna*, third *dhyāna*, and fourth *dhyāna*.

(iii) The third is the world of formlessness (*arūpadhātu*, *wusejie* 無色界), that is to say, the heavens of the plane of [endless] space (*ākāśānantyāyatanam*, *kongchu* 空處), the plane of [infinite] consciousness

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make up for this deficiency by preparing the decoration X in it.” Tanluan’s list of decorations is a systematic summary of those in the three Pure Land sūtras, and only rarely does he quote the *ipsissima verba* of Dharmākara.

83. *Daozhe*, *tongye* 道者通也: Tanluan uses *dao* 道 as a translation for *bodhi*, “enlightenment ultimate knowledge” (see below, T. 1819:40.843c14), but having done so, he also plays on [TK: the characters in the original dissertation are defaced and unreadable] of, “a route one passes along” (perhaps in English, a way of knowing), equating it with *tong* 通, “the act of passing along or through,” which can also mean, “thorough knowledge” (cf. English, “thoroughfare”). By translating *tong* as penetrating, I have tried to reproduce the pun in English.

(*vijñānānantyāyatanam*, *shichu* 識處), the plane of nothing whatsoever (*akiñcanyāyatanam*, *wusuoyouchu* 無所有處), and the plane of neither perception nor non-perception (*naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatanam* [TK: *naiva-samjñā-nāsamjñā-āyatana*], *feixiangfeifeixiangchu* 非想非非想處).

The triple world is the dark house in which ordinary people roll round from birth to death.<sup>84</sup> The difference between suffering and happiness, long<sup>85</sup> and short, may be slight, but, looking at it in general, there is no one who does not have defilements. Carried about in the “leaning-and-resting of opposites,”<sup>86</sup> they go in endless circles, meeting with various births and long holding the four inverted views. Both the causes and the effects are inseparable from futile. But, the cause of birth in blessedness is the Bodhisattva’s [Dharmākara’s] compassion and right contemplation:<sup>87</sup> it is established by the divine power of the Tathāgata’s original vow (*benyuan* 本願, *ādipraṇidhāna*).<sup>88</sup> Those born from a womb, an egg, or from moisture<sup>89</sup> are caused to bow profoundly,

84. This description of *saṃsāra* (birth-and-death) as a triple world is the traditional one. For a clear summary, see Matsunaga, *Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation*, 40–59. (Her discussion of the evolution of this idea, on pp. 58–59 is, however, not at all in line with the prevailing viewpoint of present-day historians of religions.)

85. Read *hsiu* 脩 as its homophone, 修.

86. *Yifu xiangcheng* 倚伏相乘: an allusion to *Dao de jing*, LVIII. See Waley, *The Way and Its Power*, 212, lines 5–6 and n3. [TK: According to the commentary by Hayashima and Ōtani, *the character yi* 倚 means to “get close,” *fu* 伏 means to “hide,” and the word *xiangcheng* 倚伏 implies “fortune and misfortune.” See Hayashima and Ōtani, *Jōdoron chū*, 96. Inagaki also interprets 倚伏相乘 as “alternately relying on happiness and submitting to calamity.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 139.]

87. [TK: The translation of the sentence 安樂是菩薩慈悲正觀之由生 (T. 1819:40.828a26). Inagaki (*Ōjōronchū*, 139) translates it as follows: “The Land of Peace and Bliss was produced through [Dharmākara] Bodhisattva’s compassion and right meditation.” According to Inagaki’s translation, the character *sheng* 生 does not mean the “birth” in the Pure Land, but it signifies the “production” of that land. Inagaki’s interpretation seems correct.]

88. [TK: As for the English equivalent of *benyuan* 本願 (*hongan*), “original vow” is popular in the Shin Buddhist tradition. It is, however, ambiguous whether this *benyuan* really means *ādipraṇidhāna*.]

89. There are four ways in which one can be “born,” that is, transfer to another level of the universe:



and the long cords of their karmic bonds, after this, are forever cut: enabling grace<sup>90</sup> “bends the bow” without waiting to be asked, laboring humbly for good, bestowing universal worth and common merit on all.<sup>91</sup>

Thus, it surpasses the triple world, or, as in the following words:

[2. The Measurements, 828b2–19]

*It is totally like the sky,  
which is wide, without limits.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the measurements of the decorations.<sup>92</sup> The Buddha originally conceived the merits of the measurements<sup>93</sup> of the decorations because he saw in the triple world: mountain passes, straight and dangerous; gorges between cliffs; though there were palaces, he observed that they were cramped; though there were fields, they were small and filthy; though one could find roads, they were narrow; mountains and rivers created barriers;

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(i) *jarāyujā*: birth from a womb;

(ii) *aṇḍajā*: birth from an egg;

(iii) *saṃsvedajā*: birth from moisture (perhaps invented from the observation that maggots appear in rotting meat);

(iv) *aupapādika* [TK: *aupapādika*]: metamorphosis, in which one simply “beams down,” *Star Trek* fashion, onto a world, without benefit of a vehicle. This last, as being proper to Sukhāvātī, is omitted from the list.

90. *Xukuozhiquan* 續括之權, “added-embracing-power,” a translation of *adhiṣṭhāna*. [TK: In accordance with passages in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.197c, 323a, and 592c), Inagaki translates 續括之權不待勸而彎弓勞謙善讓齊普賢 as follows: “Like a skilled archer shooting arrows in unbroken succession, [those born in the Pure Land] do not wait to be urged [by any buddha] to perform meritorious deeds diligently, unobtrusively, and humbly, like Samantabhadra Bodhisattva....” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 139. The source of Corless’s interpretation of 續括之權 as *adhiṣṭhāna* has not yet been determined.]

91. [TK: Here, Corless translates seven Chinese characters 讓齊普賢而同德 as “bestowing universal worth and common merit on all.” As Inagaki interprets (see above, n91), however, *puxian* 普賢 seems to mean Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.]

92. [TK: *Zhuangyanlianggongdechengjiu* 莊嚴量功德成就.]

93. [TK: The translation of *liang* 量.]

and countries were split into sections.<sup>94</sup> Since there were these troublesome things, the Bodhisattva [Dharmākara] set up this resolution concerning the merits of the measurements of the decorations, resolving, “My land shall be like to the sky which is wide, without limits.”

“Like the sky”: this is to say that, although those who come to birth there are many, it is as if there were none.

“Wide, without limits”: this rounds out the meaning of “like the sky,” above. Why is it like the sky? Because it is wide, without limits.

Perfection (*chengjiu*) is to say that though the beings in the ten directions who go to birth there, whether it be in the past, the present, or the future, are measureless and without limits, yet it is totally and always like the sky, wide, without limits. There is, indeed, no fullness of time there.<sup>95</sup> Therefore it says, “It is totally like the sky, which is wide, without limits.”

QUESTION: Since Vimalakīrti’s “ten foot square [chamber]” (*fang-zhang* 方丈) contained<sup>96</sup> [thirty-two thousand people] and yet had room,<sup>97</sup> why is it necessary that this land be unbounded, so that it is called wide?

ANSWER: When [Vasubandhu] says, “wide,” we do not need to regard this as we would the measurement of a field:<sup>98</sup> he merely says, “like the sky.” In any case, why be troubled about [the comparison

94. The sense of “blockage” in this passage is increased by Tanluan’s preference for characters based upon Radical 170, *fū* 阜, “mound.”

95. *Zhong wumanshi* 終無滿時: “Its end is without full time,” i.e., it is eternal.

96. Read *bao* 苞 as its homophone, 包.

97. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* IV and V. Vimalakīrti, feigning sickness, lies on a bed in a ten foot square room, which, by his magic power, he empties of all else. When he is visited by a host of bodhisattvas, *śrāvakas*, etc., led by Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, he first uses the empty room as a parable of the void (*śūnyatā*), and then magically fills it up again with 32,000 thrones of enormous size, on which his guests attempt to sit: only the *mahābodhisattvas*, who do not get stuck on “size,” are able to climb onto them. The incident teaches that *śūnyatā* is not subject to measurement, or bound by concepts of “emptiness” or “fullness.” See Lamotte, *L’Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, 222–250. [RKP: See also Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa): From the French Translation with Introduction and Notes*, 116–141.]

98. *Fei bi yi qiwan wei yu* 非必以畦畹爲喻, i.e., it must not be regarded as a *saṃskṛtadharma*, which is measurable, but like an *asaṃskṛtadharma*, such as *ākāśa*, which is not expressible in terms of “width.”

with] the “ten foot square [chamber]?” For, the contents of the “ten foot square [chamber]” were in a narrow [place which was] yet wide: consider the end result. Then, why should not something be in a wide [place which is] yet wider?

[3. *The Nature*, 828b20–c18]

*As the right way, the greatly compassionate,  
it is sprung from transcendent good roots.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the nature<sup>99</sup> of the decorations.<sup>100</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive these decorations? He saw that, because of lust in the world, the world of desire (*yujie*) came into being; because of the *p'an-yen* 攀厭 meditations,<sup>101</sup> the worlds of form (*sejie*) and formlessness (*wusejie*) came into being. This triple world has defilements produced from heretical views: sleeping long in a great dream,<sup>102</sup> no one knows how to transcend affliction. Therefore, he conceived an intention of great compassion, resolving, “I shall become a buddha by means of the supreme way of right seeing,<sup>103</sup> and conceive a pure land transcending the triple world.”

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99. *Xing* 性, essence, self-nature.

100. [TK: *Zhuangyanxinggongdechengjiu* 莊嚴性功德成就.]

101. *Pan yan chanding* 攀厭禪定: “climbing and loathing *dhyāna*-and-*samādhi*.” By cultivating loathing for the physical world and love for the spiritual worlds, one may rise to a plane consonant with the *dhyāna* or *samādhi* achieved, but this practice will not lead to complete release from *saṃsāra*. See K. 336n3 and Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 27n6. (Uesugi further states that *dhyāna* relates to the *rūpadhātu* and *samādhi* to the *arūpyadhātu*.)

102. *Dameng* 大夢, an allusion to *Zhuangzi* 莊子, II: “And someday there will be a great awakening when we know that this is all a great dream” (Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 47).

103. “The supreme way of right seeing” (*wushang zhengjian dao* 無上正見道): the general sense of this phrase is clearly, as K. 337n5, states, “supreme enlightenment,” but the interpolation of *jian* 見 is curious, and ǎ.λ. for this text. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 27n7, defines *jian* as “wisdom.” If *jian* is equivalent to *jue* 覺, *dao* may be a “translation-gloss” (cf. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, 285).

Nature is basic essence.<sup>104</sup> This is to say that this Pure Land accords with true nature (*dharmatā*, *faxing*), and is not based upon perverted factors.<sup>105</sup> The phenomena are of the same essence as those in the “Ratnarāja Tathāgata Bhūtatathatā [chapter]” of the [sixty volume] *Avataṃsaka sūtra*.<sup>106</sup>

[TK: It is also said that “by means of storing-up practices, nature is established.” This refers to that which the Bodhisattva Dharmākara produced as the result of collecting together and storing up all the perfections.<sup>107</sup>]

It also refers to the nature of “holy-seed nature.”<sup>108</sup> At the beginning [of his career], the Bodhisattva Dharmākara, in the presence of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja (*Shizizai wang fo* 世自在王佛), awaking to the calm knowledge of non-arising (*wushengfaren* 無生法忍),<sup>109</sup> established then what we call “holy-seed nature,” and in that nature put out forty-eight great vows (*dayuan* 大願, *mahāpraṇidhāna*) by the practice of which he conceived this land which we call Sukhāvātī. This [land]

104. *Xing shi benyi* 性是本義. This definition is repeated below, T. 1819:40.829a4 and 839a2.

105. *Bu guaifa ben* 不乖法本, “it is not rooted in contrary dharmas.” I read *fa* as a plural number, following Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 27 (and n9).

106. *Huayan jing*, *Baowang rulai xingqi* [pin] 華嚴經・寶王如來性起 (品), T. 24.611. [TK: Here, Tanluan seems to refer to T. 278:9.611.]

107. [TK: Corless translates the passage incompletely as follows: “It also refers to the ‘storing-up’ practice of collecting together all the perfections.” He indicates that “[I] prefer the v.l. homophone *chi* 持, *pace* U. (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*) and K.”] *Boluomi* 波羅蜜 transliterates *pāramitā*, i.e., the “social virtues” (so Conze) of perfect moral practice: Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 29 and K. 337n10, take it thus. But it seems just as likely that it refers to the “perfections” of all the buddha lands which Dharmākara “collected up” in his mind, bringing them to fruit in Sukhāvātī. The Sanskrit for this is *saṃpadam* but if, as I suspect, Tanluan was not conversant with the Sanskrit text, he may have used *boluomi* as “perfection” in this latter sense. See Ashikaga, *Sukhāvātivyūha*, 9ff.; and S.B.E., 49(2):10ff.

108. *Shengzhong xing* 聖種性, the seed-nature obtained when one enters upon the holy path (*āryamārga*). This is the fourth in a series of six seed-natures: see Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 124a and 137a.

109. *Anutpattikadharmakṣānti*: one realizes “patiently” (*kṣānti*), i.e., without alarm, that all the factors (dharma) are eternally unarisen (*anutpattika*).

has been gained with that [nature] as cause, and as we can say that the cause is in the effect, we can thus speak of the nature.

Again, to say nature means that the essence is necessarily just-what-it-is, and does not change; it is like the sea, whose nature it is to have one flavor, and all that flows into it necessarily takes on that one flavor, while the flavor of the sea is not thereby changed. Now, since man's bodily nature is impure, the various marvellous colors, pleasant smells, and excellent tastes all become impure on entering the body;<sup>110</sup> conversely, all who go to be born in Sukhāvātī will lose their impure bodies and minds, and certainly obtain a pure, unconditioned dharma body of equitability.<sup>111</sup>

Therefore, this is the perfection of the pure nature of Sukhāvātī.

*As the right way, the greatly compassionate,  
it is sprung from transcendent good roots.*

This is the great way (*dao*) which is equitable.<sup>112</sup> The way which is equitable is called the right way (*zhengdao* 正道, *sanmārga*), because "equitable" is the mark of all the dharmas (*dharmalakṣaṇa*). Because of the equitability of all dharmas, *bodhicitta* (*faxin* 發心) is equitable.<sup>113, 114</sup> Because of equitability of *bodhicitta*, the way is equitable. And because the way is equitable, great compassion is equitable. Great compassion

110. This passage relies upon the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (*Dazhi du lun*). The definition alludes to T. 1509:25.292b. " 'Nature' means absolute being-in-itself" (性名自有不待因緣), and the similes are taken from Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 199.

111. *Qingjing pingdeng wuwei fashen* 清淨平等無爲法身, that is, probably, *pariśuddhisamatāsaṃskṛtadharmakāya*, the embodiment which, partaking of the nature of the unmanifest, is pure, eternally unarisen, not composite, a *dharmakāya*. Possessing this, one can appear in manifestations (*nirmāṇakāya*) wherever one wishes. The acquisition and functioning of this *dharmakāya* are discussed below, *passim*, and esp. at T. 1819:40.840a19–b8. I resort to a Waleyism in trying to translate this compound.

112. "Equitable" (*pingdeng* 平等), *samatā*, is a synonym of *anutpāda*, "unarisen."

113. [TK: The original Chinese passage is as follows: 以諸法平等故發心等. Corless translates this passage as "Because the dharmas are 'always-so,' [Dharmākara Bodhisattva] published his intention in the always-so." However, our understanding is different from his.]

114. That is, he made his resolutions in the state of *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*. See above, and n109.

is the right cause of the way of the buddhas: therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “As the right way, the greatly compassionate.”

Compassion may relate to three things: first, it may relate to beings; this is “small compassion” (*xiaobei* 小悲); second, it may relate to the dharmas; this is “middling compassion” (*zhongbei* 中悲); third, it may relate to no thing; this is “great compassion” (*dabei* 大悲).<sup>115</sup>

Great compassion, then, is the same as<sup>116</sup> transcendent (*chushi* 出世, *lokuttara*) good, and because Sukhāvātī is sprung from great compassion, we say great compassion is the root of the Pure Land.

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “it is sprung from transcendent good roots.”

[4. The Appearance, 828c19–25]

*It has brilliance most clear and intense,  
like a glass, or the sun's and moon's discs.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the appearance<sup>117</sup> of the decorations.<sup>118</sup> The Buddha originally conceived the merits of this decoration because he saw that although the sun appears in each of the four continents [around Sumeru], its brilliance [at any one time] does not encompass three of the regions:<sup>119</sup> and that a courtyard torch in front of a house does not even shine ten *ren* 仞.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, he conceived his resolution for a brilliance most clear and intense, a brilliance most intense like the very discs of the sun and the moon themselves. Though Sukhāvātī is, again, wide, without limits, its clear

115. Similar definitions appear in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25), the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*, the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā śāstra* (T. 1521:26), etc. (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 31n18).

116. Prefer the v.l., *jishi* 即是.

117. *Xingxiang* 形相.

118. [TK: *Zhuangyanxingxianggongdechengjiu* 莊嚴形相功德成就.]

119. Simile from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.133b). As the sun, according to Indian mythological cosmology, revolves around the cosmic mountain Sumeru, it can only shine on one continent at a time.

120. The *ren* 仞 is a measure of length, approximating to a man's height. Its exact length varied with the dynasty. See Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 22b–c; Mathews, *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary*, 3111; Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 31n30; K. 342n4. For argument's sake, we may regard “ten *ren*” 十仞 as around thirty yards.

brilliance is neither exhausted nor blocked. Therefore, [Vasubandhu] says, “It has brilliance most clear and intense, like a glass, or the sun’s and moon’s discs.”

[5. The Diverse Phenomena, 828c26–829a6]

*It is naturally set with rare jewels,  
and is furnished with ornaments fine.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the diverse phenomena<sup>121</sup> in the decorations.<sup>122</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this decoration? He saw that, in the world, one adorns palaces with mud and earth, and makes ornaments from wood and stone: when working on gold or carving jade, one’s inspiration is unrealized. Though one makes a hundred thousand plans, one receives only bitterness. Therefore, he conceived an intention of great compassion, resolving, “When I become a buddha, I must provide rare jewels (*zhenbao* 珍寶) and furnish [TK: the land?] with (*juzu* 具足) ornaments, whose beauty will be ‘of themselves alone’<sup>123</sup> and whose abundance will be ‘out of mind,’<sup>124</sup> naturally<sup>125</sup> causing one to enter the way of the

121. *Zhongzhong shi* 種種事.

122. [TK: *Zhuangyanzhongzhongshigongdechengjiu* 莊嚴種種事功德成就.]

123. *Ziran* 自然, “according to innate nature,” an allusion to *Dao de jing*, chap. 25:

Man follows the ways of the Earth,  
The Earth follows the ways of Heaven,  
Heaven follows the ways of Tao,  
Tao follows its own ways. (Wu, *Lao Tzu*, 35)

That is, the beauty of Sukhāvātī is literally “incomparable.”

124. *Xiangwang* 相忘, “forgetfulness,” an allusion to *Zhuangzi* 莊子 VI (Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 90):

Yen Hui said, “I smash up my limbs and my body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything.”

That is, the abundance of Sukhāvātī transcends quantification.

125. “Naturally” as a translation of *zi* 自 here follows the *furigana* of Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 33, who reads it as *onozukara* 自ずから.



buddhas.” Even if set beside handiwork of Viśvakarman,<sup>126</sup> one would praise these decorations as admirable, piling up concepts and straining for comparisons. How might one not seize on such a picture?

“Naturally” means “in its basic essence.”<sup>127</sup> Since that which brought it into existence (*nengsheng* 能生) was pure, how could that which has been brought into existence (*suosheng* 所生) be impure? Accordingly, the [*Vimalakīrti*] sutra says, “As his mind is pure, so a buddha’s land is pure.”<sup>128</sup>

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says: “It is naturally set with rare jewels, and is furnished with ornaments fine.”

[6. *The Wonderful Colors*, 829a7–27]

*Its immaculate radiance flames out,  
and suffuses all worlds with its light.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the wonderful colors<sup>129</sup> in the decorations.<sup>130</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this decoration? He saw that, in the world, the excellent and the wretched are not the same; because they are not the same, there is the appearance of high and low; since there is the appearance of high and low, [the idea of] affirmation and negation arises; since [the idea of] affirmation and negation arises, there is long wallowing in the three states of existence (*sanyou* 三有). Therefore, he made up an intention of great compassion, and conceived a resolution of uniformity

126. Viśvakarman, “the maker of everything,” also called Devavardhika, “the artisan of the gods,” is a creator/transformer of the Hindu pantheon, described as, amongst other things, “the lord of the arts, executor of a thousand handicrafts, the fashioner of all ornaments, the most eminent of artisans, who formed the celestial chariots of the deities, on whose craft men subsist.” See Dowson, *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, 363–364.

127. See above, T. 1819:40.828b26–7, where the same definition is used.

128. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, I (T. 475:14.538c5): “c’est dans la mesure où la pensée du Bodhisattva est pure que son buddhakṣetra est purifié.” Lamotte, *L’Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, 119 (chap. 1, section 14). [RKP: An English translation of the above sentence is as follows: “to the extent that the mind of the bodhisattva is pure is his buddhakṣetra purified.” See Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 22.]

129. *Miaose* 妙色.

130. [TK: *Zhuangyanmiaosegongdechengjiu* 莊嚴妙色功德成就.]



(*pingdengyuan* 平等願), resolving, “In my land, may radiance flame out abundantly, may it especially lack this [defect of different appearances], may there be those who take on a golden color unlike that of gods and men.”

If we consider this “taking on,” it is as if nothing were to shine in the metal<sup>131</sup> face of a mirror. For, compared with the gold of the Buddha’s time, present-day gold does not shine.<sup>132</sup> Compared with the gold of the Jambu River,<sup>133</sup> the gold of the Buddha’s time did not shine. Compared with the golden sands of the *cakravartin*’s<sup>134</sup> path through the great ocean, the gold of the Jambu River does not shine. Compared with the gold mountains,<sup>135</sup> the golden sands of the *cakravartin*’s path through the great ocean do not shine. Compared with the iridescence of Mount Sumeru, the gold mountains do not shine. Compared with the iridescence of the necklaces of the gods of the thirty-three (*trāyatrīṃśaloka*),<sup>136</sup> the iridescence of Mount Sumeru does not shine. Compared with the gold of the Yama gods (*yanmotian* 炎摩天),<sup>137</sup> the iridescence of the gods of the thirty-three does not shine.

131. Tanluan plays on the many meanings of *jīn* 金 as “metal in general,” “the metal gold in particular,” “sheen, as of metal.” The passage relies on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.90). [TK: Inagaki translates the passage 如明鏡在金邊則不現 as “If a clear mirror is placed before a nugget of gold, the lustre of the gold is the brighter.” *Jīn* is simply translated as the gold. See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 147.]

132. This phrase implies that Tanluan regards the cosmos to have decayed at least to the state of *pratirūpadharma*. [RKP: *saddharmapratirūpaka*, the “semblance” or perhaps “refracted” dharma, in East Asian Buddhism generally considered the second of the three periods of the decline of the dharma.]

133. The golden sands of the cosmic river proper to Jambudvīpa, the continent inhabited by human beings.

134. A *cakravartin*, or universal monarch, travels with extraordinary pomp.

135. [TK: Corless originally rendered this as “metal mountains,” adding the note: “*Jīnshān* 金山, translating *cakravāla*, the iron mountains forming the ninth range encircling the cosmic mountain Sumeru.” The source of his interpretation, however, is not clear. Inagaki interprets *jīnshān* as “the gold mountains [surrounding Mt. Sumeru].” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 147.]

136. [TK: The translation of *sanshisan tian* 三十三天 (*trāyatrīṃśa*, *trāyatrīṃśā devāḥ*).]

137. [TK: Inagaki interprets this *yanmotian* as “Sūyama Heaven.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 147. He interprets the character *tian* 天 here and following as

Compared with the gold of the Tuṣita gods (*doushuaituotian* 兜率陀天), the gold of the Yama gods does not shine. Compared with the gold of the Nirmāṇeśvara<sup>138</sup> gods (*huazizaitian* 化自在天), the gold of the Tuṣita gods does not shine. Compared with the gold of the Paranirmiteśvara<sup>139</sup> gods (*tahuazizaitian* 他化自在天), the gold of the Nirmāṇeśvara gods does not shine. Compared with the glorious brightness of the blessed land, the gold of the Paranirmiteśvara gods does not shine.

Why is this? Because the golden radiance of that land terminates [the cycle of] births according to maculate (*gou* 垢) karma, and because its purity has nothing which is not perfection. Sukhāvātī is that which arose from the pure karma of the Bodhisattva [Dharmākara] in his calm knowledge of non-arising (*wushengren* 無生忍): it is that which was received by Amita, the Tathāgata, the Dharmarāja, and thus has become the furthering condition<sup>140</sup> of Amita Tathāgata. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says: “Its immaculate radiance flames out, and suffuses all worlds with its light.”

“Suffuses all worlds”: it suffuses two worlds (*shijian* 世間).<sup>141</sup>

[7. *The Sensations*, 829a28–b14]

*There are jewels like excellent grass,  
which is soft, and bends this way and that;  
if one strokes them, great joy is then born,  
which transcends kācilindikam's<sup>142</sup> touch.*

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“heaven” rather than “gods.” I agree with his interpretation.]

138. More commonly called Nirmāṇarati.

139. More commonly called Paranirmitavaśavartin.

140. *Zengshang yuan* 增上緣, translating *adhipatipratyaya*, “relation of dominance” (Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 13b), the influence which powerfully controls and directs towards enlightenment.

141. The “worlds” of the furnishings and of the beings, as explained below (T. 1819:40.841c6–27).

142. [TK: In this sentence, the word *jiazhanlintuo* 迦旃隣陀 is translated as *kācilindikam*. *Jiazhanlintuo* is, however, primarily the transliteration of the word *kācilindika*. The reason why Corless translates *jiazhanlintuo* not as *kācilindika* but as *kācilindikam* is unknown. (In trying to represent a Sanskrit original, perhaps Corless considered *kācilindika* as an adjective and gave it the nominal ending -m?)]

These four lines designate the perfection of the merit of the sensation<sup>143</sup> in the decorations.<sup>144</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this decoration? He saw that, in the world, there are precious, valuable things such as gold and jade, but they cannot be made into clothing; and although there are rare, pleasing things such as bright mirrors, their excellence<sup>145</sup> is incomplete, for they delight the eye but do not please the body surface (*shen* 身). Why should there be any contradiction<sup>146</sup> whatever between these two senses of body surface and the eye? Therefore he resolved, saying, “In my land, may the six senses<sup>147</sup> of the divinized men<sup>148</sup> be blended, as the homogenizing<sup>149</sup> of water and milk,

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143. *Chu* 觸 lit., “touch, feel” (I render it “stroke” in the verse), but, as will immediately appear, Tanluan takes it in a much broader sense.

144. [TK: *Zhuangyanchugongdechengjiu* 莊嚴觸功德成就.]

145. Reading *yi* 議 as the homophonic *yi* 義 and understand it as “bon, louable, excellent, eminent” (as per Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 123c). [TK: Inagaki, however, does not read *yi* 議 as its homophone *yi* 義, and translates the passage 珍玩明鏡無議於敷具 as follows: “Although clear mirrors were prized as rare treasures, they were not suitable as carpets.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 149. In addition, Inagaki also interprets *fūju* 敷具 as “carpets” in his translation. There is the passage 金薄幃帳柔軟滑澤種種天衣以爲敷具 in the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā śāstra* (T. 1521:26.70a23–24); therefore, *fūju* should be interpreted as “carpets.”]

146. *Moudun* 鉞楯, lit., “a spear thrown against a wall,” an allusion to the first section on “Difficulties” in the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 · 難一. Hanfeizi sees contrariness as an inescapable feature of life, and offers some rather cynical advice on how to mitigate it. See Watson, *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsun Tzu and Han Fei Tzu*, pt. 3, 73–79. Tanluan regards contradictions as inescapable within *saṃsāra*, but resolved in *Sukhāvātī*.

147. *Liuqing* 六情, “the six feelings,” the early translation of *ṣaḍindriyāḥ* (later, *liugen* 六根, “the six roots”), i.e., the six loci of the origination (“root”) of sense, viz., eye, ear, nose, tongue, body-surface, and mind. (The mind, *citta*, receives “mentals,” *caitta*.)

148. *Rentian* 人天, normally regarded as a translation of *devamanuṣyāḥ*, “gods-and-men.” But, since both of these states (*gati*) pertain to *saṃsāra*, which *Sukhāvātī* transcends, the compound cannot be construed in its literal sense. See further discussion on the passage T. 1819:40.832c7–17, below.

149. Delete *zu* 卒 and read the v.l., *ping* 平.

and the dispelling of the troubles of Chu 楚 and Yue 越.”<sup>150</sup> Therefore, the seven jewels are soft, both delighting the eye and pleasing the body surface.

*Kācilindikam* (jiazhanlintuo 迦旃隣陀) is the name of a soft Indian grass,<sup>151</sup> which gives birth to feelings of joy in whoever strokes it. Therefore [Vasubandhu] uses it as a simile. The commentators say that earth, stone, grass, and wood each have, amongst us in this world, their distinct natures. On what basis, then, do the interpreters regard these jewels as grass? Because they ripple like thin stalks in the breeze,<sup>152</sup> they regard them as grass. If I might participate in their interpretation, I would indeed have it this way.

“Great joy is then born”: stroking *kācilindikam* gives birth to the joy of passionate attachment (*rāga*);<sup>153</sup> but stroking these soft jewels, the joy of spiritual zest (*dharma-prīti*)<sup>154</sup> is born.<sup>155</sup>

150. An allusion to *Zhuangzi*, V: “Confucius said: ‘If you look at [things] from the point of view of their differences, then there is liver and gall, Ch’u and Yüeh. But if you look at them from the point of view of their sameness, then the ten thousand things are all One’ ” (Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 69). The kingdoms of Chu and Yue, on either side of the Yangtze, were continually at war during the Zhou 周 period, until Chu absorbed Yue in 334 BCE.

151. *Jiazhanlintuo* 迦旃隣陀者天竺柔軟草名也。But *Mahāvīyutpatti* 5879 calls *kācilindikam* a vestment of first quality, made from the finest silk, and Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 317a says it is a sea-bird, from whose feathers robes are made. Thus, it appears that something like “elder-down,” “swansdown,” is meant, and that Tanluan’s definition is an educated guess from the present context of the word.

152. The general sense of this phrase seems clear, though it contains the obscure characters 𦰩 (Morohashi 31466, *kusa ga fune ni nabiku sama*, “grass bending in the wind”) and 𦰪 (Morohashi 32220, *meguru, matou*, “to wrap around, envelop,” referring to *Shuowen* 說文 艸旋兒也, “bendable grass”) [RKP: In the original dissertation, the characters are unreadable]. For *tu* 途, “way, path,” of the Taishō text (which glosses it as 細草, “thin grass,” thus possibly, “narrow line, thread”), K. 352’s *kambun* has 𦰪, which Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 787a, defines as “tige mince d’une plante herbacée.”

153. [TK: *ranzhuo* 染著.]

154. [TK: *faxi* 法喜.]

155. This idea is expanded below, T. 1819:40.837a22–27. According to the *Lalitavistara*, VI, Śākyamuni dwelt in the womb of his mother Māyā encased in a box called *Ratnavyūha*, which was very ornamental, hard like a jewel, and

These two things<sup>156</sup> are mutually mysterious: in what way are they not great? Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*There are jewels like excellent grass,  
which is soft, and bends this way and that;  
if one strokes them, great joy is then born,  
which transcends kācīlindikam's touch.*

[8. The Three Constituents, 829b15–c17]

[8.i. Water]

*Jeweled blossoms of ten million kinds  
overspread all the ponds and the streams;  
as mild breezes stir flowers and leaves,  
so they twinkle and sparkle with light.*

These four lines designate the perfection of the merits of the water in the decorations.<sup>157</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, there are tidal waves<sup>158</sup> and rollers<sup>159</sup> whose turbulent foaming terrifies men. Ice forms, and the water retreats: it breaks up, and causes floods. Such strictures bring grief and lead to feelings of distress and sorrow: glancing over their shoulders, people fear and are anxious.

Seeing this, the Bodhisattva [Dharmākara] conceived an intention of great compassion, and resolved, “When I become a buddha, where I am will have streams, ponds, and fitting palaces: many jewel-flowers will spread out to decorate the water; gently stirred by mild breezes, they will emit a rippling light, enlarging the spirit and pleasing the body in every possible way.”

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

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soft like *kācīlindikam*: “Et encore, ce Ratnavyoûha, propriété du Bodhisattva, d’une essence solide, indestructible, pareille au diamant, est doux au toucher comme un vêtement de Kācīlindi.” Foucaux, *Le Lalita Vistara*, 63.

156. I.e., that jewels can be soft, and that their delightful touch liberates one from, rather than traps one in, *saṃsāra*.

157. [TK: Zhuangyanshuigongdechengjiu 莊嚴水功德成就.]

158. *Yunniao* 雲溺: a gloss in the Taishō text explains, “large waves in the river (jiang, 江) are called *yunniao*.” [TK: T. 1819:40.829b17.]

159. *Hongtao* 洪濤: a gloss in the Taishō text explains, “great ocean waves.” [TK: T. 1819:40.829b18.]

*Jeweled blossoms of ten million kinds  
overspread all the ponds and the streams;  
as mild breezes stir flowers and leaves,  
so they twinkle and sparkle with light.*

[8.ii. Ground]

*From the mansion with towers and spires,  
in whatever direction one looks,  
there are trees of all colors and hues  
set with railings of jewels round about.*

These four lines designate the perfection of the merits of the ground in the decorations.<sup>160</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this decoration? He saw that, in the world, there are lofty ranges, soaring peaks, plateaux with withered and flattened trees, mountainous regions, cliffs, and gullies filled with shrubs. The vastness of the blue<sup>161</sup> ocean makes one spineless, and the grassy wastes of broad fens obliterate footpaths.

Seeing this, the Bodhisattva [Dharmākara] conceived an intention of great compassion, and resolved, “In my land, the ground will be flat like the palm of a hand, and from a mansion with towers and spires one will be able to see in whatever direction. Though it will be essentially without the differentiated, it is not that it will not differentiate,<sup>162</sup> for trees of jewels and railings of jewels will combine to make glittering decorations.” Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*From the mansion with towers and spires,  
in whatever direction one looks,  
there are trees of all colors and hues  
set with railings of jewels round about.*

160. [TK: Zhuangyandigongdechengjiu 莊嚴地功德成就.]

161. Understand *cang* 滄 in the sense of its homophone 蒼. [TK: Inagaki also interprets *canghai* 滄海 as a “blue ocean.” He, however, interprets the passage 茫茫滄海爲絕目之川 as follows: “A huge blue ocean stretched beyond the range of sight.” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 152.]

162. *De wu suoshu, yi fei bushu* 的無所屬亦非不屬, i.e., though everyone will be on the same level of beauty (above, T. 1819:40.829a7–27) and there will be no difference between “good” and “bad” inhabitants (below, 830c4–831b3), there will be no lack of variety and interest.

## [8.iii. Sky]

*There are strings of rare jewels without end  
which extend through the sky like a net,  
and a medley of bells ringing out  
is proclaiming the tones of true dharma.*

These four lines designate the perfection of the merits of the sky in the decorations.<sup>163</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this decoration? He saw that, in the world, clouds and mists<sup>164</sup> shut out the vastness of the sky, while thunder, lightning, torrents, and storms come down from it,<sup>165</sup> and there is foreboding at its evil portents and rainbows. All this comes from the sky: anxiety and hundreds of cares make one's hair stand on end.

Seeing this, the Bodhisattva [Dharmākara] conceived an intention of great compassion, and resolved, "In my land, strings of jewels will extend through the sky like a net, and bells will ring out *gong, shang* 宮商,<sup>166</sup> proclaiming the dharma of the way. Seeing this, [those born there] will be without discomfort, will cherish the way, and behold virtue."

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*There are strings of rare jewels without end  
which extend through the sky like a net,  
and a medley of bells ringing out  
is proclaiming the tones of true dharma.*

## [9. The Rain, 829c18–29]

*Gorgeous vestments and flowers rain down,  
spreading infinite scents<sup>167</sup> through the air.*

163. [TK: Zhuangyanxukonggongdechengjiu 莊嚴虛空功德成就.]

164. [TK: The translation of *yanyun chenwu* 煙雲塵霧. Inagaki translates these four characters as "smoke, clouds, dust, or mist." See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 153.]

165. This fear of clouds and rain is as thoroughly Chinese as it is un-Indian. Contrast, for instance, the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa.

166. *Gong, shang* 宮商, the first two notes of the five-tone scale, probably a synecdoche for "music."

167. The Taishō text reads *xun* 薰, "fragrance." The v.l. is the homophone 勳, "merit," which is plausible, but somewhat unnatural. The Taishō text of the Comma reads another homophone 熏, "scent" (T. 1524:26.231a6). Read either 薰 or 熏.



These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the rain in the decorations.<sup>168</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this decoration? He saw that, in the world, if one wishes to welcome an honorable person by spreading cloth-offerings on the ground, or show reverence to a valued person<sup>169</sup> with scented flowers, then, one's karma being impoverished, one's gratitude is paltry, and the affair is not successful.

Therefore [the Bodhisattva Dharmākara] conceived a resolution of great compassion, and resolved, "In my land, it will always rain down those objects which are fully in accord with the wishes of beings."

Why is the word "rain" used? One might hold to the saying, "If it constantly rains flowers and robes,<sup>170</sup> the sky will be blocked out." How is it that there is no blockage? The simile of "rain" is used because the rain is adapted to the moment and is without the disaster of floods.<sup>171</sup> Indeed, how could the rewards of Sukhāvātī have objects which cause anxiety? The sutras<sup>172</sup> say that night and day, throughout the six watches,<sup>173</sup> it rains jewel-robos, it rains jewel-flowers: the jewel-substance is soft; walking on it, one sinks in *si cun* 四寸,<sup>174</sup> and when one raises one's foot, [the substance] springs back as it was. So then, to settle the matter, penetrating the jewel-earth [with one's foot] is like water penetrating a hole. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Gorgeous vestments and flowers rain down,  
spreading myriad scents through the air.*

168. [TK: Zhuangyanyugongdechengjiu 莊嚴雨功德成就.]

169. *Mingbao* 名寶, "someone famous and treasured." Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 42, takes this as a buddha or a bodhisattva.

170. *Huayi* 華衣 is read by Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 42, as *hana ya ifuku*, "flowers and robes": that this must be correct, and that it cannot be construed as a compound, "ornamental robes," appears from the sutra reference which immediately follows.

171. This does not seem a very convincing explanation, unless Tanluan is thinking only in terms of "rain" as being "gentle ... upon the place beneath."

172. This sentence paraphrases two passages in the *Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha* and one passage in the *Smaller Sukhāvātīvyūha*. See S.B.E., 49(2):19, 43, and 95.

173. *Liushi* 六時, the "six times," i.e., the three day watches and the three night watches, at each of which it is proper to offer worship.

174. *Si cun* 四寸, around 4 ¾ inches.



