

The Teaching of Hearing-the-Name in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*¹

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I. VARIOUS EDITIONS OF THE *LARGER SUKHĀVĀTĪVYŪHA SŪTRA* AND THE TEACHING OF HEARING-THE-NAME

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT teachings characteristic to the Pure Land Buddhism is Hearing-the-Name (*monmyō*). Hearing-the-Name, here, means the teaching expounded in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* that sentient beings are able to attain birth in the Pure Land by hearing the name of Amida Buddha. However, the concept of attaining birth in the Pure Land by hearing the name is not recorded in the early Buddhist teaching of Śākyamuni.² Therefore, Pure Land teaching is sometimes considered to be a different kind of Buddhism. Recently, however, we see much progress in the academic study of Pure Land teaching, re-evaluating this doctrine in the context of Śākyamuni's Buddhism. The results of these recent studies are beginning to show that the concept of Hearing-the-Name in Pure Land teaching is not so alien to the early ideas of Buddhist thought.

The origin of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name is found as early as the time of the emergence of the Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtras. For example, a passage in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* states, "People who hear my name are certain to attain the highest, perfect, enlightenment (*anuttarā samyaksambodhiḥ*)."³ Later, Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250) presented his interpretation of this passage concerning the concept of attaining enlightenment by hearing the name in his *Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa-śāstra*).⁴

The Buddha's name is also taken very seriously in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. The concept of hearing the name appears in numerous passages in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. A passage in the "Chapter on Entering the *Dharmadhātu* (Ju fa-chieh p'in, or *Gandavyūha*)" goes as follows:

Innumerable sentient beings who have heard the name will master and practice Samantabhadra's vows and unfailingly attain the highest path of enlightenment.⁵

And a passage in the eighty-scroll version of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* says,

Even if sentient beings have never aspired to the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), once they hear the name of the Buddha, they will certainly attain enlightenment.⁶

Although modern scholars have discussed various issues concerning the teaching of Hearing-the-Name as it appears in the early Mahāyāna sūtras, the origin of the concept has yet to be clarified. Doctrinal studies of the meaning of Hearing-the-Name itself, namely, why sentient beings can attain birth in the Pure Land simply by hearing the name of Amida Buddha, are far from complete. Inspired by the preceding studies on the topic, this paper examines the teaching of Hearing-the-Name and explores various issues surrounding this teaching.

First, I will briefly overview references to the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appearing in various recensions of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*⁷ and other sūtras related to Pure Land thought. The teaching of Hearing-the-Name already appears in the *O-mi-t'o san-yeh-san-fo sa-lo-fo-t'an kuo-tu-jem-tao ching*, (*Taishō*, no. 362; hereafter, *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*), considered to preserve the earliest form of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. In that version the fourth vow is as follows.

Fourth, I vow that when I attain buddhahood, I will make my name heard in innumerable Buddha-lands in all eight directions, above, and below. I will make all Buddhas expound my virtues and the merits of my land in the assemblies of the *saṃgha*. All heavenly beings, humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms who hear my name will awaken the compassionate mind. I will cause those who rejoice and dance to be born in my land. May I attain enlightenment after I fulfill this vow. I shall not attain enlightenment until fulfilling this vow.⁸

Next, the fifth vow in the same sūtra states:

Fifth, I vow that when I attain buddhahood, if innumerable heavenly beings, humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms above, below, and in the eight directions, even if they have done evil deeds in their former lives, all hear my name and aspire to be born in my land, they will return to the right path promptly, repent their past misconduct, do meritorious deeds for the path [leading to enlightenment], observe the teachings [of the Buddha] and precepts, and wish to be born in my land continuously. When they complete their lives, they will not return to the state of beings in the realms of hells, animals, or hungry spirits, but will attain birth in

my land according to their wishes. May I attain enlightenment after I fulfill this vow. I shall not attain enlightenment until fulfilling this vow.⁹

In the fifth vow, Hearing-the-Name is explained as a necessary condition for birth in the Pure Land followed by the virtues of repentance, meritorious deeds, and observing the teachings and precepts. Therefore, it is reasonable to understand that this vow does not maintain that birth in the Pure Land is possible by Hearing-the-Name alone. Hearing-the-Name, in this vow, is introduced as a prerequisite for the subsequent practices. In other words, Hearing-the-Name provides the cause and conditions for sentient beings to arouse the mind of aspiration for birth in the Pure Land. This may be related to the concept of seeing the light of Amida Buddha, discussed in more detail below, which appears in the same sūtra. Through seeing the light of Amida Buddha, the sūtra maintains, sentient beings are provided with an opportunity to practice meritorious deeds.

Compared to the fifth vow, however, the understanding of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name in the fourth vow of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* is considerably different. We also must be aware of the meaning of the preceding third vow in which the bodhisattva pledges to establish the land of bliss.¹⁰ The fourth vow, then, introduces the method of practice to attain birth in the Pure Land described in the third vow. It is noteworthy that, in the fourth vow, the basis of birth in the Pure Land is determined by the mind of rejoicing upon hearing Amida's name. In this vow, Hearing-the-Name itself is given a very significant meaning. Therefore, the fourth vow begins with the bodhisattva's pledge that the name of Amida is to be heard in innumerable buddha-lands in all ten directions.

Some scholars have suggested that the original discussion of the cause of birth in the Pure Land seems to be very simple. Of course, this issue should be examined further not only from the perspective of theory on the cause of birth, but also broadly from the perspective of the Pure Land Buddhist view of human beings. Such a discussion might go further into issues related to the origins of Pure Land teaching, such as Pure Land Buddhism's view of traditional methods of Buddhist practice developed since the time of Śākyamuni. However, I will reserve the discussion of this topic until some future time.

As shown in the fourth and fifth vows in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, there seems to be a great difference between the understanding that Hearing-the-Name provides a preliminary cause and condition for realizing of the path of the bodhisattva and the understanding that Hearing-the-Name itself becomes the cause of birth in the Pure Land. What is the cause of the emergence of these two different views of Hearing-the-Name? It seems that those who compiled the Pure Land sūtras could not completely

disregard the established system of practice existing since the period of Early Buddhism. Therefore, in a section describing the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land, the practices for *śrāmaṇa*, or monks who have renounced homelife, is explained. On the other hand, the sūtras must also clarify the uniqueness of Pure Land teachings as Buddhism for lay-persons (*zaike bukkyō*). The compilation of the Pure Land sūtras seems to have taken place under such circumstances, which, I believe, produced the different understandings of the idea of Hearing-the-Name in one text.

In the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, there is another passage mentioning Hearing-the-Name:

When I attain buddhahood, I shall teach my name and cause my name to be heard in innumerable buddha-lands all above, below, and in the eight directions; there will be no one who does not hear my name: Innumerable heavenly beings, humans¹¹

This passage corresponds with the section known as "Verses Praising the Buddha" (*Tanbutsu-ge*) in other recensions of the sūtra. This passage appears only in this recension of the sūtra and I will examine this passage of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* later in this article.

The teaching of Hearing-the-Name becomes more significant in later forms of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. In the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (*Taishō*, no. 360) and the *Wu-liang-shou ju-lai hui* (*Taishō*, no. 310-5), the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appears repeatedly in the vows. It appears in the thirty-fourth through thirty-seventh, forty-first through forty-fifth, forty-seventh, and forty-eighth vows, in the formula, "If sentient beings who have heard my Name should not . . . , may I not attain perfect enlightenment." Corresponding passages of the vows in the Sanskrit text similarly emphasize Hearing-the-Name in the phrase *mama nāmadheyam śrutvā* (having heard my name). In the *Ta-ch'eng wu-liang-shou chuang-yen ching* (*Taishō*, no. 363; hereafter *Chuang-yen ching*), Hearing-the-Name also appears in the fourteenth, twenty-seventh through twenty-ninth, thirty-first through thirty-fourth, and thirty-sixth vows. In the earlier form of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, however, there are no passages corresponding to these vows. Therefore they are understood as additions made to the later *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. It is also noteworthy that most of these vows are addressed to bodhisattvas in lands in the other directions.

It is also well known that the concept of Hearing-the-Name appears in passages concerning the fulfillment of the vow (*jōju mon*). The passage in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* states,

All sentient beings who, having heard his Name, rejoice in faith, remember him even once and sincerely transfer the merit of

virtuous practices to that land, aspiring to be born there, will attain birth and dwell in the Stage of Non-retrogression.¹²

A verse of the “Hymn of the Eastern Direction (*Tōbō-ge*)” in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* says,

By the power of that Buddha’s Original Vows,
All who hear his Name and desire birth,
Will, without exception, be born in his land,
And effortlessly enter the Stage of Non-retrogression.¹³

Corresponding passages of the verse in the Sanskrit text describe this more precisely. According to the text, innumerable *tathāgatas* and bodhisattvas in the ten directions worshiped Amida Buddha and made offerings to him. Responding to the worship and offerings, Amida Buddha smiled back at them. Then bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara asked why he smiled.

Then Amitāyus the Buddha explained:
“The miracle of my smile is due to the
vow I made in former times—
that living beings who heard my name, no matter how,
should come to my field without fail.
“This splendid vow of mine has been fulfilled.
And living beings come here from many world systems.
Arriving directly before my presence, they cannot fall back;
only this one birth remains for them.”¹⁴

It is interesting that the contents of this verse are very close to that of the *Wu-liang ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng-chüeh ching* (*Taishō*, no. 361; hereafter *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching*), which is one of the earlier versions of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. We should note that in this passage Amida himself confirms his original vows. According to this passage, we could also understand that the essence of Amida’s vows are represented by the concept of birth caused by Hearing-the-Name.