## [10. The Radiance, 830a1–8]

*Buddha's wisdom is bright as the sun,  
and dispels the world's darkened confusion.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the radiance<sup>175</sup> in the decorations.<sup>176</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this decoration? He saw that, in the world, although the sun's radiance is behind and before,<sup>177</sup> yet there is confusion<sup>178</sup> and [mental] darkness.<sup>179</sup> Therefore [Bodhisattva Dharmākara] resolved and said, "May it be, in my land, that that which has light will be able to dispel confusion and [mental] darkness, making one enter buddha wisdom; it will not be that there will be affairs without benefit."<sup>180</sup> It is further said that the light of Sukhāvatī arises as a corollary of the Tathāgata's wisdom, and therefore is able to dispel the world's [mental] darkness. The [Vimalakīrti] sūtra says, "There are buddha lands which do the work of Buddha by means of light,"<sup>181</sup> and that is the case here. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Buddha's wisdom is bright as the sun,  
and dispels the world's darkened confusion.*

175. *Guangming* 光明, "brilliant light," probably a translation of *prabhāsa*.

176. [TK: *Zhuangyanguangminggongdechengjiu* 莊嚴光明功德成就.]

177. [TK: According to Hayashima and Ōtani, *Jōdoron chū*, 128, the two characters *xiang* 項 and *bei* 背 respectively mean the "nape of the neck" and the "back."]

178. *Yuchi* 愚癡, *moha*, lack of clarity in regard to Buddhist doctrine.

179. *Suoan* 所闇, "that which shuts the door," the ignorance (*avidyā*) which is the fundamental hindrance to enlightenment.

180. *Wujizhishi* 無記之事, perhaps, "affairs which are not worth recording." The translation, "without benefit," follows Shandao 善導, who equates *wuji* with *wuli* and *wuyi* (無利・無益: Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 44n28).

181. T. 475:14.553c. See Lamotte, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, 340. "The work of buddha," *foshi* 佛事, *buddhakārya* (Lamotte, "œuvre de Buddha") is his soteriology. [TK: In Boin's English translation, *buddhakārya* is interpreted as "Buddha deeds." See Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 223 (chap. 10, sec. 8).]

[11. *The Wonderful (Weimiao 微妙) Sound*, 830a9–22]

*For the brahma sound wakens<sup>182</sup> afar,  
it is wonderfully heard in all spheres.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the wonderful sound of the decorations.<sup>183</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, though there might be the true dharma (*shanfa* 善法),<sup>184</sup> yet its illustrious sound<sup>185</sup> does not go far;<sup>186</sup> though its illustrious sound goes far, yet it is not wonderful [in quality]; though its illustrious sound goes far and is wonderful, yet it is not able to enlighten beings. Therefore [Bodhisattva Dharmākara] conceived this decoration.

In India, they say, “*brahma* practice” meaning “purificatory practice” (*jingxing* 淨行), and, “*brahma* language” meaning “wonderful speech” (*miaoci* 妙辭). In that country, revering Brahmadeva<sup>187</sup> much, they use *brahma* as an honorific. And so we could go on. Therefore, in Chinese Buddhism, we [similarly] understand Brahmadeva.<sup>188</sup>

182. Reading *wu* 悟, “awakens, enlightens,” with the present text and the Three Text edition of the Comma (T. 1524:26.231a8 reads *yu* 語, “speaks”). [RKP: Without explanation, Corless refers to T. 1524 as the “Three Text edition,” which simply highlights the fact that the Taishō version draws information from three previous editions, those of Song, Yuan, and Ming.]

183. [TK: *Zhuangyanmiaoshenggongdechengjiu* 莊嚴妙聲功德成就.]

184. *Shanfa* 善法 would more naturally be *kuśaladharmāḥ*, but the context requires it to be construed as *saddharma*.

185. Taking *mingsheng* 名聲 as “renown, fame” (Soothil, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 204b).

186. Compare below, T. 1819:40.832b3–8.

187. *Fantian* 梵天, “Brahma the God.” Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 45n30 cites two references from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*: “For the congregation of Brahmadeva is honored as all-hearing and omniscient” (T. 1509:25.211b); “The people mostly recognize Brahmadeva, and not the other gods” (ibid., 122c).

188. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 45n31 says: “It is noted in the *Records of Central Asia* (*Xiyuji* 西域記) that, in ancient India, the culture was founded by Brahma Devarāja, that the language is the speech of Brahmadeva, and that any matter at all is connected with Brahmadeva” (see T. 2087:51.875c). In the same place, Uesugi quotes the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*: “Both the beings who have and have not [heard] Buddha, recognize Brahmadeva as the Father of the World” (T. 1509:25.315c).

“Sound” (*sheng* 聲) means “name” (*ming* 名). “Name” means “the name of Sukhāvātī.”<sup>189</sup> The sūtra<sup>190</sup> says that if a person merely hears the name of Sukhāvātī, he will then make the resolution to be born there, and will obtain it as he has resolved. This name enlightens creatures and leads them to attainment.

The *Shilun* 釋論<sup>191</sup> says, “Thus, this Pure Land is not included in the triple world.” How can we say this? Since it is without desire, it is not in the world of desire (*kāma dhātu*, *yujie* 欲界). Since there is ground to stand on, it is not in the world of form (*rūpa dhātu*, *sejie* 色界). Since it has form, it is not in the world of formlessness (*ārūpya dhātu*, *wusejie* 無色界). It is the Bodhisattva [Dharmākara]’s special karma which brought this about.

Transcending existence, it yet exists, and we call it “subtle” (*wei* 微):<sup>192</sup> as its name is able to initiate enlightenment, we call it “wonderful” (*miao* 妙).

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*For the brahma sound wakens afar,  
it is wonderfully heard in all spheres.*

[12. The Lord, 830a23–b2]

*Amitābha, the samyaksambuddha*<sup>193</sup>  
*as a dharma-king, stands firm in good.*

189. T. 1819:40.835c28 makes it mean the name of Amitābha also.

190. This seems to refer to the nineteenth *pranidhāna* (*yuan* 願) in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha*, except that the sūtra says, “my name.” See Ashikaga, *Sukhāvativyūha*, 14; and S.B.E., 49(2):15.

191. *Shilun* 釋論, “the explanatory treatise” is another name, first used by Kumārajīva, for the final *juan* of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 45n33). The quotation is T. 1509:25.340a.

192. A gloss in the text explains: “‘Transcending existence’ means transcending the triple-world. ‘It exists’ means the Pure Land exists.” That is, Sukhāvātī is extra-phenomenal but not a phantasm (such as a *gandharvanagaram*, “fairy castle,” etc.).

193. [TK: Corless uses “fully enlightened” in his revised translation.]

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the lord<sup>194</sup> of the decorations.<sup>195</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, when *rākṣasas* (*luocha* 羅刹) become the princes,<sup>196</sup> the people of the land devour each other,<sup>197</sup> but when the wheel of empire<sup>198</sup> lodges in the palace, the four regions are without anxiety: this is compared to “bending with the wind,”<sup>199</sup> and how indeed could it be accidental?

Therefore [Bodhisattva Dharmākara] set up this resolution, and resolved, “In my land, there will always be a dharma-king,<sup>200</sup> and the dharma-king will stand firm in the power of his good [roots].”

“Stands firm” (*zhuchi* 住持): [TK: this is like the yellow swan who wholeheartedly thought of and brought back to life Zian 子安, who lived for one thousand years after that;]<sup>201</sup> or the mother fish, who re-

194. Zhu 主, “chief.”

195. [TK: *Zhuangyanzhugongdechengjiu* 莊嚴主功德成就.]

196. *Luocha wei jun* 羅刹爲君, an allusion to the *Ekottarāgama* (T. 125:2.615b). A *rākṣasa* is a chimaeric, cannibalistic demon.

197. Apparently to be understood quite literally. See K. 373n2.

198. *Baolun* 寶輪, *cakra-ratnam* (more usually *lunbao* 輪寶), “the wheel-treasure,” the chief of the seven treasures possessed by a *cakravartin*, “wheel-turner,” an emperor who rules by righteousness. The epiphany of the wheel to a ruler foretells his *cakravartin* destiny: the wheel then travels throughout the territory which is to become his kingdom, lodges in the inner court of his palace, and finally disappears seven days after his death. See Agrawala, *Wheel Flag of India*; Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India*; “Cakravartin,” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 3:336–337.

199. *Pi zhi feng mi* 譬之風靡, an allusion to *Analects*, XII, 19.

君子之德風小人之德草

草上之風必偃 (Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 1:259).

The essence of a gentleman is that of wind: the essence of small people is that of grass. And when a wind passes over grass, it cannot choose but bend. (Waley, *Analects of Confucius*, 168)

The *Zihai* 字海 defines *mi* 靡 as “bending over because of a force” (順勢而倒).

200. *Fawang* 法王, *dharmarāja*, a king who rules by righteousness.

201. An allusion to the *Lieyi chuan* 列異傳 of Emperor Wen 文 of Wei 魏 (220–227). The “yellow swan,” *huanghu* 黃鵠, is said to be the crane (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 47n36). [TK: Though, according to the *Lieyi chuan*, *zian* 子安 is the name of a person, Corless translates the three Chinese characters *chi zi*

members to guard her fry while traversing a watercourse,<sup>202</sup> so that they are not harmed.<sup>203</sup>

Now, Sukhāvātī is firm (*chi* 持) in the good of the *samyaksaṃbuddha* (*zhengjue* 正覺, i.e., properly awakened one)<sup>204</sup> [Amitābha], as his land. How could it be without those things, which pertain to perfect enlightenment (*samyaksaṃbodhi*, *zhengjue*)?

Therefore, [Vasubandhu] says:

*Amitābha, the samyaksaṃbuddha,  
as a dharma-king, stands firm in good.*

[13. The Populace,<sup>205</sup> 830b3–10]

*The Tathāgata's host of pure flowers  
metamorphose<sup>206</sup> from flowers of true bodhi.*

an 持子安 as “‘guards’ her chicks, keeping them safe.” Corless translates this section as follows: “This is like the yellow swan, who ‘guards’ (*chi* 持) her chicks, keeping them safe, until they are a thousand years old, before quitting.” Inagaki translates and summarizes the story of the yellow swan and Zian in the *Lieyi chuan* as follows:

One day Tzu-an [Zian] met a man who had caught a crane [*huanghu*]. He took off his clothes, exchanged them for the crane, and released it. When Tzu-an died, the crane came to his grave and perched on the tree which was planted there. Then the crane began to call Tzu-an’s name. It kept on calling his name for three years, and died. When people dug up the grave, Tzu-an was found alive. He said to them, “A long time ago, I redeemed a crane and released it. Now it saved my life at the sacrifice of its own.”

See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 299n61. I translate the same section as above on the basis of this information.]

202. *Xue* 𩇛, “source tarie” (Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 539c). A gloss in the text explains: “We speak of a *xue* where there is water in summer, but not in winter.” (T. 1819:40.830a29).

203. Analogy from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.614c).

204. *Zhengjue* 正覺, the highest form of Buddha.

205. [TK: English seems to have no term equivalent to the Chinese term *juanshu* 眷屬, which suggests closer relation than residence, but as not close as family.]

206. *Huasheng* 化生, *aupapādika*. See above, n2 and n8.

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the populace<sup>207</sup> in the decorations.<sup>208</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, the receptacle of the [embryonic] body is the womb with its blood,<sup>209</sup> and the source of birth is [also the source of] feces and urine. [Though it may be a case where] there are [three] acacia trees and [nine] jujube trees,<sup>210</sup> [the lineage of] the high-born may decay, and an unworthy scion emerges; [though it may be a case where] a stripling lies with a servant-girl, from her belly an eminent genius may emerge: disgrace coming from the one harbors fire;<sup>211</sup> contempt based upon the other, encompasses water.<sup>212</sup> Therefore, the resolution [of Bodhisattva Dharmākara] says, “May it be that, in my land, all will be born from the pure flowers of the

207. Juanshu 眷屬, “family, household.”

208. [TK: Zhuangyanjuanshugongdechengjiu 莊嚴眷屬功德成就.]

209. This is the second in a list of five impurities in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.198c–199a):

- (i) the impurity of the place of birth, *shengchu bujing* 生處不淨;
- (ii) the impurity of the seed, *zhongzi bujing* 種子不淨;
- (iii) the impurity of nature (*svabhāva*), *zixing bujing* 自性不淨;
- (iv) the impurity of proper-marks (*svalakṣaṇa*), *zixiang bujing* 自相不淨;
- (v) final impurity, *jiujing bujing* 究竟不淨. (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 47n38)

210. Huaiji 槐棘, “acacias and jujubes.” Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 459a, says:

*Nine jujubes* 九棘: The courtyard of the Imperial Palace wherein the Princes and State Ministers assembled. To the North there were three *huai* 槐, *acacia sophora* [or, *Sophora japonica*; Mathews, *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary*, 2230], under which the three Grand Ministers, *sankung* 三公, took their places; to the East were nine wild jujubes under which the Assessors of the Three Grand Ministers and the Grand Prefects, *ku ch'ing ta-fu* 孤卿大夫 lined up; to the West were another nine wild jujubes which marked the places of the Princes, *kung hou po tzū nan* 公侯伯子男.

Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 47n39 envisages a somewhat simpler arrangement. Thus, *huaiji* 槐棘 is an oblique metaphor for those close to the throne.

211. The high-born parents blush (due to the fiery element) for shame at their offspring. K. 377n7.

212. The low-born man, trying to make good, breaks out in a nervous sweat (due to the watery element). K. 377n8.

Tathāgata; may the citizens be of equal class, with no trace of usurpation.” Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*The Tathāgata’s host of pure flowers  
metamorphose from flowers of true bodhi.*

[14. The Rewards, 830b11–24]

*Then they joyfully savor his dharma,  
taking dhyāna and samādhi as food.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the rewards<sup>213</sup> in the decorations.<sup>214</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, one might invade [birds’] nests, break the eggs, and prepare dishes of sumptuous fare; or else [during a famine] people fill bags with sand, and console one another by pointing to the bags.<sup>215</sup> Since they cry out, surely the young [of all creatures] are able to suffer in their hearts? Therefore [the Bodhisattva Dharmākara] conceived this resolution of great compassion, resolving, “In my land, they will take the *buddhadharma*, *dhyāna* (*chan* 禪), and *samādhi* (*sanmei* 三昧) as food, and be eternally free from the troubles pertaining to other foods.”

“They joyfully savor his dharma”: when Candrasūryapradīpa Buddha (*Riyue dengming fo* 日月燈明佛) preached the *Lotus Sutra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, *Fahua jing* 法華經) throughout sixty small *kalpas*,<sup>216</sup> those who had gathered to listen also sat in one place for sixty small *kalpas*. This means since no one became weary in body or mind, that it was like a meal-break.<sup>217</sup>

213. *Shouyong* 受用, “what is received and used.” But *yong* 用 also means “function,” as the metaphysical opposite of “nature” (*ti* 體), and Tanluan plays on this meaning below (T. 1819:40.841c11–19).

214. [TK: *Zhuangyanshouyonggongdechengjiu*, 莊嚴受用功德成就.]

215. [TK: Pretending that the bags are filled with food.]

216. *Liushi xiaojie* 六十小劫: but the Sanskrit text records sixty “intermediate” *kalpas* (*ṣaṣṭyantarakalpān*), a considerably longer time. Wogihara and Tsuchida, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtram*, 18, lines 26 and 28.

217. This incident is in chap. 1 of the *Lotus Sutra* (ibid., 18f; S.B.E., 21:21), but the interpretation that, since no one noticed the enormous length of time, it was “like a meal-break” (謂如食頃), and that, implicitly, they must have fed on dharma for lack of anything else, is Tanluan’s own. [TK: T. 262:9.4a.]



“Taking meditative concentration (*chanding* 禪定)<sup>218</sup> as food”: this means that all the great bodhisattvas are constantly in *samādhi* and without other food.

*Samādhi*: when those divinized men desire food, delicious preparations in hundreds of flavors are spread out before them; their eyes see the colors, their noses smell the savors, and their bodies are comforted by being automatically sated. When they have finished, it goes away, but if they desire, it appears again. This is in the [*Larger Sukhāvativyūha*] sutra.<sup>219</sup> Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Then they joyfully savor his dharma,  
taking dhyāna and samādhi as food.*

[15. The Absence of Hardship, 830b25–c3]

*Freed from troubles in body and mind,  
they have joy without end, without pause.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the absence of hardship<sup>220</sup> in the decorations.<sup>221</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, one who receives imperial favor<sup>222</sup> in the morning may be afflicted with impe-

218. *Yi chanding wei shi* 以禪定爲食. [TK: Corless translated *chanding* 禪定 as *dhyāna*.] Strictly, *chanding* is a combination transliteration/translation of *dhyāna-samādhi*, but Tanluan seems to take it “loosely used” (Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 460a) for *dhyāna* alone, reserving *sanmei* 三昧 for *samādhi*. He appears to make no distinction between the two terms (K. 380n4 indeed states flatly, “*Dhyāna* and *samādhi* mean the same thing”), and so I render it in the verse, but the Pāli canon sees *dhyāna* (*jhāna*) or “recollected awareness,” arising as a consequence of true *samādhi*, or “concentration” (Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary*, 65).

219. S.B.E., 49(2):40ff. The sutra is not quite so explicit on the appearance and disappearance of the “food,” but, since it equates the bodhisattvas with the *Paranirmitavaśavartindevāḥ*, who feed on joy (*prīti*) and control their environment, it is not much of a stretch of its meaning to arrive at what Tanluan says, “automatically sated”; *ziran baozu* 自然飽足 means that they feel sated though they do not actually eat anything.

220. *Wu zhu nan* 無諸難, “the lack of all difficulties.”

221. [TK: *Zhuangyanwuzhunangongdechengjiu* 莊嚴無諸難功德成就.]

222. *Gunchong* 袞龍, crasis (*lueyu* 略語) of *gunlong* 袞龍, “imperial robe,” and *sichong* 思龍, “imperial favor” (K. 383n2), i.e., ceremonial regalia granted by the favor of the sovereign.



rial punishment<sup>223</sup> in the evening; he who is cast out amidst brambles when young may sit before a ten-foot square board<sup>224</sup> when grown up; and, at the piping of the flute<sup>225</sup> one sallies forth, but with hempen threads<sup>226</sup> [of mourning] one hastens back. In this way, many things oppose and annul each other. Therefore, the resolution [of Bodhisattva Dharmākara] says, “May it be, in my land, that joys will follow one another, entirely without pause.”

“Troubles in body” (*shennao* 身惱): that is, hunger, thirst, cold, heat, killing, injury, and so forth.

“Troubles in mind” (*xinnao* 心惱): that is, there are no errors due to the three poisons (*sandu* 三毒)<sup>227</sup> and such like. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Freed from troubles in body and mind,  
they have joy without end, without pause.*

[16. The Gate of the Great Principle, 830c4–14]

*In the realm of the great way’s good roots<sup>228</sup>  
all are equal: it lacks despised names,*

223. Fuyue 斧鉞, “hatchet and battle-axe,” symbols of authority deployed like the Roman *fascis* (Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 167b).

224. Fangzhang 方丈, an allusion to the Mencius, VII.B.34.ii:

食前方丈侍妾數百人 (Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 2:496)

Their tables, laden with food, measure ten feet across, and their female attendants are counted in the hundreds. (Lau, *Mencius*, 201)

Synecdoche for a man of wealth.

225. Emend *qie* 茄 to *jia* 笳 with Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 51.

226. Emend *li* 歷 to *ma* 麻 with K. 382, and either emend *jing* 經 to *die* 緯 with *ibid.* or read the text and understand it as haplography for *diewei* 經緯, “warp and woof,” i.e., fabric (Mathews, *Mathews’ Chinese-English Dictionary*, 1123d4). Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 51 (gloss) and K. 384n6 take it as *mofuku no koto*, “mourning dress,” which must be what is meant.

227. *Sandu* 三毒, the three basic hindrances to enlightenment: passionate attachment (*rāga*), passionate detachment (*dveṣa*), and muddle-headedness (*moha*).

228. *Dacheng shangen jie* 大乘善根界. There is some evidence that *jie* 界, “realm,” should be read *nan* 男, “male.” The Three Text edition of the Comma says: “Zhiyi of the Tiantai read *nan* and said it was a mistake for *jie*, so he altered it, and all subsequent commentators read *jie*: that is why we have it

because women, and any deformed,  
and the two vehicle seed, are not born.

These four lines designate the perfection of the merits of the gate of the great principle<sup>229</sup> in the decorations.<sup>230</sup> Gate is the gate of penetrating the great principle. The great principle is what pertains to the Mahāyāna. Just as a man, when building a city, enters through the gate

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here” (T. 1524:26.233a27–9). [TK: The original Chinese passage is as follows: 天台智者即曰界字乃男字之錯則宜改作而諸疏家皆作界字故今存之.] My friend Julien Pas of the University of Saskatchewan, working on Shandao and, thus, his views on this line, proposes the restoration of *nan*, in order to give a parallelism within the two lines, so that, “on the one hand, in Sukhāvati only male persons with good Mahāyāna roots are reborn, on the other hand no one with a female body, or with defective roots, or belonging to the twofold Hinayana way ... is reborn there. It seems that this latter interpretation is preferable, although the lack of the Sanskrit text forbids any decisive choice” (personal communications with the author, 5th July and 19th November, 1972). Certainly it reads easier with *nan*, and one might translate:

They are men, with the great way’s good roots,  
and are equal, with no despised names.

However there is no certainty that the text of Zhiyi was the text of Tanluan and, on the principle of the *lactio difficilis*, I am disposed to keep as we have it, tentatively “restoring” the Sanskrit (if, indeed, it is valid to suppose that we are not dealing with an original Chinese pseudograph) as *mahāyānakuśalamūladhātau*, “in the realm of the good root of the Mahāyāna.” Tanluan has already stated (above, pp. 94ff.) that Sukhāvati is the product of Dharmākara’s resolution, made in the full possession of *anūtpattikadharmakṣānti*, and that it partakes of the “nature” of this cause (T. 1819:40.828c1–4). It would therefore not be odd to speak of it as the realm of this resolution which formed the good root in the context of the Mahāyāna career, and, indeed, Tanluan explicitly does so at T. 1819:40.838c20–21: “Clearly, that pure land is the pure fundamental resolution of Amitābha Tathāgata, the product of non-production” (明彼淨土是阿彌陀如來清淨本願無生之生), and later says: “That land is the realm of non-arising” (彼土是無生界, T. 1819:40.839b6), i.e., *anūtpādhātu*. Therefore, while not dismissing the reading “man” as impossible, I feel that *jie* fits in better with the whole sweep of Tanluan’s thought, and follow the master of Tiantai: to do so, of course, requires understanding *shāngen* 善根 in the singular, as referring to Dharmākara’s resolution.

229. *Dayi men* 大義門.

230. [TK: *Zhuangyandayimengongdechengjiu* 莊嚴大義門功德成就.]

when he comes to it, so, if a man come to be born in Sukhāvātī, he has then achieved the gate of the Mahāyāna.

Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, although there are buddhas, Tathāgatas, and the company of those in the [three] worthy [states] and the [ten] holy [levels], etc.,<sup>231</sup> yet, due to the dark ages of the world, they divide the one [vehicle] and speak of three [vehicles].<sup>232</sup> Again, on the one hand, [when women become disciples] criticism is expressed by raising the eyebrows, and, on the other hand, [when cripples become disciples] ridicule is shown by pointing and speaking. Therefore, the resolution [of Bodhisattva Dharmākara] says, “May my land be of the one flavor Mahāyāna,<sup>233</sup> all within it being equal and of one flavor, may the seed of bad roots in no wise be born there,<sup>234</sup> and may women and despised names likewise be sundered from it.” Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*In the realm of the great way's good roots  
all are equal: it lacks despised names,  
because women, and any deformed,  
and the two vehicle seed, are not born.*

231. *Xian sheng deng zhong* 賢聖等衆. The “worthies” (*xian*) are the ten states or virtuous attainments proper to each of the ten bodhisattva levels, the ten practices of those levels, and the ten ways of dispersing merit from those levels. The “holies” (*sheng*) are the ten levels themselves. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 52n45.

232. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 52n46 quotes the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*: “The Buddha, when he appears during the five *kaśāya* world-periods, makes, in the One Path, a division into Three Vehicles” (T. 1509:25.711a). But it would seem more natural to take this as a more direct reference to the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is quoted below (T. 1819:40.830c28–9).

233. *Dacheng yiwei* 大乘一味, *ekarasamahāyāna*, i.e., the undifferentiated Mahāyāna or classical Ekayāna.

234. *Genbai zhongzi bijing busheng* 根敗種子畢竟不生. This phrase contains several ambiguities, which Tanluan exploits below. *Gen* means “root” (*mūla*) and “sense-faculty” (*indriya*), *zhongzi* means “germ” (*bīja*) and “lineage” (*gotra*), and consequently *sheng* many then be either transitive, “produce,” or intransitive, “born.” See further, in the following section.

[Three questions on the “gate of the great principle,” 830c14–831b3]

[i. Are there *śrāvakas* in Sukhāvatī.]

QUESTION: We respectfully refer to the forty-eight vows of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara in the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha preached at the city of Rājagṛha, where it says, “If, when I have become a buddha, one is able to reckon the extent of the *śrāvakas* in my land, and know that number, may I not accept supreme enlightenment.”<sup>235</sup> This is the first testimony to there being *śrāvakas* [in Sukhāvatī].

Again, the “Praises of Amitābha” in the *Explanation of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva Path* composed by the Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna says,

They transcend<sup>236</sup> the three worlds and the hells,  
and their eyes are like petals of lotus,  
this uncountable *śrāvaka* throng!  
And for this, I bow down to the ground.<sup>237</sup>

This is the second testimony to there being *śrāvakas* [in Sukhāvatī].

Again, the *Mahāyāna śāstra*<sup>238</sup> says, “Buddha lands are not all the same. There are buddha lands purely for the *śrāvaka-saṃgha*, buddha lands purely for the *bodhisattva-saṃgha*, and buddha lands where bodhisattvas and *śrāvakas* together form the sangha. Amitābha’s Sukhāvatī is of this [last] sort.”<sup>239</sup> This is the third testimony to there being *śrāvakas* [in Sukhāvatī].

In the sutras, whenever they speak of Sukhāvatī, they repeatedly say, “There are *śrāvakas*,” and never say, “There are no *śrāvakas*.” Now, *śrāvakas* are one of the two vehicles (*ercheng* 二乘),<sup>240</sup> but the discourse says, “There are none of the rank of the two vehicles.”

235. T. 360:12.268a17–19. This is resolution fourteen in the Chinese, twelve in the Sanskrit. Tanluan omits twenty characters from his quotation. S.B.E., 49(2):13ff.

236. Restore *qi* 起 to *chao* 超 with T. 1521:26.43b4.

237. T. 1521:26.43b4–5.

238. *Moheyan lun* 摩訶衍論, a common nickname for the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 53 and n48.

239. T. 1509:25.311c.

240. The two vehicles (*dviyāna*) are those of *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. Tanluan does not discuss the question of the *pratyekabuddhas*, even omitting them in his quotation from the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*: it is in any case quite odd that the sutra should envision everyone becoming a *pratyekabuddha*, even as a literary device, for the sense of *pratyeka* would then seem to be evacuated.

How do you reconcile these passages?

ANSWER: If we inquire into the inner meaning (*li* 理) of this, we see that Sukhāvātī cannot have the two vehicles. How can we say this? Well, “where there is a sickness, there is a medicine”:<sup>241</sup> this is a general rule.

The *Lotus Sūtra* says that Śākyamuni Tathāgata, when he appears during the five dark ages, divides the one [vehicle] into three [vehicles].<sup>242</sup> Since the Pure Land is not subject to the five dark ages, it clearly lacks the three vehicles (*sancheng* 三乘).

The *Lotus Sūtra* again says, “Śrāvakas are people who have attained what sort of liberation? They are separated merely from false views, and they call that ‘liberation.’ Those people indeed have not yet attained complete liberation, for they have not yet attained the supreme way.”<sup>243</sup> Truly to inquire into the inner meaning (*li*) here: since *arhats* have not yet attained complete liberation, they must be reborn. These people, however, are not born within the triple world, and, outside of the triple world, there remains [only] the Pure Land,<sup>244</sup> and other than it there is no place to be reborn. Therefore, they can only be reborn in the Pure Land.”<sup>245</sup>

Now, as for the [use of the] word *śrāvaka*: they are called *śrāvakas* because those born in that region were formerly called *śrāvakas*. Similarly, when Śakra, king of gods,<sup>246</sup> was born amongst men, he took the family name Kauśika. Afterwards, although he had become king of the gods, the Buddha, desiring to make people recognize his origin,

241. *Fu you bing, ze you yao* 夫有病則有藥. A common proverb?

242. T. 262:9.9b. Compare Wogihara and Tsuchida, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtram*, p. 39 line 29 to p. 40 line 4; and S.B.E., 21:42. See also above, n232.

243. T. 262:9.13. Compare Wogihara and Tsuchida, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtram*, 87, lines 6–9, which is a little different, though the gist is the same: “From what, Śāriputra, are they liberated (*vimukta*)? They are liberated from unreal views (*asantaḡrāhātu*); but they are not liberated in every way (*sarvata*), they have not vanished (*ahivṛtān*): thus says the Leader (*nāyakaḥ*).” Kern (S.B.E., 21:90ff.) misunderstood the doctrinal import of this stanza.

244. This has been established above: T. 1819:40.830a17–20 (see pp. 107–108).

245. [TK: Perhaps Tanluan is quoting from his memory.]

246. *Tiandi shi* 天帝釋, Śakra devendra. For the story, see T. 1509:25.458a–b.

just called him “Kauśika,” since he was of that lineage, though at the time he was [usually] known as “Lord Śakra.”<sup>247</sup>

Further, although the discourse says the two vehicle seeds are not born, this also may be taken to mean that, in Sukhāvātī, the seeds of the two vehicles are not born,<sup>248</sup> for how could one prevent those from the two vehicles being born there? To take a metaphor:<sup>249</sup> orange trees will not grow north of the Yangtze,<sup>250</sup> but we see plenty of oranges here in Holo;<sup>251</sup> or again we might say,<sup>252</sup> parrots do not migrate from Longxi 隴西,<sup>253</sup> but we have them here [in the Kingdoms] of Zhao 趙 and Wei 魏,<sup>254</sup> in cages. These two examples speak of non-transferable seeds, and the “existence” of *śrāvakas* in that land is comparable. With this explanation, we have reconciled the sutras and the discourse.

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247. *Dishi* 帝釋, Indra-Śakra.

248. *Ercheng zhong bushing, wei anleguo bushing ercheng zhongzi* 二乘種不生謂安樂國不生二乘種子. Playing on the ambiguity of *zhong* and relying on the flexibility of the Chinese verb (see above, n234) Tanluan takes the hemistich, “the *zhong* (lineage) of the two vehicles is not born there” and makes it mean, “the *zhong* (germ) of the two vehicles will not be produced there,” i.e., those in Sukhāvātī will neither be of the two vehicles, nor will they decide to become of the two vehicles. I have attempted to reproduce this ambiguity in my translation of the verse.

249. This metaphor is from the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, chap. 1 (Taya, p. 90, no. 36).

250. This is not entirely true: according to Sima Qian, oranges were apparently grown on both sides of the Yangtze, though not as far north as Luoyang. See Herrman, *Historical Atlas of China*, 12.

251. Heluo 河洛, crasis of Henan 河南 and Luoyang 洛陽, alternative names for the eastern capital at the time. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 55n54.

252. I cannot trace the source of this metaphor: the reader is at liberty to presume that Tanluan thought it up himself.

253. Longxi 隴西, “western foothills,” a town in modern Gansu, about a hundred miles southwest of Lanzhou. The name also referred to the town’s environs.

254. Zhao, Wei 趙魏, i.e., “Central China” of those days, roughly equivalent to modern Shanxi: Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, and Shandong.

[ii. Whether the verse be not prolix.]

QUESTION: We designate things by using names.<sup>255</sup> When there is a thing, there is a name. And since Sukhāvatī is without the things of the two vehicles, women, and the deformed, why is it necessary to say further that it is without these three names?

ANSWER: Weak-minded bodhisattvas who are not courageous and forceful<sup>256</sup> we contemptuously call *śrāvakas*. People who adore a tune and then weary of it we contemptuously call “women.” If someone has an eye, which, though clear, does not recognize things, we contemptuously call him “blind.” If someone has an ear, which, though it can hear, hears but does not understand, we contemptuously call him “deaf.” If someone has a tongue, which, though it can speak, stumbles and stammers,<sup>257</sup> we contemptuously call him “dumb.” Such people, though their faculties<sup>258</sup> are complete, have contemptible names. This is why it is necessary to say, “lacks despised names.” Clearly, the Pure Land is without such names, whether given or received.

[iii. Whether *śrāvakas* can become bodhisattvas.]

QUESTION: Inquiring into the Bodhisattva Dharmākara’s original vow as it is found in the “Praises” of the Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, it seems that all marvels are amply performed by the company of the *śrāvakas* in that land.<sup>259</sup> What does this mean?

255. *Ming* 名, “names, ranks, titles”: all three nuances are implied.

256. *Ruanxin pusa bushenyongmeng* 軟心菩薩不甚勇猛. Referring to the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā śāstra* (T. 1521:26.20 and 38), Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 56n55 explains: “Weak-minded bodhisattvas are those who, afraid of *saṃsāra*, enter *nirvāṇa* too soon [i.e., at the seventh level]: they are those who have made the resolution to be liberated within the context of the two vehicles [*dviyānavimokṣaprañidhāna*].” The thought is the same as that of the second quotation from the *Lotus Sūtra* in the first query, above (p. 119).

257. *Nekou, jianchi* 訥口吃, two words for speech impediments [TK: the missing character 口 is Morohashi 4271]. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 56n56 explains *jianchi* as more severe than *nekou*.

258. *Gen* 根, here used as *indriya* (see above, n234).

259. T. 1521:26.43b28–9:

For, as soon as they seek Buddha’s way  
they perform every wonderful deed:  
All the sūtras proclaim this as so,  
and I bow with my face to the ground!



ANSWER: The *śrāvakas*, having taken the limit of existence<sup>260</sup> as their goal, reckon that they cannot go on to produce the root and sprout<sup>261</sup> of the way of buddha. So, the Buddha encompasses them with the inconceivable divine power of his original vow, and causes them to produce it. It must be, then, pursuant to<sup>262</sup> his divine power that they publish the intention of supreme enlightenment.<sup>263</sup> To take a metaphor: if a secretary bird<sup>264</sup> enters water, the fish and molluscs<sup>265</sup> die; but when a rhinoceros<sup>266</sup> touches it, the dead are all revived. In this way they cannot live, yet they live, and therefore we marvel. Thus, among the five inconceivable things (*wu bu si yi* 五不思議),<sup>267</sup> the *buddhadharma* is the most inconceivable. The Buddha [*Amitābha*] is able to cause *śrāvakas* to go on and publish the intention of supreme enlightenment: truly, this is the limit of inconceivability!

260. *Shiji* 實際, *bhūtaḥ*, here, a derogatory term for the “highest” state of those who drop out of the bodhisattva career at the seventh level: going into final extinction, they are saved, but cannot save others. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 57n58. But see also n3.

261. The root (*gen* 根) or *mūla* is the Mahāyāna resolution, and the sprout (*ya* 芽) is the first evidence of the bodhisattva career, which will lead to the fruit (*guo* 果) of buddhahood.

262. Delete *fu* 復 and read the v.l. *hou* 後.

263. *Sheng qi wushangdao xin* 生其無上道心, *anuttarasamyaksambodhicittotpāda*.

264. *Zhenniao* 鵩鳥: a bird whose touch was believed to be poisonous, it is described as, “the size of an eagle, with a long bluey-green neck and red beak; it feeds on snakes” (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 57n59).

265. *Bang* 蚌 (more usually 蚌), “oyster,” but something more general seems indicated. “Mollusc” was suggested to me by John Buettner-Janusch of the Duke University Primate Facility.

266. *Xiniu* 犀牛, “rhinoceros,” whose touch was believed to be vivifying. The v.l. *xijiao* 犀角, “horn of rhinoceros,” is equally possible. In many parts of the ancient world, east and west, rhinoceros or narwhal horns were employed as cups or phials: since they were regarded as the horns of the unicorn, a widely used symbol of transcendent purity (see, for example, the “Unicorn Hunt” tapestries of the New York Metropolitan Museum), any substance placed in them was believed to become an elixir of eternal life.

267. The five inconceivables (*acintya*) are explained below, T. 1819:40.838b5–14.



## [17. The Fulfillment of All That Is Sought, 831b4–10]

*If those beings wish any delight,  
it is always and fully obtained.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the fulfillment of all that is sought<sup>268</sup> in the decorations.<sup>269</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that, in the world, an aristocrat, whose post is important, has no means of going into retirement, while a commoner, whose lineage is humble, has no way of bettering himself, though he desires it. Length or brevity [of life] is determined by karma: as with the Ṛṣi Asita,<sup>270</sup> its control does not lie with oneself. Since such as these are blown about by the winds of karma, they do not attain autonomy.<sup>271</sup>

Therefore, the resolution [of Dharmākara Bodhisattva] says, “May it be, in my land, that everyone, calling for what he seeks, will feel his want fulfilled.” Therefore, [Vasubandhu] says:

*If those beings wish any delight,  
it is always and fully obtained.*

## [Concluding Resolution, 831b11–13]

*Therefore I resolve to be born<sup>272</sup>  
in the land of the Buddha Amita.*

268. Yiqie suoqiu manzu 一切所求滿足.

269. [TK: Zhuangyanyiqiesuoqiumanzugongdechengjiu 莊嚴一切所求滿足功德成就.]

270. Asituo xianren 阿私陀仙人. Asita was the ṛṣi (shamanistic holy man, lit., “trembler”—because of the supernatural influence—translated as *xianren*, Daoist immortal) who foretold the baby Śākyamuni’s future, then wept, realizing that his karma would cause him to die before he himself saw its fulfilment. See *Buddhacarita*, I, 67–82 (S.B.E., 49[1]:12–14) and Introduction to the *Jātaka*, where Asita is called Kāḷadevala (Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, 49ff.).

271. Zizai 自在, “abiding in oneself,” also a translation of *īśvara*, “lord,” sometimes, “god.” Bodhisattvas of the seventh level and above are *zizai*, and all the inhabitants of Sukhāvatī are either actually or imputatively such bodhisattvas: this is “inconceivable” (T. 1819:40.838c1).

272. The present text has *shi gu yuan sheng bi* 是故願生彼, “Therefore there is the resolution to be born there,” while the Taishō text of the Comma (T. 1524:26.231a16) has *gu wo yuan wangsheng* 故我願往生, “Therefore I resolve

These two lines round off<sup>273</sup> the above seventeen visualizations on the perfection of the decorations of the land, on account of which [Vasubandhu] resolves to be born [there].<sup>274</sup> With this, we have finished explaining the purity of the furnishings of that realm.