There is another passage on Hearing-the-Name in the section of circulation (*ruzūbun*) at the end of the sūtra. The *Wu-liang-shou ching* version states,

If there are people who hear the Name of that Buddha, rejoice so greatly as to dance, and remember him even once, then you should know that they have gained great benefit by receiving the unsurpassed virtue.¹⁵

How, then, does the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* explain the meaning of Hearing-the-Name? The sūtra does not give us a clear definition of the idea itself. In some vows, however, the significance of Hearing-the-Name is explained in the context of Buddhist practices. For example, the twentieth vow of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* instructs:

... people who having heard my Name, concentrate their thoughts on my land, do various meritorious deeds and sincerely transfer their merits towards my land¹⁶

The thirty-fifth vow adds,

... people who having heard my Name, rejoice in faith, awaken aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicitta*)¹⁷

And in the thirty-seventh,

... people, who having heard my Name, prostrate themselves on the ground to revere and worship me, rejoice in faith, and perform the bodhisattva practices¹⁸

According to these vows, Amida Buddha has established the vows for sentient beings so that they rejoice in faith upon hearing the name, awaken aspiration for enlightenment, and practice the bodhisattva path diligently. In these vows, the concept of Hearing-the-Name plays the significant role of introducing beings to the path of Buddhist practice.

The understanding of the concept of Hearing-the-Name as the introduction to the path of Buddhist practice was pointed out as early as Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Larger Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Ta-chih-tu-lun*):

Concerning "hearing the name." One is not able to attain the path to enlightenment only by hearing the name. Having heard the name, practice, and then attain emancipation. Just like the wealthy man Sudatta. First he heard the name of the Buddha and rejoiced in his mind. Then he visited the Buddha, listened to the Dharma, and attained the path to enlightenment. And like a brahman Saila, who was a student of a Jaṭila named Keṇika. When he heard the name of the Buddha from his master for the first time, his mind rejoiced instantly. He visited the Buddha immediately, listened to the Dharma, and attained the path of enlightenment.¹⁹

Nāgārjuna takes the vow to mean that sentient beings are not able to attain enlightenment only by hearing the name of the Buddha. Emancipation will

be actualized by subsequent practice, inspired by the experience of hearing the name of the Buddha.

I mentioned that the sūtra itself does not give us a clear definition of Hearing-the-Name and its significance in Buddhist practice. However, according to the fourth vow in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, Hearing-the-Name is defined as listening to Amida Buddha's virtues and the merits of his land. It is also noteworthy that, in the vow, the practitioner's act of hearing corresponds with all other buddhas' acts expounding Amida's virtues and merits.

Further, in some vows in the Sanskrit text, the meaning of Hearing-the-Name is known by a word which connects Hearing-the-Name with its virtues. In the forty-second and forty-third vows, there are passages which say, "living beings will hear my name and yet the root of merit that comes with hearing my name . . ." ²⁰ and "living beings in another buddha-field will hear my name and yet the root of merit that comes with hearing my name . . ." ²¹

According to these passages, the experience of hearing Amida Buddha's name itself is understood as a practice creating virtues. In the Sanskrit text, the word "comes with" is *sahagatena* (accompanied, associated). By this word it is known that "hearing" is equal to "virtues." In these examples Hearing-the-Name is considered to have significant meaning by itself.

Having reviewed the teaching of Hearing-the-Name as it appears in various recensions of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, we have discovered that there is no significant difference between the earlier and later forms of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* concerning their views on Hearing-the-Name. Two types of interpretations of the concept of Hearing-the-Name exist in both groups of texts. The one sees high value in Hearing-the-Name itself. The other postulates that Hearing-the-Name is an introduction to the practices of the Buddhist path. In the later versions, the former interpretation is given more emphasis than in the earlier forms of the sūtra.

Next, I will review the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appearing in other sūtras related to Pure Land teaching. First, in the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*, there is a passage which goes as follows.

Like many bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas, if good men and women who have heard the name are able to attain birth in *Akṣobhya's* Buddha land, how much more so will those who wish to accumulate the ultimate roots of virtues be born in *Akṣobhya's* Buddha land. Having completely accumulated all roots of virtues, instantly they will attain the ultimate enlightenment on the highest and the most righteous path.²²

The corresponding passage in an alternative Chinese translation of the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra* goes as follows.

Oh, Śāriputra, if good men and women have heard of the name of the bodhisattva, they will attain birth in the Buddha land.²³

As in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, these passages seem to promote the teaching of birth in Akṣobhya's buddha land by hearing his name. However, some scholars point out that the idea of "birth by hearing the name" does not seem very strong in these passages considering the context of this passage.²⁴

Certainly, in the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*, emphasis is generally placed more on the six *pāramitās* of bodhisattva practice, and birth in Akṣobhya's buddha land is determined by the virtue of practitioners' good deeds rather than their experience of hearing the name of the buddha. In addition, the concept of birth in the buddha land by hearing the name does not appear in any of the original vows of Akṣobhya Buddha. Compared to the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*, it is remarkable that the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* had already included the concept of birth in the buddha land by hearing the name in its original vows. The existence, or non-existence, of the idea of birth in the buddha land by hearing the name as found in the passages of the original vows demonstrates that there is a fundamental difference in the characteristics of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* and the *Akṣobhyavyūha Sūtra*.

Another sūtra related to Pure Land teaching is the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*. There are four different Chinese translations of this sūtra, the earliest dating to the ninth century C.E.²⁵ There is also a Tibetan translation which belongs to later recensions.²⁶ Among the various Chinese translations of the sūtra, in the "Bhadrapāla Section" of the *Mahāvaiṣṭya-mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra (Ta-fang-teng Ta-chi ching hsien-hu fen)*, there is a passage that includes the phrase, "having heard the name of Amida tathāgata, arhat, samyaksambuddha . . ." ²⁷ Although the concept of Hearing-the-Name exists in this Chinese translation, there is no mention of the "name" in the corresponding passages of the other translations.