[Visualization of the Beings

(*zhongsheng* 衆生, lit. “Repeatedly Born”), 831b13–833c14]

[831b13–28]

Next, we visualize (*guan*) the purity of the beings<sup>275</sup> in that realm. This section has two parts: First, the visualization of the merits of the adornments<sup>276</sup> of Amitābha Tathāgata,<sup>277</sup> second, the visualization of the merits of the adornments of the bodhisattvas.<sup>278</sup>

There are eight kinds of visualization of the merits of the adornments of the Tathāgata, as we shall see in the following text.

QUESTION: The commentators<sup>279</sup> overwhelmingly interpret the phrase “repeatedly born”<sup>280</sup> (*zhongsheng*) as follows: “Since they roll round in the three realms of existence (*sanyou* 三有), experiencing many births and deaths (*zhongduo shengsi*, 衆多生死), they are called ‘repeatedly born’ (*zhongsheng*).” In this case, the Buddha and bodhisattvas are called repeatedly born (*zhongsheng*). What does this mean?

on rebirth.” The apparatus lists no v.l. in either case. The second reading is clearer and slightly more elegant, though the gist is the same in both cases.

273. *Jiecheng* 結成, “wraps up and completes.”

274. [RKP: As for the sentence 所以願生, Inagaki and Corless add the name Vasubandhu maybe in accordance with the traditional way of interpretation, and translate it as above. See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 170. The actual subject is, however, absent in this sentence. It may be interpreted as “on account of which the resolve to be born [there arises].”]

275. *Zhongsheng* 衆生, *sattva*. An explanation of this word follows immediately.

276. *Zhuangyan* 莊嚴. Since one “decorates” objects but (except in a military sense) not persons, I translate “adornment” here.

277. [TK: *Guanchaamituorulaizhuangyangongde* 觀察阿彌陀如來莊嚴功德.]

278. [TK: *Guanchabizhupusazhuangyangongde* 觀察彼諸菩薩莊嚴功德.]

279. *Lunshi* 論師. “The masters who wrote treatises,” evidently restricted here to the Hīnayāna masters.

280. [TK: Referring to “living beings” born repeatedly in *saṃsāra*.]

ANSWER: As the sūtra says,<sup>281</sup> “A thing<sup>282</sup> has limitless names; a name has limitless meanings.” To take “being” as “experiencer of many births and deaths” is the definition used by the Hīnayāna Buddhists, who make it refer to an entity within the triple world,<sup>283</sup> but it is not the meaning of the Mahāyāna Buddhists. When the Mahāyāna Buddhists speak of a “being,” it is according to the *Sūtra on Neither Increasing nor Decreasing*:<sup>284</sup> A “being” means “neither born nor decaying.”<sup>285</sup> How so? If [a being] were to be born, then, when its life was over, it would be reborn, so that there would be no end [to the cycle]: but, if it were not born, then “birth” is ended. Therefore, there is no birth. If there were birth, there could be decay, but since, [as we have shown,] there is no birth, how can there be decay? Therefore, “without either birth or decay” is the meaning of a “being.” In the [*Commentary on the Vimalakīrti*] sūtra it is said:<sup>286</sup> “The five feelings and the [five] bundles are absolutely void and without existence: this is the meaning.”<sup>287</sup> This case is like that.

281. K. 408 identifies this as *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, vol. 33 [TK: T. 374:12].

282. *Yifa* 一法, translated by K. 408 as *hitotsu no jibutsu*.

283. This is the *ābhidharmika* definition, apparently taken from the *Record of the Abhidharmakośa* (*Jushelunji* 俱舍論記) and similar to the *Śāriputrābhidharma śāstra*: “A ‘being’ means a being born in the five states (*gati*) of the hells, animals, ghosts (*preta*), men, or gods” (T. 1548:28.603a).

284. *Buzeng bujian jing* 不增不減經, Nanjio, *Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, 524, who does not attempt a Sanskrit restoration.

285. T. 668:16.467c. In full, “How is it that the inconceivable, pure *dharmadhātu* can be called a ‘being?’ Because a ‘being’ means not born, not decaying, always pure, not changing, not retreating, a synonym of the inconceivable pure *dharmadhātu*, therefore it is called a ‘being.’ ”

286. T. 1775:38.354. One of the fourteen extant writings of the Mādhyamaka Sengzhao 僧肇 (374–414). For a brief discussion of this text, see Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, 137–140. The quotation is not quite accurate: it should be “the five feelings (*vedanā*) and bundles (*skandha*) are absolutely void (*śūnyatā*) and unarisen (*anutpāda*).” The five “feelings” are sorrow, joy, pain, pleasure, and indeterminate (Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 115b).

287. Emend *ku* 苦 to the v.l. *ming* 名.

[The Visualization of the Eight Adornments of the Buddha, 831b29–832c28]

[i. His Throne, 831b29–c22]

*There, the king of great unbounded treasure  
is enthroned upon wonderful flowers*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the decorations of [Amitābha's] throne.<sup>288</sup> Why did the Buddha originally decorate<sup>289</sup> this throne? He saw that bodhisattvas, being in their final incarnation, spread grass, sit, and perfect *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* (anouduoluosanmiaosanputi 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提), but men and gods who see this do not produce increasingly superior faith, increasingly superior worship, increasingly superior love, or increasingly superior practice. Therefore, the resolution [of Bodhisattva Dharmākara] says, “When I become a buddha, may I take my buddha seat as a king of great unbounded treasure, enthroned upon wonderful flowers.”

“Unbounded” (*wuliang* 無量): the *Contemplation Sutra* (*Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經)<sup>290</sup> says:<sup>291</sup>

On the seven-jeweled ground there is a kingly throne of great jeweled lotus flowers; the petals<sup>292</sup> of the lotus flowers are each of a hundred colors, with 84,000 veins only gods could paint them and the veins have 84,000 light rays; the smallest lotus petal is 250 *yojanas* (*youxun* 由旬) in length and breadth; the flowers have 84,000 petals: between each petal there are a hundred *koṭis* of *maṇi* jewels fit for a king,<sup>293</sup> forming a brilliant ornament; each *maṇi* discharges a thousand rays of light; these rays are like a coverlet spreading compacted over the whole surface of the seven-jeweled ground. His podium is made of

288. Zuo 座, “seat,” but it is clearly much more. [TK: *Zhuangyan zuogongdechengjiu* 莊嚴座功德成就.]

289. *Zhuangyan* 莊嚴 is here used as a verb: like κοσμέομαι, “set in order, decorate.”

290. [TK: Considering the Chinese title *Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經, the Sanskrit title is presumed to be *Amitayurdhyāna sūtra*.]

291. This is contemplation seven given to Queen Vaidehī. See the English version of Takakusu, from which I occasionally depart. S.B.E., 49(2):176–177.

292. Ye 葉, “leaf,” so Takakusu, op. cit., 176, but as it is strange to extol the leaves of the lotus, K. 406n7, *hanabira*, “petal” must be right.

293. *Monizhuwang* 摩尼珠王, possibly *maṇiratnarājāni*, “the best of jewel treasures.”

*śakrābhilagna* gems.<sup>294</sup> This lotus flower podium has 80,000 diamonds, *kiṃśuka* gems,<sup>295</sup> *brahmamaṇi* gems,<sup>296</sup> and marvelous nets of pearls making an interlaced<sup>297</sup> ornament. Proper to the top of his podium are four columns with jeweled streamers; each jeweled streamer is like 84,000 *koṭis* of Mount Sumeru [in length]; atop the streamers are jeweled curtains as in the palace of Yamadeva (*Yemo tian* 夜摩天). It has a shining ornament made of 500 *koṭis* of marvelous gems; each gem has 84,000 light rays [TK: each light ray manifests 84,000 different brilliant colors<sup>298</sup>]; each brilliant color spreads throughout the jeweled land of Sukhāvātī, changing in every place, each creating a different characteristic—in one place it might become a podium of diamonds, in another it might form a net of pearls, in another it might make clouds of variegated flowers in each of the ten directions—following one's wishes,<sup>299</sup> so it changes and manifests, doing the work of Buddha by its metamorphosis."<sup>300</sup>

294. *Shijiapilengga bao* 釋迦毘楞伽寶, originally, but not necessarily, the magic jewels in Śakra's crown (Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 521b). K. 406n10 (whose Sanskrit restoration is incorrect) says, "jewels in which one can see everything;" this image recurs at 837c7–8.

295. *Zhenshujia bao* 甄叔迦寶. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 62n7 restores *puṣparāga* and takes it as "red amber," but *puṣparāga* is more normally "topaz," which is not red. K. 407n11 restores *kiṃśuka*, a gem resembling the red flowers of the *kiṃśuka* tree: this is closer to the sound of the Chinese characters, and more plausible. Some sort of red gem is meant. (The *kanji* 叔 and 摩 in Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 62n6 and n7 have undergone metathesis.)

296. *Fanmoni bao* 梵摩尼寶. Both Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 62n8 and K. 407n12 agree on restoring *brahmamaṇi*, but that this further means *cintāmaṇi* (K.) seems like guesswork, and it is unlikely, in an Indian context, that it could mean "pure jade" (Uesugi). "Best jewel" is most likely.

297. Emend *yan* 嚴 to the v.l. *jiao* 交.

298. [TK: This is the translation of the Chinese sentence 一一光作八萬四千異種金色 (T. 40:831c17). In his dissertation, Corless does not translate it.]

299. *Suiyi* 隨意. Takakusu translates, "freely" (S.B.E., 49[2]:177), i.e., "according to the wishes of the light-ray," but, "according to the wishes of the inhabitants" seems to fit the context of the whole sūtra better.

300. *Bianxian huazuo foshi* 變現化作佛事, i.e., by the transformations just mentioned, the light-ray purifies and spiritualizes in accordance with the wisdom and compassion of Buddha. Takakusu (idem.) seems to have understood *nirmāṇakāyāḥ*, which is, however, a function of the *beings in*, not the light of, Sukhāvātī.

The tale of such phenomena is beyond reckoning. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*There, the king of great unbounded treasure  
is enthroned upon wonderful flowers.*

[ii. His Bodily Activity, 831c23–832a7]

*His marks and his signs shine one xun<sup>301</sup>  
and his form is superior to all.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [RKP: Amitābha's] bodily activity.<sup>302</sup> Why did the Buddha originally adorn<sup>303</sup> his bodily activity like this? He saw that, though a buddha's body experiences one *zhang* of radiance,<sup>304</sup> such bodily radiance is not very unusual amongst men. For, the marks and signs<sup>305</sup> of a world emperor (*cakravartin*) are much the same; Devadatta, lacking only two of them,<sup>306</sup> was able to forment the rebellion of King Ajātaśatru;<sup>307</sup> and

301. [TK: Xun 尋.]

302. *Shenye* 身業, *kāya-karma* [TK: *Zhuangyanshenyegongdechengjiu*, 莊嚴身業功德成就].

303. See above, n289.

304. *Yizhang guangming* 一丈光明, i.e., an aureole extending about ten feet out from the body. This is less than a *xun*, but see below.

305. *Xianghao* 相好, *lakṣaṇānuvyañjana*, the thirty major and eighty minor physical peculiarities of a superman (*mahāpuruṣa*). For a list and discussion, see Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 299–305. The sutra (see below, n311) says that Amitābha has 84,000 major marks but, strangely, Tanluan makes no mention of this.

306. Devadatta 提婆達多, though a relative of Śākyamuni, repeatedly opposes him in the sutra accounts, and the *Jātaka* says that this is nothing new. The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.92a, 683c) claims thirty of the major marks for him, omitting the *ūrṇā* and *cakra* (Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 301 and 303–304). Emend, therefore, *yī* 一 to the v.l. *er* 二 (K. 418).

307. This incident sets the scenario of the *Contemplation Sutra*: “At that time, in the great city of Rājagṛha there was a prince, the heir-apparent, named Ajātaśatru. He listened to the wicked council of Devadatta and other friends and forcibly arrested Bimbisāra his father, the king, and shut him up by himself in a room with seven walls, proclaiming to all the courtiers that no one should approach (the king)” (S.B.E., 49[2]:161; romanization modernized).

Samjayin Vairaṭīputra and the rest<sup>308</sup> acted like that daredevil mantis.<sup>309</sup> Because of these things, he prepared his bodily activity like this.

[OBJECTION:] I observe that we say that there are six *chi* 尺 to a *xun*.<sup>310</sup> But, according to the *Contemplation Sūtra*,<sup>311</sup> the height of Amitābha Tathāgata's body is 600,000 *koṭis* of *nayutas*<sup>312</sup> times the sands of the Ganges, in *yojanas*, and the Buddha's aureole is as one hundred *koṭis* of three thousand great chiliocosms. Having interpreted *xun* as we have said, how is the aureole so abbreviated?

[REPLY:] Country folk do not accurately compute width or length: they reckon breadth by spreading apart both hands and arms, and regarding that as a *xun*.<sup>313</sup> If we accept an interpretation of this sort and use it as a standard, then what we call "one *xun*" is equal to the outstretched arms of Amitābha Tathāgata. Then, the aureole must have a diameter of 600,000 *koṭis* of *nayutas* times the sands of the Ganges, in *yojanas*.<sup>314</sup> Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

308. *Shanduye deng* 刪闍耶等, a stock phrase for the "six heretical teachers" who were competitors of Śākyamuni. See Basham, *History and Doctrine of the Ājīvikas*, esp. chap. 1. The name is variously Sanskritised (Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 551a).

309. *Gan ru danglang* 敢如螳螂, an allusion to *Zhuangzi* IV and XII: "Don't you know about the praying mantis that waved its arms angrily in front of an approaching carriage, unaware that they were incapable of stopping it? Such was the high opinion it had of its talents" (Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 62; cf. 133.). A metaphor of hubris.

310. *Liuchi yue xun* (or, *xin*) 六尺曰尋, about six feet; but, eight *chi* to *xun* is more usual (Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 239a) and is thus given in *Shuowenjiezi* 說文解字, which Tanluan uses elsewhere, e.g., T. 1819:40.835a8. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 64n14 resorts to a guess on the basis of a later text, but it is quite possible that the similarity of form has caused a confusion between *liu* 六 and *ba* 八, and we could emend the text.

311. S.B.E., 49(2):180.

312. Or, "*niyutas* of *koṭis*" (idem.). The exact value of *niyuta/nayuta* varies, and it may be more or less than a *koṭi*. (Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, ¶475(c); Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 291a), thus either word could modify the other.

313. Similarly, an English draper would measure a yard from his nose to his outstretched finger-tips.

314. Because height and outstretched arms are equal measure. This is always regarded as a major mark of a buddha (Dayal, op. cit., 302) but, in fact, any



*His marks and his signs shine one xun,  
and his form is superior to all.*

[Question on the interrelation of the *dharmadhātu* and the *nimitta*,<sup>315</sup> 832a8–b2.]

QUESTION: The *Contemplation Sutra* says:<sup>316</sup> “All the buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, are the body of the dharma realm (*fajieshen* 法界身, *dharmadhātukāya*) which enters into the mental representations (*xin-xiang* 心想, *nimitta*) of beings. Therefore, when you create a mental representation of the Buddha, your very own mind is the [Buddha’s body with the] thirty-two marks and eighty signs, your mind becomes the Buddha, your mind is the Buddha. The ocean of the right and thorough knowing<sup>317</sup> of the buddhas is produced from that mental representation.” What does this mean?

ANSWER: “Body” (*shen* 身, *kāya*) means “collection,” and “realm” (*jie* 界, *dhātu*) means “differentiation.”

The realm of vision (*yanjie* 眼界, *caḥsur-dhātu*) depends upon the sight-sense, the sight-object, space, light, and perception:<sup>318</sup> when these five factors<sup>319</sup> have arisen, we can speak of “the realm of vision.”

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average human being has these proportions.

315. This section is translated and discussed by Hsiao, *Life and Teachings of T’an-luan*, 102–104.

316. T. 365:12.343a19–22. reading the v.l. S.B.E., 49(2):178. This is a comment on the eighth meditation given to Queen Vaidehī, in which she is commanded to form a mental representation (*nimitta*) of Amitābha.

317. *Zhengbianzhi* 正遍知, *samyaksaṃjñā*. The characters *zheng* and *bian* are discussed at T. 1819:40.843c15–19, from which it is clear that they must be taken as I do here. The character *zhi* 知 is “knowing an object,” while *zhi* 智 is “objectless knowledge, wisdom.” Neither Takakusu (S.B.E., op. cit.) nor Hsiao (*Life and Teachings of T’an-luan*) make this important distinction.

318. *Gen, se, kong, ming, zuoyi* (根色空明作意, *indriya, rūpa, ākāśa, prabhāsa, pratyakṣa*). This last cannot be “will” (Hsiao, *Life and Teachings of T’an-luan*, 103), but the operation of the mind in a more general sense: cf. *Mahāvīryapatti* 4632. This list apparently relies on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.324–327) rather than the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, which lists nine factors (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 65n18).

319. *Yinyuan* 因緣, regularly *hetupratyaya*, “causes and conditions”: but its sense here seems to be *hetvālabhāna*, “causes and bases,” a quite Chinese usage found, e.g., in the pseudepigraphical *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda śāstra* (T.



The eye works on its own material,<sup>320</sup> not on alien material, so that there is “differentiation” [between the senses]. The realms of hearing, smelling, etc. are comparable. When it says, “All the buddhas, the Tathāgatas, are the body of the dharma realm,”<sup>321</sup> the “dharma realm” is the “mind<sup>322</sup> of all beings.” The mind is called the dharma realm because it gives rise to all the factors (*dharmas*), both worldly (*laukika*) and transworldly (*lokuttara*). The dharma realm produces the bodies (*kāya*) of the Tathāgatas with their marks and signs, even as sight-objects, etc., produce sight-consciousness.<sup>323</sup> Therefore, the buddhas’ bodies are called the body of the dharma realm (*dharmadhātukāya*). This body does not work on alien material, therefore it “enters into the mental representations of beings.”<sup>324</sup>

“When you create a mental representation of the Buddha, your very own mind is the [Buddha’s body with the] thirty-two marks and eighty signs.”<sup>325</sup> When beings create a mental representation of the Buddha, the Buddha’s body, with its marks and signs, appears in the mind of beings. It is like an image appearing in clear water: the water and the image are neither the same nor different.<sup>326</sup> So we can say that the Buddha’s body with its marks and signs is the same as one’s mental representation of it.

“Your mind becomes Buddha”: This refers to the mind’s ability to become Buddha.

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1666:32.578a1); Hakeda’s translation, taking the compound in its original (Sanskrit) sense, is foggy at this point (Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, 55).

320. Yuan 緣 must be *ālambana* here.

321. [TK: T. 365:12.343a19.]

322. *Xinfa* 心法, apparently the *manovijñāna* (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 65n19), the sixth of the eight “organs of mediate knowing” (*vijñāna*) of Yogācāra, which arranges the sense data into meaningful concepts.

323. *Yanshi* 眼識, *caḥsurvijñāna*, the first of the eight *vijñānas*, here taken as representative of the list.

324. [TK: T. 365:12.343a19–20.]

325. [TK: T. 365:12.343a20–21.]

326. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 66n21 cites the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.102b) as the source of this image: but also cf. *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*: “When, by means of your own holy wisdom, you have attained the realm that was to be attained (reading 得), you will be like the moon in the water, which never entered and will not leave” (T. 672:16.610b20–21).

“Your mind is the Buddha”: Outside of the mind there is no Buddha. For example, fire comes from wood: without wood, one cannot have fire. But, because it is not separate from wood, it consumes the wood. The wood becomes fire, and, being fire, consumes the wood.<sup>327</sup>

“The ocean of the right and thorough knowing of the buddhas is produced from that mental representation”: “Right and thorough knowing” means that they know truly, rightly, and in accordance with the dharma realm. Because the dharma realm has no marks (*alakṣaṇa*), the buddhas have no knowing. Since they have no knowing, there is nothing that they do not know. Having no knowing, yet knowing, this is “right and thorough knowing.” This knowing is profound and vast, and cannot be fathomed or measured: it is therefore compared to the “ocean.”<sup>328</sup>

[iii. His Vocal Activity, 832b3–8]

*The Tathāgata’s wonderful voice,  
in brahma tones, sounds in all realms.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [RKP: Amitābha’s] vocal activity.<sup>329</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that, because the sound of what was said<sup>330</sup> about the perfect way penetrated only as far as the heaven of Brahma,<sup>331</sup> the Tathāgata’s name was as if dishonored,<sup>332</sup> and those

327. Cf. *Mahāratnakūṭa sūtra* (T. 1530:26.319c) and the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (T. 350:12.191a). Hsiao (idem.) misunderstands the force of *li* 離. Emend *wei* 爲 to the v.l. *shi* 是.

328. This passage is based upon chap. 3 of *The Treatise of Sengzhao* 肇論, entitled *Banruo wu zhi*, which Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika*, 212–221, translates as “Prajñā Has No Knowing,” hence my understanding of *zhi* 知. See also Liebenthal, *Chao Lun*, 64–80.

329. Kouye 口業, *vāk-karma*. [TK: Zhuangyankouyegongdechengjiu 莊嚴口業功德成就.]

330. Emend *ri* 日 to the v.l. *yue* 曰.

331. *Fantian* 梵天, *Brahmadevaloka*, the summit of the first *dhyāna* or one quarter of the way up the *rūpadhātu*: see above, pp. 89–90. This tradition is recorded in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*, but the derogatory “only” (*wei* 唯) is added by Tanluan (T. 1509:25.123a).

332. *Rulai ming si buzun* 如來名似不尊, “It was as if Tathāgata’s name were not Bhagavān.”

outside the way of Buddha intruded,<sup>333</sup> calling themselves “of the lineage of Gautama.”

Therefore, the vow of Bodhisattva Dharmākara says, “May it be that, when I become a buddha, my wondrous sound will spread far abroad, and that those who hear it will awaken to the calm knowledge of non-arising.”<sup>334</sup> Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*The Tathāgata’s wonderful voice,  
in brahma tones, sounds in all realms.*

[iv. His Mental Activity, 832b9–18]

*As the earth, water, fire, and the wind,  
and the sky, he is ever impartial.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [RKP: Amitābha’s] mental activity.<sup>335</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that the Tathāgata spoke of the factors (dharma) as “black,” “white,” and “neither black nor white,” and of an inferior teaching (dharma), a middling teaching, a superior teaching, and a very superior teaching.<sup>336</sup> With such immeasurable differences, the sections of the teaching appeared as if divided.<sup>337</sup>

Therefore, this vow of Bodhisattva Dharmākara says, “May I be, when I become a buddha, as the earth, which bears the light and the heavy without particularity; like water, which nourishes the weeds and the crops without differentiation; like fire, which consumes the fragrant and the noxious without distinction; like the wind, which stirs the sleeper and the wakeful without variance; and like the sky,

333. Rong 融, “shoved their barrow in.”

334. Ren 忍, *kṣānti*, i.e., *anūpattikadharmakṣānti* (see above, n109).

335. Xinye 心業, *manāḥ-karma*. [TK: Zhuangyanxinyegongdechengjiu 莊嚴心業功德成就.]

336. Lists commonly classify the *dharma*s as *kuśala* (good; here, “white”), *akuśala* (bad, “black”) and *avyākṛta* (ambivalent, “neither black nor white”). The *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* divides the teachings of Buddha into an ascending series of that for *śrāvakas*, for *pratyekabuddhas*, for *bodhisattvas*, and for *buddhas* (T. 374:12.585b).

337. Tanluan shows himself opposed to any “classification of teachings” (*panjiao* 判教) such as Zhiyi and Zongmi were to develop. Jingtu, along with Chan, has consistently set its face against any such division.

which envelops space and obstacles without paying mind.<sup>338</sup> Attaining to this within, may I pacify creatures without.” “They go to him empty and come home full”<sup>339</sup>—in this way we have the end of the matter. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

As the earth, water, fire, and the wind,  
and the sky, he is ever impartial.

[v. *The Great Congregation*, 832b19–27]

Those divine ones, unshakable beings,  
come to birth out of wisdom’s pure ocean;

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the great congregation<sup>340</sup> in the adornments.<sup>341</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that, when the Tathāgata handed down the wheel of the teaching (*dharmacakra*), the roots, natures, and preferences<sup>342</sup> of the great congregation were not all the same: in regard to buddha wisdom, some turned back and others drowned, for they were not equal, the congregation was not pure.<sup>343</sup>

338. These are the four great elements (*mahābhūta*, 四大) of Indo-European proto-physics (*prthivī*, *āp*, *tejas*, *vāyu*, *ākāśa*), each of which is “impartial,” i.e., non-discriminating (*nirvikalpa*).

339. Zhuangzi V. See Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 68. A figure for someone whom one does not meet without profit.

340. *Da zhong* 大衆.

341. [TK: *Zhuangyandazhonggongdechengjiu* 莊嚴大衆功德成就.]

342. *Gen*, *xing*, *yu* 根性欲. When Śākyamuni preaches the *Lotus Sutra*, he announces (chap. 2) the revelation of a secret; a third of his congregation (representing the Hīnayāna) walks out, and he declares their stubbornness to be due to their make-up, developed over many lives: “I know the disposition (*āśaya*), course of conduct (*cari*) and varied zeal (*nānā dhimukta*) of *koṭis* of living beings here ... and what good they have done in the past” (Wogihara, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtram*, 41, lines 11–14). Zhiyi, remarking on this passage in his *commentarium ad litteris* (*Fahua wenju* 法華文句) explains that what was “rooted” (*gen*) in the past conditions our present “preference” (*you*) for Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna, which in turn decides our future “nature” (*xing*) as *śrāvakas*, *bodhisattvas*, etc. (K. 447n3). Although this note is later than Tanluan, it seems to be consonant with his meaning here.

343. *Bu chungjing* 不純淨, “not unmixed,” i.e., not all of one type of person.

Therefore Dharmākara Bodhisattva conceived the resolution, “When I become a buddha, may the divinized men<sup>344</sup> all come to birth from the pure ocean of the Tathāgata’s wisdom.”

“Ocean”: this means that the Buddha’s omniscience,<sup>345</sup> which is profound and extensive, boundless, not arrested in the mixed good of the two vehicles,<sup>346</sup> that corpse of the middling and inferior vehicles, is comparable to the ocean. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Those divine ones, unshakable beings,  
come to birth out of wisdom’s pure ocean;*

“Unshakable”: those divinized men have perfected the root of the Mahāyāna<sup>347</sup> and cannot be overthrown.

*[vi. The Superiors, 832b28–c6]*

*Like the king of the Mountain Sumeru,  
they are powerful, and never surpassed.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the superiors<sup>348</sup> in the decorations.<sup>349</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive

344. Tianren 天人, “gods and men”: but, they are mahābodhisattvas. See n364.

345. Yiqie zhong zhi 一切種智, the “complete omniscience” of a buddha, contrasted with the “simple omniscience,” yiqie zhi 一切智, of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas (Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 68a). This distinction appears to be similar to that made in the Sanskrit logical texts between sarvajñā, “knowledge of all that is needful for salvation (of the four holy truths, etc.)” and sarvasarvajñā, “knowledge of absolutely everything.” See, for instance, Kajiyama, *An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy*, 134–137. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 70n32 and K. 448n6 turn what appear to me as unnecessary somersaults trying to make this fit the satyadvaya, “which is being talked about here” (?).

346. Ercheng za shan 二乘雜善. Good and bad are mingled in the two vehicles. K. 448n7.

347. Chengjiu dacheng gen 成就大乘根, mahāyānakuśalasāmpadam. The bodhisattvas are all non-lapsing. The eighth level is called Acalā, “the unmoving” and, as we shall see (T. 1819:40.840a17–c9), all the inhabitants of Sukhāvātī function as bodhisattvas of the “upper levels,” i.e., eight and above.

348. Shangshou 上首 is ambiguous. Primarily, it means the Buddha (K. 451, jōshu, “feudal lord”!), but secondarily, as appears from the form of the resolution, it means the bodhisattvas, who are made equal to the Buddha.

349. [TK: Zhuangyanshangshougongdechengjiu 莊嚴上首功德成就.]

this resolution? He saw that, among the Tathāgata's company, there were "men of violence"<sup>350</sup> such as Devadatta, who was of the same class as Śākyamuni;<sup>351</sup> earthly rulers stood level with the Buddha and governed, not knowing to defer much to the Buddha;<sup>352</sup> and if one enquired of the Buddha, other matters<sup>353</sup> caused one to forget the answer. With these similarities, the power of the superiors was not complete.

Therefore, this resolution of Bodhisattva Dharmākara says, "When I become a buddha, may all the great congregation who are unable to publish the intention (*bodhicitta*) surely be my equal. With only one spiritual ruler, how much more will there not be any temporal rulers!<sup>354</sup>" Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Like the king of the Mountain Sumeru,  
they are powerful, and never surpassed.*

[vii. *The Lord*, 832c7–17]

*There, the divinized ones, the devout,  
circle round<sup>355</sup> and gaze up as they worship.*

These two lines designate the perfection of the merits of the lord<sup>356</sup> of the decorations.<sup>357</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that, though the Buddha, the Tathāgata, had a large congregation, yet amongst that congregation, there were those who did not greatly worship him. For example, the *bhikṣu* who said to Śākyamuni Buddha, "I can learn about the way without your explaining

350. *Qiangliang zhe* 強梁者, "strong rafter," an allusion to *Dao de jing* 42. Usually taken to mean "man of violence," but see Waley's discussion (*The Way and Its Power*, 196 and 257n42).

351. *Liu bi* 流比. Devadatta was a relative of Śākyamuni, therefore he was "ranked comparably."

352. Indian kings were supposed to reverence holy men: in China this did not obtain, and was the cause of much friction between the establishment and the sangha.

353. *Ta yuan* 他緣. K. 451n4, *hoka no jijō*, "other circumstances."

354. *Fa wang, su wang* 法王 · 俗王, *dharmarāja, artharāja*.

355. *Rao* 繞, *pradakṣiṇā*, sun-wise circumambulation, a normal mark of respect in India, but considered quite rude in China.

356. *Zhu* 主 unambiguously refers to the Buddha.

357. [TK: *Zhuangyanzhugongdechengjiu* 莊嚴主功德成就.]

the fourteen problems to me!”<sup>358</sup> Also Kukari,<sup>359</sup> who, having slandered Śāriputra, the Buddha thrice spoke to,<sup>360</sup> but was thrice disobeyed. And, again, those of the traditions outside the way<sup>361</sup> of Buddha who deceitfully entered the Buddha’s congregation, then constantly watched for the Buddha’s shortcomings. And also, Māra, in the sixth heaven,<sup>362</sup> who constantly opposed whatever the Buddha did.

Because there were these classes of beings who did not worship, the resolution of Bodhisattva Dharmākara says, “May it be, when I become a buddha, that the great congregation of divinized men will worship unwearyingly.” It only mentions divinized men<sup>363</sup> because in the Pure Land there are no women or spirits of the eight classes.<sup>364</sup> Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

358. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 15 (T. 1509:25.170a).

359. One of the four disciples of Devadatta (K. 453n2). For the story, see *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 12 (T. 1509:25, 157b).

360. Yu 語, obviously in a severe tone of voice (K. 454, *shikarita*, “scolded”).

361. *Waidao bei* 外道輩, K. 454, *baramon no shugyōsha*, “Brahmanical practitioners.” T. 1509:25.470a.

362. Māra, the controller of birth-and-death (√mr̥, “die”), lives in the sixth *devaloka*, at the top of the *kāmadhātu*.

363. *Tianren* 天人. See following note.

364. *Ba bu gui shen* 八部鬼神, i.e., (1) *deva*, (2) *nāga*, (3) *yakṣa*, (4) *gandharva*, (5) *asura*, (6) *garuḍa*, (7) *kiṃnara*, (8) *mahoraga* (K. 453n5). Since “gods” (*deva*, *tian* 天) are here specifically excluded from *Sukhāvātī*, the compound *tianren* 天人 cannot mean *devamanuṣyāḥ*, “gods and men.” The beings in *Sukhāvātī* are repeatedly said to be *mahābodhisattvas*, not “rolling round” in the states of existence (*gati*), within which the *devaloka* and *mānuṣyaloka* are included. However, Tanluan repeatedly uses *tianren* (five times) and its variant *rentian* (ten times) for the inhabitants of *Sukhāvātī* (apart from his use of it for beings in the triple world, or his quotation of the stanzas). It is also used occasionally in the *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, but usually with the immediate qualification that this is an epithet only, e.g., *saṃvṛtivyavahāramātra devā manuṣyā iti saṃkhyāgaṇanātaḥ* (Ashikaga, *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, p. 11, line 11), “one reckons them as gods and men only in terms of everyday speech.” The “men” are “gods,” but in fact they are neither, since *Sukhāvātī* (according to Tanluan) is not within the triple world. At one point, when Tanluan directly quotes the sūtra (T. 1819:40.844a8), he uses *rentian* where the Sanskrit (*ibid.*, p. 12, line 16) has *sattvāḥ*, “beings.” Now, Tanluan has already said (T. 1819:40.831b19–28; above pp. 124ff.) that *sattva*, for him, does not have the meaning of “a being who is born and dies,” but



*There, the divinized ones, the devout,  
circle round and gaze up as they worship.*

[viii. Not Standing Firm in Vain, 832c18–28]

*See the power of the Buddha's original vow!  
Those who meet him shall not pass in vain,  
for the great sea of merit-bearing treasures  
is empowered to be quickly fulfilled.*

These four lines designate the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] not standing firm in vain.<sup>365</sup> Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that the Tathāgata's community (sangha) was made up only of *śrāvakas*, and lacked those who sought the supreme<sup>366</sup> way of Buddha; that although there were those who honored the Buddha, they did not escape the three defilements;<sup>367</sup> and then, there were the cases of Shanxing 善星,<sup>368</sup> Devadatta, and Kukari. Again, people may publish the intention for supreme enlightenment on hearing the name of Buddha but, on meeting adverse conditions, they may turn back and enter the level of *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*. Because of these unprofitable people, who turn back and are drowned, the resolution of Bodhisattva Dharmākara says, "May it be,

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rather the reverse. It seems then, that Tanluan would have us take *tianren/rentian* as equivalent to *sattva* with the addition of a mark of gender (only to be born in Chinese by *ren*), i.e., as a mere epithet of those dwelling in the unarisen, perhaps as a sort of honorific equivalent to *xian* 仙. "Divinized men," then, would not be an unreasonable translation. The surface meaning of the sutra is not this, but Tanluan is concerned with meanings which he sees hidden beneath the mere letter.

365. *Bu xu zuo zhu chi* 不虛作住持. [TK: *Zhuangyan bu xu zuo zhu chi gongde chengjiu* 莊嚴不虛作住持功德成就.]

366. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 73 inserts "supreme *bodhi*," and this must be the meaning, though by *definition* there could not have been others than *śrāvakas*: but see the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 34 (T. 1509:25.311c), which states that this was merely a peculiar feature of the sangha of Śākyamuni.

367. *San tu* 三塗, either the three evil destinies (hells, ghosts, animals)—so K. 456n2—or the three poisons (lust, hate, befuddlement).

368. *Shanxing* 善星, a *bhikṣu* who cursed the Buddha by the side of the River Nairāñjanā at Gayā; the ground immediately opened and he descended alive into *Avīci*, the lowest hell. *Mahānirvāṇa sūtra*, T. 374:12.562a (K. 456n3). I cannot find the Sanskrit: perhaps *Sulocana*?



when I become a buddha, that all who value meeting me may quickly fulfill<sup>369</sup> the supreme, great treasure.”<sup>370</sup> Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*See the power of the Buddha's original vow!  
Those who meet him shall not pass in vain,  
for the great sea of merit-bearing treasures  
is empowered to be quickly fulfilled.*

The meaning of standing firm is as above.<sup>371</sup>

In the above, we have completed the eight kinds of visualization of the merits of the adornments of the Buddha.

[The Visualization of the Four Adornments of the Bodhisattvas, 832c28–833c14]

Next are the four kinds of visualization of the perfection of the merits of the adornments of the great bodhisattvas in Sukhāvātī.

QUESTION: Wherein is the visualization of the merits of the adornments of the Tathāgata deficient, that we must go on to visualize the merits of the bodhisattvas?

ANSWER: It is as they say, “Where there is an illustrious prince, there are worthy ministers.”<sup>372</sup> This case is similar to that of Yao 堯 and Shun 舜, who are praised for not interfering.<sup>373</sup> And, if we allow there to be only the Tathāgata as king of dharma, we should lack the great bodhisattvas as ministers of dharma, who assist in praising the

369. Manzu 滿足, perhaps “realize” as one “realizes” an insurance policy.

370. Wushang dabao 無上大寶, defined as *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.542c).

371. Zhuchi 住持 has been described by analogy, above (T. 1819:40.830a27–b1), and is defined as *adhiṣṭhāna*, below (T. 1819:40.840a12–14).

372. *You ming jun ze you xian chen* 有明君則有賢臣. Apparently a proverb.

373. Yao and Shun are the “most righteous kings” of Chinese mythological antiquity, traditionally dated 2357 and 2255 BCE. They were so upright that, without actually involving themselves in government (*wuwei* 無爲), they acted as the “unwobbling pivot” (Ezra Pound) of the State, which became naturally harmonious. Their virtue is extolled in the *Book of Documents* 1 and 2 (書經 · 唐書, 虞書, Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 3:15–51), and their non-interference in many place, e.g., *Analects*, 8.18, 15.4 (Waley, 193n6, misunderstands *wuwei* as “the immobility of self-hypnosis”) and *Zhuangzi* (Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 126).

way.<sup>374</sup> How can there not be a “filling” if we have said “full?”<sup>375</sup> As they also say, “When the pile of kindling is small, the fire will not be large.”<sup>376</sup>

According to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* and the *Contemplation Sutra*, the Land of Amitābha Buddha has bodhisattvas measurelessly and boundlessly great, such as Avalokiteśvara (*Guanshiyin* 觀世音) and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (*Dashizhi* 大勢至), whose last birth will be in that region as assistants of the Buddha.<sup>377</sup>

The chapter on the “Gates to Everywhere” in the *Lotus Sutra*<sup>378</sup> says that, if a person invokes the name of Avalokiteśvara, recollects him, goes for refuge in him, and visualizes him, there is no want that will

374. Lack of bodhisattvas would contradict *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sāstra* 7 (T. 1509:25.109a).

375. *Qi zu yun man* 豈足云滿. Word-play on “fulfill” (above, n369).

376. *Xin zhi xiao ze huo bu da* 薪積小則火不大. Apparently another proverb.

377. This is a commonplace of the two sutras. For more precise references, see the indices in S.B.E., 49(2).

378. *Pumen pin* 普門品, *Samantamukha-parivarta*, chap. 24 in the Sanskrit, chap. 25 in Kumārajīva’s Chinese translation. This chapter circulated independently as the *Guanyin jing* 觀音經. Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) appears in thirty-three forms (i.e., all forms, thirty-three being a “perfect” number) to rescue devotees from all possible disasters. The cult of these manifestations was and remains widespread, both in the iconography of many-headed (commonly, eleven or one thousand) forms (“he-who-faces-everywhere,” *samantamukha*) and in such *dhāraṇī* as the “Text in Ten Phrases to Avalokiteśvara for Prolonging Life,” *Emmei jukku kannon gyō* 延命十句觀音經, popularized by Hakuin. See S.B.E., 21:406–418; Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 247–251; Mallmann, *Introduction à l’étude d’Avalokiteśvara*, esp. 136–141; Malalasekara (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2, fasc. 3, 407–415 and 422–423; Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, 168; and Yampolsky, *Zen Master Hakuin*, 18–24.