In the Chinese translation of the one-fascicle edition of the sūtra, there is the famous phrase, "Those who wish to be born should meditate upon my name." Although this passage mentions the name, the corresponding sections in the Chinese translation of the three-fascicle edition, the "Bhadrapāla Section," and also the Tibetan translation of this sūtra simply state, "meditate upon the Buddha," but do not mention the "name." The phrase "hearing the name of the Buddha" appears both in the Chinese translation of the three-fascicle and the one-fascicle editions. Corresponding sections in the other translations do not contain this phrase. Therefore, some scholars suggest that the translation of these passages in the Chinese

translation of the three-fascicle and the one-fascicle editions may not be faithful to the original texts.²⁸ Either way, we cannot deny criticisms that these arguments are, at best, mere speculation, since we do not have any decisive evidence. However, it is certain that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name or Calling-the-Name is not so significant in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhī Sūtra*.

In the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra* (*Yao-shih pen-yüan ching*),²⁹ the concept of “birth in the buddha land by hearing the name” appears in the passages of the original vows, but as this sūtra is thought to have been compiled fairly late in the development of Mahāyāna sūtras, I will not discuss this text.

I have examined some early Mahāyāna sūtras, especially those related to Pure Land Buddhism. Among them, it is especially noteworthy that the concept of “birth in the buddha land by hearing the name” appears in the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching*, one of the earliest compiled Mahāyāna sūtras. Also, we discovered that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appears very frequently in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*—which is the most fundamental sūtra in the Jōdo Shinshū tradition—especially in the section of original vows, in the “Hymn of the Eastern Direction,” and in the section of circulation of the sūtra. However, it is not clear whether the teaching of Hearing-the-Name suddenly appeared in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, or whether there was a precursor to this teaching, or some related ideas, that existed in the early Buddhist sūtras. Some scholars speculate that this teaching may have been influenced by non-Buddhist religions. I will discuss these issues in the following section.

II. ORIGINS OF THE TEACHING OF HEARING-THE-NAME

In this section, first, I will examine the theory that high valuation of the name within Pure Land teachings was introduced from ancient, pre-Buddhist, Indian thought, or, at least, developed under such influence. Nakamura Hajime is one of the scholars representing this opinion.

The idea of giving high value to the name has existed in India from ancient times. During the period of the rise of *upanīṣad* thought, there arose the practice of meditating upon the sacred word “OM,” a symbol of the absolute being, Brahman. This practice has continued in various schools of Indian thought, such as Vedānta. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, there is the idea of revering the name Considering these traditions, I conclude that the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*’s idea of giving high value to the name of Amida Buddha originated in Indian religious philosophy that

existed continuously from the period of Brahmanism to the period of Hinduism.³⁰

There is another study on the concept of the name by Jan Gonda in ancient Indian religions, in which he briefly refers to Pure Land teachings by citing a work by Gerhard Rosenkranz:

In expatiating upon the modification of the Buddhist practice of “thinking of the Buddha” in Amida Buddhism Rozenkranz³¹ argues that “uralte Wortmagie” [ancient magical nature of words] led people to replace the Buddha by his name which manifests the nature of its bearer.³²

He points out that a belief in the magical power of words suggests the origin of the notion of placing high value on the name. Certainly, the idea of placing high value on the name existed in ancient Indian society. Perhaps the influence of such a concept in Pure Land teaching cannot be totally neglected. As these scholars say, the development of the idea of Hearing-the-Name in Pure Land teaching cannot be understood properly without considering notions of the potency of names and words in ancient Indian society.

Scholars of ancient India may criticize us, saying that we simply forget that this idea existed in that society. I think specialists still need to discuss many issues concerning the study of ideas in ancient societies. As for the idea of placing high value on the name, there are many questions that remain to be solved. Particularly, the issue of whether there is an essential difference between the meaning of the idea in ancient Indian society and that of Pure Land teaching is very significant. And, if there is a difference, what is it? Nakamura’s studies, however, do not address these issues.

Some studies, however, do discuss the above mentioned issues. For example, Sakamoto Hiroshi points out that there is a great difference between the faith in the names of buddhas or bodhisattvas, and other ancient beliefs in the name.³³ In the following, I summarize the outline of his arguments:

1. The buddhas or bodhisattvas, who are the subject of the belief in their names, will circulate their names and merits universally and generously without any limitation. Their names are accessible and open to anyone. On the other hand, ancient deities generally try to keep their real names secret in order to preserve their power. They only reluctantly release their powers if someone summons the name through magical rituals.

2. The supernatural power of a name, or the power of buddhas and bodhisattvas themselves, is the compassionate salvific activity which is supported by the wisdom-power of *prajñā*. The power of the ancient deities is the power to suppress dark mystical or evil power. It is no more than magical power which is only accessible or able to be activated through magical rituals.