Oddly, this passage and T. 1819:40.834a10 are the only places in the text where Tanluan mentions Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta by name. It is also notable that he identifies the Avalokiteśvara of the *Lotus Sutra*, who often seems to appear as an object of worship in his/her own right, with the Avalokiteśvara of the Pure Land sutras, who is always a part of the retinue of Amitābha.

not be fulfilled. So, the bodhisattva pursues merit as the sea swallows the rivers, without stopping or feeling full.<sup>379</sup>

Also, it is like Śākyamuni Tathāgata, who heard a silly<sup>380</sup> monk call out, “Whoever loves merit, let him thread my needle!” Then the Tathāgata, rising from meditation, came to where this was spoken, and said, “I love merit: I will comply and thread this needle.” When the dim<sup>381</sup> monk heard the Buddha’s speech, he was by turns startled and delighted, and humbly addressed the Buddha, saying, “Bhagavān! Bhagavān! Is your merit not yet full?” The Buddha replied, “My merit is entirely full and has nothing that need be added. Yet, I have produced this body from my merits. Know then that graciousness is an aspect of merit, and therefore I used the word ‘love.’ ”

As for your<sup>382</sup> question about visualizing the Buddha’s merits, truly there is no wish that is unsatisfied, and therefore we go on to visualize the merits of the bodhisattvas, having the above significance.

[i. Preaching Dharma Everywhere Constantly, 833a19–b3]

*In the Land of Blessed Peace, all is pure,  
and the wheel without spot always turns,  
bodhisattvas, as buddhas transformed<sup>383</sup>  
shine like suns, yet stand firm like Sumeru.*

Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that, in the buddha lands, there were only minor bodhisattvas,<sup>384</sup> who were unable to do the work of buddha, widely reaching the worlds in the ten directions; or, there were only *śrāvakas* and *devas*, whose power to benefit was restricted.

379. An allusion to *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*, 16 (T. 1509:25.179a): “Seeking the dharma unwearingly, like the sea swallowing the rivers, this makes the *bodhicitta* advance in purity.”

380. *Yi mu an* 一目闇, “blind-in-one-eye.” Aniruddha, a *śrāvaka* well known for his “divine sight” or wisdom (*divya-cakṣuḥ*; *tianmu* 天目) is here ridiculed in typical Mahāyāna fashion. Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 293a; T. 1509:25.128a–129, 249b.

381. *Shiming* 失明, v.l. *muan* 目闇.

382. Emend *ru* 如 to the v.l. homophone 汝.

383. *Huafo pusa* 化佛菩薩. The bodhisattvas abide in Sukhāvātī but function as *nirmāṇakāya* buddhas in all other regions, as explained immediately.

384. *Xiao pusa* 小菩薩, bodhisattvas below the eighth level, not yet autonomous.

Therefore Bodhisattva Dharmākara conceived the resolution, “May it be that, in my land, there will be a measureless company of great bodhisattvas who, without moving from their original place,<sup>385</sup> will constantly do the work of buddha, practicing according to the truth, going throughout the ten directions by means of various transformations.”<sup>386</sup>

This is like the sun which, though it is located in the sky, it is yet reflected here in hundreds of rivers: how can we say that the sun comes here, or that it does not?<sup>387</sup> As the *Mahāsaṃnipāta* (*Daji jing* 大集經) [vol. 11] says, “When a man governs well, the dikes are properly measured, so that when the water rises, his mind is not agitated.”<sup>388</sup> The bodhisattvas are like this. Governing in first place, they ensure that all the buddhas are worshipped and that all beings are taught by means of various “dikes” which make them enter the *samādhi* in which their bodies and minds do not move.<sup>389</sup> Thus, they “constantly do the work of the Buddha, practicing according to the truth.” Practice in accordance with the truth means that although there is constant practicing, there is in truth no practitioner.<sup>390</sup>

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*In the Land of Blessed Peace, all is pure,  
and the wheel without spot always turns,  
bodhisattvas, as buddhas transformed,  
shine like suns, yet stand firm like Sumeru.*<sup>391</sup>

385. *Benchu* 本處, almost, “the place where they are rooted.”

386. *Yinghua* 應化, *nirmāṇakāya*.

387. Simile from *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*, T. 1509:25.123c. See also above, n326.

388. [TK: T. 397:13.72a.]

389. This rather flowery metaphor has some elegant double-entendres, esp. “his mind is not agitated” (*bu jia xin li* 不加心力, “he does not add force/movement to his mind”) and, “their minds do not move” (*xin bu dong* 心不動). The *samādhi* produces *nirmāṇakāyāḥ* while the *dharmakāya* stays put. Richard Robinson used to speak of a “*samādhi* of interstellar overdrive,” but, if such a *samādhi* exists, it is not being spoken of here.

390. I.e., the activity occurs in the *unārisen*, the realm of no-activity, *yathābhūtam* (*rushi* 如實).

391. Tanluan’s commentary makes it clear that the *Shinshu Seiten* (Honolulu, 1955), 118, cannot be right when it translates: “All the Transformed Ones come and go / As sun’s beams do e’er on Meru.” See below, T. 1819:40.841a8–

## [ii. Preaching Dharma Everywhere Simultaneously, 833b4–18]

*Their beauteous light is without stain:  
in one instant, and all at one time  
it illumines all buddha assemblies  
and conveys health to all living beings.*

Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that the family of the Tathāgata desired to worship the limitless buddhas in other regions, and to teach the limitless beings there, but one dropped out of sight as another came into view; the south was before them, the north was behind them; they were unable to send out their light instantaneously<sup>392</sup> and simultaneously<sup>393</sup> illuminating the worlds in the ten directions for teaching beings, for there was appearing and disappearing, before and behind.

Therefore [Bodhisattva Dharmākara] conceived this resolution, “May it be that, in my buddha land, the great bodhisattvas may do the various works of buddha, instantaneously, simultaneously and immediately reaching the ten directions.”<sup>394</sup>

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Their beauteous light is without stain:  
in one instant, and all at one time  
it illumines all buddha assemblies  
and conveys health to all living beings.*

QUESTION: In the previous section you said, “their bodies do not move, yet they go throughout the ten directions.” They arrive without moving. Does not this mean “simultaneous?” What is the difference?

ANSWER: When we said above that they arrive without moving, it might have appeared that there was a time lag. So here, we assert the absence of a time lag. This is the difference.<sup>395</sup> Also, this rounds out the

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10, which is quite explicit that the bodhisattvas resemble the sun because they shine, but resemble Sumeru because they “stand firm.”

392. *Yinian* 一念, “one thought,” the space of thought, one *kṣaṇa*, the smallest unit of time.

393. *Yishi* 一時, “at one and the same time.”

394. [TK: According to Inagaki, this signifies the twenty-third vow of those of forty-eight in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*. See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 305n137. T. 360:12.268b15–17.]

395. “Arriving” (*zhi* 至) seems to imply movement in time; and *ynian* is a time unit, though a very small one. To remove the ambiguity, the word

meaning of “without moving,” above. If it were not simultaneous, then there would be going and coming: and if there be going and coming, there is not “without moving.” Therefore, we should regard “simultaneous” as rounding out the meaning of “without moving,” above.

[iii. *Preaching Dharma Everywhere Impartially*, 833b19–c5]

*They rain down divine robes, flowers<sup>396</sup> and music,  
subtle incense, and so forth, in worship,  
thus to praise all the merits of buddhas,  
with their minds quite impartial<sup>397</sup> to all.*

Why did the Buddha originally conceive this adornment? He saw that, in the buddha lands, the zeal of the bodhisattvas, gods, and men did not suffice for them to go throughout the boundless worlds in the ten directions, to worship the great congregation of buddhas, of Tathāgatas: for some, being themselves in defiled lands, dared not visit pure areas, while others, living in pure [lands], despised the defiled lands. Because of this compartmentalization, the buddhas, the Tathāgatas, could not be perfectly worshipped, one could not put down wide and great roots.

Therefore, the resolution of [Bodhisattva Dharmākara] says, “When I become a buddha, may it be that, in my land, all the great company of bodhisattva, *śrāvakas*, and divinized men will rain down divine music, divine flowers, divine robes, and divine incense in the great gathering places of all the buddhas<sup>398</sup> throughout the ten directions, and worship and praise all the merits of the buddhas with well articulated phrases.”<sup>399</sup>

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“simultaneous” (*yishi* 一時) is here added.

396. *Hua* 華. The Comma (T. 1524:26.231b1) reads the homophonic synonym *hua* 花.

397. *Wu fen bie* 無分別, *nirvikalpa*.

398. *Yiqie zhu fo da hui chu suo* 一切諸佛大會處所, “all place where there are gatherings of beings and a buddha ruling over them.” In Mahāyāna thought, it is usual to regard every region as under the beneficent influence of some buddha. The following four lines give the fail-safe adornment in case this should somewhere not obtain.

399. [TK: According to Inagaki, this signifies the twenty-fourth vow of those of forty-eight in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha*. See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 305n139. T. 360:12.268b18–20.]

Although they praise defiled lands, wherein the Tathāgatas, out of great compassion, have humbled themselves,<sup>400</sup> they do not regard those buddha lands as being of mixed [purity and] defilement;<sup>401</sup> although they praise pure lands, wherein the Tathāgatas have immeasurable adornments,<sup>402</sup> they do not regard those buddha lands as being pure. How so? Since the dharmas are equal (*deng* 等), the Tathāgatas are equal. Therefore, all buddhas, Tathāgatas, are known as, “equally enlightened” (*dengjue* 等覺).<sup>403</sup> If, in regard to buddha lands, there should arise unworthy thoughts,<sup>404</sup> then one would be falsely rendering worship to the *tathāgatas*, it would not be worship in accordance with the [true] dharma.

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*They rain down divine robes, flowers, and music,  
subtle incense, and so forth, in worship,  
thus to praise all the merits of buddhas,  
with their minds quite impartial to all.*

[iv. Preaching Dharma Everywhere There Is No Buddha, 833c6–14]

*Is there any realm which is without  
the treasures of buddha and dharma?<sup>405</sup>  
I resolve to be born in each one,  
as a buddha to preach the buddhadharma.*

400. Qianren 謙忍, abasement or κένωσις appropriate to the environment.

401. Zahui 雜穢. If a land were *totally* defiled, there would be no good seeds which could fruit as escape to a higher realm or *nirvāṇa*: such an idea of an eternal hell is unusual in, if not entirely absent from, Buddhism.

402. The glorified form appropriate to a glorious environment.

403. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 諸佛等故名爲等覺, 10: “All buddhas are called ‘same-enlightened’ because they are ‘the same’ ” (T. 1509:25.128a). This is Sanskrit word-play. Since the buddhas realize that the dharmas are everywhere and always unarisen, i.e., “equal” (*śamatā*), they are then “fully enlightened” (*śamyaksaṃbuddha*). The root *√sam*, “same,” and the prefix *sañ*, “sum,” are born rendered in Chinese by *deng* 等: the pun is thus lost, and the character becomes the focus of a new exegetical tradition unknown to the Sanskrit masters.

404. Such as discriminating between the pure and the defiled.

405. Fo, fa 佛法. Seng 僧, sangha, is understood (see below), and is omitted here *metri causa*.

Why did the Buddha originally conceive this resolution? He saw that there were weak-minded bodhisattvas<sup>406</sup> who, lacking a strongly compassionate mind, wished only to practice in a buddha land. Therefore [Bodhisattva Dharmākara] conceived the resolution, “When I become a buddha, may the bodhisattvas in my land have a vigorous and strong compassion, that they may, if they wish, forsake the Pure Land and go to other regions to places which lack the buddha, dharma, and sangha. Standing firm in the glorious jewels of buddha, dharma, and sangha, they will preach as buddhas, so that the seed of buddhahood<sup>407</sup> will nowhere be cut off.” Therefore [Vasubandhu] says:

*Is there any realm which is without  
the treasures of buddha and dharma?  
I resolve to be born in each one,  
as a buddha to preach the buddhadharma.*

The above completes the four types of visualization of the perfection of the merits of the adornments of the bodhisattvas.

[The Fifth Gate: Turning (the Merit) toward (Being), 833c14–19]

The following four lines form the gate of turning [the merit] toward [beings] (*huixiang men* 迴向門).

*I have written this essay and hymn,  
with the wish to see Buddha Amita,  
and, together with all living beings,  
be reborn in his kingdom of peace.*

These four lines form the gate of turning [the merit] toward [beings] by the master of the discourse.<sup>408</sup> Turning toward means “turning over” one’s merit<sup>409</sup> universally to all beings, that all together may see Amitābha Tathāgata and be born in Sukhāvātī.

406. See above, n256.

407. *Fozhong* 佛種, *buddhabīja*. K. 479n3 takes this as equivalent to *buddhatā*, “buddha-ness.”

408. Vasubandhu. See above, p. [TK: In the original dissertation, the page number is defaced and unreadable], n9.

409. *Huixiang zhe*, *hui ji gongde* 迴向者迴己功德. Such is the usual meaning of *pariṇāma*, as Tanluan repeats at T. 1819:40.842a25–26, but in this text it also means turning oneself around to re-enter *samsāra*: see T. 1819:40.836a20–b1. “Turning Towards” for *huixiang* attempts to reproduce this ambiguity in English.



I have finished summarizing, by means of stanzas for chanting, the passages in the sūtra(s) of Limitless Life.

[POSTSCRIPT TO THE SUMMARY: EIGHT QUESTIONS,  
833C20–834C27]<sup>410</sup>

[Questions about the Five Gravest Offenses (*wuni* 五逆),  
833c20–834b13]

(i.) QUESTION: The Bodhisattva Vasubandhu, in his section on turning toward, says, “and, together with all living beings, be reborn in his kingdom of peace.” What beings (*zhongsheng* 衆生) are indicated by “together with”?

ANSWER: We refer to the *Larger Sukhāvātīyūha*, preached at Rājagṛha:<sup>411</sup>

Buddha [Śākyamuni] said to Ānanda ... “All the buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, in the ten directions, as many as the sands of the Ganges, praise<sup>412</sup> in concert the merits of the majestic, divine power of Buddha Amitāyus, for it is inconceivable. All the beings in the states of existence who, on hearing that name, shall rejoice with trusting hearts just once,<sup>413</sup> expanding that intention so as to turn towards [beings], desiring to be born in that land, shall go to be born there, establishing in non-lapsing. Only those of the five gravest offences,<sup>414</sup> or those who have vilified the true dharma, are excluded.”

410. This section has been translated into English in *Shinshu Seiten*, 125–132. Hsiao, *Life and Teachings of T'an-luan*, reproduces this on 106–112, with some alteration.

411. T. 360:12.272b8–14. S.B.E., 49(2):44–45, reads a different text, omitting the list of sins.

412. Tanluan has *chengtan* 稱嘆 for the *zantan* 讚嘆 of the Taishō text of the sūtra.

413. *Naizhi yinian* 乃至一念, “up to one instant of thought.”

414. *Wuni* 五逆, listed by Hīnayāna as (1) patricide; (2) matricide; (3) killing an arhat; (4) causing a schism in the sangha; (5) causing blood to flow from a buddha. The Mahāyāna list is (1) damaging a pagoda or burning a sūtra, thus harming what pertains to the three jewels; (2) speaking against the three vehicles; (3) slandering a fellow monk; (4) causing a schism in the sangha; (5) showing disbelief in the law of karma by performing the “ten gross evils,” which are variously listed. K. 493n10.

This reference states, then, that all those outside the way [of buddha], and ordinary men,<sup>415</sup> will attain rebirth [in Sukhāvati].

Again, according to the *Contemplation Sutra*,<sup>416</sup> there are nine types of rebirth:

Those born in the lowest of the low are beings who perform bad actions, the five gravest offences and the ten evil acts (*shie* 十惡), and are replete with everything bad. Such foolish people, because of their evil actions, fall in consequence into the evil destinies,<sup>417</sup> and pass through many *kalpas* suffering endlessly. Such foolish people, just at the point of death, may meet a good, wise [person], who in various ways calms and consoles them by preaching the true dharma, and teaching them that they ought to recollect the Buddha.<sup>418</sup> But those people, crushed by pain, have not the leisure to recollect the Buddha. So, that spiritual friend<sup>419</sup> says, “If you cannot be recollected, you should [at least] invoke<sup>420</sup> Buddha Amitāyus.” Thus he perfects their minds, causing them to chant uninterruptedly. Fulfilling [the tale of] ten recollections<sup>421</sup> they call out *Namo wuliangshou fo*.<sup>422</sup> By invoking the Buddha’s name, they cast off eighty *koṭis* of *kalpas* worth of saṃsāric transgressions with each recollection. At death, a golden lotus flower like the sun’s disc appears in front of them and, quick as thought,<sup>423</sup> they go to birth in the Blessed Realm, in a lotus flower. When twelve great *kalpas* have been fulfilled, the lotus flower opens

415. Read the v.l., *waidao fanfu* 外道凡夫.

416. These are the fourteenth through the sixteenth meditations given to Queen Vaidehī. S.B.E., 49(2):188–199. The quotation is from 197–199.

417. Birth as an animal, ghost (*preta*), or in the hells.

418. *Nianfo* 念佛, *buddhānusmṛti*, “to call the buddhas to mind.” But since *nian* basically means “to read thoughtfully out loud so as to remember,” it is also used for *japa*, “recitation” and *kṣaṇa*, “thought instant.” Hence, *nianfo* (Jpn. *nenbutsu*) comes to mean, “to invoke the Buddha.”

419. *Shanyou* 善友, *kalyāṇamitra*, “a friend in regard to the good,” not necessarily a “good friend” or “chum,” but one whose actions further upon the way.

420. *Cheng* 稱.

421. *Shinian* 十念. For the meaning given by Tanluan, see below, T. 1819:40.834c13–17.

422. *Namo wuliangshou fo* 南無無量壽佛, a combination transliteration/translation of *namo ’mitāyuse buddhāya*, “Hail! Buddha Amitāyus!”

423. *Yinian* 一念, *eka-kṣaṇa*. But see below, n443.

wide,<sup>424</sup> and Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, with greatly compassionate voices, preach to them at length on the true dharma, and the methods of casting off transgressions. Hearing this, they rejoice, and respond by publicizing their intention to become enlightened (*bodhicittotpāda*). This is called “the birth of the lowest of the low.”

From the testimony of this sūtra, we clearly see that ordinary men of the lowest class, provided they do not vilify the true dharma, all go to birth [in *Sukhāvati*], dependent upon faith in the Buddha.

(ii.) QUESTION: The *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* says,<sup>425</sup> “Those who so wish, all go to birth: only those who are guilty of the five gravest offences and who have vilified the true dharma are excluded.” The *Contemplation Sūtra* says, “Those who perform the five gravest offences and the ten evil acts, and are replete with everything bad, also go to birth.”<sup>426</sup> How can we reconcile these two sūtras?

ANSWER: One sūtra comprehensively refers to two grave transgressions: first, the five gravest offences; second, vilifying the true dharma. If one is guilty of *both* these transgressions, one cannot go to birth. The other sūtra only refers to the transgressions of performing the ten evil acts and the five gravest offences, etc., and does not speak about vilifying the true dharma.

Therefore, one can go to birth if one has not vilified the true dharma.

(iii.) QUESTION: In the case, then, of someone who is replete with the transgressions of the five gravest offences, but who has not vilified the true dharma, [you claim that] the sūtras grant he can go to birth. So, if someone is free from the transgressions of the five gravest offences, having only vilified the true dharma, and resolves to go to birth, can he be born there, or not?

ANSWER: If he, having only vilified the true dharma, cannot go to birth, though he is free from the remaining transgressions. How can we say this?

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424. A gloss in the text reads, “Then, with this, one has made up for (*chang* 償) the transgressions of the five gravest offences.” The lotus bud is thus a kind of purgatory.

425. S.B.E., 49(2):15 (resolution nineteen). [TK: T. 360:12.268b1–2.]

426. S.B.E., 49(2):197–199. [TK: T. 365:12.346a12–26.]

The sutras say<sup>427</sup> that a person with the transgressions of the five gravest offences falls into the Avīci Great Hell (*Abi da diyu* 阿鼻大地獄) and receives severe punishment constantly<sup>428</sup> for one *kalpa*. A person who has vilified the true dharma falls into the Avīci Great Hell and, as one *kalpa* is used up, he goes again to an Avīci Great Hell in another region, rolling around in this way through a thousand Avīci Great Hells. The Buddha does not mention the time of emerging [from Avīci]. Therefore, vilifying the true dharma is a transgression of extreme gravity.

Further, “true dharma” means *buddhadharma*. How could you argue that a confused person who has already vilified it could resolve to be born in a buddha land? And if someone resolves to be born there merely out of passionate longing for its delights, this would be like seeking for waterless ice or smokeless fire!<sup>429</sup> What kind of reasoning is that?

(iv.) QUESTION: What characterizes vilifying the true dharma?

ANSWER: Saying, “There is no buddha,” “There is no *buddhadharma*,” “There are no bodhisattvas,” “There is no *bodhisattvadharma*”: views such as these which have become fixed ideas either by one’s own mind’s discrimination<sup>430</sup> or through outside influences, are all called “vilifying the true dharma.”

(v.) QUESTION: Such prescriptions refer only to one’s own affairs. How can this offense, which does not trouble beings, be a graver transgression than the five gravest offences?

ANSWER: If there were no buddhas or bodhisattvas who instructed beings by preaching the worldly (*laukika*) and transworldly (*lokuttara*) good ways, how should we know about the existence of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity?<sup>431</sup> If that were so, all worldly good would be destroyed, and all transworldly worthy and holy

427. This is a combined reference to the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*, T. 262:9.15 and T. 220:7.304. See also S.B.E., 21:92.

428. The punishments in Avīci are not simply “full” (*ju* 具, v.l. *zu* 足) but “uninterrupted” (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 85, reads it *tsubusa ni*) as its name, lit., “waveless,” i.e., unvarying, implies.

429. Since the happiness of Sukhāvātī is for others’ sake, one’s resolution must be altruistic; see below, T. 1819:40.842a15–22.

430. *Jie* 解, probably *vikalpa*.

431. Confucian virtues (*ren* 仁, *yi* 義, *li* 禮, *zhi* 智, *xin* 信) are here given a Buddhist source, as was common in the apologetic of the time.

[people] would disappear. You only recognize the transgressions of the five gravest offences as grave, but fail to recognize that the transgressions of the five gravest offences come from the absence of the true dharma. Therefore, if one vilifies the true dharma, his transgression is very grave.

[One Question on the Special Operation of Karma, 834b13–c12]

QUESTION: As for the ways of karma, the sūtras say<sup>432</sup> that the ways of karma are like a balance, with the heavier pulling down. But, according to what the *Contemplation Sūtra* says,<sup>433</sup> there are people who have performed the five gravest offences and the ten evil acts, and are replete with everything bad. Consequently, they fall into the evil destinies and pass through many *kalpas* receiving immeasurable suffering. Just as the point of death, they meet a good, wise [person], who teaches them the invocation *namo wuliangshou fo*. Thus he perfects their minds, causing them to chant uninterruptedly. Fulfilling [the tale of] ten recollections, they then attain rebirth in Sukhāvātī, surely entering the company of those who are properly settled<sup>434</sup> in the Mahāyāna and do not lapse, and are eternally separated from the sufferings of the three defiled [destinies]. How can we align this with the idea of “pulling down”?

432. *Ye dao jing yan* 業道經言 could possibly mean “the Karma Sūtras say” (*Shinshu Seiten*, 129), except that no such sūtra is otherwise recorded. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 87n16 quotes two references where karmic action is compared to a balance (T. 607:15.233b and T. 760:17.605a) and says Shandao took the words to mean “the Mahāyāna sūtras say.” For a convenient English version of a popular text of this genre, see the edition and translation of McKenzie, “*Sūtra of the Causes and Effects of Actions*” in *Sogdian*, esp. 27–28. Taya (in *Ōtani gaku hō*, vols. 23–26, 1942, p. 522) takes it as a comprehensive reference to all sūtras, both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. Hsiao (*Life and Teachings of T’an-luan*, 109n89) follows Tōdō, *Muryōjūkyō ronchū no kenkyū*, 152–153 in seeing it as an allusion to the *Bao puzi* 抱樸子. Therefore, I regard the phrase as a general appeal to a scriptural commonplace which might commend itself equally to Buddhist and Daoist readers. On this, see Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika*, 17. [RKP: Since Tanluan uses *jing* 經, we changed Corless’s “texts” to “sūtras.”]

433. [RKP: This closely paraphrases the second quotation given in answer to the first question of this postscript; see pp. 148–149.]

434. Hsiao (*Life and Teachings of T’an-luan*, 109) mistakes *zhengding* 正定 for *samyaksamādhī*. See above, p. 71 and n7.

Further, actions building up over vast ages into the past are by nature defiled,<sup>435</sup> and bind one to the triple world. How can you then say that merely by ten recollections of the recollection of Amitābha Buddha<sup>436</sup> one can transcend the repeated desires that are the essence of the karma that binds one to the triple world?

ANSWER: Your understanding takes the karmic bonds of the five gravest offences and the ten evil acts as heavy, and the ten recollections of the person in the lowest of the low as light. In response, we shall now give [three] standards for measuring “weight” in regard to transgressions “pulling down” and dragging one into the hells, binding one to residence in the triple world. It has to do with the mind (*xin* 心), with a cause (*yuan* 緣), and with determination (*jueding* 決定): it has nothing to do with length of time or quantity.<sup>437</sup>

How has it to do with the mind? Those people who have built up transgressions come to be by relying upon their own false and inverted views, while these people of the ten recollections come to be by relying upon hearing about the true dharma<sup>438</sup> through the compassionate strategy (*upāya*) of the good, wise [man]. One is true, one is false:<sup>439</sup> how can they be compared with each other? It is as if there were a light in a room that had been dark for a thousand years: even though it shines out only a moment, [the darkness] is changed into brightness. How could you say that the darkness, having been in the room for a thousand years, would not be dispelled? This is called “having to do with the mind [and having nothing to do with length of time].”

How has it to do with a cause? Those people who have built up transgressions come to be by relying upon their own deluded conceptual mind, and upon beings who are receiving the fruits of passion and foolishness, while these people of the ten recollections come to be by

435. *You lou zhi fa* 有漏之法, *sāśravadharmā*.

436. *Shinian nian amituo fo* 十念念阿彌陀佛, “tenfold *japa* of the *smṛti* of Amita Buddha.”

437. *Zai xin, zai yuan, zai jueding: bu zai shijie jiujiu duoshao ye* 在心在緣在決定不在時節久近多少也.

438. *Shi xiang fa* 實相法. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 88n19 takes this as “the dharma of the true marks,” i.e., of “Amitābha’s name, the sea of true merits.” This does not seem to be the plain sense of the sutra (see above, pp. 148–149), but it would rather appear to be the Shinshū interpretation of it.

439. This puns on “true marks” and “false views” and bears the nuance, “one is full, one is empty.”

relying upon the mind of peerless faith and upon the wonderful strategy<sup>440</sup> of Amitābha Tathāgata's name, which is true, pure, and of limitless virtue. It is as if a person were to be injured by a poisoned arrow, such that where it hit, the flesh would be pierced and the bone broken: then, on hearing an antidote-drum,<sup>441</sup> the arrow would drop out and the poison be dispelled. How could you say that, the arrow being in deep and the poison being strong, hearing the drum's sound could not pluck out the arrow and dispel the poison? This is called "having to do with a cause [and having nothing to do with quantity]."

How has it to do with determination? Those people who have built up transgressions come to be by relying upon a mind that is anxious and distracted,<sup>442</sup> while these people of the ten recollections come to be by relying upon a mind that is not anxious or distracted. This is called "having to do with determination [and having nothing to do with time or quantity]."

Measuring by these three standards, that of the ten recollections is heavier, and, "the heavier pulling down" enables one to transcend the triple world. Both texts have the same meaning.

440. *Fangbian zhuangyan* 方便莊嚴. I take this as *upāyālaṃkāra*, but it may be *alaṃkāropāya*, "the strategy ornament."

441. *Miechu yao gu* 滅除藥鼓, *vipravāsadundubhi*, a drum coated with poison-dispellant. This is the second of three similes of the miraculous power of the *sūraṃgamasamādhi* (to which a gloss in the text refers), T. 1509:25.633b:

C'est comme le grand roi des médicaments (*mahābhaiṣajyarāja*) nommé Vipravāsa "Disperser:" au moment des combats (*saṃgrāma*) on en enduit les tambours (*dundubhi*); dès que les blessés, atteints d'une flèche (*śalya*) ou frappés par une lance (*śūla*), entendent le son (*svara*) de ces tambours, les flèches sortent [de leurs blesseurs] et les poisons (*viṣa*) sont éliminés. Ainsi en est-il, ô Dṛḍhamatī, du bodhisattva en *Sūraṃgamasamādhi*: chez ceux qui entendent son nom, les flèches (*śalya*) de l'amour (*rāga*), de la haine (*dveṣa*) et de la stupidité (*moha*) s'arrachent d'elles-mêmes (*svataḥ*), les poisons de toutes les vues fausses (*sarvadṛṣṭigataviṣa*) sont éliminés, et plus aucune passion (*kleśa*) ne surgit. (Lamotte, *La Concentration de la Marche Heroïque*, 151)

442. *You hou xin, you jian xin* 有後心有間心, "a mind in the future, a mind with spaces." The mind of an enlightened person must not be thus, but solidly here-and-now, living in the *nunc stans* (called, indeed, *nian* 念 by the Zen school), and *asaṃśīryam*, "unperforated," i.e., unbreakable, indivisible, incombustible. On this last, see Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, 27.



## [Two Questions on the “Ten Recollections,” 834c13–27]

(i.) QUESTION: How long is one “recollection?”

ANSWER: There are 101 arisings and decayings [of dharmas] in one *kṣaṇa*, and 60 *kṣaṇa* in one recollection.<sup>443</sup> But, the present discussion of “recollection” is not concerned with it as a unit of time. We only refer to “keeping in mind” and “recollecting”<sup>444</sup> Amitābha Buddha, whether it be his marks generally or individually.<sup>445</sup> Consequent upon these meditative conditions in the mind, without other conceptions,<sup>446</sup> ten consecutive recollections are called “the ten recollections.” The invocation of the name is similar.<sup>447</sup>

(ii.) QUESTION: If the mind is occupied with something, we can collect it, and by recall note the amount of recollection [practiced]. [TK: But, when we know the amount of recollection, the recollection will be interrupted.<sup>448</sup>] If we solidify the mind and concentrate the thoughts, how can we record the amount of recollection?

ANSWER: When the sutras speak of “ten recollections,” they are clearly referring to the completion of the work: it is not necessary to know the exact number. As it has been said, “The summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn.”<sup>449</sup> How could such an insect know summertime? Only he who knows can speak of it. Likewise, only he who has

443. *Yinian* 一念 is here taken as larger than one *kṣaṇa* (*chana* 刹那). In some traditions, it is even larger (ninety *kṣaṇa*), while in others, it is equal to one *kṣaṇa*. Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 250b–251a.

444. *Yinian* 憶念. K. 495n33 explains this as “keeping in mind” and “clearly recording without forgetting,” linking it to the continuous invocation and, finally, firm faith as the idea is put forth by Shinran in his *Yuishinshōmon'i* 唯信鈔文意 (a commentary on a text of Seikaku, 1166–1235 CE, extolling faith in Amida).

445. *Zong xiang, bie xiang* 總相・別相. The visualization of the decorations and adornments either all at once or *seriatim*, as explained below in the exposition section.

446. *Xiang* 想 is probably a double-entendre for “notion” (*saṃjñā*) in recollection and “mental representation” (*nimitta*) in visualization.

447. Except that *shinian* 十念 then means “ten consecutive recitations,” *daśajapāḥ*.

448. *Fei wu jian* 非無間. See above, n442.

449. *Huigu bu zhi chunqiu* 蟪蛄不識春秋. An allusion to *Zhuangzi* 1 (Watson's translation, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 30). The *huigu* is born at the



the superknowledges (*abhijñā*) can speak of the completion of the work of the ten recollections. We have only finished after we have piled up recollections in a connected series, not basing ourselves on anything else. Why should you want to know the exact number of recollections? But if<sup>450</sup> you must know, there is a method: you must give them out orally, not write them with a brush.<sup>451</sup>

End of the First Juan.

## [SECOND JUAN, 835A–844B]

[OUTLINE, 835A6–12]

The Discourse on the Sayings<sup>452</sup>

What follows is the exposition of the meaning (*yi* 義) in ten parts.

First, The General Meaning of the Stanzas on the Resolution.

Second, Beginning Contemplation and Producing Faith.

Third, The Contemplation of the Images.

Fourth, The Purity Entering into the Resolved Mind.

Fifth, Skillful Conversion.

Sixth, The Removal of the Obstacles to *Bodhi*.

Seventh, The Aids to *Bodhi*.

Eighth, The Mutual Inherence of the Name and the Essence.

Ninth, The Perfection of the Resolution.

Tenth, The Fullness of Beneficial Practice.

“Discourse” means “interpretation.”<sup>453</sup> “Interpretation,” that is to say, of the stanzas. “Sayings” means “expressions.”<sup>454</sup> The interpretation explains the expressions of the stanzas, whose lines are then given.

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “The discourse on the sayings.”

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beginning of summer and dies at the end of summer: thus, having no other referents, it does not know “summer” as “summer.”

450. Emend *xia* 暇 to the v.l. *jia* 假.

451. On the necessity of oral recitation, see below, T. 1819:40.835b12. The phrase seems to recommend the use of a rosary, although this is normally regarded as a later development. A rosary allows one to keep count physically, while the mind is wholly involved with the invocation.

452. *Lunyue* 論曰.

453. *Lun zhe yi ye* 論者議也. Definition from *Shuowenjiezi* IIIa.

454. *Yue zhe ci ye* 曰者詞也. *Shuowenjiezi*, Va.

## [THE MEANING IN TEN PARTS, 835A12–843C8]

## [The General Meaning of the Stanzas on the Resolution, 835a12–14]

*What principles do these stanzas on the resolution make clear? They show<sup>455</sup> the contemplation of that<sup>456</sup> Realm of Blessed Peace and seeing Amitābha Tathāgata<sup>457</sup> due to the resolution to be born in that land<sup>458</sup>*

## [Beginning Contemplation and Producing Faith, 835a15–836a27]

This is further divided into two:

[A] Showing the Power of the Five Recollections;

[B] Going through<sup>459</sup> the Five Gates of Recollection.

## [A] Showing the Power of the Five Recollections [835a16–18]

*How does one visualize? How does one produce faith? If a young man or woman of good family<sup>460</sup> exercises in the five recollections and practices<sup>461</sup> to completion, he will certainly attain birth in Sukhāvātī and see Amitābha Buddha.*

## [B] Going through the Five Gates of Recollection [835a19–836a27]

*What are the five gates of recollection?*

*First, the gate of prostration;*

*Second, the gate of praise;*

*Third, the gate of resolution;*

*Fourth, the gate of visualization;*

*Fifth, the gate of turning towards.*

455. *Shixian* 示現. These two characters are not in the Taishō text of the Comma (T. 1524:26.231b).

456. *Bi* 彼. Not in Comma.

457. Comma has *fo* 佛.

458. *Guo* 國. Comma has *guotu* 國土.

459. *Chu* 出. The image is quite direct and hardly needs glossing as *enshitsu*, “production, manifestation” (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 94).

460. *Shan nanzi, shan nüren* 善男子善女人, *kulaputro vā kuladuhitā*. “A *kulapūtra* [or *kuladuhitṛ*] possesses either a good spiritual endowment, or a good social position, or both. The word is regularly used as a polite form of address, and has no very precise meaning” (Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books*, 24).

461. Comma lacks *xing* 行.

“Gate” means “going in and coming out.” It is like a man who, gaining a gate, comes in and goes out without hindrance. The first four recollections are the entrance gates to Sukhāvātī, while the last recollection is the exit gate of teaching and converting [beings] out of compassion.

[The Gate of Prostration, 835a24–b10]

*What is prostrating in worship? It is doing worship by means of bodily activity to Amitābha, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One (zhengbianzhi 正遍知).<sup>462</sup>*

The excellences of the buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, is immeasurable. Since their excellence is immeasurable, their excellent titles are also immeasurable: indeed, paper and blushes would not suffice to record them all! Therefore, the sūtras either put forward ten names or set out three titles.<sup>463</sup> How could we ever completely comprehend the essential [name]? What are called “three titles” are these: Tathāgata, Arhat, and Fully Enlightened One.

462. [TK: Corless regards the word *zhengbianzhi* as the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit term *samyaksaṃbuddha*, and interprets it as the “Fully Enlightened One” in this section. On the other hand, Corless also regards the term *zhengjue* 正覺 as the Chinese translation of *samyaksaṃbuddha* in the previous section. See p. 111 and n204.]

463. *Shi ming, san hao* 十名・三號. *Mahāvīyūtpatti* §1 (*tathāgatasya paryāyanāmāni*) lists eighty “names” (*minghao* 名號) of which three are personal names of Śākyamuni (49: Siddhārtha; 50: Śākyasiṃha; 78: Gautama). The first ten are, as here, sometimes grouped separately: (1) Buddha; (2) Bhagavān; (3) Tathāgata; (4) Arhat; (5) Samyaksambuddha; (6) Vidyācaraṇasaṃpanna; (7) Sugata; (8) Lokavid; (9) Anuttara; (10) Puruṣadamyasārathi. Tanluan discusses names 3–7; name 1 is included in name 5, and name 2 has been discussed above, T. 1819:40.827a3–5 (pp. 77–78). His distinction between “name” (*ming*) and “title” (*hao*) seems to be purely stylistic.

“Tathāgata”: As release is according to the *dharmatā*,<sup>464</sup> so preaching is according to the *dharmatā*.<sup>465</sup> In the way that (*tathā*) all the buddhas have come (*āgata*) to the way of release,<sup>466</sup> this Buddha [Amitābha] has likewise come (*tathā-āgata*), and will not go into future states of existence. Therefore he is called *tathāgata*.

“Arhat”: “Worthy” (*arhat*) means “worthy of offerings” (*pūjā-arha*). The Buddha, removing the bonds, exhausting the drives,<sup>467</sup> and attaining omniscience,<sup>468</sup> is worthy of the offerings of all the beings in the world. Therefore he is called *arhat*.

“Fully Enlightened One”: He knows (*budhyate*) that the dharma are actually not destroyed, being non-arising and non-decaying (*anutpādā-nirodha*). How are they “not destroyed”? His mind functions

464. [TK: Corless interprets the Chinese words 如法相 and 解 respectively as “according to the *dharmatā*” and “release” here, and translates the sentence 如法相解如法相說 as follows: “As release is according to the *dharmatā*, so preaching is according to the *dharmatā*.” On the other hand, Inagaki interprets the aforementioned Chinese words respectively as “dharma as they are” and “comprehend,” and translates the sentence as follows: “ ‘one who comprehends dharma as they are’ and ‘one who explains dharma as they are.’ ” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 207. Inagaki’s translation seems to be more reasonable than that of Corless.]