Sakamoto's arguments, especially the latter, are very similar to Nāgārjuna's comments on the teaching of Hearing-the-Name. Nāgārjuna discusses Hearing-the-Name from the perspective of buddha-body theory. The meaning of the name in the concept of Hearing-the-Name, according to Nāgārjuna, is the name of the Buddha of the living dharma-nature (*dharmatā*) who emancipates every being and has fulfilled all vows.³⁴ The Buddha of the living dharma-nature is, as has already been discussed by some scholars, the *tathāgata* of the reward-body (*vipāka-kāya*), or enjoyment-body (*sambhoga-kāya*).³⁵ The reward-body is the actualization of the Dharma-body (*dharmakāya*) or the wisdom of true thusness (*tatathā*) in the secular world, which works to emancipate sentient beings. The foundation of the salvific act of the *tathāgata* of Pure Land is wisdom directed toward the secular world. The nature of the reward-body is characterized by compassionate salvific activity supported by the wisdom-power of *prajñā*.³⁶

On the other hand, emphasis on secrecy in belief in the name in ancient Indian society is well represented by the phrase *guhya nāma* (hidden, secret name). The notion of the name in Pure Land teaching clearly contrasts with this. For example, a passage in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* says,

When I attain buddhahood, I shall teach my name and make my name to be heard in innumerable buddha-lands all above, below, and in the eight directions.³⁷

The name of Amida Buddha is accessible from all buddha-lands and open to everyone. We should thus be aware that there is a fundamental difference in belief in the name in ancient Indian society and in Pure Land teaching.

Of course, the possible relation between Pure Land thought and Indian thought is not limited to the teaching of Hearing-the-Name. For example, some scholars maintain that the concept of faith (*shin*) in Amida Buddha developed under the influence of the idea of *bhakti* (devotion) which appeared in texts such as the *Bhagavadgītā*.³⁸ There are also scholars who maintain that non-Buddhist religions significantly influenced the formation of Pure Land teaching. For example, there are studies trying to demonstrate a relationship to non-Buddhist religions through the idea of the light which adorns both Amida and his Pure Land.³⁹ However, we

must be careful again not to draw too broad a conclusion or too hastily establish a relationship based only on the discovery of a few similar terms. Since they share ancient Indian thought as a common background, undoubtedly some similarities in the expression of ideas exists. But these similarities should not be overemphasized. Rather, we need to find out what are the fundamental differences between ancient Indian thought and the Pure Land teaching which also arose in India.

There is another possibility that, although the teaching of Hearing-the-Name is alien to the essential parts of Buddhist teaching, it was introduced into Buddhism as a skillful means to popularize it. It can also be thought that it was simply adopted as a popular and ordinary practice that already existed in ancient India. To respond to these ideas, it is necessary to examine the meaning of the name in ancient societies, or how the name was understood among the populace. However, I disagree with the opinion that Hearing-the-Name was introduced simply as a skillful means and has nothing to do with the essential part of Buddhist teaching. If such was the case, the teaching would not have been taken so seriously in the development of Buddhist thought. To the contrary, the fact that Nāgārjuna discussed Hearing-the-Name in the *Discourse on the Ten Stages (Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā)*⁴⁰ and the *Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*⁴¹ demonstrates that Hearing-the-Name was an essential issue in Buddhism.

Next, I will review issues concerning Hearing-the-Name within Buddhist thought. Some scholars maintain that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name was developed among Buddhists who thought that reciting the name of the Buddha with their mouth was disrespectful. According to this theory, these Buddhists believed that they could attain birth in the Pure Land or heavens simply by hearing the name of a buddha praised by other buddhas. The rise in popularity of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name is, therefore, a result of people being restrained from reciting the name.⁴² However, I doubt whether such a relationship ever existed between the practice of Hearing-the-Name and the practice of Calling-the-Name. In the earlier *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* and also in the *Lotus Sūtra*, we find the concept of Calling-the-Name. I think it is more reasonable to assume that the concepts of Hearing-the-Name and Calling-the-Name originally derived from two different groups of sūtras in India, one emphasizing the Calling-the-Name practice and the other the Hearing-the-Name practice.⁴³ That is why I doubt that the Hearing-the-Name practice was developed as a substitute for the practice of Calling-the-Name.

Next, concerning the relation between Hearing-the-Name and Calling-the-Name, some scholars believe that the teaching of Hearing-the-Name and the theory of Hearing-the-Name as the cause of birth, and the teaching of *nembutsu* and the theory of *nembutsu* as the cause of birth are the same concept expressed in different terms and, therefore, have an

inseparable relationship.⁴⁴ According to this theory, Hearing-the-Name should not be understood as an independent teaching within the Pure Land path. Rather, the experience of hearing the name of Amida Buddha is a part of the wholistic experience of hearing, awakening faith, rejoicing, and *nembutsu* that results in the attainment of enlightenment. Therefore, there is no fundamental difference between Hearing-the-Name and *nembutsu*. Hearing-the-Name itself includes virtues that reflect the historical context that “hearing” was the starting point of all practices shared by all disciples after the Buddha’s death. According to this theory, during the early period of the development of Pure Land teaching, Pure Land Buddhists needed to emphasize the significance of “hearing” on the one hand in order to respond to criticisms from Hīnayāna Buddhists, and, on the other hand, attempted to promote their teaching broadly to the general public. Under such circumstances, Pure Land Buddhists developed the idea that the practice of Hearing-the-Name itself bestowed such virtues as the eradication of evil karma, entry into the stage of non-retrogression, and birth in the Pure Land. Therefore, although it is not clear that the idea of birth by Hearing-the-Name was originally an essential part of practice among Pure Land Buddhists, it is possible to discuss the concept of birth by Hearing-the-Name as an issue related to the concept of birth by *nembutsu*.