465. *Ru fa xiang jie, ru fa xiang shuo* 如法相解如法相說. K. 535n3 explains that *dharmatā* (*tathatā*) is *vimokṣa* when viewed transcendentally (*paramārthitas*), but *vitarka* (*pravacana*) when viewed commonly (*saṃvṛtitas*).

466. *Anwen dao* 安穩道, “the *bodhi* of peace and stability”: a synonym for *vimokṣa* drawn from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* 5 (T. 374:12.392b): “*Vimokṣa* (解脫) is called ‘peaceful stability,’ for it is comparable to a place that, having many rebels, cannot be called ‘peaceful and stable’ but, once they are cleared away, is so called.”

467. *Jie* 結 “bonds” and *shi* 使 “drives” are synonyms for *kleśa* (T. 1851:44.561b). The explanation is similar to that of Buddhaghosa, who at one point derives *arahanta* from “he who has destroyed the spokes” [of the wheel of *saṃsāra*], *ara-hatta*: “Tattha, ārakatta, arīnaṃ arāṇaṃ ca hatattā, paccyādināṃ arahattā, pāpakaraṇe rahābhāvā ti imehi tāva kāraṇehi so Bhagavā arahāṇa ti anussarati” (Warren, *Visuddhimagga*, 163).

468. *Yiqie zhīhui* 一切智慧, *sarvajñā*. But this is normally the “simple omniscience” of *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* (see above, n345).

in extinction, and his words transcend speech:<sup>469</sup> all the dharmas, like *nirvāṇa*, do not move. Therefore he is called “Fully Enlightened One.”

The meaning of Amitābha has been explained above, in the stanzas.<sup>470</sup>

... because one wishes to be born in that land.

Why does [Vasubandhu] say this? In the *bodhisattvadharma* one usually worships all the buddhas of the ten directions three times during the day and three times during the night.<sup>471</sup> one need not resolve to be born [in a buddha land]. But in this case, one constantly resolves to be born [in Sukhāvātī] and therefore worships Amitābha Tathāgata.

[The Gate of Praise, 835b11–c17]

What is praise (*zantan*)? It is praising by means of vocal activity. . . .

“Praise” (*zan*) is “to exalt,” “laud” (*tan*) is “to sing praises.”<sup>472</sup> Praise is not made public unless it is vocal: therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “praising by means of vocal activity.”

... And invoking the Tathāgata’s name. As that Tathāgata’s radiance is the mark of his wisdom, so his name is his essence (*yi* 義). Thus we wish to practice in accord with the truth and with this correspondence (*xiangying* 相應, *yoga*) [of name and essence].<sup>473</sup>

469. *Xin xing chu mie, yan yu dao guo* 心行處滅言語道過, an obscure phrase that appears to warn us that the following tenet, that the dharmas are truly unarisen, is incomprehensible and unutterable. A similar warning is given by Sengzhao at T. 1858:45.151b, on which this passage may be based.

470. See above, p. 80.

471. This is a commonplace. For an example, with text and rubrics, see Bendall and Rouse, *Śikshā-samuccaya*, 263–268.

472. “Explaining” a compound by commenting on its members is a common Chinese practice, but unless one resorts to cumbersome double-barreled words (“praise-and-laud,” etc.), it is impossible in English. By translating the compound as one word, its members as two more, and giving the Chinese in brackets, I am following the method of Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, e.g., 144–145.

473. This paragraph has been quoted above, T. 1819:40.827a29–b2 (p. 80). [RKP: With regard to the Chinese sentence 欲如實修行相應故, in his dissertation, Corless originally translates it as follows: “Thus we wish to exercise in this correspondence according to the truth.” This translation, however, seems to be incorrect, therefore we revise it completely.]

“Invoking the Tathāgata’s name” means invoking the name of Amitābha Tathāgata.

“As that Tathāgata’s radiance is the mark of his wisdom”: The Buddha’s radiance is the mark of his wisdom. This radiance illumines the worlds in the ten directions without hindrance, and is able to remove the ignorance and delusion<sup>474</sup> of the beings in the ten directions. It is not like the pearly brightness of the sun or moon, which [by comparison] is only able to disperse the darkness in an empty cave.

“So his name is his essence.”<sup>475</sup> thus we wish to practice in accord with the truth and with this correspondence [of name and essence]”: the unimpeded radiance (Amitābha) of that *tathāgata*’s name is able to disperse the ignorance of all beings and bring their resolution to completion. However, one may invoke the name, keeping it in mind and recollecting it,<sup>476</sup> yet ignorance may still persist, and what is resolved may not be brought to completion. Why? Because one does not “practice in accord with the truth,” one does not [practice] “the correspondence” of the “name” and “essence.” How does one not practice in accord with the truth, and not with the correspondence of the name and essence? We say that it is due to not knowing the Tathāgata in both his [dharma body as the true nature of things] (*shixiang shen* 實相身) and his [dharma body as skill in means] (*weiwu shen* 爲物身).<sup>477</sup>

Then, there are three ways of not being in correspondence:

1. One’s faith (*xinxin* 信心) is not genuine (*chun* 淳), it is not quite absent, yet it “scarcely exists”<sup>478</sup>;
2. One’s faith is not unified, it does not have determination;

474. *Wuming, heian* 無明・黑闇, “dimness and darkness,” *avidyā* and *moha*.

475. [RKP: This passage appears to assert the unity (*xiangying* 相應, *yoga*) of word (or name) and its meaning, and that one should practice in accord with the unity. This idea would therefore be part of the Indian philosophy of language reflected in Tanluan’s discussion below (pp. 205–208).]

476. *Yinian* 憶念. See above, n444.

477. *Shixiang shen, weiwu shen* 實相身・爲物身, “the embodiment of the aspect of the truth”, i.e., the Buddha as he exists for himself, and “the embodiment for the sake of creatures” (note *wu* 物, not *zhongsheng* 衆生, *sattva*), i.e., the Buddha as he exists for others (K. 541n4). This alludes to the functioning of the double *dharmakāya*, which will be discussed at T. 1819:40.841b12–15, and has already been foreshadowed (see pp. 174–176 and 194ff.).

478. *Ruo cun* 若存. An allusion to *Dao de jing* 6: 谷神—縣縣若存用之不動 (“The spirit of the vale . . . scarcely exists, but it will not give out when used”).

3. One's faith is not constant, one's recollection is intermittent.

These three are completely interdependent: because of faith not being genuine, one is without determination; being without determination, one's recollection is not continuous: again, if one's recollection is not continuous, one does not attain determined faith (*xin* 信); not attaining determined faith, one's heart (*xin* 心) is not genuine. These three complementaries are what we call "practice in accord with the truth and with this correspondence [of name and essence]." Therefore, the master of the discourse<sup>479</sup> bases himself on the words "with one mind, I . . ."

QUESTION: A name indicates something, as a finger indicates the moon. If invoking the name of Buddha causes our resolution to be brought to completion, then a finger indicating the moon should be able to disperse the darkness;<sup>480</sup> but if a finger indicating the moon cannot disperse the darkness, neither can invoking the name of Buddha bring our resolution to completion.

ANSWER: There are ten thousand different things, and they cannot all be ranked alike. There are names that are the same as things, and there are names that are other than things. The names of buddhas and bodhisattvas, the *Prajñāpāramitā* with its *dhāraṇī*,<sup>481</sup> [Daoist]

479. Vasubandhu. See above, p. 75.

480. An 闇, "darkness" bears the nuance "ignorance": see n474, above.

481. Tanluan's expression translated here as the phrase "the *Prajñāpāramitā* with its *dhāraṇī*" is obscure. It may be translated as the "*Prajñāpāramitā dhāraṇī*" or as the "*Prajñāpāramitā* and *dhāraṇīs*." A *dhāraṇī* is a kind of mantra that has, normally, many more syllables than a mantra but the same effect. The *Prajñāpāramitā* or "perfection of wisdom" can sometimes be said to be a mantra in itself. There is a new form of Buddhism in Japan in which the word *prajñāpāramitā* is used as a mantra. It has also been suggested that the *Heart Sutra* (as the *Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* is commonly known), which concludes with a mantra or *dhāraṇī*, is itself a mantra or *dhāraṇī*. In any case, however the characters are translated, Tanluan is clearly referring to speech that is performative in the extra-saṃsāric realm. [RKP: Corless gives no justification for this assertion that the efficacy of what I have elsewhere called "extraordinary language" is "extra-saṃsāric," just as it is unclear what he means by the "extra-saṃsāric realm." Since Tanluan groups spells used to quell inflammations and escape harm in battle together with the *Prajñāpāramitā* and *dhāraṇī*, it cannot be the case that there is a distinction between those uses of "extraordinary language" that are "saṃsāric" and those that are "extra-saṃsāric."]



spells,<sup>482</sup> and suchlike spoken phrases are all “names that are the same as things.”

Suppose one wishes to conjure away an edema (*zhong* 腫); one says, “When the sun comes up in the eastern sky, at first it’s red and then it’s pale, etc.”<sup>483</sup> If one casts the spell between six o’clock and ten o’clock at night, the edema will go away, without concerning oneself about the sunrise. Again, when set in the front line [of a battle], one merely intones, “When ranged for the fight, ’tis with champions in front”<sup>484</sup> through one’s teeth: intoning these nine characters, the five weapons<sup>485</sup> will not hit one. The *Bao puzi* regards this as quite true. Again, if one suffers from a twisted ligament, a hot quince poultice will cure it:<sup>486</sup> but even if someone merely calls out the word “quince,” he will be cured. In our own bodies we have obtained these results: they are familiar things, all the world knows of them. How much more true must it be, then, for things in the inconceivable realm! The simile of the

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482. *Jinzhou* 禁咒 may mean “mantra” (see preceding note), but the context suggests it means a Daoist “spell.”

483. *Richu dongfang zha chi, zha huang* 日出東方乍赤乍黃. Following the colors of dawn, the inflamed skin will go from red to yellow, i.e., normal Chinese skin color. The source of this spell does not seem to have been identified.

484. *Lin bing douzhe jie chenlie zai qian* 臨兵鬥者皆陳列在前. *Bao puzi* 17 (抱樸子·內篇卷十七).

485. *Wubing* 五兵, i.e., dagger, bow, arrow, sword, and battle-axe (刀·弓·矢·劍·矛), Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 100n8. K. 546 has “bow, arrow, spear, sword (reading 刀 as *katana*), and other weapons” (*nado no tekiei*). Hsiao, *Life and Teachings of T’an-luan*, 71, translates “five enemy soldiers,” apparently mistaking *bing* 兵 for a person carrying a weapon.

486. *Xu bo wu zhi* 續博物志 7. Translation tentative. The phrase *mugua dui huo yun* 木瓜對火熨 appears to say, “*mugua* is applied with a fiery iron.” It may be this, but on analogy with a phrase in the *Huangdi nei jing* 黃帝內經 7, it might also be a form of moxibustion: “When the body is in distress but the will and ambition are gratified and happy, disease arises from the muscles; and in order to cure it, one uses moxa (irons? 熨) and breathing exercises” (Veith, *Yellow Emperors’ Classic of Internal Medicine*, 210. Veith adds in n3, “Wang Ping explains 熨引 to mean 藥熨導引.”

The “quince” (*mugua* 木瓜) is the *Pyrus japonica* according to *Kenkyūsha’s New Japanese-English Dictionary*, 93b, sub *boke*, and is described in *Ueda’s Daijiten* (4707, p. 1116a) as “a tree of the rose family, bearing red flowers in the spring, which later turn white.”



antidote drum is of this latter sort: we need not expand on this, for we have already explained the simile, above.<sup>487</sup>

“Names that are other than things” are like the “finger indicating the moon.”

[The Gate of Making the Resolution, 835c18–836a4]

*What is making the resolution? It is constantly making the resolution in one's mind, singlemindedly recollecting only that one will certainly be born in Sukhāvatī: thus we wish to practice śamatha in accord with the truth.*

Śamatha is translated as “stopping.”<sup>488</sup> “Stopping” means stopping the mind in one place and not doing evil.<sup>489</sup> This translation is not contrary to the general meaning, yet it is insufficient in regard to [our] special meaning (yi 義). Why do we say this? We also speak of “stopping” in regard to stopping the mind at the tip of the nose.<sup>490</sup> Again, we speak of “stopping”<sup>491</sup> in regard to stopping passion (*tan* 貪, *rāga*) by the contemplation of unclean things (*bujing* 不淨, *aśubha*), stopping

487. See p. 153 and n441. [TK: The word 滅除藥塗鼓 could be rendered more literally as “a drum coated with poison-dispellant.”]

488. *Yi shemota yue zhi* 譯奢摩他曰止. This translation was used by Zhiyi.

489. I.e., restraining the mind. The Sanskrit texts commonly speak of śamatha as like tying a monkey to a post.

490. Taking *zhi* 止 as a translation of *sthāna*. This is the third of the six stages of śamatha as set out in the *Abhidharmakośa* 6:

1. *gaṇanā*: counting the inhalations/exhalations;
2. *anugama*: following the presumed internal course of the breath;
3. *sthāna*: fixing the breath at the nostrils;
4. *upalakṣaṇa*: observing that breath=wind=elements=non-self, etc.;
5. *vivartanā*: switching to the observation of the dharmas;
6. *parīśuddhi*: “purification”—at this stage one enters the “path of seeing” (*dharśanamārga*).

Lamotte's translation of (3) is as follows: “Lier la mémoire de façon qu'elle se tienne au bout du nez, ou entre les sourcils, ou à un autre endroit jusqu'à l'orteil; fixer la pensée; voir le souffle se tenant dans le corps comme le fil d'un collier de perles (*maṇisūtrayāt*); constater s'il est froid ou chaud, défavorable ou propice” (*L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, vol. 16, t. 4, p. 155). The same system is used by Zhiyi in his *Liu miaofa men* 六妙法門 (The Six Gates of True Dharma).

491. Taking *zhi* 止 as a translation of *pratipakṣa* [antidote].

hatred (*chen* 瞋, *dveṣa*) by the contemplation of compassion (*cibei* 慈悲, *karuṇā*), and stopping delusion (*chi* 癡, *moha*) by the contemplation of cause-and-effect (*yinyuan* 因緣).<sup>492</sup> We also speak of “stopping” in regard to someone who is just about to move, but does not move. These understandings of the word “stopping” are irrelevant here; they do not give the proper meaning of *śamatha*, just as the camellia, the wild mulberry, the elm, and the willow are all called “trees,” but only the elm and the willow can truly be called “trees.”<sup>493</sup>

Herein, when *śamatha* is spoken of as “stopping,” it has three meanings:

First, “singlemindedly recollecting only” (*yixinzhuannian* 一心專念) Amitābha Tathāgata, one resolves to be born in that land. This *tathāgata*’s name, and that land’s name, “stop” all evil.<sup>494</sup>

Second, Sukhāvātī “surpasses the triple world’s ways”:<sup>495</sup> if someone is born in that country, the evils of his body, speech, and mind “stop” of themselves.

Third, the power of Amitābha Tathāgata’s enlightenment (*zhengjue* 正覺, *samyaksambodhi*), which stands firm,<sup>496</sup> automatically “stops” one from aspiring to be a *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*.

These three kinds of “stopping” come from the Tathāgata’s merits, which are “in accord with the truth.” Therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “thus we wish to practice *śamatha* in accord with the truth.”

492. Classification of people as especially dominated by one or other of the three poisons (*sandu* 三毒, *triviṣa*) i.e., *rāga* [also *lobha*], *dveṣa*, *moha*, for which there are specific correctives (*pratipakṣa*), is common throughout Buddhism, although the *Abhidharmakośa* does not explicitly follow the model. The *Visuddhimagga* 3 (Warren, *Visuddhimagga*, 82–93) has a carefully worked out system based on this, parts of which have been translated by Conze in *Buddhist Scriptures*, 116–121, and Waley presents a tidbit from a Chinese example contemporary with Tanluan in Conze, *Buddhist Texts through the Ages*, 276ff.

*Asubha* (*bujing* 不淨, “unclean”) is the “unlovely” (indeed!) condition of corpses in various stages of decay, which is a *pratipakṣa* for *rāga*: the Pāli sources list ten, sometimes nine, stages of decomposition, and the *Abhidharmakośa* lists seven (or eight, if we count two sorts of skeleton). See Vajirañña Mahāthera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*, 166–182, and Lamotte, op. cit., 149ff.

493. *Chun*, *zhe*, *yu*, *liu* 椿柘榆柳. The *chun* and the *zhe* are bushes.

494. Compare above, pp. 108–109.

495. Quoted from the Stanzas. See above, p. 86.

496. Alludes to the Stanzas. See above, pp. 110–111.

## [The Gate of Visualization, 836a5–19]

What is visualization? It is visualizing with wisdom, visualizing with right mindfulness that [land and its inhabitants]: thus we wish to practice *vipaśyanā* in accord with the truth.

*Vipaśyanā* is usually translated as “beholding.”<sup>497</sup> However, the ordinary meaning of the word “beholding” is again insufficient. Why do we say this? We speak of “beholding” in regard to beholding the body, under the nine aspects (*jiuxiang* 九相),<sup>498</sup> as impermanent (*wuchang* 無常, *anitya*), dissatisfying (*ku* 苦, *duḥkha*), empty (*kong* 空, *sūnya*) and without self (*wuwo* 無我, *anātmaka*).<sup>499</sup> Again, it is as above, where the designation “tree” does not [truly] obtain in the case of the camellia and the wild mulberry.

When “*vipaśyanā*” is spoken of [here] as “beholding,” it has two meanings:

First, here and now, one creates a mental representation<sup>500</sup> and “beholds” the three kinds of excellent decorations,<sup>501</sup> whose merits accord with the truth; thus the practitioner obtains merits that accord with the truth, and, as his merits accord with the truth, he certainly attains birth in that land.<sup>502</sup>

497. *Yi piposhena yue guan* 譯毘婆舍那曰觀. Again, this translation was used by Zhiyi. Curiously, when Tanluan repeats the Comma (p. 163), he writes *she* 奢 for *she* 舍.

498. [TK: This is the translation of *jiuxiang* 九相, the conventional expression of *jiuxiang guan* 九相觀. It means the nine aspects of decomposition of a body in detail.]

499. This is the first of the four “applications of mindfulness” (*smṛtyupasthāna*), *kāyasmṛtyupasthāna*, which, in the *Abhidharmakośa*, begins the practice of *vipaśyanā* (Lamotte, op. cit., 158–159).

500. *Zuoxiang* 作想, “one creates a *nimitta*,” the mental image of a thing that is seen as clearly as the thing itself. It is a basic feature of most forms of Buddhist meditation. For a description and classification of different varieties of *nimitta* see Vajirañāṇa, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*, 31–33. A comparable practice by the Jesuits is called “composition” (of “place,” etc.): for example, see almost any page of the *Spiritual Exercises* (*Ejercicios Espirituales*) of St. Ignatius Loyola.

501. The three kinds are explained below; see n504.

502. This passage, and the ambiguity of *gongde* 功德, has been discussed above, n80.

Second, then, having been born in the Pure Land, he sees Amitābha Buddha. Bodhisattvas who have not yet achieved a purified mind certainly obtain a dharma body of equitability (*pingdeng fashen* 平等法身, *samatādharmakāya*) and, together with [TK: the bodhisattvas who have achieved purified minds and] the bodhisattvas of the top levels, certainly attain the quiescent equitability.<sup>503</sup>

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “thus we wish to practice *vipaśyanā* according to the truth.”

*The visualization (guancha) is of three kinds.<sup>504</sup> What three?*

*First, visualization of the merits of the decorations<sup>505</sup> of that buddha land, second, visualization of the merits of the adornments of Amitābha Buddha, and third, visualization of the merits of the adornments of the bodhisattvas.*

When the mind rests on those phenomena, we call it “beholding” (*guan*); when what is beheld by the mind is distinguished clearly, we call it “inspecting” (*cha* 察).<sup>506</sup>

503. Three kinds of bodhisattvas are spoken of here (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 103n15, n17, and n18):

1. “Bodhisattvas who have not yet achieved a purified mind,” *weizheng jingxin pusa* 未證淨心菩薩, i.e., minor bodhisattvas, those of the first through the seventh *bhūmi*;
2. “Bodhisattvas of purified mind,” *jingxin pusa* 淨心菩薩, i.e., those of the eighth *bhūmi*, now liberated from *kleśa*;
3. “Bodhisattvas of the top levels,” *shangdi pusa* 上地菩薩, i.e., those of the ninth and tenth *bhūmis*.

In *Sukhāvātī*, all bodhisattvas are actually or imputatively of type 3, thereby gaining a *samatādharmakāya* and becoming autonomous. For lack of precision on this point, the passage as translated by De Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 1:340) is unintelligible.

504. See n501 above.

505. *Zhuangyan gongde* 莊嚴功德. Here and throughout, metathesized from the *gongde zhuangyan* of the Comma.

506. *Xin yuan qi shi yue guan*; *guan xin fen ming yue cha* 心緣其事曰觀。觀心分明曰察. This is a most elegant definition. Expanding a little, we could translate: “When the mind uses the phenomena of the Pure Land as an *ālambana*, we call it *guan*; when the mind that is doing *guan* begins to see (*paśyati*) distinctly (*vi-*), we call it *cha*.” At the start of *vipaśyanā*, one takes an object as *ālambana* (*Pāli*, *ārammaṇa*) or “support” for the mind; but *vipaśyanā* only gets under way when

[The Gate of Turning Towards, 836a20–27]

What is turning [TK: the merit] towards [TK: beings]? One does not reject suffering beings but constantly makes resolutions to turn [TK: the merit] towards them, putting that first so as to attain a perfectly compassionate mind.

“Turning towards” has two aspects: first the “going” aspect; second the “returning” aspect.

The going aspect: taking one’s own merit, one turns it over (*huishi* 迴施) to all beings, making the resolution that all together may go to be born in Amitābha Tathāgata’s Sukhāvātī.

The returning aspect: having been born in that land and attained the perfection of *śamatha* (meditative stability), of *vipaśyanā* (insight), and of competence in skillful means (*upāya*), one returns and enters (*huru* 迴入) the dense<sup>507</sup> forest of *saṃsāra*, converting all beings so that they all together go towards (*xiang* 向) the way of Buddha.

Whether “going” or “returning,” in either case one catches up beings and helps them across the ocean of *saṃsāra*. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says: “turn towards them and putting that first so as to attain a perfectly compassionate mind.”

### The Visualization of the Images

[Visualization of the Pure Land, 836a28–841b3]

[Outline, 836a28–b2]

This portion is twofold:

First, the images of the furnishings;

Second, the images of the beings.

This portion of the furnishings is further divided into three:

First, the images of the land;

Second, the demonstration of the benefit to self and others;

Third, entering into the ultimate truth.

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the object is clear (*ming* 明, *√pas*) and distinct (*fen* 分, *vi-*). Thus *guancha* as a compound expresses the total process of *vipaśyanā*.

507. Chou 稠. De Bary (*Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 1:340) translates, “the withered forest,” perhaps having read *ku* 枯.

## [The Furnishings, 836b2–839b8]

## The Images of the Land [836b2–838c2]

[836b2–c5]

Why does one visualize the merits of the decorations of that buddha land?  
Because the merits of the decorations of that buddha land are of perfectly  
inconceivable power, since they are like *cintāmaṇi*s whose nature resembles  
and accords with the dharma.

Of “inconceivable power”: When the “power of the merits” of the  
seventeen kinds of “decorations of that buddha land” are all pointed  
out, they are found to be “inconceivable.”

The sutras generally say that there are five “inconceivables”:<sup>508</sup>

First, the number of beings is inconceivable;

Second, the power of karma is inconceivable;

Third, the power of dragons (*nāga*) is inconceivable;

Fourth, the power of *dhyāna* and *samādhi* is inconceivable;

Fifth, the power of the *buddhadharma* is inconceivable.

The inconceivability of that buddha land partakes of the power of two  
of these:

First, the power of karma: that is, of what has been realized by the  
karmic power of the transcendental good root (*lokottarakuśalamūla*) of  
Dharmākara’s great vow;

Second, that which is encompassed by the power of the standing  
firm in the good of Amitābha, the *samyaksaṃbuddha*, the dharma king.  
These inconceivables, as set out below in seventeen kinds, are incon-  
ceivable in their several aspects, as our text will forthwith explain.

“Like *cintāmaṇi*s whose nature resembles and accords with the  
dharma”: The nature of a *cintāmaṇi*<sup>509</sup> is used to manifest the inconceiv-

508. This list of five inconceivables, *wu zhong bu ke si yi* 五種不可思議, *pañcācintyadharmāḥ*, is very nearly that of *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 30 (T. 1509:25.283c): “The sutras say that there are five inconceivables, that is, the number of beings, the fruition of karma, the power of someone sitting in *dhyāna*, the power of dragons (*nāga*), and the power of buddhas. And amongst these, the power of the buddha is the most inconceivable” (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 105n1). Of the five listed, Tanluan picks nos. 2 and 5 as especially relevant to Sukhāvātī.

509. *Moni ruyi bao* 摩尼如意寶, “the precious thing that is a *maṇi* whose operation is according to one’s wishes,” a rather complicated transliteration/translation of *cintāmaṇi*, the magic wishing jewel whose origin and function is here described.

able nature of the Buddha Land of Happiness<sup>510</sup> (*Anle fotu* 安樂佛土). When buddhas enter *nirvāṇa*, they leave behind, with their power of strategy (*upāya*), relics or *śarīra*,<sup>511</sup> which give blessings to beings. When the blessings of beings are exhausted,<sup>512</sup> these *śarīra* turn into *cintāmaṇi* jewels. Such jewels are chiefly to be found in the great ocean: the great dragon kings (*mahoragarājāni*) use them as head ornaments. If a *cakravartin*<sup>513</sup> comes into the world and because of his compassion is able to obtain one of these jewels,<sup>514</sup> he works great benefit in Jambūdvīpa.<sup>515</sup> If, when he wants various objects, such as clothing, food, lights, or musical instruments according to his desire, the king then, purified by fasting, sets the jewel on top of a long pole and proclaims his wish, saying, “If I truly am a *cakravartin*,<sup>516</sup> may this jewel cause such and such objects to rain down, whether for one, for ten, or for a hundred miles around, according to my heart’s desire,” there will immediately be a rain of various objects out of the sky. All request what they need, and, because of the power of this jewel’s “nature,” the desires of all people under heaven are fulfilled. That Buddha Land of Happiness is similar, because of the various perfections of the “nature” of [the land of] happiness.

“Resembles and accords with the dharma”: if one seeks, through the power of that jewel, clothing or food, one is able to have clothing or food rained down. Now, if one requests and seeks according to a

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510. [RKP: Cf. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 2:294.]

511. *Suishen sheli* 碎身舍利, “pieces of body, *śarīra*,” a translation/transliteration for the personal relics which, when properly worshipped, bring temporal and spiritual blessings.

512. *Zhongsheng fu jin* 衆生福盡. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 106 inserts the gloss *masse ni natte*, “it being the end of the world,” i.e., the dark ages. See above, n3. The “blessings” may be the five blessings of Chinese tradition: longevity, wealth, health, virtue, and timely death (Mathews, 1978, 29).

513. See above, n198.

514. The wishing jewel is one of the seven treasures of a *cakravartin*, which are bestowed as a recompense for righteousness (dharma).

515. *Yanfuti* 閻浮提, the transliteration of Jambudvīpa (“rose apple continent”), i.e., the world of human beings, the southernmost of the four continents surrounding Mount Sumeru.

516. This is an act of truth (*sat-karma*). Total honesty (*satya*) meshes with “the way things are” (*sat*) to produce extraordinary effects.



wish, it is not the case that one does not seek something. However, that buddha land is not thus: since its nature is complete and perfect, there is nothing lacking. We have only taken a part of its nature and made an analogy. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “resembles and accords with.”

Further, that precious thing is only able to grant the wishes of beings for clothing, food, and so forth; it is unable to grant the wishes of beings in regard to the supreme way (*wushangdao* 無上道). And again, that precious thing is only able to grant the wishes of beings for one lifetime; it is unable to grant the wishes of beings through measureless lifetimes. Because of these many differences, [Vasubandhu] says, “resembles.”

*[List of the Seventeen Furnishings, 836c6–17]*

*One must understand seventeen types of visualization on the perfection of the merits of the decorations of the Buddha Land. What<sup>517</sup> are the seventeen?*

*First, the Perfection of the Merits of the Purity of the Decorations;<sup>518</sup>*

*Second, the Perfection of the Merits of the Measurements of the Decorations;*

*Third, the Perfection of the Merits of the Nature of the Decorations;*

*Fourth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Appearance of the Decorations;*

*Fifth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Diverse Phenomena in the Decorations;*

*Sixth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Wonderful Colors in the Decorations;*

*Seventh, the Perfection of the Merits of the Sensation in the Decorations;*

*Eighth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Three Constituents<sup>519</sup> in the Decorations;*

*Ninth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Rain in the Decorations;*

*Tenth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Radiance in the Decorations;*

*Eleventh, the Perfection of the Merits of the Wonderful<sup>520</sup> Sound of the Decorations;*

*Twelfth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Lord of the Decorations;*

*Thirteenth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Populace in the Decorations;*

517. *He deng* 何等. Comma (T. 1524:26.231b28) has *he zhe* 何者.

518. *Zhuangyan* 莊嚴, which Tanluan repeats for all seventeen, only appears in the Comma at no. 8. [TK: It means the eighth perfection in the Comma; see T. 1524:26.231c.]

519. *Sanzhong* 三種. Not in the Comma.

520. *Miao* 妙 is not in the Comma.



*Fourteenth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Rewards in the Decorations;  
Fifteenth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Absence of Hardship in the  
Decorations;  
Sixteenth, the Perfection of the Merits of the Gate of the Great Principle in  
the Decorations;  
Seventeenth, The Perfection of the Merits of the Fulfillment of All That Is  
Sought in the Decorations.*

First, we shall set forth the paragraphs, and then give an explanation of their connections.

*[The Seventeen Inconceivables of the Land, 836c18–838c1]*

[i. The perfection of the merits of the purity of the decorations.]

*It is on the account of the perfection of the merits of the purity of the decorations that the stanzas have: “Thus, I gaze on the marks of that realm that surpasses the triple world’s ways.”*

How is this inconceivable? Ordinary men, replete with the passions, are, even so, born into that Pure Land. The karmic bonds of the triple world do not finally pull them down,<sup>521</sup> but without having cut off their passions, they attain the status of *nirvāṇa*.

Is this conceivable?

[ii. The perfection of the merits of the measurements of the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the measurements of the decorations that the stanzas have: “It is totally like to the sky, which is wide, without limits.”*

How is this inconceivable?

If the divinized men<sup>522</sup> of that country desire palaces or towering mansions, whether one, a hundred, or a thousand *yojanas* wide, and with a thousand or ten thousand rooms, it will be realized as they think of it. Each individual will be like this. Again, it is impossible to know the number of the beings throughout the ten directions who, making the resolve to be born [there] in their past, present, or future lives, in the short space of a day or an hour [will appear there]; yet that realm

521. Refers to the sixth question: see above, pp. 151–153.

522. Throughout this section on the seventeen inconceivables, Tanluan refers to the dwellers in Sukhāvātī as *rentian* 人天, “men and gods.” For a defense of my rendering this as *divinized men*, see above, n364.

is always “like to the sky,” without any constrictions. The beings in it abide within these dimensions. Though their wants are enormous, it is still “like to the sky,” without limiting measurements. The measure of the wishes fulfilled by the beings is as the measure of that land.

How is this conceivable?

[iii. The perfection of the merits of the nature of the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the nature of the decorations that the stanzas have: “As the right way, the greatly compassionate, it is sprung from transcendent good roots.”*

How is this inconceivable?

It resembles the *kṛkalāsa* lizard,<sup>523</sup> whose form is minute, but, in a high wind, its body becomes like a large mountain: according to the strength of the wind, so is the form of its body. The birth of beings in Sukhāvati is like this: they are born into the realm of the right way, and at once the [fruits of the] “transcendent good roots” [of Dharmākara] are realized, and they enter the company of the firmly settled. Again, as with the [lizard and the] wind: there is not a body, yet there is a body!

Is this conceivable?

[iv. The perfection of the merits of the appearance of the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the appearance of the decorations that the stanzas have: “It has brilliance most clear and intense, like a glass, or the sun’s and moon’s discs.”*

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523. *Jialuoqiuluo chong* 迦羅求羅蟲. Sanskrit restoration uncertain. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 110n5 does not attempt it, and K. 598n1 bluntly says, “the Sanskrit pronunciation is unknown,” and gives up. However, Mochizuki, *Bukkyō Daijiten*, 479c–480a, on the basis of the Tibetan *rtsaṅs-pa*, hazards that it is a transliteration of *kṛkalāsa*, “a sort of chameleon” (plus *chong* 蟲, which is approximately American English “bug,” any sort of insect, worm, reptile, or noxious creature, so probably “lizard” here). Its singular performance, here quoted by Tanluan from *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 7 (T. 1509:25.113b), is used as a symbol of the light of *prajñā* “expanding” beings. Zhiyi also uses it as a simile of *śamatha-vipaśyanā*, and Shandao illustrates the effects of the *nianfo* 念佛 in terms of it. Here, it is a simile of Sukhāvati, itself born of *prajñā*, etc. [TK: For more information about *jialuoqiuluo chong* 迦羅求羅蟲, see also Nakamura, *Kōsetsu Bukkyōgo Daijiten*, 1:223.]

How is this inconceivable?

It is by tolerating insults that one [here] obtains rectitude: it is an effect<sup>524</sup> of one's mental attitude. But, once one obtains birth there, there is no distinction between hatred and tolerance. The forms of those divinized men are on one level of marvellous excellence. This is due to the power of the "clear brilliance." That "brilliance" is not of their mental activity, yet it becomes a phenomenon of their mental activity.<sup>525</sup>

Is this conceivable?

[v. The perfection of the merits of the diverse phenomena in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the diverse phenomena in the decorations that the stanzas have: "It is naturally set with rare jewels, and is furnished with ornaments fine."*

How is this inconceivable?

One calls for those diverse phenomena, whether for one jewel, ten jewels, or a hundred thousand jewels, and one's wish does not go unfulfilled.<sup>526</sup> Then, if one desires them not to be, immediately they disappear. One's mind is autonomous, one has more than the superknowledges (*abhijñānāni*).

How is this conceivable?

[vi. The perfection of the merits of the wonderful colors in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the wonderful colors in the decorations that the stanzas have: "Its immaculate radiance flames out, and suffuses all worlds with its light."*

How is this inconceivable?

When that radiance suffuses objects, it penetrates from the outside to the inside; when that radiance suffuses the mind, it puts an end to ignorance. The radiance is the work of the Buddha.

Is this conceivable?

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524. Emend *xiang* 嚮 to the v.l. homophone, *xiang* 響.

525. Compare (x.) the perfection of the merits of the radiance in the decorations, below.

526. This idea is expanded at (viii.b.), the perfection of the merits of the ground in the decorations, below.

[vii. The perfection of the merit of the sensation in the decorations]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merit of the sensation in the decorations that the stanzas have: "There are jewels like excellent grass, which is soft, and bends this way and that; if one strokes them, great joy is then born, which transcends kācilindikam's touch."*

How is this inconceivable?

Now, it is a rule that jewels are hard, but these are soft, and they bend: the joy of stroking should lead to craving (*trṣṇā*); but here, it is a furtherance on the way (*adhipati*). This is like Aizuo.<sup>527</sup> How is this conceivable? There was a bodhisattva named Aizuo. He was upright of men, and gave rise to craving in people, yet the [*Mahāratnakūṭa*] *sūtra*<sup>528</sup> says that whoever craved him either was reborn in heaven, or else produced the aspiration to enlightenment (*bodhicittopāda*).<sup>529</sup>

[viii. The perfection of the merits of the three constituents in the decorations.]

*One should recognize three phenomena in the perfection of the merits of the three constituents in the decorations. What are the three?*

- (a) the water
- (b) the ground
- (c) the sky.

These three are treated together [in the stanzas] because they are in the same class. How can we say this? First, they are classed amongst the six great elements (*ṣaḍdhātavaḥ*), that is, space, consciousness, earth, water, fire, and air (*ākāśa, vijñāna, pṛthivī, ab, teja, vāyu*). Second, they are classed amongst the [five] non-discriminating elements (*wu*

527. Aizuo 愛作, "he who causes passionate love." I do not find the Sanskrit. Possibly *Rāgakaraṇa*. [RKP: Inagaki: *Priyaṃkara*; see Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 311n189.]

528. [TK: Within the *Mahāratnakūṭa* *sūtra* (*Da bao ji jing* 大寶積經, T. 310:11), the specific *sūtra* is *Dacheng fangbian jing* 大乘方便經 (*Upāyakaṇṣālyajñānottara-bodhisattvapariṣcchā sūtra*).]

529. This summarizes T. 310:11.597b–c. By his attractive bearing, this bodhisattva stole the hearts of young girls, who were then reborn in the *Trāyatrimśaloka*, and won the admiration of their parents, who then made the *bodhicittopāda*.

*fen bie* 無分別), that is, earth, water, fire, air, and space. [The stanzas] only refer to three elements, because:

(a) consciousness is one of the six which pertains [only] to beings in the [triple] world;<sup>530</sup>

(b) fire is one of the six that is absent there [in Sukhāvati];

(c) though there is air [in Sukhāvati], air cannot be seen, nor does it rest anywhere.

Therefore, from these six great elements and the five elements, those which can be decorations are selected,<sup>531</sup> and the “three constituents” are treated together.

[viii.a. Water.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the water in the decorations that the stanzas have: “Jeweled blossoms of ten million kinds overspread all the ponds and the streams; as mild breezes stir flowers and leaves, so they twinkle and sparkle with light.”*

How is this inconceivable?

The divinized men in that Pure Land do not have “water and cereal” bodies:<sup>532</sup> so, what need have they of water [to drink]? As [Sukhāvati] is perfectly pure, they do not need to wash: again, what use would water be? There are not four seasons there: it is always temperate, never uncomfortably hot; again, what need have they of water? They do not need it, yet they have it. There must be a reason for this. The *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* says:<sup>533</sup>

If those bodhisattvas and śrāvakas enter the jewel lakes<sup>534</sup> and desire to sink in the water up to their feet, then they sink in the water up to their feet; if they desire the water to reach to their knees, then it

530. Consciousness (*viññāna*, “mediate knowing”) is, according to Yogācāra thought, transformed (*parāvṛtta*) into wisdom (*jñāna*, “immediate knowing”) at enlightenment.

531. This phrase is important for understanding the sense of *zhuangyan* 莊嚴 in this text. See above, n80.

532. *Shuigu shen* 水穀身, bodies nourished by water and the five essential cereals (listed as, e.g., rice, millet, wheat, barley, and beans). The bodhisattvas in Sukhāvati feed on *dhyāna*, etc. See (xiv.), the perfection of the merits of the rewards in the decorations, and pp. 112–114, above.