However, I have reservations in accepting the theory which considers Hearing-the-Name and *nembutsu* to be essentially the same concept expressed in different terms. Instead, I think that the concept of Hearing-the-Name and the concept of *nembutsu* have different origins. Although the origin of *nembutsu* and Calling-the-Name is very old, there is no mention of the teaching of Calling-the-Name in the Sanskrit text of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. However, the teaching of Hearing-the-Name appears throughout that text. It should also be noted that Nāgārjuna, in his works, does not discuss the relationship between Calling-the-Name and Hearing-the-Name at all. This also suggests that Hearing-the-Name and Calling-the-Name are derived from different doctrinal positions.

There is another reason to consider *nembutsu* and Hearing-the-Name separately. In the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching*, Hearing-the-Name mainly appears in the passages of the original vows. On the other hand, the concept of *nembutsu* mainly appears in the section discussing the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land.⁴⁵ The view that, from the perspective of the historical development of the sūtra, the section of the original vows and the section of the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land were originally compiled as independent sūtras is very convincing.⁴⁶ A few scholars have already pointed out that there are many inconsistencies in the contents of the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching*.⁴⁷ For example, the passages which correspond with the “Verses Praising the Buddha” (*Tanbutsu-ge*) in other editions of the sūtra are similar to the twenty-fourth, third, fourth, and the latter half of the

second vows, respectively.⁴⁸ These passages are considered to be a summary of the most significant four vows in the entire twenty-four vows pledged in the sūtra. The passages basically relate that the bodhisattva Dharmākara became the most excellent Buddha above all other Buddhas and adorned his Pure Land. Then he caused sentient beings to be born in his land by letting them hear his name and causing them to become bodhisattvas and arhats. According to these passages, the essential method of practice in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* is to cause sentient beings to be born in the Pure Land by Hearing-the-Name. Therefore, the fourth vow is considered to be more significant than the fifth, sixth, and seventh vows. However, if the existence of the passages of fulfillment of the vow reflects the significance of the vow, then this thesis becomes inconsistent, since the fourth vow does not have a corresponding passage of fulfillment of the vow. Thus it is thought that the section expounding the original vows and the section discussing the birth in the three grades were originally compiled independently.

In the above two sections, I have examined the teaching of Hearing-the-Name as discussed by scholars from various perspectives. I have pointed out the problems within each theory, which has raised issues to be discussed further. In the following sections, I would like to propose alternative approaches to understanding the idea of Hearing-the-Name.

III. THE TEACHING OF HEARING-THE-NAME AND BUDDHA-BODY THEORY

In this section, I approach the teaching of Hearing-the-Name from the perspective of Buddha-body theory. The subject of Hearing-the-Name in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* is, of course, the name of Amida Buddha. And since Hearing-the-Name means hearing the name of Amida Buddha, the nature of Amida Buddha himself becomes a very significant issue. First of all, Amida Buddha is one of the Buddhas in a presently existing Buddha land. I would like to consider the historical context in which Buddhas in other lands appeared. It is not difficult to imagine that, generations after Śākyamuni Buddha passed away, there were many disciples who lamented in deep sorrow that they were born in a world with no Buddha. Some of them, who could not suppress their passion, strongly wished to see the Buddha in this present life.

It has already been pointed out that the sense of “present-ness” exists as a significant issue at the deepest foundations of Pure Land teaching. This is readily known from the concept of welcoming (*raigō*) by Amida Buddha in Pure Land teaching. For example, the eighteenth vow in the Sanskrit text says,

Blessed One, may I not awaken to unsurpassed, perfect, full awakening if, after I attain awakening, those living beings in other world spheres . . . will not be met by me at the moment of death—if I should not stand before them, then surrounded and honored by a retinue of monks, so that they can meet death without anxiety.⁴⁹

A wish to see the Buddha in the present must be a feeling commonly shared by all Buddhists. Thus they tried to deeply grasp Amida Buddha in the image of Śākyamuni Buddha appearing in the present.

Although Amida Buddha is a Buddha of the present, he is not one who appears in this present world. Amida Buddha is not an existence appearing with a concrete form in this secular world. According to Yamaguchi Susumu, if we try to grasp the image of Amida, like a shadow, we cannot grasp it. His presence is ephemeral. Therefore, the passage “(Amida Buddha had attained enlightenment) ten kalpas ago”⁵⁰ in the sūtra is a temporal expression of his ungraspability in concrete worldly form. And the passage “(Amida Buddha resides in the Pure Land) ten thousand billion lands away”⁵¹ in the sūtra is a spacial expression of his ungraspability.⁵² Amida Buddha is a Buddha with transcendental nature as a reward-body (*sambhogakāya*). This is clear in the following analysis by Nagao Gajin:

An enjoyment-body (*sambhoga-kāya*) is known to be founded upon dual natures. On the one hand, its character transcends a personified Buddha of transformed-body (*nirmāṇa-kāya*). On the other hand, it is an actualization of absolute self-nature-body (*svabhāva-kāya*). An enjoyment-body is, therefore, transcendental as well as actual, historical as well as trans-historical. It carries two natures in one body.⁵³

According to this argument, it is clear that a reward-body includes both natures of eternity and transcendency. However, the author also points out that the special characteristic of the three body theory is that the transcendental nature of the reward-body of a buddha is not directly identified with the transcendental nature of the dharma-body (*dharma-kāya*).