533. Cf. S.B.E., 49(2):38–40, which is slightly different.

534. Emend *di* 地 to *chi* 池.

reaches to their knees; if they desire the water to reach to their waists, then it reaches to their waists; if they desire the water to reach to their necks, then it reaches to their necks; if they desire to immerse their whole bodies, spontaneously their bodies are immersed; and if they desire the water to recede, it immediately recedes. It is suitably cool or warm, according to their desires. It enlarges the spirit, delights the body, and soaks up the mind's impurities. It is clear and clean. It is pure and without shadows,<sup>535</sup> transparent to the jeweled sands: there is no depth that is not bright. Ripples flow back and forth across one another, gently dying out, neither tardily nor hastily. The waves rise up without measure with the spontaneous, wonderful sound of "buddha," "dharma," "sangha," "quiescence," "void," "non-self," "compassion," "the perfections," "the ten powers," "fearlessnesses," "special dharmas," "the superknowledges," "the lack of karmic effects," "non-arising and non-decaying," "the calm knowledge of non-arising," "final initiation"—the sound of all this host of true dharma<sup>536</sup> is heard, if one has the need through not having heard it before. Such sounds as these, being called for, are heard, and they

535. Emend *hsing* to *ing*. [TK: Emend *cheng* 澈 to *cheng* 澄? Corless has noted here a difference between Tanluan's quotation and the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sutra* text itself.]

536. This list, which is not quite that of the sutra as we have it, begins with basic Buddhist concepts and ends with the virtues proper to the highest enlightenment:

- (1)–(3) buddha, dharma, sangha;
- (4) quiescence: *jijing* 寂靜, *nirodha*, i.e., *nirvāṇa* of the seventh *bhūmi*;
- (5) void: *kong* 空, *śūnyatā*;
- (6) non-self: *wuwo* 無我, *anātman* (one would have expected 5 and 6 in the reverse order?);
- (7) compassion: *da cimei* 大慈悲, *mahākaruṇā*;
- (8) the perfections: *boluomi* 波羅蜜, *pāramitā*: the "social virtues" (Conze) of giving, morality, patience, vigor, concentration, and wisdom;
- (9)–(11) the special characteristics of a *tathāgata*: the ten powers, *shili* 十力, *daśabālāni* (ten varieties of wisdom); the four fearlessnesses, *si wuwei* 四無畏, *catvārivaiśāradyāni* ("grounds of self-confidence" [Conze] consequent upon wisdom); and the eighteen special dharmas, *shiba bugong fa* 十八不共法, *aṣṭādaśāveṇīkadharmāḥ* (ways in which the Buddha is never at fault, *nāsti skhalitam*, in body, speech, or mind);

rejoice without measure. They become acquainted with purity, separation from passion, the essence of quiescent suchness,<sup>537</sup> the power of the three jewels, the fearlessnesses, the special dharmas, the superknowledges, and what is practiced on the paths of bodhisattvas and śrāvakas. The three defilements, sorrow, and any difficulties are not even named. There are only the sounds of spontaneous delight. Therefore, that country is called “peaceful and happy” (*sukhā*).

The “water” is the work of Buddha. How is this conceivable?

[viii.b. Ground.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the ground in the decorations that the stanzas have: “From the mansion with towers and spires, in whatever direction one looks, there are trees of all colors and hues, set with railings of jewels round about.”*

How is this inconceivable?

In regard to those “diverse phenomena,”<sup>538</sup> whether it be a single jewel, ten jewels, a hundred jewels, or an immeasurable number of jewels, according as one desires, calls for, and wishes for such decorations, so those decorations completely appear, and, as in a bright

(12) the superknowledges, *tonghui* 通慧, *ṣaḍabhijñānāni*: bilocation, clairaudience, telepathy, retrocognition, clairvoyance, and the abandonment of the reality of the subjective/objective interface (*āśrayakṣayañāna*);

(13) lack of karmic effects, *wu suozuo* 無所作, *anabhisamkāra*: action that does not accumulate karma;

(14) non-arising and non-decaying, *buqi bumie* 不起不滅, *anutpādānirodha*: the doctrine that, in the absolute sense, nothing is ever created or destroyed;

(15) the calm knowledge of non-arising, *wu shengren* 無生忍, *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*: the personal realization of the preceding doctrine; and

(16) final initiation, *ganlu guanding* 甘露灌頂, *amṛtābhiṣeka*: the condition of the tenth *bhūmi*, when the bodhisattva is anointed (*abhiṣeka*) as with nectar (*amṛta*) by rays of light from all the buddhas (Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Its Relation to Hīnayāna*, 283).

537. *Jimie zhenshi zhi yi* 寂滅真實之義. Does this mean *nirodhasamāpatti*?

538. See (v.), the perfection of the merits of the appearance of the decorations, above.

mirror, the karmic good and evil of all in the countries both pure and defiled throughout the ten directions is manifested. This occurs automatically, because the divinized men therein, seeing these phenomena, feel towards them as those who “test cautiously, as though putting a finger into hot water.”<sup>539</sup> Again, it is like the great bodhisattvas “who are crowned with the jewels of the brilliant *dharmatā*.”<sup>540</sup> In this jeweled crown, one sees completely all the buddhas and fully understands the nature of all dharmas. Further, it is as when the Buddha preached the *Lotus Sutra* and he projected a brilliant ray from his *ūrṇā* towards the eastern quarter, so that eighteen thousand worlds were all magnificently illuminated, from the hell of *Avīci* to the pinnacle of being (*bhavāgra*).<sup>541</sup> In this [ray] were seen the beings in all the worlds in the six states of *saṃsāra*, receiving beauty or ugliness on the basis of their good or evil karma. The present case is of this sort. This vision is the work of Buddha.

How is this conceivable?

[RKP: viii.c. Sky.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the sky in the decorations that the stanzas have: “There are strings of rare jewels without end that extend through the sky like a net, and a medley of bells ringing out, is proclaiming the tones of true dharma.”*

How is this inconceivable?

The [*Larger Sukhāvativyūha*] sutra says<sup>542</sup> that

a net of jewels without end, made of golden threads, pearls, and a hundred thousand miscellaneous jewels both rare and unusual covers the Buddha Land. This interlaced ornament is hung with jeweled bells on all four sides. Brilliant colors of utmost beauty radiate everywhere. Spontaneously, a pleasing wind gently rises and barely shakes it. The wind is temperate, neither too hot nor too cold, but either warm or cool; and it is soft, neither too light nor too strong.

539. *Tantang* 探湯. An allusion to *Analects* 16:11: “Master K’ung said: . . . When they see what is not good, they test it cautiously, as though putting a finger into hot water” (Waley, *Analects of Confucius*, 207). A mark of moral purity.

540. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 9 (T. 1509:25.124b).

541. Wogihara’s Sanskrit (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtram*, p. 4, lines 18–22) agrees with Tanluan. Kern (S.B.E., 21:7) says, “eighteen hundred thousand buddha-fields,” apparently reading a different text.

542. Cf. S.B.E., 49(2):35ff.



When it blows on the net and the jeweled trees, they send forth the tones of true and limitless dharma (*amitasaddharmasvara*) and disseminate ten thousand kinds of subtle and pleasing perfumes. Defiled thoughts and actions are automatically kept from arising in anyone who listens. When the wind touches their bodies, all are delighted.

This “sound” is the work of Buddha. Is this conceivable?

[TK: ix. The perfection of the merits of the rain in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the rain in the decorations that the stanzas have: “Gorgeous vestments and flowers rain down, spreading infinite scents through the air.”*

How is this inconceivable?

The [*Larger Sukhāvativyūha*] sūtra says<sup>543</sup> that

the wind blows and scatters “flowers” throughout the Buddha Land: their colors are discrete and do not become muddled. They are soft, resplendent, and strongly scented. Placing one’s foot on them, it sinks in *si cun*,<sup>544</sup> having raised one’s foot, they spring back as before. When the flowers have been used,<sup>545</sup> the earth opens, and they disappear: thus, the purity [of the Pure Land] is not affected. This moment of the wind blowing and scattering flowers recurs six times [every twenty-four hours].<sup>546</sup> Further, a mass of jeweled lotuses fills that realm. Each jeweled [lotus] blossom has one hundred thousand *kotis* of petals. These blossoms radiate limitless colors. Those of green color have a green light, those of white color have a white light, and those that are black, yellow, red, and purple have a light corresponding to their color. The effulgence is like that of the sun or moon. From each flower, three hundred sixty thousand *kotis* of rays are emitted. From each ray, three hundred sixty thousand *kotis* of buddhas emerge, each having a body the color of red gold and bearing the marks and signs. Each buddha again emits one hundred thousand rays, and everywhere in the ten directions preaches the true dharma. In this way, each buddha severally establishes innumerable beings in the right way (*zhengdao* 正道, *sanmārga*) of buddha.

543. Cf. *ibid.* 42–43, and, for the lotuses, 36.

544. *Si cun* 四寸. See n174.

545. Used, that is, for the liturgy (*pūjā*).

546. At the six canonical hours of worship (dawn, noon, dusk, and the three night watches).

These “flowers” are the work of Buddha. How is this conceivable?

[x. The perfection of the merits of the radiance in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the radiance in the decorations that the stanzas have: “Buddha’s wisdom is bright as the sun, and dispels the world’s darkened confusion.”*

How is this inconceivable?

The radiance of that land is the corollary of the Tathāgata’s wisdom. The darkness of ignorance is necessarily dispelled from anyone whom it reaches. The radiance enables those lacking in wisdom to make use of wisdom.<sup>547</sup>

Is this conceivable?

[xi. The perfection of the merits of the wonderful sound of the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the wonderful sound of the decorations that the stanzas have: “For the brahma sound wakens afar, it is wonderfully heard in all spheres.”*

How is this inconceivable?

The [Pure Land] sutra<sup>548</sup> says that if someone merely hears of Sukhāvatī, it will be engraved<sup>549</sup> on their minds and they will resolve to be born there and, having been born there, will enter the company of those who are properly settled. This name of that land is the work of Buddha.

How is this conceivable?

[xii. The perfection of the merits of the lord of the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the lord of the decorations that the stanzas have: “Amitābha, the samyaksambuddha, as a dharma king (fa wang 法王, dharmarāja), stands firm in good.”*

How is this inconceivable?

547. See (iv.), the perfection of the merits of the appearance of the decorations, above.

548. [RKP: We changed Corless’s original “the [Pure Land] sutras” (i.e., plural) to “[Pure Land] sutra” (i.e., singular) based on Inagaki’s explanation (Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 312n201).]

549. Understand *kenian* 剋念 as the homophonic *kenian* 刻念 (K. 622n1).

“Amitābha, the *samyaksaṃbuddha*” (*zhengjue*) is inconceivable: and Sukhāvātī depends upon Amitābha the *samyaksaṃbuddha* standing firm in the power of his good.

How could one ever comprehend this?

“Standing” means not changing or disappearing, “firm” means not scattering or slipping. It is like a seed coated with a preservative. [TK: This seed will not decay<sup>550</sup> even in the water, and will not be scorched even in the fire.] If a man is once born into Sukhāvātī and at a later time wishes to be reborn in the triple world to teach and convert beings, he forsakes the Pure Land and is able to be born according to his wishes. Although he is born after the manner of the various births in the triple world, as it were in “water and fire,” the seed of supreme *bodhi* certainly does not decay. Why? Because it is linked with “Amitābha *samyaksaṃbuddha*’s standing firm in good.”

[xiii. The perfection of the merits of the populace in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the populace in the decorations that the stanzas have: “The Tathāgata’s host of pure flowers metamorphose from flowers of true bodhi.”*

How is this inconceivable?

Ordinary men are subject to various births in the worlds, from a womb, from an egg, from moisture, or by metamorphosis (*aupapādika*), and the populace partakes of the ten thousand varieties of misery and joy, due to their various deeds. In Sukhāvātī, there is no one who is not born by metamorphosis from a pure flower of Amitābha Tathāgata’s true *bodhi*, for they are all together in the non-discriminating way of the recollection of the Buddha.<sup>551</sup> Understand well that “all within the four seas become brothers.”<sup>552</sup>

The populace are innumerable. Is this conceivable?

550. Emend *lan* 瀾 to the homophone *lan* 爛.

551. *Nianfo wubie dao* 念佛無別道, perhaps *buddhānusmṛtyavikalpabodhi*.

552. *Analects* 12:5: “If a gentleman [who has no natural brothers] attends to business and does not idle away his time, if he behaves with courtesy to others and observes the rules of ritual, then all within the Four Seas are his brothers” (Waley, *Analects of Confucius*, 163–164). The “brotherhood” of Sukhāvātī is not based on natural kinship.

## [xiv. The perfection of the merits of the rewards in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the rewards in the decorations that the stanzas have: "Then they joyfully savor his dharma, taking dhyāna and samādhi as food."*

How is this inconceivable?

They do not eat, yet their lives are supported. This means that there is a means of support. Indeed, how could it be that the Tathāgata's original vow should be inadequate? They rely on the Buddha's vow and make it their own life.

Is this conceivable?

## [xv. The perfection of the merits of the absence of hardship in the decorations]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the absence of hardship in the decorations that the stanzas have: "Freed from troubles in body and mind, they have joy without end, without pause."*

How is this inconceivable?

The sutra<sup>553</sup> says, "The body is a vessel for pain, the mind is a receptacle for anxiety." Yet there [in Sukhāvati] they have bodies and minds, but "have joy" without pause.

How is this conceivable?

## [xvi. The perfection of the merits of the gate of the great principle in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the gate of the great principle in the decorations that the stanzas have: "In the realm of the great way's good roots, all are equal; it lacks despised names, because women, and any deformed, and the two vehicle seed are not born."*

It must be understood that one of the products of the Pure Land is its separation from two despised things: [offensive] beings and their names. There are three kinds of beings: people belonging to the two vehicles, women, and cripples.<sup>554</sup> These three offensive [types of people] are absent; therefore it is said to be separated from despised beings.

553. *Faju piyu jing* 法句譬喻經. A translation of the *Dharmapada* with commentary (Nanjio, *Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, 1353). Quotation from T. 211:4.595b15.

554. [RKP: The translation of *zhu gen bu ju ren* 諸根不具人, which literally means the person who lacks six roots (six sensory organs, *liugen* 六根).]

There are, also, three kinds of names. Not only are the three beings absent, but even the names, “two vehicles,” “women,” “cripples,” are not heard. Therefore it is said to be separated from despised names. Equal means everyone is equal and has the same characteristics.

How is this inconceivable?

Now, the gods have their food off a single plate, but its type is according to their merits.<sup>555</sup> The tip of the foot touches the earth, and it becomes splendid with particles of gold dust.<sup>556</sup> Although those who

555. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* 1:18: “Par exemple, Śāriputra, les fils des dieux (*devaputra*) Trāyastriṃśa prennent tous leur nourriture (*bhojana*) dans un unique récipient précieux (*ekasmin ratnabhājane*), mais l’ambrosie (*amṛta*) qui est la nourriture des dieux se différencie selon la diversité des mérites accumulés par ces dieux (*puṇyasaṃcayaviśeṣāt*).” Lamotte, *L’Enseignement*, 122–123 [RKP: T. 475:14.538c. An English translation of the above sentence is as follows: “For example, O Śāriputra, the sons of the Trāyastriṃśa gods (*devaputra*) take their food (*bhojana*) from one single precious receptacle (*ekasmin ratnabhājane*), but the ambrosia (*amṛta*) which is the food of the gods varies according to the diverse merits accumulated by those gods (*puṇyasaṃcayaviśeṣāt*).” See Lamotte, *Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 24. In addition, Macrae translates the same passage as follows: “The Buddha said to Śāriputra, ‘My buddha country is always pure, like this. It is only so as to save inferior persons here that I manifest it as a defiled and impure land. It is like the many-jeweled eating utensils used in common by the gods, the food in which is of different colors depending on their merits. Just so, Śāriputra, if a person’s mind is pure he sees the merits and ornaments of this land.’ ” See Macrae, *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, 79.]

556. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* 1:17. Lamotte, *L’Enseignement*, 122. This and the preceding reference establish the transforming power of merit: similarly, Amitābha’s merit transforms the beings born into Sukhāvātī. [RKP: T. 475:14.538c.] The English translation by Lamotte/Boin (*The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 23–24) is as follows:

Then the Blessed One touched, with his toe (*pādānguṣṭhenotskipati sma*), the trichiliomegachiliocosm (*trīsāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu*), and, as soon as he had touched it, that universe (*lokadhātu*) became like a heap of many jewels (*anekaratnakūṭa*), a collection of several hundreds of thousands of jewels (*anekaratnaśatasahasrasaṃcaya*), a pile of several hundreds of thousands of jewels. And the Sāha universe appeared like the Anantaṅgaratnavyūhā universe belonging to the Tathagatā Ratnavyūha.

Macrae (ibid., *Sūtra of Queen Śrīmālā*, 79) translates this section into English as follows:

go to birth were originally divided into three groups of three, here, classes one and two are absent. This is like the Zi 淄 [RKP: River] and Sheng 澠 [River] having the same taste!<sup>557</sup>

Is this conceivable?

[xvii. The perfection of the merits of the fulfillment of all that is sought in the decorations.]

*It is on account of the perfection of the merits of the fulfillment of all that is sought in the decorations that the stanzas have: "If those beings wish any delight, it is always and fully obtained."*

How is this inconceivable?

If any of those divinized men wish to go to a realm in another place, to any of the innumerable *buddhakṣetras* (*focha* 佛刹), there to worship the buddhas and bodhisattvas, then, they accomplish the worship of what they willed; and there is nothing for which they cannot call. Again, if they desire to forsake that [realm of] eternal life and go to other worlds where life is either short or long, they obtain it according to their wish, as [if] autonomous. Not being at the autonomous level, they yet function as if they were autonomous.<sup>558</sup>

Is this conceivable?

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At this the Buddha pointed to the earth with his toe, and instantly the trimegachiliocosm was as if ornamented with a hundred thousand jewels. It was like the Jewel Ornamentation land, with all its immeasurable merits, of Jewel Ornament Buddha.

557. Zi, Sheng 淄澠. Two rivers, the first in Shandong and the other in Henan, proverbially different in taste. “辨淄澠之滋味 (幼學) Savoir discerner la saveur de l'eau de la Tcheu d'avec celle de l'eau de la Cheng: avoir du gout” (Couvreur, *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, 525a). See also Liezi (列子 · 說符篇): “Meister Kung sprach: ‘Der Koch J Ya konnte das Wasser der Flüsse Dschī und Yung (sic), wenn es zusammengegossen war noch am Geschmack unterscheiden’ ” (Wilhelm, *Liä Dsi*, 98).

558. Wei jie zizai zhi wei er tong zizai zhi yong 未階自在之位而同自在之用. “Autonomy” (zizai 自在) is obtained at the seventh *bhūmi* and above. This passage makes it quite clear that the inhabitants of Sukhāvātī, though not actually *mahābodhisattvas*, are putatively so.

*The Demonstration of the Benefit to Self and Others [838c2–9]*

*This has been a summary explanation of seventeen of the perfections<sup>559</sup> of the merits in the decorations<sup>560</sup> of Amitābha Buddha's land, so as to demonstrate the great perfection of the power of the merits pertaining to the Tathāgata's own benefit, and the perfection of the merits pertaining to benefitting others.<sup>561</sup>*

[Vasubandhu] says “summary” because he merely sketches the merits of the Pure Land, which are infinite: there are not just seventeen. This is as if Sumeru were to enter into a mustard seed, or a hair pore contain the ocean! How could that mountain or that ocean have such ability? How could that pore or that seed have such power? But, if they are enabled, they will be able. Thus, it must be understood that although these seventeen speak of benefitting others, they illuminate the principle of benefitting oneself.<sup>562</sup>

*Entering into the Ultimate Truth [838c10–839b7]*

*One must understand the decorations of that land of Buddha Amitāyus as the marks of the wonderful realm of the ultimate truth, here explained one at a time in sixteen parts and one part.*

559. *Chengjiu* 成就. Not in Comma (T. 1524:26.232a).

560. *Shiqi zhong zhuangyan* 十七種莊嚴. Comma has *zhuangyan shiqi zhong*.

561. *Liyita* 利益他. This phrase specifically means the Buddha benefiting beings: see below, T. 1819:40.843c25–28.

562. [RKP: This is the translation of the forementioned Chinese word *zili* 自利. We choose to translate it as “benefitting oneself” in accordance with the context.]

The ultimate truth is produced by the Buddha.<sup>563</sup> This truth is the principle of that realm.<sup>564</sup> Therefore, the decorations in these sixteen parts are called the marks of the wonderful realm. This principle enters into the one essential part,<sup>565</sup> which the text then elaborates.

“One at a time in [sixteen parts and] one part”: this means contemplating the furnishings, which are pure, etc. They are split up into “seventeen parts” and contemplated “one at a time.” Why do we bring them up one at a time?<sup>566</sup>

[Vasubandhu’s] stanzas begin with “[I] take refuge in Amitābha Tathāgata; in that joyful land may I be born.” Herein there is a doubt. The doubter says, “Birth is at the root of existence, the source of bondage. Forsaking birth, he resolves to be born. How is he finished with birth?”

In order to dispel this doubt, let us look at the perfection of the merits of that Pure Land’s decorations. Clearly, that Pure Land is the pure original vow of Amitābha Tathāgata, the product of

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563. *Diyi di zhe, fo yinyuan fa ye* 第一義諦者佛因緣法也, *paramārthasatya* is the dharma which has Buddha for *hetu* and *ālambana* (*pratyaya*?). K. 640n1, with perhaps unwarranted precision, understands *yin* 因 as Dharmākara’s vow (*praṇidhāna*) and *yuan* 緣 as his practice (*śikṣā*): thus Sukhāvātī is the product of the will and activity of Dharmākara. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 128n34 is more to the point in quoting the *Dvādaśadvāra śāstra* (T. 1568:30.165a29–b1):

諸佛因緣法名爲甚深第一義是因緣法無自性故我說是空

The dharma which depends on the buddhas is called profound and primary; it is the dharma of *pratītyasamutpāda*, and because it is *niḥsvabhāvitā* we affirm it as *śūnyatā*.

Uesugi seems to be right in seeing here a reference to the *satyadvaya*: i.e., commonly speaking (*saṃvṛtita*) the buddhas call up a realm (*kṣetra*) that really (*parāmarthita*) does not arise (*anutpāda*) and is therefore void (*śūnya*).

564. *Ci di shi jing yi* 此諦是境義, “*paramārthasatya* is the innerness of that outward realm.” Thus, the decorations (*vyūha*) are the marks (*lakṣaṇa*) of ultimate truth.

565. *Yifaju* 一法句, *ekadharmapada*, the single metrical section (*eka-pada*) which deals with “purity” or transcendence. See above, pp. 87–91. The rest of the text is an elaboration of this section.

566. Tanluan delays answering this query while he resolves a doubt about the opening couplet.



non-production.<sup>567</sup> This is not like birth in the three states of existence (*tribhāva*), vapid and false. Why do we say this? Understand that the *dharmatā* is pure and absolutely unarisen. When [the doubter] says, “birth,” he means “physical birth.” But, if birth is really no birth, how is birth a thing to be finished?<sup>568</sup> And in any case, if one were to finish with birth, then, first of all, one would lose the body that acts as if not acting,<sup>569</sup> and second, one would succumb to the incurable disability of regarding the three voids as not void.<sup>570</sup> The root would be cut off, eternally destroyed, and one would cry out, causing the three thousand

567. *Wusheng zhi sheng* 無生之生. Dharmākara’s resolution to bring Sukhāvati into being was made in the full knowledge that nothing ever comes into being (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*). See n563, above, also pp. 94–96 and n228.

568. *Sheng* 生 has the double entendre of *jāti*, “the birth of a being” and *utpāda*, “the arising of a phenomenon.”

569. *Wuwei nengwei zhi shen* 無爲能爲之身. This phrase can be taken in the Daoist sense of “the holy man (*shengren* 聖人) who acts by not acting” (*Dao de jing*, passim), and the Buddhist sense of the holy person (*āryapudgala*) whose actions are “non-actions” because of the lack of karmic effect (*anabhisaṃskāra*).

570. The three voids, *sankong* 三空, more commonly known as the three doors to deliverance (*vimokṣadvara*), are voidness (*śūnyatā*), “no labels” (*animitta*), and apatheia (*apraṇihīta*). Those who do not regard these “voids” as themselves void, i.e., those who regard them as fillable emptiness, are locked into a binary worldview and therefore “incurable,” *gu* 癩. The thought is precisely that of *Mūlamadhyamakakarikā* 13:8:

śūnyatā sarva-dṛṣṭinām proktā niḥsaraṇaṃ jinaiḥ /  
yeṣāṃ tu śūnyatā-dṛṣṭis tān asādhyaṇ babhāṣire //

Voidness has been declared by the conquerors (i.e., the buddhas) as the purgative of all metaphysical theories; they have pronounced incurable all those for whom voidness is a metaphysical theory.

[RKP: This English translation appears to be Corless’s. For comparison, Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, 36 translates it into English as follows:

The victorious ones have said  
That emptiness is the relinquishing of all views.  
For whomever emptiness is a view,  
That one will accomplish nothing.]

[great chiliocosms] to tremble, for shame at being unable to go back and start again.<sup>571</sup>

The Pure Land is bodied forth as the product of its substrate [of purity].<sup>572</sup> The seventeen parts are the exposition of the house<sup>573</sup> of the Pure Land. Within these seventeen parts, there is a bifurcation into general and special. The opening part gives the general characteristic by saying that this pure buddha land “surpasses the triple world’s way.” And what are the [special] characteristics of this surpassing the

571. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* 6 and 7. Those who choose *nirvāṇa* at the seventh *bhūmi* enter a cul-de-sac from which they cannot emerge to proceed to final enlightenment.

(1) *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* 6:7 and 6:8: A goddess tosses flowers as offerings towards the Buddha’s congregation; they drop off the *mahābodhisattvas* but stick to the *śrāvakas* who, knowing the *vinaya* prohibits garlands, are ashamed: this is a symbol of those who do and do not discriminate (*kalpayanti*) the flowers as “flowers.”

Les fleurs s’attachent à ceux qui n’ont pas encore brisé les relents des passions (*aparikṣiṇavāsana*); elles ne s’attachent pas à ceux qui les ont brisés (*parikṣiṇavāsana*). C’est pourquoi elles ne s’attachent pas aux corps (de ces Bodhisattva) qui ont brisé tous les relents des passions. (Lamotte, *L’Enseignement*, 272)

[RKP: An English translation of these sentences is as follows: “Flowers cling to those who have not yet dispelled the pervasions of the passions (*aparikṣiṇavāsana*); they do not cling to those who have dispelled them (*parikṣiṇavāsana*). That is why they do not cling to the bodies (of these bodhisattvas) who have dispelled all the pervasions of the passions” (Lamotte/Boin, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 161–162, chap. 6, §8, ¶6.)]

(2) *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* 7:4 and 7:5: Mahākāśyapa laments that *śrāvakas*, “qui ont brisé les entraves (*parikṣiṇasamyojana*) . . . sont incapables de produire la pensée de la suprême et parfaite illumination” (Lamotte, *L’Enseignement*, 292). [RKP: An English translation of these sentences is as follows: “Equally, over the Listeners (*śrāvaka*) who have broken the fetters (*parikṣiṇasamyojana*) all the Buddhadharmas are virtueless and powerless and can no longer recapture them. These Śrāvakas, say I, are incapable of producing the thought of supreme and perfect enlightenment.” (Lamotte/Boin, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 179–180, chap. VII, §5, ¶1–2).]

572. *Ti fu sheng li, wei zhi jingtu* 體夫生理謂之淨土. This takes up the “explanation of the connections” promised above (p. 170) and answers the question posed at the head of this section (see n566).

573. The metaphor of a house, *zhai* 宅, is used more fully below, T. 1819:40.843a20–28.

triple world? They are given in the perfection of the merits of the sixteen decorations that follow.<sup>574</sup>

First, the “measurement”: “it is totally like to the sky,” and so, it is “wide, without limits.” Thus we understand its measurements. What is the origin of these measurements? In order to understand this, we visualize their nature. “Nature” means “basic essence.”<sup>575</sup> The Pure Land comes from “the right way, the greatly compassionate, it is sprung from transcendent good roots.” Since [Vasubandhu] says, “transcendent good roots,” what are the characteristics of this that is sprung from good roots? In order to understand this, we next visualize the “appearance” of the decorations. Having understood the appearance, it is proper to understand what is the embodiment of this appearance. Therefore, we next visualize the “diverse phenomena.” Having understood the diverse phenomena, it is proper to understand the “wonderful colors” of the diverse phenomena. Therefore, we next visualize the wonderful colors. Having understood the wonderful colors, we wonder about the “sensation” of these colored things. Therefore, we next visualize their sensation. Having understood how they are sensed by the body, we should understand how they are sensed by the eyes. Therefore, we next visualize the three phenomena of “water, ground, and sky” in the decorations. Having understood how they are sensed by the eyes, we should understand how they are sensed by the nose. Therefore, we next visualize the perfume of the robes and flowers.<sup>576</sup> Having understood how they are sensed by the eyes and nose, we must understand about the separation from passion (*virāga*). Therefore, we next visualize the radiance of Buddha’s wisdom. Having understood the power of that wisdom’s brightness and purity, it is proper to understand how far the sound of the name travels. Therefore, we next visualize the “*brahma* sound, heard afar.” Having understood about the sound of the name, it is proper to understand who it is who furthers one (*adhipatya*). Therefore, we next visualize the “lord.” Having understood who the lord is, who are they who become the lord’s “populace”? In order to understand this, we next visualize the populace. Having understood about the populace, it is proper to understand what

574. See n565, above.

575. This is the third occurrence of this definition. See above, pp. 94–95 and 98.

576. [TK: This sentence seems to allude to the perfection of the merits of the rain in the decorations (*zhuangyanyugongdechengjiu* 莊嚴雨功德成就).]

“rewards” that populace receives. Therefore, we next visualize the rewards. Having understood the rewards, it is proper to understand whether these rewards are with or without hardship. Therefore, we next contemplate the “absence of hardship.” Having understood about the absence of hardship, on what principle is there absence of hardship? In order to understand this, we next visualize the “gate of the great principle.” Having understood the gate of the great principle, it is proper to understand whether the gate of the great principle is fulfilled or not. Therefore, we next visualize the “fulfillment of all that is sought.”

We repeat that this series of seventeen parts is not the total explanation, but visualizing the perfection of the decorations in these seventeen ways, one will be enabled to produce a true and pure faith (*xin* 信) and certainly be born in that Buddha Land of Happiness (*Anle fotu*).

QUESTION: You said above that we know birth as no birth. This refers to those born in the top class.<sup>577</sup> However, a person in the lowest of the low<sup>578</sup> can be born if he relies upon the ten recollections: How is it that he does not choose actual birth? And, if he simply chooses actual birth, he will succumb to the two sticking points:<sup>579</sup> first, the fear that he will not be born; second, the fear that he will be born in a deluded state.

ANSWER: It is like a clean *cintāmaṇi* is placed in muddy water: the water is cleansed. If a man, though muddled by the transgressions of immeasurable births and deaths, hears of Amitābha Tathāgata, he goes

577. *Shang pin* 上品, the top three of the nine classes of rebirth are reserved for those who best understand Buddhist doctrine. S.B.E., 49(2):188–192. In the later iconography, it was represented that such beings would have a vision *in extremis* of Amitābha seated in the lotus pose and exhibiting the meditation gesture (*dhyānamudra*). The great Buddha of Kamakura is shown thus.

578. *Xiaxia pin* 下下品, the beings in the lowest class of rebirth are wicked and unlearned, but faithful. S.B.E., 49(2):197–199. Their vision was then said to be of the standing Buddha, with one hand raised in reassurance (*abhayamudrā*) and the other lowered in donation (*varadamudrā*).

579. *Erzhi* 二執 is normally the two holdings, *dvigraha* [TK: *grāha-dvaya*], i.e., holding to the reality of a self (*ātmagraha* [TK: *ātma-grāha*]) and holding to the reality of the dharmas (*dharmagraha* [TK: *dharm-grāha*]). The present pair is either due to Tanluan himself, or a yet untraced source. K. 652n4 compares it with the two doubts (*eryi* 二疑) of Daochuo 導綽 [TK: the alternate rendering of Daochuo 道綽] (562–645) and Chikō 智光 (Nara period).

to the pinnacle of non-arising,<sup>580</sup> for the clean jewel of the name is cast into his muddled mind. By its constant repetition, his transgressions disappear, his mind is cleansed, and he is born.

Again, if that *cintāmaṇi* is wrapped in black or yellow cloth and cast into water, the water becomes black or yellow in accordance with the color of the object. That pure buddha land has the peerless jewel of Amitābha Tathāgata wrapped in the cloth of the perfection of the merits of the innumerable decorations, and it is cast into the water of the mind of he who is to be born. How could this not convert his false view of birth into the wisdom of “no birth”?

Further, it is like ice thrown onto a blazing fire. The fire is fierce, so the ice disappears: but as the ice disappears, the fire goes out. Although the man of the lowest class does not know that *dharmatā* is unarisen, simply by the power of invoking the Buddha’s name, he makes the re-birth wish and resolves to be born in that land. That land is the realm of non-arising,<sup>581</sup> so, though he falsely views it as birth, the fire [of his false view] is automatically put out.

### *The Beings [839b8–841b3]*

This is divided into two: first, visualization of the Buddha; second, visualization of the bodhisattvas.

#### *Visualization of the Buddha [839b9–840c23]*

*What is the visualization of the perfection of the merits of the Buddha’s adornments? One must understand eight kinds of visualization on the perfection of the merits of the Buddha’s adornments.*

The principle of this visualization has already been sketched in the preceding stanzas.

*What are the eight kinds?*

*First is the perfection of the merits of the decorations of [Amitābha’s] throne;<sup>582</sup>*

580. Or, “no birth.” See n568, above.

581. *Wusheng jie* 無生界, *anutpādhātu*. See n567 above, and references there given.

582. Throughout this list, where the Comma (T. 1524:26.232a) has the formula “X” *zhuangyan*, e.g., 座莊嚴, Tanluan has the cumbersome formula *zhuangyan* “X” *gongde chengjiu*, e.g., 莊嚴座功德成就.

*Second is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] bodily activity;*<sup>583</sup>

*Third is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] vocal activity;*

*Fourth is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] mental activity;*

*Fifth is the perfection of the merits of the great*<sup>584</sup> *congregation in the adornments;*

*Sixth is the perfection of the merits of the superiors in the decorations;*

*Seventh is the perfection of the merits of the lord of the decorations;*

*Eighth is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] not standing firm in vain.*

*What is the perfection of the merits of the decorations of [Amitābha's] throne? It is on account of this that the stanzas have: "There, the king of great unbounded treasure, is enthroned upon wonderful flowers."*

If one wishes to visualize the throne, one should refer to the [seventh visualization given to Queen Vaidehī in the] *Contemplation Sutra*.<sup>585</sup>

*What is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] bodily activity? It is on account of this that the stanzas have: "And his marks and his signs shine one xun, for his form is superior to all."*<sup>586</sup>

If one wishes to visualize the Buddha's body, one should refer to the [eighth and ninth visualization given to Queen Vaidehī in the] *Contemplation Sutra*.<sup>587</sup>

*What is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] vocal activity? It is on account of this that the stanzas have: "The Tathāgata's wonderful voice, in brahma tones, sounds in all realms."*

583. Here and in the following two adornments, Tanluan adds *ye* 業 to the plain *shen* 身 (or *kou* or *xin* 口 • 心) of the Comma.

584. *Da* 大, not in the Comma or v.l.

585. See above, pp. 125–127.

586. [TK: As for the stanzas of the perfection of the merits of the adornment of Amitābha's bodily activity, slightly different sentences are used in each volume of the text: 相好光一尋色像超群生故 (first volume, T. 1819:40.839b20) and 相好光一尋色像超群生 (second volume, T. 1819:40.831c23). Therefore, though the English translation of the stanzas is "and his marks and his signs shine one *hsun*, for his form is superior to all" in the first volume, they are interpreted as "his marks and his signs shine one *xun*, and his form is superior to all" in the second volume.]

587. S.B.E., 49(2):177–181.

What is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha's] mental activity? It is on account of this that the stanzas have: "As the earth, water, fire, and the wind, and the sky, he is ever impartial." "Impartial," because his mind is impartial.

Because ordinary people build up transgressions through the three activities of body, speech, and mind,<sup>588</sup> rolling around in the triple world without end, the buddhas and bodhisattvas employ the adornment of their three activities of body, speech, and mind to cure the false activities of beings (*sattva*). How do they employ them as a cure?<sup>589</sup>

By regarding the body [as real],<sup>590</sup> beings receive a body in the three defiled states,<sup>591</sup> a despicable body, an ugly body, a body subject to the eight difficulties,<sup>592</sup> a body subject to *saṃsāra*. Beings such as these, through seeing Amitābha Tathāgata's body glorious with its marks and

588. Tanluan has, up till now, used *xinye* 心業 for *manāḥ-karma*, but here he more correctly writes *yiye* 意業.

589. The Taishō text, Uesugi (*Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 136), and K. 659 all punctuate after *zhongsheng*, i.e., "How do they employ them as a cure for beings? By regarding the body, they receive a body. . . ." This is awkward and destroys the symmetry of the style. Punctuating after *zhi* 治, however, gives us a phrase beginning *zhongsheng yi shenjian gu* 衆生以身見故, which then parallels the formulae at T. 1819:40.839c2–3 and 839c8.

590. *Shenjian* 身見, *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*. This is the first of the five "wrong viewpoints" (*kudr̥ṣṭi*) listed in *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* 6: "Prendre comme 'moi et mien' les cinq Upadānaskandhas. Cette vue a pour action d'être le support de toutes les opinions fausses (*dr̥ṣṭigata*)" (de la Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, 348).

[TK: This is a translation of the Chinese sentences 謂於五取蘊執我我所一切見趣所依爲業 (T. 1585:31.31c13–4). Wei Tat (*Ch'eng wei-shih lun*, 417) translates this sentence by Xuanzang into English as follows: "To take the five Upadanaskandhas for 'I and mine.' The special activity of bad views is to serve as a supporting basis for all false opinions."]

591. *San tu* 三塗 i.e., the three lowest states (*gati*) of animals, ghosts (*preta*), and the hells.

592. *Ba nan* 八難, the eight conditions under which it is difficult to comprehend Buddhism:

- (1)–(3) birth in the three states, as preceding note;
- (4) birth in Uttarakuru, the continent to the north of Mount Sumeru, where life is so long and pleasant that one cannot understand about impermanence (*anitya*) and suffering (*duḥkha*);
- (5) birth in the heavens, having similar difficulties to the above;
- (6) being deaf, blind, or dumb;



signs, obtain release from the various bonds of bodily activities such as above mentioned, and, entering into the family of the Tathāgata, certainly obtain bodily activity that is equitable (*samatā, pingdeng* 平等).<sup>593</sup>

By being arrogant, beings vilify the true dharma, slander those who are blessed and holy, and despise those who are honorable and senior.<sup>594</sup> Men such as these will suffer the pain of having their tongues cut out,<sup>595</sup> the pain of being dumb, the pain of teaching to no avail, and the pain of going unrecognized. Beings with these various pains, on hearing the most meritorious name of Amitābha Tathāgata, and the sound of dharma being preached, obtain release from the various bonds of vocal activities as above mentioned and, entering into the family of the Tathāgata, certainly obtain vocal activity that is equitable.