If we want to create a connection with Amida Buddha, then what kind of approach is possible? Here, the name of Amida Buddha appears as a medium through which a space will be opened for us to meet Amida Buddha. This might be the only possible approach. However, it is impossible for us sentient beings to understand the name or to praise the virtues of the name, which are essentially equal to the Buddha himself. Only the other Buddhas can praise the name of Amida Buddha. We are therefore listening to the other Buddhas praising the virtues of the name. It also

means that we are listening to the virtues of Amida Buddha and the adornment of the Pure Land. There, for the first time, a space is truly opened for us to meet with the *tathāgata*.

Now, I will take another look at the fourth vow of the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*. In the fourth vow, a relationship between "teaching" and "hearing" is established in the passage of teaching by other Buddhas, "all buddhas will expound my virtues and the merits of my land in the assemblies of the *samgha*" and the passage of hearing by sentient beings, "All heavenly beings, humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms who hear my name." The seventeenth vow in another Chinese translation, the *P'in-teng-chüeh ching*, is essentially the same vow, except that the character for "expounds, teaches (*shuo*)" is written as "praise (*t'an*)." The fourth vow in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* and the seventeenth vow in the *P'in-teng-chüeh ching* later developed into the seventeenth and eighteenth vows in the later *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. As a result, the relationship between "teaching" and "hearing" became unclear. The contents of these vows are, however, considered to retain the same relationship between the two ideas as in the earlier *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*.

However, when we turn to the passage of fulfillment of the vow, it states,

All Buddhas, Tathāgatas, in the ten directions, as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, together praise the inconceivable, supernal virtue of Amitāyus. [That is because] all sentient beings who, having heard the name [of Amitāyus], rejoice in faith, remember him even once and sincerely transfer the merit of virtuous practices to that land, aspiring to be born there, will attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. But excluded are those who have committed the five gravest offenses and abused the right Dharma.⁵⁴

In this passage, other Buddhas praise the wonderful virtue of Amida because all sentient beings may attain birth in the Pure Land and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression through hearing his name. The relationship between sentient beings' hearing and other Buddhas' praising the virtues of Amida does not seem to exist. When we read the passage carefully, however, it says "having heard the name" (*sono myōgo wo kikite*). In this passage, "the name" implies that sentient beings have heard "the name other Buddhas are praising." Therefore, the relationship between sentient beings' hearing and other buddhas' praising the name of Amida Buddha exists in the passage of the fulfillment of the vow.

A study by Unebe Toshihide indirectly supports this idea. According to his study, in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, only other Buddhas are

able to praise the name.⁵⁵ However, sentient beings or bodhisattvas, as subjects, have never praised the name or recited the name. On the other hand, the subjects who hear the name are consistently sentient beings (or bodhisattvas, or women) in the Sanskrit text of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, and other buddhas have never appeared as the subject of hearing the name. In the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, the idea of Hearing-the-Name means hearing the name being praised by other Buddhas, and hearing the virtue of Amida Buddha and the merits of the land.

Next, I examine the origin of the teaching of Hearing-the-Name in relationship to Hearing-the-Dharma (*monbō*) which has been expounded in Buddhist traditions since the time of the early Buddhist sūtras. I believe that the teachings of Hearing-the-Name and Hearing-the-Dharma are fundamentally the same. Śākyamuni's teaching of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) developed the transcendental and metaphysical aspects of the teaching of the ultimate truth. This aspect of the development of the teaching concretely appears in the idea of Dharma-body and reward-body in Buddha-body theory. Therefore, in Pure Land teaching, Śākyamuni's teaching of dependent origination is expressed in the form of a reward-body of Amida Buddha. It is possible to see that Amida Buddha is a concrete and personified presence of Dharma. In that sense, hearing the name of Amida Buddha is not different from hearing Śākyamuni's teaching. Thus the teachings of Hearing-the-Name and Hearing-the-Dharma are inter-related.

Then why was it necessary that Hearing-the-Name be taught along with Hearing-the-Dharma? A possible reason for this is that the Dharma realized by Śākyamuni gradually became more and more transcendental and metaphysical. As a result, it became more and more difficult for the general public to understand. On the other hand, Buddha-body theory, in which Dharma is expressed in the form of the body of the Buddha, developed. In Buddha-body theory, the reward body symbolizes the Dharma-nature of the ultimate reality and the principle of Buddha Dharma, and its will to actualize the spirit of Dharma upon human beings. A transformation body is the form fully realized in the world of human beings. Therefore, we are made to feel a closeness to Amida Buddha as a reward body buddha, or the name of Amida Buddha. We have classified various recensions of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* into two groups, earlier and later, and Amida Buddha in the earlier recensions of the sūtra appears as a more personified figure than in the later recensions. For example, in the earlier recensions, Amida Buddha takes baths and appears in the lecture hall in the Pure Land. All these scenes have disappeared in the later recensions of the sūtra. Also in the earlier editions there are expressions that say Amida Buddha will pass into *nirvāṇa* or hears voices. In the earlier *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, Amida Buddha is not completely considered as a reward-body and there still remains some nature of

a transformation body. Therefore, in some descriptions, Amida Buddha's behavior is similar to that of an ordinary being's.

In the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, hearing the name is promoted on the basis of this understanding of Amida Buddha's body. In the sūtra, hearing the Dharma is also promoted. In the section of circulation at the end of the Sanskrit text of sūtra, there is a passage which goes as follows:

In order to hear this discourse on the Dharma, one should plunge into a three-thousandfold, many thousandfold, world system full of fire, one should not allow even one single thought leaving, nor should there be any regret.⁵⁶

Also in the section of the lower grades of aspirants of the Pure Land in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, there is a passage which says,

When they hear the profound Dharma, they joyfully accept it and do not entertain any doubt; and so remembering the Buddha even once . . .⁵⁷

This shows that Hearing-the-Dharma will also inspire the mind of joy and faith, just like Hearing-the-Name. However, these passages explain that Hearing-the-Dharma is a very difficult practice as explained in the section on circulation. The difficulty of Hearing-the-Dharma is also found in the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* saying that this teaching is the most difficult to accept.⁵⁸ We see that the Dharma had already become very difficult for common people living in secular society to understand. Perhaps this is why the Hearing-the-Name practice was promoted instead of Hearing-the-Dharma.

These issues of the relationship between the name and the Dharma remind me of the interpretation of the name by T'an-luan (476–524). T'an-luan understood the Buddha's Names in the relationship that names and dharmas (things) are exactly identical. He explains this idea in his *Commentary on the Discourse on the Pure Land (Ching-t'u-lun chu)* as follows:

In some cases, names and things [dharmas] are exactly identical, and in others, they are different. Some examples of the former are the names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the word *prajñāpāramitā, dhāraṇīs*, spells and some other [mystic] phrases.⁵⁹

T'an-luan classifies all names into two categories: names the same as dharmas and names not the same as dharmas. He defines all names other than names of Buddhas, *dhāraṇī*, etc., to be not the same as dharmas, and indicates the inconsistency in ordinary names and their meanings, and

their inappropriateness. By following T'an-luan's definition, we are able to understand the relationship of the name and what it signifies, i.e. Dharma (teaching). And we are able to know that there is no difference between hearing the name of Amida Buddha and hearing the teaching.

IV. THE IDEA OF HEARING-THE-VIRTUE-OF-LIGHT

Another remarkable idea in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* which is related to Hearing-the-Name is the idea of hearing the virtue of the Buddha's light. In the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, there is a passage which says, "If sentient beings, having heard of the majestic virtue of his light, glorify it continually, day and night, with sincerity of heart, they will be able to attain birth in his land, as they wish."⁶⁰ No corresponding passage exists in other recensions of the sūtra and the passage might make more sense if it said that sentient beings praise his light by seeing it. But what exactly does this passage mean by "hearing the virtue of the light"? Here we need to consider the meaning of light and the relationship between light and the name.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the idea of light is given special emphasis. For example, in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the Buddha is frequently described in terms of light. The Chapter on Vairocana Buddha explains the merit gained by sentient beings who encounter the Buddha's light:

Observing the light of the Buddha is like [seeing] a cloud. It is difficult to conceive in one's mind. It is omnipresent. It appears right in front of one's eyes. The radiation of light from [the Buddha's] pores is like a cloud. It is unlimited. In accordance with the sound of sentient beings, limitless virtue of the Buddha is praised. If sentient beings encounter the Buddha's light, all sufferings will be permanently eliminated and peace and happiness achieved. They will be filled with joy.⁶¹

The virtue of light and its this-worldly merits are mentioned frequently in other passages in the sūtra, such as the Chapter of Bhadrakarmā Bodhisattva.⁶²

Among the sūtras which emphasize the virtue of light, it has been pointed out that the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* places more emphasis on light than any other sūtra.⁶³ In the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, the virtue of seeing light is explained in the section near the end of the text. There is a section in which Ānanda sees the land of Amida Buddha, and those of other bodhisattvas and arhats.⁶⁴ After seeing the land, Ānanda rejoices greatly and dances and says, "Namo' mitābha-samyaksambuddha" (*Na-mo O-*

mi-t'o san-yeh-san-fo-t'an).⁶⁵ Responding to this act of recitation of the name, light radiates from Amida's buddha-land. Countless numbers of humans, and flying bugs and wiggling worms, see Amida Buddha's light and rejoice with compassionate minds. Then the text says, "All blind persons instantly gain their sight. All deaf persons instantly begin to hear. All mute persons instantly are able to speak." A similar passage is also found in the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching*.⁶⁶ This passage, however, does not exist in the other Chinese translations, nor the Sanskrit text or Tibetan translation. This issue should be discussed from the perspective of the sūtra's historical development.

This passage has been