By holding false views,<sup>596</sup> the minds of beings produce discrimination (*vikalpa*). “Discrimination” is supposing there to be such things as being and non-being, negation and affirmation, beauty and ugliness, good and evil, this and that. Because of discrimination, one wallows in the three states of existence and receives the pain of the various discriminations, the pain of selecting and rejecting: this is an extended sleep in a long night, with no hope of escape. These beings, on meeting Amitābha Tathāgata’s unchanging radiance, or hearing of Amitābha

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(7) being a philosopher, i.e., someone unable to transcend the binary worldview;

(8) living in the interregnum between buddhas, when their dharma has been forgotten.

[RKP: Cf. Inagaki, 314n229. Unfortunately neither Corless nor Inagaki provide any source for their explications of these eight categories. We note that Hirakawa gives *aṣṭākṣaṇa*, and *aṣṭa-akṣaṇaḥ*; this then is the negative of the *aṣṭākṣaṇa*, i.e., the eight opportune rebirths. See Buswell and Lopez, sv. “*aṣṭākṣaṇa*,” p. 72, r.]

593. [TK: The meaning of the word *pingdeng* 平等 is similar to that of *wu fen bie* 無分別 (non-discriminating) or of *wu cha bie* 無差別 (indiscrimination).]

594. *Zun, chang* 尊長. The text adds the gloss: “‘Honorable’ means one’s prince (*jun* 君), father, or teacher. ‘Senior’ means a virtuous man or one’s brother’s family.” This is the Confucian explanation, but the characters are also patient of a Buddhist interpretation as translations of *ārya* and *śreṣṭhin*.

595. Either in this world or on rebirth in the Hell of Tongue-Cutting.

596. *Xiejian* 邪見, *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*, the third of the “false viewpoints” in the *Siddhi* (see above, n590), though Tanluan’s list agrees neither with the *Siddhi* nor with *Abhidharmakośa* 5.18, being more general than either.



Tathāgata's mental activity that is equitable, such beings obtain release from the various bonds of mental activity as above mentioned and, entering into the family of the Tathāgata, certainly obtain mental activity that is equitable.

[Three Questions on the Operation of Wisdom, 839c15–29]

[i.] QUESTION: The mind is the perceiver.<sup>597</sup> How then can it be, like the earth, water, fire, and the wind . . . ever impartial?

ANSWER: Although the mind is the perceiver, when it enters the truth,<sup>598</sup> it has no perceiving. This is like a snake that, though by nature crooked, straightens out when it enters a bamboo pipe.<sup>599</sup> Again, it is as with the human body: when one is pricked by a needle or stung by a wasp, one perceives it [as “pain”]: but if one is leeches or operated on,<sup>600</sup> one does not perceive it [as “pain” but as “benefit”]. In these cases, there is either perceiving or non-perceiving, depending upon the circumstances. And if it depends on the circumstances, then [in Sukhāvati] there is neither perceiving nor non-perceiving.

[ii.] QUESTION: If, then, the mind has no perceiving on entering the Truth, how can it have omniscience?<sup>601</sup>

ANSWER:<sup>602</sup> The mind of an ordinary man (*prthagjana*) has things it perceives, and consequently, things it does not perceive. “The mind

597. *Xin shi juezhi xiang* 心是覺知相. *Juezhi*, sometimes just *zhi*, is “to perceive an object” (Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika*, “knowing”). I take *xiang* as a *bahuvrihi* marker.

598. *Shixiang* 實相: *tattva*? K. 663n15 expands it to *zhenru shixian* 眞如實相. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika*, 128, translates “real.”

599. Simile from *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.709b).

600. *Ruo shizhi dan*, *ruo gandao ge* 若石蛭噉若甘刀割, “If one is sucked on by leeches or cut with a sweet knife.” Medicinal leeches were raised on stones, and a “sweet” knife signifies a therapeutic one (K. 663n16, n17).

601. *Yiqie zhong zhi* 一切種智, “complete omniscience.” See above, n345.

602. This passage closely follows the *Banruo wu zhi lun* 般若無知論. [TK: This is not an independent text, rather a part of *Zhao lun* 肇論 by Sengzhao 僧肇 (T. 1858:45.153–154).] The second sentence quotes T. 1858:45.153a27–28; the third sentence selects from T. 1858:45.154a2–3. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika*, 213, translates the first section as follows:

If there is something that is known, then there is something that is not known. Because in the holy mind there is nothing that is known,

of a holy man (*āryapudgala*) has nothing it perceives, and so, nothing it does not perceive.” Since he perceives without perceiving, “perceiving is the same as not perceiving.”

[iii.] QUESTION: You have just said, “Because there is nothing he perceives, there is nothing he does not perceive.” But if there is nothing he does not perceive, how can it not be that he perceives the dharma-s? And if he perceives the dharma-s, how can you go on to say that he has nothing that discriminates?

ANSWER: The marks of the dharma-s are like a magical trick. Because of a magical trick, there may be the form of a horse:<sup>603</sup> and it is not that it is without differentiation into long neck, nose, and four feet; but a wise man, seeing it, would not say that there was definitely the form of a horse, and discriminate it as that.

[840a1–b8]

*What is the perfection of the merits of the great congregation in the adornments? It is on account of this that the stanzas have: “Those divine ones, unshakable beings, come to birth out of wisdom’s pure ocean.”*

*What is the perfection of the merits of the superiors in the decorations? It is on account of this that the stanzas have: “Like the king of the Mountain Sumeru, they are powerful, and never surpassed.”*

What is the perfection of the merits of the lord of the decorations?  
It is on account of this that the stanzas have:

*There, the divinized ones, the devout,  
circle round and gaze up as they worship.*

*What is the perfection of the merits of the adornment of [Amitābha’s] not standing firm in vain? It is on account of this that the stanzas have: “See the power of the Buddha’s original vow! Those who meet him shall not pass in vain, for the great sea of merit-bearing treasures is empowered to be quickly fulfilled.”*

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there is nothing that is not known. The knowing of unknowing is termed all-knowing (*sarvajñāta*).

Also see *ibid.*, 218, where Robinson punctuates differently from Tanluan.

603. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 139n9 cites *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* 6 (T. 1509:25.101c) as the source of this simile. Something comparable is also found in the *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*, where a definitely Yogācāra viewpoint is set forward.

The perfection of the adornment of [Amitābha's] not standing firm in vain: this refers to the power of Amitābha Tathāgata's original vow (*ādipraṇidhāna*). We shall give a short explanation of "in vain" and "not standing firm," from which the meaning of "not standing firm in vain" will appear.

A man whose house had been cut off was supported by a nobleman, but strife arose in a boat: another piled up gold to fill his treasury, but did not escape an indigent death.<sup>604</sup> Everything we see is like this: what one obtains has nothing to do with what one has kept safe. All this is due to working in vain and not standing firm. The phrase "not standing firm in vain" refers to the present lordly, divine power<sup>605</sup> of Amitābha Tathāgata originating from the forty-eight vows of Dharmākara Bodhisattva. His power is complete (*cheng* 成) because of his vow, and his vow was perfect (*jiu* 就) because of his power. The vow was not vain, and the power is not empty. His power and his vow go together, in the final analysis they are not different, and therefore are called perfection (*chengjiu* 成就).

*When the bodhisattvas who have not yet achieved a purified mind see the Buddha, they will certainly achieve a dharma body of equitability. [Between them and the bodhisattvas of purified mind, there is no difference:]<sup>606</sup> and therefore, together with the bodhisattvas of purified mind and the*

604. Laconic allusions to two complex misadventures (K. 674n2, n3).

(1) In the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yue* (吳越春秋), 2, it is recorded how Prince Liao of Wu 吳王僚, intending to kill Duke Qingji 公子慶忌, first set about murdering the family of Yaoli 要離, and Duke Qingji took the destitute Yaoli into his service. One day, all three were in a boat: the Duke killed the Prince and then, "like a dog biting his master," Yaoli killed the Duke.

(2) The *Documents of the Former Han* 前漢書, 93, relate that Emperor Wen of Han 漢文帝 showed favor to Dengtong 鄧通, who thus was able to amass great wealth: but the next emperor, Jing 景帝, declared Dengtong's money worthless and confiscated his property, so that he died a pauper.

605. *Zizai shenli* 自在神力, *adhiṣṭhāna*. This establishes that "not standing firm in vain," *bu xu zuo zhuch* 不虛作住持, is a synonym of *adhiṣṭhāna*.

606. Missing Chinese characters, *jingxin pusa wuyi* 淨心菩薩無異, restored from the Comma (T. 1524:26.232b2). The Taishō text of Tanluan omits the phrase, K. 669 follows suit, and Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 141 omits the next phrase as well!

*bodhisattvas of the upper levels, they will certainly attain the quiescent equitability.*

The dharma body of equitability (*pingdeng fashen*): This is the body of a bodhisattva of the eighth level and above, born of the *dharmatā*.

The quiescent equitability (*praśamasamatā*): This means that what is obtained by these dharma-body bodhisattvas is the dharma of the quiescent equitability.

Because they obtain this dharma of the quiescent equitability, we speak of their dharma-bodies of equitability: because of what is obtained by these bodhisattvas who have dharma-bodies of equitability, we speak of the dharma of the quiescent equitability. These bodhisattvas obtain the *vipākaja-samādhi*,<sup>607</sup> and in the divine power of that *samādhi*, [remaining] in one place, they go throughout the worlds in the ten directions instantaneously and simultaneously, there to worship all the buddhas and all the hosts in the buddha-assemblies, vast like the sea; and they are able to go to the innumerable worlds which lack the Buddha, the dharma, and sangha and, manifesting themselves variously, variously teach and convert: completely liberated, they constantly do the work of Buddha for the sake of beings, themselves quite without notions of going and coming, worshiping, or being completely liberated. Hence, their bodies are called dharma-bodies of equitability, and this dharma is called the dharma of the quiescent equitability.

Bodhisattvas who have not yet achieved a purified mind: This means bodhisattvas from the first to the seventh levels inclusive. These bodhisattvas are also able to manifest bodies in worlds that lack the Buddha [dharma and sangha], whether a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a *koṭi*, or a hundred thousand *koṭis* [of worlds],<sup>608</sup> there to propagate the work of Buddha. But they must use their minds<sup>609</sup> to enter the *samādhi* until they are able to negate or not negate their

607. *Baosheng sanmei* 報生三昧, a *samādhi* of the eighth *bhūmi*, obtained from the fruit (*vipāka-ja*) of one's merits, by means of which one can be autonomously reborn anywhere. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 141n12; K. 675n11; Mochizuki, *Bukkyō Daijiten*, 1790a. The *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* mentions two *samādhis* that seem to be included in the present one (S.B.E., 49[2]:21).

608. The *Sutra on the Gracious Sovereign* (*Renwang jing* 仁王經) lists the number of worlds visited as proportionate to the *bhūmi* attained (T. 245:8.826). [RKP: Today, this text is commonly regarded as *Sutra for Humane Kings*. See Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*.]

609. *Zuoxin* 作心: Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 142n14 says this means *vikalpa*.

thought processes.<sup>610</sup> Since they use their minds, they are said to have not yet achieved a purified mind. These bodhisattvas vow to be born in Sukhāvatī and thus see Amitābha Buddha: on seeing Amitābha Buddha, they will certainly be equal with the bodhisattvas of the upper levels in regard to body and dharma.

It is for the sake of this that the lineage of the bodhisattvas Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu resolve to be born there.

[Two Questions on Subitism, 840b8–c9]

(i) QUESTION: Referring to the *Daśabhūmika sūtra*,<sup>611</sup> we find that bodhisattvas rise through the levels, gradually obtaining limitless merit after passing through many *kalpas*. How is it that, on seeing Amitābha Buddha, one will certainly be equal with the bodhisattvas of the upper levels in regard to body and dharma?

ANSWER: To say certainly [RKP: equal] does not mean precisely equal. Certainly they will not slip from this equality, and therefore we say, equal.

(ii) QUESTION: If, then, they are not precisely equal, how can you maintain that they are bodhisattvas? For this term is used only for those who set out at the first level and move gradually upwards by themselves until they are equal with the buddhas. Why do you falsely say that they are equal to the bodhisattvas of the upper levels?

ANSWER: Bodhisattvas at the seventh level go into the great extinction<sup>612</sup> if, looking up, they see no buddhas who can save them and,

610. *Nai neng fei bu fei xin* 乃能非不非心. Translation tentative. The main point is that, above the seventh *bhūmi*, there is neither arising nor ceasing of thought, the mind does not “move,” all is “the same” (*samatā*): but, I am not satisfied that I comprehend this phrase with precision.

611. *Shidi jing* 十地經. K. 676n19 identifies this as the “Chapter on the Ten Levels” (*shidi pin* 十地品) of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經), i.e., chap. 26 of the sixty *juan* version of Śikṣānanda (T. 279:10). It also circulated as a separate text: see Nanjio, *Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, 87, 88, 105, and 110. The reference here is to the overall plan of the sutra. For a representative selection translated from the earlier (sixty *juan*) version (where it is chap. 22), see Robinson, *Chinese Buddhist Verse*, 54–59; and for an analysis, see Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 283–291 et passim.

612. *Da jimie* 大寂滅, *mahānirodha*, the cul-de-sac of Hīnayāna. Dutt (*Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 279 and n4 [RKP: in rev. ed. 1978: 124 and n4]) tells us that the bodhisattva

looking down, they see no beings who can be saved. They desire to cast off the way of Buddha and attain the limit of existence.<sup>613</sup> At that time, if they be not entreated by the divine power of the buddhas of the ten directions, they go into extinction, and are not different from those of the two vehicles. But if the bodhisattvas are born into Sukhāvatī, they see Amitābha Buddha, and so they do not have this problem. This is why we can say “certainly” and “equitability.”

Again, in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*, Amitābha Tathāgata, in his original vow, says:<sup>614</sup>

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attained nirodha in the sixth bhūmi, and in the seventh, he entered into and arose out of it but it should not be thought that he is subject to nirodha because he is above that delusion (*vitarkadoṣa*) of the Śrāvakas, viz., that nirodha is *saṃskṛtātyanta vyupaśama* (the ultimate cessation of the constituted things).

N4 explains: “In fact this shows the line of demarcation between the Śrāvakas and the Bodhisattvas.”

613. *Shiji* 實際, *bhūtaḥkoṭi*. I must confess to great puzzlement over this term. Since it is so often used in the Mahāyāna texts as a derogatory term for the “enlightenment” of śrāvakas (as here, and also above, p. 121 and n260), one might take it as a synonym for *bhavāgra*, “the pinnacle of existence,” a state of being so subtle that it can be mistaken for *nirvāṇa*, though it is actually still subject to *saṃsāra*: Dutt (ibid., 279 and n5) understands it so. But, the evidence collected by Vallée Poussin at the end of the *Siddhi* (v.2, p. 750ff.) quite forbids this. One might then settle for it as a “lesser *nirvāṇa*” of the śrāvakas, who gain a *vimuktikāya* but not a *dharmakāya* (cf. Lamotte, *Samādhi-nirmocana*, 257), were it not that the Japanese commentators never tire of equating it with *dharmatā* (e.g., Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 57n58, “*bhūtaḥkoṭi* is a synonym of *nirvāṇa* and *dharmatā*”) and, indeed, Vallée Poussin (op. cit., 750, citation 2) quotes a passage from the *Ratnakūṭa* which appears to identify *bhūtaḥkoṭi* with *apratīṣṭhitakoṭi*, the “non-stuck” point, which is nothing if not the Mahāyāna *nirvāṇa*. So, if it is alright for bodhisattvas to be one with the *dharmatā*, and if *bhūtaḥkoṭi* is a synonym of *dharmatā*, why then is it necessary to transcend *bhūtaḥkoṭi*? I can only guess that the term predates Mahāyāna (Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Dictionary*, 410a, cites Pāli *koṭi-gata* as, “salvation”) and is thus used (a) as a term for the Hīnayāna *vimokṣa*; and (b) as an originally apical term, it is warmed over and used for the *dharmadhātu*, etc. The present case seems to be like that of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*, which apparently equates *bhūtaḥkoṭi* with *nirodha* (Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 262).

614. The text of this quotation, on which Tanluan bases a crucial doctrinal argument, differs at important points from the Sanskrit.

May it be that, when I become a buddha, the host of bodhisattvas from the buddha lands in other regions may come to be born in my land, certainly and necessarily attaining the state of those in their last life; except for those who, because their original vow was freely made for the sake of beings, have bound upon themselves the armor<sup>615</sup> of the wide-ranging vow, who continually pile up their stock of merit, travel to all the buddha lands so as to exercise in the bodhisattva practice in order to release [beings] completely, worship all the buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, in the ten directions, initiating the conversion of beings as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, and establishing them in the peerless right and true way (*wushang zhengzhen zhi dao* 無上正真之道): transcending the usual levels, [those born in my land] will be face-to-face with the practices of all the levels, and practice the virtues of Samantabhadra.<sup>616</sup> And if it is not so, may I not obtain perfect enlightenment.

Referring to this sūtra, we see that the bodhisattvas of that land need not go from one level to the next. The saying about gradually rising through the levels was a teaching of Śākyamuni Tathāgata, who was a transformation (*nirmāṇakāya*) for Jambudvīpa.<sup>617</sup> How could that region, the Pure Land, be like this [Jambudvīpa]? Amongst the five inconceivables, the *buddhadharma* is the most inconceivable.<sup>618</sup> But, if we say that the bodhisattvas must go from one level to the next, the substrate (*li* 理) would not be transcendent, and that is certainly not the case!

615. Emend *deng* 鐙 to *kai* 鎧, following Skt. *saṃnāha*. [TK: Tanluan's text has the former character, while the *Sukhāvātīvyūha* uses the latter. See T. 360:12.268b.]

616. Samantabhadra is the bodhisattva of perfect practice. See, for example, Chang, *Buddhist Teaching of Totality*, 187–196.

[TK: This sentence is the English translation of the Chinese sentence 超出常倫諸地之行現前修習普賢之德. According to Hayashima and Ōtani (*Jōdoron chū*, 345–350), we have to translate it as follows: “they also transcend the usual levels, that is, transcend the practices of all the stages, and actually practice the virtues of Samantabhadra.”]

617. Jambudvīpa (“rose apple continent”) is the continent to the south of Mount Sumeru, inhabited by human beings. See also above, n133.

618. See above, p. 168 and n508.



It is analogous to the tree called “strongroot.”<sup>619</sup> This tree matures in the earth for a hundred years before it is full grown.<sup>620</sup> In one day it increases its height a thousand feet, and so on every day: reckoning its growth over a hundred years, how could its size be ranked with that of the pine tree, when we see that a pine tree’s daily growth is not more than an inch? Hearing of strongroot, can we doubt that it has such a daily [growth]?<sup>621</sup>

If a man were to listen to Śākyamuni Tathāgata and attain arhatship at one hearing or discern the unarisen “early one morning,”<sup>622</sup> we would not regard those lapidary words<sup>623</sup> as the whole explanation of truth. And one will not come to believe [this idea of transcending the usual levels] just by hearing the matter of this discourse. These are not ordinary words, and “they cannot be received by ordinary men.”<sup>624</sup>

619. *Hao jian* 好堅, “well-founded,” a nickname for the eponymous tree of Jambudvīpa (see n616). Mentioned in many places in *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*.

620. Punctuate after *ju* 具 (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 145n22).

621. Emend *yue* 曰 to *ri* 日 and punctuate after it, following Shinran (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 145n24). But there still seems something queer about the passage.

622. *Zhong chao* 終朝. An allusion to the opening line of *Cai lü* 采綠, “Gathering Green” in the *Book of Songs* 詩經: Mao 226; Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 4:411ff. The first stanza goes (Waley, *Book of Songs*, #59):

The whole morning I gathered green;  
And in the end had not a handful.  
My hair is all wispy;  
I must go home and wash it.

K. 677n35 agrees with Legge in taking the characters to mean *asa meshi mae*, “before breakfast.”

623. *Jiyou zhi yan* 接誘之言, “enticing words,” the phrase or single word that may be the occasion of enlightening those sufficiently advanced. Śāriputra was enlightened thus (Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, 89) and the Zen stories are full of similar incidents.

624. *Bu ru changren zhi er* 不入常人之耳, “They will not go into the ears of ordinary men.” An allusion to *Zhuangzi* 12 (Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 140):

Great music is lost on the ears of the villagers, but play them “The Breaking of the Willow” or “Bright Flowers” and they grin from ear to ear. In the same way, lofty words make no impression on the minds of the mob.



[TK: Even if those who listen to such extraordinary words say that they are not correct; it cannot be helped.<sup>625</sup>]

*[Summary of the Visualization of the Eight Adornments of the Buddha, 840c10–23]*

*One must understand the perfection of the merits of the adornments of the Tathāgata's benefits for himself and others<sup>626</sup> summarily shown in eight parts, one at a time.*

Why does [Vasubandhu] say, “one at a time”?

Above, the perfection of the merits of the decorations of the land have been given in seventeen parts. Since we know what pertains to the land, we ought to know about the lord of the land, and therefore we next visualize the merits of the Buddha's adornments. If the Buddha has adornments, where is his throne? Therefore, we first visualize his throne. Having understood about his throne, it is proper to understand about the lord of the throne. Therefore, we next visualize the Buddha's adornment of bodily activity. Having understood about his bodily activity, we ought to understand about the sound of his name. Therefore, we next visualize the Buddha's adornment of vocal activity. Having understood how his name is heard, it is proper to understand why his name was obtained. Therefore, we next visualize the Buddha's adornment of mental activity. Having understood all three activities, we ought to inquire: who are those divinized men, great teachers, worthy to receive benefit? Therefore, we next visualize the merits of the great congregation. Having understood that the merits of the great congregation are immeasurable, it is proper to understand who are the superiors. Therefore, we next visualize the superiors. The superiors are buddhas.<sup>627</sup> Having understood about the superiors, we fear

625. [TK: In this section, Corless did not translate the sentence 謂之不然亦其宜也. On the basis of the Japanese commentary, I translated it as: “Even if those who listen to such extraordinary words say that they are not correct; it cannot be helped.” Inagaki translates this sentence as follows: “So we must expect such a question as ‘How would it be possible?’ ” See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 257.]

626. [TK: *Rulai zili lita gongde zhuangyan cidì chengjiu* 如來自利利他功德莊嚴次第成就.]

627. *Shangshou shi fo* 上首是佛. This is not strictly true, as Tanluan immediately reminds us: the bodhisattvas partake of the supremacy of the buddha. See above, n348.

that the mature and the immature might be the same; therefore, we next visualize the lord. Having understood about the lord, what is the lord's power of furtherance (*adhipati*)? Therefore, we next visualize the adornment of [RKP: Amitābha's] not standing firm in vain.

These are the eight parts, one at a time.

### *Visualization of the Bodhisattvas*

[*The Visualization of the Four Adornments of the Bodhisattvas*, 840c23–841b3]

What is the visualization of the perfection of the merits<sup>628</sup> of the bodhisattvas' adornments? One must understand the visualization of the perfection of the merits of the bodhisattvas' adornments as the visualization of the perfection of the merits of four right actions of those bodhisattvas.

Thusness (*tathatā*, *zhenru* 眞如) is the proper substance of all the dharmas.<sup>629</sup> The substance acts in such a way, yet we affirm that it does not act.<sup>630</sup>

"Not acting, yet acting": this is called acting in accord with the truth.<sup>631</sup> The substance, although it is one, can be divided into four according to its import, and the four actions can be properly summed up in one.

*What are the four?*

*First, their bodies not moving from the Buddha Land, they go throughout the ten directions in various transformations, acting in accordance with the truth, and always doing the work of Buddha. It is on account of this that the stanzas have: "In the Land of Blessed Peace, all is pure, and the wheel*

628. Hear again, *zhuangyan gongde* 莊嚴功德 is metathesized from the *gongde zhuangyan* of the Comma (T. 1524:26.232b).

629. *Zhenru shi zhu fa zhengti* 眞如是諸法正體. This may be a Yogācāra statement. See the discussion following.

630. [TK: Regarding the sentence 體如而行則是不行, Inagaki translates it as follows: "Since [the bodhisattvas of the Pure Land] perform practices while realizing that their essence is suchness, their practices are, in fact, non-practice." See Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, 258–259. I would translate this sentence as follows: "If one acts on the basis of thusness, his/her action are regarded as non-action."]

631. *Bu xing er xing, ming rushi xiuxing* 不行而行名如實修行. Another ambiguously Buddhō-Daoist reference to *anabhisamkāra* and, e.g., *Dao de jing* LXIX, *xing wu xing* 行無行. See above, p. 187 and notes.

*without spot always turns, bodhisattvas, as buddhas transformed, shine like suns, yet stand firm like Sumeru.”*

*Hence, they cause beings to bloom, like lotuses in the mud.*

The bodhisattvas of the eighth level and above are constantly in *samādhi*,<sup>632</sup> and in the power of the *samādhi*, their bodies not moving from their original place, they are able to go throughout the ten directions to worship the buddhas and teach and convert beings.

“The wheel without spot”: this is a virtue of the buddha-stage (*fōdī* 佛地, *buddhabhūmi*). The virtue of the buddha-stage is that it is unspotted by the activity of the passions. The buddhas always turn this wheel of dharma for the sake of the bodhisattvas, and the great bodhisattvas are then able, with this wheel of dharma, to preach to all [beings], without pausing even for a moment.<sup>633</sup> This is why [Vasubandhu] says, “always turns.” Their dharma-bodies are like suns, in that the brilliance of their transformations goes throughout the worlds: but to call them suns is inadequate, for their brightness is unmoving, so [Vasubandhu] further says, “yet stand firm like Sumeru.”

“Like lotuses in the mud”: A sūtra says,<sup>634</sup> “A lotus will not grow on high, dry ground, but a lotus will grow in the lowlands, in wet mud.” This is a metaphor of ordinary men who are in the mud of the passions: for their sake the bodhisattvas preach and are able to cause the lotus of the Buddha’s perfect enlightenment to grow. So, indeed, they “constantly, without interruption, propagate the three jewels gloriously connected.”<sup>635</sup>

*Second, these transformations send out great and luminous rays that are able, simultaneously, without a time lag, as quick as thought and instantaneously,<sup>636</sup> to go throughout the worlds in the ten directions,*

632. This is the *samādhi* called *vipākaja*. See above, pp. 197–198 and notes.

633. *Wu zanshi xiuxi* 無暫時休息, almost, “without pausing for breath.”

634. *Jing yan* 經言. But it is not really a sūtra; it is Sengzhao’s *Commentary on the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (T. 1775:38.392b) commenting on the phrase *padmam ivodaka jātām udakena na lipyate*, “as a lotus, though born in water, is not stained by water.” The saying is a commonplace: see Lamotte, *L’Enseignement*, 111 and its note. [RKP: As for Boin’s English translation, see Lamotte/Boin, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 14, chap. 1, §10, ¶17 and note.]

635. Quotation from Sengzhao (see preceding).

636. *Yiqieshi, buqian buhou, yixin, yinian* 一切時不前不後一心一念. This unwieldy string of characters appears to be no more than a list of synonyms for “simultaneous.” *Yiqieshi* would normally be “at all times, constantly,”

*teaching and converting beings by the practice of various skillful strategies, and thus relieving the sufferings of beings by what they do. It is on account of this that the stanzas have: "Without spot is their beauteous light: in one instant, and all at one time it illumines all buddha assemblies and conveys health to all living beings."*

When it was said, above, that they arrive without moving, it might have appeared that in "arriving" there would be a time lag.<sup>637</sup> Therefore, [Vasubandhu] goes on to say, "instantaneously, simultaneously, without a time lag."

*Third, in this, they omit none of the worlds, they shine on all the beings in the buddha assemblies without remainder: they worship the merits<sup>638</sup> of the buddhas, the tathāgatas, with praises and grand and limitless offerings. It is on account of this that the stanzas have: "They rain down divine robes, flowers, and music, subtle incense, and so forth, in worship, thus to praise all the merits of buddhas,<sup>639</sup> with their minds quite impartial to all.*

Without remainder: The brightness goes throughout all worlds and all great buddha assemblies, so that there is not a single world nor a single buddha assembly that it does not reach. Zhaogong<sup>640</sup> says:

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but the stanzas, and Tanluan's comment, take it as *yishi* 一時, "at one time, simultaneous." Yixin might be "one mindedly," *cittaikāgratā*, but that would hardly make sense in context. The sense of *yinian* and *buqian buhou* has already been established (see above, pp. 143ff., and notes).

637. Tanluan quotes himself from T. 1819:40.833b14ff. (see above, pp. 143–144), with minor modifications.

638. *Gongde* 功德. Not in Comma.

639. Very curiously, Tanluan here writes *zan zhu fo gongde* 讚諸佛功德, whereas the Comma and his own previous text of the stanzas have *zan fo zhu gongde* 讚佛諸功德.

640. Zhaogong 肇公. An alias of Sengzhao 僧肇. The quotation is from the preface to his *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Commentary* (T. 1775:38.327a). My translation is tentative: I am not certain I comprehend it. The Taishō punctuation destroys the parallelism, and I follow that of K. 688.

法身無像。而殊形並應。  
至韻無言。而玄籍彌布。  
冥權無謀。而動與事會。

The "Dark Sayings" (*xuanji* 玄籍) are the commentaries on the Classics (K. 691n5), and "exalted schemes" (*mingquan* 冥權) means *upāya* (K. 694). The whole thing seems finally to be no more than an elegant comment on "moving without moving."

The *dharmakāya* is beyond form:  
 yet, its various shapes react in order.  
 Fine rhyme is beyond comment:  
 yet, the “Dark Sayings” (*xuanji* 玄籍)<sup>641</sup> are replete with it.  
 Exalted schemes are beyond method:  
 yet, they move in accordance with affairs.

This is the meaning here.

*Fourth, they stand firm in whichever of the worlds in the ten directions lacks the three jewels and establish<sup>642</sup> the great sea of the merits of the jewels of the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, teaching and explaining the practice that is in accordance with the truth. It is on account of this that the stanzas have:*

*Is there any realm that is without  
 the treasures of Buddha and dharma?  
 I resolve to be born in each one,  
 as a buddha to preach the buddhadharma!*

The first three parts have spoken only of going to where there are buddha lands. Were it not for this part, [it might be thought that] the *dharmakāya* would have places where there was no dharma, and the supreme good would have places where there was no good.

This completes the visualization of the images.

#### [4. The Purity Entering into the Resolved Mind, 841b3–c2]

What follows is the fourth part of the exposition of the principles, called “the purity entering into the resolved mind.” The purity entering into the resolved mind:

*We have spoken of visualizing the perfection of the merits of the decorations of the Buddha Land,<sup>643</sup> of the perfection of the merits of the adornments of*

641. [TK: As for the Chinese word *xuanji* 玄籍, which is interpreted as “Dark Sayings” in the dissertation, Corless also explains in n640 that the word signifies “the commentaries on the Classics.” According to Hayashima and Ōtani, *Jōdoron chū*, 358–360, however, *xuanji*, whose literal translation is “profound texts,” is regarded as the paraphrase of “sūtras.”]

642. Understanding *zhuangyan* 莊嚴 as a verb.

643. *Guancha zhuangyan fotu gongde chengjiu* 觀察莊嚴佛土功德成就. Expanded and metathesized from the Comma (T. 1524:26.232b): *fo guotu gongde zhuangyan chengjiu* 佛國土功德莊嚴成就.

the Buddha,<sup>644</sup> and of the perfection of the merits of the adornments<sup>645</sup> of the bodhisattvas. One must understand<sup>646</sup> these three types of perfections as the adornment of the resolved mind.

“One must understand”: One must understand that the perfection of these three types of decorations originates in the forty-eight resolutions [of Dharmākara Bodhisattva], which are what adorned his pure, resolved mind. The effect is pure because the cause is pure. There is no other cause whatsoever.

Therefore, it can be summarized as “entering into the one essential part.”

The seventeen parts on the decorations of the land, the eight parts on the adornments of the Tathāgata, and the four parts on the adornments of the bodhisattvas, above, constitute the amplification. Entering into the one essential part<sup>647</sup> constitutes the summary.

How can we demonstrate the mutuality of the amplification and the summary? All buddhas and bodhisattvas have a double *dharmakāya*: first, the *dharmakāya* of dharma-nature (*faxingfashen* 法性法身); second, the *dharmakāya* of skillful means (*fangbianfashen* 方便法身). The *dharmakāya* of dharma-nature produces the *dharmakāya* of skillful means, and the *dharmakāya* of dharma-nature emerges from the *dharmakāya* of skillful means.<sup>648</sup> These two *dharmakāyas* are different, but indivisible; they are one, but not the same. Therefore, the mutuality of the amplification and the summary is controlled by the meaning of the word “dharma.” If bodhisattvas do not understand the mutuality of the amplification and the summary, they can neither benefit themselves nor others.

“The one essential part” means “the part of purity.” “The part of purity” means “the unconditioned *dharmakāya* of true knowledge.”

These three parts are completely interchangeable. On what principle is it called essential (dharma)? Because of its purity. On what

644. Zhuangyan fo gongde chengjiu 莊嚴佛功德成就. Comma has fo gongde zhuangyan chengjiu 佛功德莊嚴成就.

645. Zhuangyan only in the Three Text edition of Comma, metathesized here.

646. Ying zhi 應知. Not in Comma.

647. See above, pp. 185–186 and notes.

648. You faxingfashen sheng fangbianfashen, you fangbianfashen chu faxingfashen 由法性法身生方便法身. 由方便法身出法性法身. See the discussion.

principle is it called purity? Because it is the unconditioned *dharmakāya* of true knowledge.<sup>649</sup>

True knowledge is knowledge of the true marks. Because the true marks have no marks, true knowledge has no knowing.<sup>650</sup> The unconditioned *dharmakāya* is the *dharmakāya* of dharma-nature. Because dharma-nature is quiescent, the *dharmakāya* has no marks.<sup>651</sup> Because it has no marks, there is nothing which it does not mark: therefore, the *dharmakāya* is none other than the [Buddha's body] adorned with the [thirty-two] marks and [eighty] signs.<sup>652</sup> Because it has no knowing, there is nothing that it does not know: therefore, true knowledge is the same as omniscience.<sup>653</sup> If “knowledge” is classified as “true” (*tattva*), it is clear that “knowledge” is neither created nor uncreated. If the *dharmakāya* is categorized as “unconditioned” (*asaṃskṛta*), it is clear that the *dharmakāya* is neither with form nor formless.

[OBJECTION:] This is a negation of a negation. How is it that this negated negation is not an affirmation? For, the lack of a negation is called an affirmation.

[REPLY:] It does not depend on this, for we further negate the affirmation. Negating and affirming, we negate the negation, up to hundreds of negations, until we reach the place where there are no negations.

Therefore [Vasubandhu] says: “the part of purity.” “The part of purity” means “the unconditioned *dharmakāya* of true knowledge.”

649. *Zhenshi zhihui wuweifashen* 眞實智慧無爲法身, i.e., perhaps, *tattvaprajñāsaṃskṛtadharmakāya*. The identification relies on the polyvalence of *fa* 法 as a translation of the polyvalent word *dharma*: “law, regulator, essence, transcendence, purity,” etc.

650. *Zhen zhi wu zhi* 眞智無知, “true objectless wisdom has no knowing-of-an-object,” i.e., *grāhyaagrāhakanirmukta*. See “Prajñā Has No Knowing” (Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika*, 212–221), on which this passage is based, and cf. above, pp. 203–207. Also see Kajiyama, *Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy*, 147.

651. *Faxing jimie gu fashen wuxiang ye* 法性寂滅故法身無相也, “because *dharmatā* (= *dharmadhātu*: Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, 733) is *prāsama* (?), therefore *dharmakāya* is *alakṣaṇa*.”

652. *Xianghao zhuangyan* 相好莊嚴, *lakṣaṇānuvyañjanālaṃkāra*, i.e., the unmanifest is the manifest. Cf. above, pp. 130–132, where the *Contemplation Sūtra* is quoted to prove this.

653. *Yiqiezhong zhi* 一切種智, *sarvasarvajñā*. See above, n345.



[The Double Aspect of Purity, 841c3–27]

One must understand this “purity” as twofold.

In the above interchangeable parts, by penetrating<sup>654</sup> the one essential (*ekadharmā*) one enters into the purity, and by penetrating the purity one enters into the *dharmakāya*. Now, if we proceed to divide this purity, it emerges as twofold. Therefore [Vasubandhu] says, “One must understand.”

What are the two?

First, the purity of the furnishings of that realm;

Second, the purity of the beings in that realm.<sup>655</sup>

The purity of the furnishings of that realm is the perfection of the merits of the seventeen kinds of decorations of the Buddha Land,<sup>656</sup> as<sup>657</sup> previously discussed. This is called, “the purity of the furnishings of that realm.” The purity of the beings in that realm is the perfection of the merits of the eight kinds of adornments of the Buddha,<sup>658</sup> and the perfection of the merits of the four kinds of adornments of the bodhisattvas,<sup>659</sup> as previously discussed. This is called “the purity of the beings in that realm.” This is how one must understand the one essential part as including the principle<sup>660</sup> of the two kinds of purity.

Now, the natures of beings are in accordance with their differential recompense, while the function of that land is in accordance with a common recompense.<sup>661</sup> It should therefore be realized that its nature and its function are not the same. As all dharmas are in the mind, since

654. Tong 通, “knowing thoroughly.” See above, n83.

655. These are the two “worlds” (*shijian* 世間, in the sense of “the world of books,” etc., i.e., a grouping) which are suffused by the light of Sukhāvātī: see above, p. 100 and n141.

656. Zhuangyan *fotu gongde chengjiu* 莊嚴佛土功德成就. Comma (T. 1524:26.232b) has *fo guo* (國) *tu gongde zhuangyan chengjiu*.

657. Ru 如. Not in Comma.

658. Zhuangyan *fo gongde*. Comma has *fo gongde zhuangyan*.

659. Zhuangyan *pusa* (菩薩) *gongde*. Comma has *pusa gongde zhuangyan*.

660. Yi 義. Not in Comma.

661. Nature (*ti* 體) and function (*yong* 用) are approximately “essence” and “manifestation” in Chinese philosophy. K. 711n2 says that the absence of mountains, etc., in Sukhāvātī is a symbol of its “common recompense” (*gongbao* 共報) of non-differentiation.



there is nowhere else at all, so the beings in the furnishings are neither different nor the same. They are not the same, for their characters (*yi* 義) are separate; they are not different, for they are both pure.

The furnishings (*qi* 器) are the function (*yong* 用),<sup>662</sup> that is, the Pure Land is what is “furnished for” (*shouyong* 受用) those pure beings, and so it is called “furnishing” (*qi* 器). If a dirty vessel (*qi* 器) is used (*yong* 用) for clean food, then, because the vessel is dirty, the food also will be dirty. If a clean vessel is used for dirty food, then, because the food is dirty, the vessel also will be dirty. Both together must be clean before there is purity. Therefore, this one word “purity” must include the two kinds.

If you say, “The beings are pure,” then you have identified them with buddhas and bodhisattvas. Do all the divinized men thus enter the number of the pure, or not?

ANSWER: Being called “pure” does not mean that one is in fact pure.<sup>663</sup> For example, one who has left the world (*pravrajyā*) and become a holy person by killing the thieves of the passions is called a *bhikṣu*: but an ordinary man who has left the world, whether he observes the rule or breaks it, is also called a *bhikṣu*. Again, it is like an anointed heir apparent<sup>664</sup> who, at the time of his birth, has all the thirty-two marks and is ranked amongst those who have the seven treasures; even though he has not yet performed the deeds of a *cakravartin*, he is called a *cakravartin*, for he surely will become a *cakravartin*. Those divinized men are like this: they will all enter the company of those who are firmly settled in the Mahāyāna, and will certainly obtain a pure *dharmakāya*. And because they will obtain it, they are called “pure.”

662. *Qizhe, yongye* 器者用也. Tanluan plays on the meanings of *qi* as “receptacle, tool, appliance” and *yong* as “use, operate, apply, manifest”: *shouyong* 受用 is “receive as a reward.” Finding myself incompetent to reproduce all these puns in English, I have settled for something less.

663. Cf. above, pp. 197–199, on imputative equality.

664. *Guanding wangzi* 灌頂王子, the son of a *cakravartin*, who will therefore display the *lakṣaṇānuvyañjana* [TK: major and minor marks] and obtain the seven treasures. See above, n198, and references there cited.

Skillful Conversion<sup>665</sup> [841c27–842b5]

*Thus the bodhisattvas make their minds perfectly flexible by the amplified and summary practices of śamatha and vipaśyanā.*

“Flexible mind”<sup>666</sup> means that the amplified and summary practices of “stopping” and “beholding”<sup>667</sup> are in mutual accord, and a non-dual mind<sup>668</sup> is perfected. It is like a reflection in water: when clear and calm, there is perfect accord [between the image and the original].

*They know the dharmas in both amplification and summary, in accordance with the truth.*

“In accordance with the truth” is knowing in accordance with the true marks. Neither in the amplification of twenty-nine parts, nor in the summary of one part, are they unaware of the true marks.

*Accordingly, they perfect the skilful strategy<sup>669</sup> of turning towards.*

“Accordingly” means according to the true marks of the former and latter, the amplification and the summary. Realizing the true marks, they realize that all beings in the triple world have the mark of insubstantiality. Realizing that beings are insubstantial, they give birth to true compassion. Realizing the true *dharmakāya*, they give rise to true refuge taking (*śaraṇāgama*). The arising of this skillful strategy of compassion and refuge taking is set out below.

*What is the bodhisattvas’ skillful strategy of “turning towards”? The bodhisattvas’ skilful strategy of “turning towards” means speaking of the merits*

665. *Shanqiao shehua* 善巧攝化, “good and clever, collecting up and converting,” a rather unusual, but rather attractive, rendering of *upāyakaūśalya*, normally, (and here, often) *fāngbian* 方便, “suitable methods.”

666. *Rou ruan xin* 柔軟心, the mind which bends to all circumstances, not being “hard-headedly” fixed in any one viewpoint.

667. *Zhi, guan* 止觀, *śamatha, vipaśyanā*. See above, pp. 163–166.

668. *Buer xin* 不二心, *advaya-citta*, the condition of *grāhyagrāhakanirmukta* (see above, n650). The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, with Sengzhao’s commentary on which Tanluan was familiar, has an entire chapter (VIII; Lamotte, *L’Enseignement*, 301–318, 301n1 for other refs.) on “entering the gate of the not two dharma” (*ru buer fa men* 入不二法門), which Lamotte rather stuffily calls “Introduction à la Doctrine de la Non-Dualité” (*advayadharmamukhāpraveśa*). [RKP: See also Lamotte/Boin, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 188–203. Boin’s English translation of the chapter title is “Introduction to the Doctrine of Non-Duality.”]

669. *Qiao fāngbian* 巧方便, *upāyakaūśalya*. See n665.

of the good root obtained through the five practices of prostration, etc., and, because they wish to take away the sufferings of all beings and do not seek the standing firm in happiness for themselves, they make the resolution encompassing all beings that they may all together be born in that Buddha Land of Happiness. This is called the perfection of the bodhisattvas' skilful strategy of "turning towards."

Referring to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* preached at Rājagṛha, we find that although there were those of both noble and common practice amongst the three classes of those born [into Sukhāvātī], there were none who did not wholly produce the supreme *bodhi*-mind.<sup>670</sup> This supreme *bodhi*-mind is the mind of the resolution to become buddha. The mind of the resolution to become buddha is the mind to save beings. The mind to save beings encompasses beings so that they give birth to the mind of the Buddha Land. Therefore, anyone who resolves to be born in Sukhāvātī must produce the supreme *bodhi*-mind. If a person does not produce the supreme *bodhi*-mind, but, hearing that one experiences uninterrupted happiness in that land, he resolves to be born there because of the happiness, he will not go to birth. This is why [Vasubandhu] says, "Because they wish to take away the sufferings of all beings and do not seek the standing firm in happiness for themselves."

"The standing firm in happiness" means that in Sukhāvātī, because of Amitābha Tathāgata's standing firm in the power of his original vow, one experiences uninterrupted happiness.

The usual interpretation of the term "turning towards"<sup>671</sup> is that one hands over the merits one has accumulated so that all beings together may go towards the way (*bodhi*) of buddha.

"Skillful strategy" means that the bodhisattva vows: "With the fire of my wisdom I will burn up the plants and trees of the passions of all beings, and shall not become a buddha if there should be one

670. *Wushang puti xin* 無上菩提心, a translation of *anuttarabodhicitta*.

671. *Huixiang* 迴向, *pariṇāmanā*. See above, pp. 146–147. Tanluan also gives an "unusual" explanation below, T. 1819:40.836a20–b1 (which necessitates my queer rendering of it), and even here, the play on *xiang* is only "usual" in Chinese.

being who has not realized buddhahood.”<sup>672</sup> If<sup>673</sup> a bodhisattva<sup>674</sup> were to realize buddhahood before all beings had realized buddhahood, it would be like using sticks<sup>675</sup> to burn up all the plants and trees one could gather: the sticks would be useless before the plants and trees had been used up. “Staying behind, one is in front”:<sup>676</sup> this is called “skillful strategy.” In this compound, strategy (*upāya*) means making the resolution encompassing all beings, that they should all together be born in the Buddha Land of Blessed Peace. That Buddha Land is the perfect completion<sup>677</sup> of the way of buddha, the supreme strategy.

### Obstacles to Bodhi<sup>678</sup> [842b5–18]

*In this way, the bodhisattvas, fully knowing the perfection of “turning towards,” are able to remove three factors (dharma) which are opposed to bodhi. What three?*

672. This saying is apparently invented by Tanluan to fit the following analogy, which he draws from *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.194a).

673. Read the Taishō text, which is the accepted form as established by Hōnen. The original text and punctuation is incomprehensible (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 160n12).

674. Shinran took *pusa* 菩薩 as “the bodhisattva,” i.e., *Dharmākara*. This seems eisegetical.

675. 火□ a curious compound apparently meaning “fire tongs made of wood,” K. 723n9 calls them *hibashi*, “fire chopsticks” (橋 seems a misprint for □ [TK: missing character is Morohashi 15176]). Morohashi 15176 gives the second meaning of □ [TK: missing character is Morohashi 15176] as *moku no eda*, “tree branch.” Sticks used as tongs for gathering and burning other sticks seem to be indicated: they are burnt up while still doing their job. I find the Chinese rather dense and am not sure I have it right. There is an English translation at *Shinshu Seiten*, 133, but that is even less intelligible.

676. *Hou qi shen, er shen xian* 後其身而身先. Quoted from *Dao de jing*, VII. One of a series of paradoxes in the actionless activity of the holy man.

677. *Bijing* 畢竟 can, according to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (T. 374:12.524c), mean either “perfection” or “completion.” I take it here in the latter sense (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 161n14). The entire compound is a bit ponderous: it may be something like *samyaksaṃbuddhamārgottamopāyasampadam*.

678. *Zhang puti men* 障菩提門, “obstructions at the gate of bodhi.” In the *Outline* (T. 1819:40.835a6–12), Tanluan calls this section *li puti zhang* 離菩提障, “removal of obstructions to bodhi.”

*First, by means of perceptive wisdom (zhahui 智慧) they do not seek happiness for themselves, for they remove selfish greed and attachment to their own persons.*

Knowing when to advance, to stand still, and to retreat is called being perceptive (zhi 智). Knowing about the void (*śūnyatā*) and non-self (*anātman*) is called wisdom (hui 慧). By being perceptive they do not seek happiness for themselves: by means of wisdom they remove selfish greed and attachment to their own persons.

*Second, by means of merciful love (cibei 慈悲) they take away the sufferings of all beings and remove mental discord from beings.*

To take away suffering is called mercy (ci 慈, *maitrī*):<sup>679</sup> to give happiness is called love (bei 悲).<sup>680</sup> By means of mercy they take away the sufferings of all beings. By means of love they remove mental discord from beings.

*Third, by means of appropriate strategy (fangbian 方便, upāya) they empathize with the thoughts of all beings and remove the thought of their own importance.*<sup>681</sup>

Directness is called strategy (*fāng* 方): “going out of oneself” is called appropriateness (*bian* 便).<sup>682</sup> By means of directness they give birth to empathy with the thoughts of all beings. By means of going out of themselves they remove the thought of their own importance. This is called<sup>683</sup> removing the three factors which are opposed to *bodhi*.

#### Aids to Bodhi<sup>684</sup> [842b19–c6]

*The bodhisattvas who have removed in this way the three factors which are opposed to bodhi may then fully attain the three factors which are in accord with bodhi.*

*What three?*

679. [An abbreviation for *cibei* 慈悲 which is *karuṇā*.]

680. *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, XV (T. 374:12.453).

681. *Yuanli gongyang gongjing zishen xin* 遠離供養恭敬自身心, “they remove far from the thought of doing *pūjā* and *vandana* to themselves.”

682. *Fang* 方 carries the nuance of “square,” so that one “squares with” all beings; *bian* 便 has the nuance “flow out,” and so, “going out of oneself.”

683. Comma (T. 1524:26.232c) ends the sentence with *gu* 故, giving “therefore, this is called. . . .”

684. *Shun puti men* 順菩提門, “being lined up with the gate of *bodhi*.”

*First, a passionless, pure mind, by reason of<sup>685</sup> not seeking happiness for themselves.*

*Bodhi* is the pure state of the passionless mind. If one seeks happiness for oneself, one is opposed to *bodhi*. Therefore, a passionless, pure mind is in accord with *bodhi*.

*Second, a peaceful, pure mind, by reason of taking away the sufferings of all beings.*

*Bodhi* is the pure state of rest for all beings. If one does not apply one's mind to taking away all beings from the sufferings of *saṃsāra*, then one is opposed to *bodhi*. Therefore, taking away the sufferings of beings is in accord with *bodhi*.

*Third, a joyful, pure mind, both by reason of causing all beings to obtain great bodhi, and of encompassing all beings so that they will be born in that Buddha Land.*

*Bodhi* is the condition of ultimate, constant happiness. If one does not cause all beings to obtain this ultimate, constant happiness, then one is opposed to *bodhi*. By reason of what is this ultimate, constant happiness obtained? By reason of the *Mahāyāna*. “*Mahāyāna*” means just that Buddha Land of Peace and Happiness.<sup>686</sup> This is why [Vasubandhu] goes on to say: “and [by reason] of encompassing all beings so that they will be born in that Buddha Land.”

*One must understand this as what is known as “fully attaining the three factors which are in accord with bodhi.”*

#### The Mutual Inherence of the Name and Essence<sup>687</sup> [842c7–843a6]

*We have explained the three gates of perceptive wisdom (zhìhui 智慧), mercy, and strategy. One must understand them as incorporating prajñā, and prajñā as incorporating strategy.*

*Prajñā* (*banruo* 般若) designates the wisdom (*hui* 慧) which sees into suchness (*tathatā*). Strategy (*upāya*) refers to being perceptive (*zhì* 智), leading to thorough adaptability. Seeing into suchness, one's mind moves in quiescence. Being thoroughly adaptable, one minutely examines the manifold situations. The perception which examines situations is minute and appropriate, yet there is no knowing: the wisdom

685. Text agrees with the Three Text edition of the Comma.

686. This has been proved above (n228).

687. *Mingyi shedui* 名義攝對, “the name and its essence mutually embracing.”

which is quiescent has no knowing, yet it minutely examines. Thus, perceptive wisdom and strategy, being mutually dependent, are mutually in motion: yet they are still. Moving without error is the force<sup>688</sup> of perceptive wisdom in stillness: being still but not useless is the power of strategy in motion.

Therefore, perceptive wisdom, mercy, and strategy incorporate *prajñā*, and *prajñā* incorporates strategy.

“One must understand” means one must understand that wisdom and strategy are the father and mother of *bodhisattvas*.<sup>689</sup> Except one relies upon wisdom and strategy, the *bodhisattvadharma* cannot be perfected. Why? When one is working for the sake of beings, one will fall into inverted views<sup>690</sup> if one does not have wisdom. When one is contemplating the *dharmatā*, one will [only] realize the limit of existence<sup>691</sup> if one does not have strategy. Thus, one must understand.

*We have explained removing selfish greed and attachment to one's own person, removing mental discord from beings, and removing the thought of one's own importance. One must understand these three factors as as opposed to the bodhi mind.*

The factors (*dharma*) are severally in opposition, as wind is in opposition to stillness, earth is in opposition to water, moisture is in opposition to fire, the five black [deeds]<sup>692</sup> and the ten evil acts are in opposition to [rebirth in the realm of] men and gods, and the four inverted views are in opposition to the fruition of the *śrāvakas* (*śrāvakaphala*). One is in opposition to the *bodhi* mind (*bodhicitta*) if one has not removed these three.

688. Gong 功, “force” (virtue), parallel with li 力 in next line.

689. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 165n18 cites the following sources for this idea: (1) Sengzhao's *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Commentary* (T. 1775:38.393a); (2) *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (sixty juan version) (T. 278:9.782c); (3) *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā śāstra* (T. 1521:26.25b). Tanluan seems to say that wisdom is the mother and strategy is the father: this would be quite normal. The Tibetans symbolize this by the ritual opposition of the bell (*ghaṇṭā*, symbolizing wisdom) and the *vajra*, symbolizing *upāya*.

690. *Diandao* 顛倒, *viparyāsa*, the four “upside-down” views which regard the actually impermanent, unsatisfactory, non-self, and unpleasant as their opposites. They are mentioned again in the following paragraph.

691. *Bhūtaḥkoṭi*. See n613.

692. Wu hei 五黑, v.l. Wu e 五惡. Same as the wo ni 五逆. See n414.



“One must understand”: if one wishes to attain that which is free of obstacles,<sup>693</sup> one should remove these three obstacles.

*We have explained the passionless, pure mind; the peaceful, pure mind; and the joyful, pure mind. One must understand these three minds as summarized in one state of perfection, that is, the mind of marvellous joy and supreme truth.*

There are three sorts of joy:

First is exterior joy. This is joy born of the five consciousnesses.<sup>694</sup>

Second is interior joy. This is the joy of the first, second, and third *dhyānas*, born of the *manovijñāna*.<sup>695</sup>

Third is the joy of the pursuit of dharma.<sup>696</sup> This is the joy born of wisdom. This joy born of wisdom comes from the love of the Buddha’s merits.

The three attitudes (*xin* 心), the removal of selfishness, the removal of mental discord from beings, and the removal of the thought of one’s own importance, are a furtherance (*adhipati*) in purity, and may be summarized as the mind (*xin* 心) of marvellous joy and supreme truth.

“Marvellous” refers to its pleasantness, for this joy is produced because of the [merits of the] Buddha. “Supreme” means it supremely transcends the joys of the triple world. “Truth” means it is neither false nor inverted.

#### [The Perfection of the Resolution, 843a6–18]

As for the perfection of the vow:

*One must understand such bodhisattvas, having the mind of wisdom, the mind of strategy, the mind free from obstacles and the mind of supreme truth, as able to be born in the Pure Buddha Land.*

“One must understand” means one must understand that these four pure virtues, and no other cause whatsoever, are able to lead one to birth in that Pure Land.

693. *Wu zhang* 無障 sounds like an allusion to the non-obstruction doctrine of Yogācāra. See, e.g., Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality*, 18–21 and 143–155.

694. *Wu shi* 五識, the *vijñānas* of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body-surface, and mind (*manas*).

695. *Yishi* 意識 the sixth consciousness in the Yogācāra system, which produces the illusion of *ātman*.

696. *Fayao le* 法樂樂. In his *yomikata*, K. 738 reads this as *hō gakuraku*, “the joy of the study of dharma.”



*This is called the perfection of the bodhisattva-mahāsattvas' autonomy in accordance with their wishes, for they are correlated with the five dharma-gates of bodily activity, vocal activity, mental activity, wisdom activity, and the activity of wise strategy which, as we have mentioned, are in accord with the dharma-gate.*

“Autonomy in accordance with their wishes” means the “ascending and descending”<sup>697</sup> autonomy of those born in the Pure Buddha Land through the power of these five virtues. “Bodily activity” is prostration. “Vocal activity” is praise. “Mental activity” is making the resolution. “Wisdom activity” is visualization. “The activity of wise strategy” is turning towards. These five activities are conjoined; they are in accord with the dharma-gate of rebirth in the Pure Land and are the perfection of autonomous activity.

[The Fullness of Beneficial Practice, 843a18–c8]

As for the fullness of beneficial practice:

*One must further understand the five gates through which one gradually perfects the five virtues. What are the five gates?*

*First, the approach gate.*

*Second, the gate of the great congregation.*

*Third, the gate of the house.*<sup>698</sup>

*Fourth, the gate of the rooms.*

*Fifth, the gate of the stage of playing in the gardens and woods.*

These five manifest what pertains to the process of “entering” and “leaving.”<sup>699</sup>

In regard to “entering,” the first thing is to reach the Pure Land, that is, the approach. This means to enter the company of those who are firmly settled in the Mahāyāna and approach *anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi*.<sup>700</sup> Having entered the Pure Land, one enters into the number of the Tathāgata’s great congregation. Having entered the number of the congregation, one reaches the house of the practice of the pacified mind.

697. *Chu mo* 出沒, “ascending” to perfection through the first four gates, and “descending” back into *saṃsāra* through the fifth gate. See the next section, “the fullness of beneficial practice.”

698. *Zhai* 宅. See above, n573.

699. *Ru chu* 入出, equivalent to ascending and descending; see n697.

700. *Anoudoluosanmiaosanputi* 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提. A laboriously faithful transliteration, which Tanluan explains below (T. 1819:40.843c9–22).

Having entered the house, one arrives at the practice of those who dwell in the rooms. When one's practice is perfected, one reaches the stage of teaching and converting. The stage of teaching and converting is the stage of the bodhisattva's own enjoyment. Therefore, "leaving" is called "the gate of the stage of playing in the gardens and woods."<sup>701</sup>

*Of these five gates, the first four are the perfection of the virtues of entering, and the fifth is the perfection of the virtue of leaving.*

How are these gates the virtues of "entering" and "leaving?" [Vasubandhu] explains:

*Entering through the first gate: one worships Amitābha Buddha for the sake of being born in that land, and therefore obtains birth in the Realm of Blessed Peace. This is called entering through the first gate.*

Worshiping buddha, and resolving to be born in the Buddha's land, pertains to the first virtue.

*Entering through the second gate: one praises Amitābha according to the essence of his name, invoking the Tathāgata's name and relying upon its correspondence with the Tathāgata's radiant wisdom; by this practice one enters into the number of the great congregation. This is called entering through the second gate.*

Praise which relies upon the essence of the Tathāgata's name pertains to the second virtue.

*Entering through the third gate: one practices śamatha, the samādhi of quiet,<sup>702</sup> by single-mindedly and recollectedly making the resolve to be born there; by this practice one enters into the realm of the lotus treasure. This is called entering through the third gate.*

The practice of quiet "stopping" by means of single-mindedly resolving to be born in that land pertains to the third virtue.

*Entering through the fourth gate: one practices vipaśyanā, by visualizing those marvellous decorations recollectedly, and thus attains to there where<sup>703</sup>*

701. Yuan lin youxi 園林遊戲. Cf. above (T. 1819:40.836a24–25), "having been born in that land . . . one returns and enters the dense forest of saṃsāra. . . ."

702. Shemota jijing sanmei 奢摩他寂靜三昧. This is probably no more than a transliteration/translation/transliteration, but I consciously translate it in such a way as to suggest its correspondence with the Prayer of Quiet in Christian mysticism which, as here, is an intermediate achievement on the spiritual path.

703. Chu 處 is not impossible but suo 所 (K. 745, kanbun) is easier.

one receives the joys of the various flavors of dharma. This is called entering through the fourth gate.

“The joys of the various flavors of dharma”:<sup>704</sup> within *vipaśyanā* there is: the flavor of visualizing the purity of the Buddha Land; the flavor of receiving beings into the Mahāyāna; the flavor of certainly not standing firm in vain; the flavor of, according to circumstances, raising up practices concerned with the resolution to obtain the Buddha Land.

Because these flavors of the adornment of the Buddha Land are immeasurable, [Vasubandhu] says “various.” This pertains to the fourth virtue.

*Leaving through the fifth gate:*<sup>705</sup> because of “turning towards” in the power of the original vow, one visualizes the sufferings of beings and, out of great compassion, one shows<sup>706</sup> transformation bodies, turning around and entering the gardens of saṃsāra and the woods of the passions, wherein one plays by means of the superknowledges, reaching the stage of teaching and converting. This is called leaving through the fifth gate.

“One shows transformation bodies (*nirmāṇakāya*)”: this is like the numerous manifestations in the chapter on the “Gates to Everywhere” in the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>707</sup>

“One plays” has two meanings.

First, autonomy: when bodhisattvas save beings, they are like lions, which can catch deer with no difficulty.<sup>708</sup> It is like play.

Second, saving with no one to save: the bodhisattvas observe that beings are ultimately non-existent.<sup>709</sup> Though they save limitless

704. The consumption of these “flavors of dharma” (*fa wei* 法味) is explained at T. 1819:40.830b11–24, and its importance for mysticism suggested in my discussion on that section. [TK: In the original dissertation, the discussion occurs on pp. 147–148.]

705. *Zhe* 者. Not in Comma (T. 1524:26.233a19).

706. *Shi* 示, agreeing with Three Text edition of Comma: *yi* 亦 is an obvious mistake.

707. See above, n378.

708. Analogy from *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.116): though as a matter of fact, the speed of a deer and the strength of a lion are quite well matched, and it is not at all “without difficulty” (*suo wei bu nan* 所爲不難) that a capture is made!

709. *Wu suo you* 無所有, *abhāva*, a curiously nihilistic (*ucchedavādin*) phrase for a careful Buddhist.

beings, in truth there is not a single being who is saved. They make a show of saving beings, as if they were at play.

The phrase “the power of the original vow” (*benyuanli* 本願力) indicates that, although the great bodhisattvas in their dharma bodies are constantly in *samādhi*, yet they manifest various incarnations and various superknowledges, preaching dharma in various ways. All this is brought to pass by the power of the original vow. It is like the *asuras*’ zither, which plays a tune of itself without being struck.<sup>710</sup> This is called the stage of teaching and converting, and pertains to the fifth virtue.

*One must understand the entering of the bodhisattvas through the four gates as the perfection of the practice of benefitting oneself.*

“Perfection” means benefitting oneself to the full. “One must understand” means one must understand that the ability to benefit others comes from benefitting oneself. It is not the case that if one is unable to benefit oneself, one can yet benefit others.

*One must understand the leaving of the bodhisattvas through the fifth gate as the perfection of the practice of benefitting others by “turning towards.”<sup>711</sup>*

“Perfection” means: turning towards is the cause, realizing the stage of teaching and converting is the result. As in the cause, so is the result: if anything at all is lacking, one will not be able to benefit others. “One must understand” means one must understand that the ability to benefit oneself comes from benefitting others. It is not the case that if one is unable to benefit others, one can yet benefit oneself.

#### [CONCLUDING SUMMARY, 843C9–844B3]

*The bodhisattvas exercising in this way in the five gates of recollection<sup>712</sup> benefiting themselves and others, speedily gain the perfection of anuttarasamyaksambodhi.*

The dharma which a buddha gains is called *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* (*anouduoluosanmiaosanputi* 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提).<sup>713</sup> One is called a buddha because one gains this *bodhi*. Herein, [Vasubandhu] says,

710. Analogy from *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra* (T. 1509:25.188). The *asuras* (anti-gods) have a kind of super autoharp, which plays tunes as they wish for them; this is used as a figure for *nirvikalpa*.

711. Text metathesized from Comma [TK: T. 1524:26.233a23].

712. *Nian* 念. Not in Comma (T. 1524:26.233a).

713. [Tanluan reads this phonetically.]

speedily gain *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, which means that one becomes a buddha without delay.<sup>714</sup> A 阿 means “without.” Nouduoluo 耨多羅 means “superior.” Sanmiao 三藐 means “right.” San 三 means “thorough.” Puti 菩提 means “the way.”<sup>715</sup> Putting this together, we can translate as “the right and thorough way without superior.”<sup>716</sup>

“Without superior” means that, in speaking of this way, one “explores the laws of nature to their deepest core,”<sup>717</sup> so that one cannot go further. Why do we say this? Because it is “right.”<sup>718</sup> “Right” means “holy wisdom.” Because it knows the marks of the dharmas, it is called “right wisdom.” Because *dharmatā* has no marks, holy wisdom has no knowing.

“Thorough” has two meanings: First, the holy mind thoroughly knows all dharmas; second, the dharma body thoroughly fills the *dharmadhātu*. [Therefore,] neither body nor mind are lacking in thoroughness.

“The way” is “the unobstructed way.” The sūtras say<sup>719</sup> that people in the ten directions unobstructedly escape *saṃsāra* in the one way. “The one way” is the one unobstructed way. “Unobstructed” means

714. Zao 早, “promptly.” Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 174n26 refers to *Mahāsannipāta* (T. 397:13.140c) as the source of *zao cheng fo* 早成佛 (Tanluan has *zuo* 作 for *cheng*). This phrase perhaps influenced the development of the “prompt reception” (*sōraigō* 早来迎) amidst iconography, of which one of the earliest and finest is in the Chion’in 知恩院, dated late Kamakura. See, e.g., Ishida, *Jōdokyō bijutsu*.

715. *Puti ming dao* 菩提名道. This definition establishes that *fo dao* 佛道 must be *buddhabodhi*, not *buddhamārga*.

716. *Wushang zheng bian dao* 無上正遍道.

717. *Qiong li jin xing* 窮理盡性. Quotation from *The Book of Changes*, “Discussion on the Trigrams,” chap. 1 (易經 · 說卦傳), where it is claimed that the book is a complete description of the workings of the Dao: Tanluan therefore claims this for *bodhi*. See Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 262.

718. *Yi zheng gu* 以正故. Cf. Wieger, *Chinese Characters*, 266, on *zheng* 正: “To be arrived and 止 to stop at the 一 line, at the limit, where one had to reach, without going astray.” Thus Tanluan is using the traditional explanation of *zheng* as “right” in the moral and physical sense.

719. Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 174n27 cites *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, sixty *juan* text (T. 278:9.429) and eighty *juan* text (T. 279:10.68), as sources for this quote: but neither is exact, and the following sentences indicate a more general Yogācāra reference.

understanding that *saṃsāra* is *nirvāṇa*. This is what pertains to the unobstructedness of entering the gate of the non-dual dharma.<sup>720</sup>

QUESTION: On what basis can you say that they “speedily gain the perfection of *anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi*”?

ANSWER: The discourse says it is due to the perfection of exercising in the five gates of benefitting themselves and others. Tracing this to its root, it is on account of the furthering conditions (*adhipatipratyaya*) of Amitābha Tathāgata.

“Others being benefited” (*tali* 他利) and “benefiting others” (*lita* 利他) may be talked of from two sides:<sup>721</sup> speaking from the point of view of the Buddha, we should properly say, “benefiting others”; speaking from the point of view of beings, we should properly say, “others being benefited.” Herein, since we are discussing the Buddha’s power, we call it, “benefiting others”, and thus we should take it.

As a general rule, birth in the Pure Land, and the practices of those bodhisattvas, those divinized men, are all dependent on the power of Amitābha Tathāgata’s original vow. Why do we say this? If it were not for the Buddha’s power, the forty-eight vows would have been established in vain.<sup>722</sup> Herein, we select three vows as central,<sup>723</sup> so as to realize the meaning [of the forty-eight].

The [eighteenth] vow says:<sup>724</sup>

May it be that, when I have become a buddha, all beings in the ten directions who joyfully have faith in me and who, desiring to be born in my land, have recollected me up to ten times [may be born there]: and if they are not so born, may I not obtain perfect enlightenment. Only those who commit the five abominations or who have vilified the true dharma are to be excluded.

Therefore, on the basis of the power of the Buddha’s vow, one can go to birth after ten thoughts recalling the buddha. Since one obtains birth

720. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, VIII. See above, n668 and n693.

721. Tanluan appears to be original in this distinction.

722. *Tu* 徒, *itazura ni* (Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 176, *furigana*).

723. *Di* 的, “as the bullseye.” Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 176 (*furigana*) has *hitoshiku*, “as being equivalent [to the forty-eight],” while K. 764 (*furigana*) reads it *akiraka ni*, “clarifyingly.”

724. Quotes T. 360:12.268a26–28, with the addition of *de* 得 after *ruo bu* 若不. This is the famous “original vow” (*ben yuan* 本願, Jpn. *hongan*) which, equally famously, is missing from all known Sanskrit texts. See S.B.E., 49(2):73ff.

there, one escapes the activities of rolling around in the triple world. Because one does not so roll around, one speedily gains [enlightenment]. This is the first testimony.

The [eleventh] vow says:<sup>725</sup>

May it be to me that if, in that Buddha Land, humans and *devas* do not all enter the company of those who are firmly settled, necessarily reaching supreme extinction, I shall not obtain perfect enlightenment.

Therefore, on the basis of the power of the Buddha's vow, one enters the company of those who are firmly settled. Since one enters the company of those who are firmly settled, one necessarily reaches supreme extinction, and is without the problem of turning back in defeat. Therefore, one speedily gains [enlightenment]. This is the second testimony.

The [twenty-second] vow says:<sup>726</sup>

May it be that, when I become a buddha, the host of bodhisattvas from the buddha lands in other regions may come to be born in my land, certainly and necessarily attaining the state of those in their last life; except for those who, because their original vow was freely made for the sake of beings, have bound upon themselves the armour of the wide-ranging vows, who continually pile up their stock of merit, travel to all the buddha lands so as to exercise in the bodhisattva practice in order to release [beings] completely, worship all the buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, in the ten directions, initiating the conversion of beings as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, and establishing them in the peerless right and true way: transcending the usual levels, [those born in my land] will be face-to-face with the practices

725. T. 360:12.268a11–12. Cf. S.B.E., 49(2):13 (resolution 11). Ashikaga's Sanskrit text reads (p. 12, lines 16–19): *sacen me bhagavaṃs tasmin buddhakṣetre ye sattvāḥ pratyājāyerāṃs, te sarve na niyatāḥ syur, yad idaṃ: samyaktve yāvan mahāparinirvāṇād, mā tāvad anuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abdhisaṃbudhyeyam*. This quote establishes the following equivalents:

- (a) *ren tian* 人天 translates *sattvāḥ*, “beings,” not “gods and men.”
- (b) *zhengding ju* 正定聚 translates *niyatāḥ samyaktve*, “those fixed in what is right” (*ju* probably represents the locative case), not “those in *samyaksamādhī*.”
- (c) *mie du* 滅度 translates *mahāparinirvāṇa*.

726. T. 360:12.268b8–14. Does not agree with Sanskrit: see above, pp. 200–201 and notes, pp. 199–203.



of all the levels, and practice the virtues of Samantabhadra.<sup>727</sup> And if it be not so, may I not obtain perfect enlightenment.

Therefore, on the basis of the power of the Buddha's vow, one transcends the usual levels, is face-to-face with the practices of all the levels, and practices the virtues of Samantabhadra.<sup>728</sup> Since one transcends the usual levels, and is face-to-face with the practices of all the levels,<sup>729</sup> one speedily gains [enlightenment]. This is the third testimony.

This sets forth other-power as the furthering condition. Is this not so?

Now, to set forth again<sup>730</sup> a metaphor of self-power and other-power. [Self-power] is like a person who, because he is afraid of the three defilements, receives and holds the precepts; because of receiving and holding the precepts, he is able to practice *dhyāna*;<sup>731</sup> because of *dhyāna*, he is able to exercise the superknowledges; and because of the superknowledges, he is able to play in the four corners of the world. Such is called self-power. Then again, [other-power] is like a lowly person who, instead of saddling up a donkey,<sup>732</sup> follows the progress of

727. [TK: 超出常倫諸地之行現前修習普賢之德: Hayashima and Ōtani, *Ōjōronchū*, 421–428, translate this sentence rather differently: “They also transcend the usual levels, that is, transcend the practices of all the stages, and actually practice the virtues of Samantabhadra.”]

728. [TK: Hayashima and Ōtani (*ibid.*) translate the sentence 超出常倫諸地之行現前修習普賢之德 as follows: “One transcends the usual levels, that is, transcends the practices of all the stages, and actually practices the virtues of Samantabhadra.”]

729. [TK: In accordance with Hayashima and Ōtani (*ibid.*), I translate the sentence 以超出常倫諸地行故 as follows: “Since one transcends the usual levels, that is, transcends the practices of all the stages.”]

730. *Fu* 復. Cf. the metaphors quoted from the *Daśabhūmīkavibhāṣā śāstra* at the very beginning of the text.

731. *Chanding* 禪定, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*: but see above, n218.

732. *Kua lu bu shang* 跨驢不上. The Japanese commentators take *shang* as a verb: e.g., Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 178, *roba ni matagarite (jibun no chikara de kokū ni) noborazaredomo*, “Mounted on a donkey, he is not able, under his own power, to rise into the air.” But Hsiao, *Life and Teachings*, 88, translates, “. . . who cannot even ride a donkey,” apparently taking *shang* as a post-position modifying *kua*. I follow Hsiao, as seemingly more natural, but it may be he has been influenced by contemporary *baihua* 白話 usage. The “donkey”



a cakravartin and rides through the air, playing in the four corners of the world without hindrance. Such is called other-power.

How fortunate!<sup>733</sup> Future students will hear of other-power, and they can ride upon it by producing the mind of faith! Do not trust to yourselves!

This completes the brief explanation of the meaning of the *Upadeśa on the Sūtras of Limitless Life with Gāthās on the Resolution to be Born*.

The sūtra begins with, “Thus . . .”,<sup>734</sup> showing it to be trustworthy, so that we may get into it. It ends by speaking of the practices which we should openly “wear on our breasts”<sup>735</sup> when they are complete.

The discourse opens with “taking refuge” and “worshiping,” clarifying the source of the main point.<sup>736</sup> We have closed by saying, “This completes the meaning,” declaring that the discussion of its essence is finished.

We have recounted how men, though created unequal, are herein ranked together.

End of the second *juan*.

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may signify Hīnayāna (cf. Soothill, *Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, 471a). See also *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*, T. 1509:25, 123c, 130b, 636a.

733. Emend *yu* 愚 to the homophone *v.l.* 遇 (T. apparatus misprinted!) and understand it as “good fortune” (*shiawase*; Uesugi, *Kaidoku Jōdoron Chū*, 178, *furigana*).

734. *Ru shi* 如是. The sūtras traditionally open with the formula *ru shi wo wen yi shi* 如是我聞一時 (sometimes *wen ru shi*, etc), i.e., “I [Ānanda, the Buddha’s valet] heard [the Buddha himself speak] thus on a certain [definite] occasion.” The phrase authenticates the sūtras as the *ipsissima verba* of Śākyamuni, trustworthily reported and pinned to a definite time and place. Supposedly, all the Hīnayāna sūtras were thus recited by Ānanda at the first general council at Rājagṛha, and most Mahāyāna sūtras imitate the model, claiming a similar trustworthiness. See Brough, “Thus Have I Heard...,” who shows, among other things, that the punctuation of this phrase in most English translations is wrong.

735. *Doctrine of the Mean*, VIII. This phrase was used at the beginning of the text in regard to Vasubandhu: see above, n13.

736. This appears to be a somewhat contracted allusion to the beginning of the commentary on the stanzas: “The resolution to be born is the main point [of those sūtras]. Therefore, we know that the phrase means here ‘to take refuge in Śākyamuni.’” (Above, pp. 77–78.)

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## **The *Pacific World*—Its History**

Throughout my life, I have sincerely believed that Buddhism is a religion of peace and compassion, a teaching which will bring spiritual tranquillity to the individual, and contribute to the promotion of harmony and peace in society. My efforts to spread the Buddha's teachings began in 1925, while I was a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley. This beginning took the form of publishing the *Pacific World*, on a bi-monthly basis in 1925 and 1926, and then on a monthly basis in 1927 and 1928. Articles in the early issues concerned not only Buddhism, but also other cultural subjects such as art, poetry, and education, and then by 1928, the articles became primarily Buddhistic. Included in the mailing list of the early issues were such addressees as the Cabinet members of the U.S. Government, Chambers of Commerce, political leaders, libraries, publishing houses, labor unions, and foreign cultural institutions.

After four years, we had to cease publication, primarily due to lack of funds. It was then that I vowed to become independently wealthy so that socially beneficial projects could be undertaken without financial dependence on others. After founding the privately held company, Mitutoyo Corporation, I was able to continue my lifelong commitment to disseminate the teachings of Buddha through various means.

As one of the vehicles, the *Pacific World* was again reactivated, this time in 1982, as the annual journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. For the opportunity to be able to contribute to the propagation of Buddhism and the betterment of humankind, I am eternally grateful. I also wish to thank the staff of the Institute of Buddhist Studies for helping me to advance my dream to spread the spirit of compassion among the peoples of the world through the publication of the *Pacific World*.

Yehan Numata  
Founder, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai

## **In Remembrance**

In May of 1994, my father, Yehan Numata, aged 97 years, returned to the Pure Land after earnestly serving Buddhism throughout his lifetime. I pay homage to the fact that the *Pacific World* is again being printed and published, for in my father's youth, it was the passion to which he was wholeheartedly devoted.

I, too, share my father's dream of world peace and happiness for all peoples. It is my heartfelt desire that the *Pacific World* helps to promote spiritual culture throughout all humanity, and that the publication of the *Pacific World* be continued.

Toshihide Numata  
Chairman, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai





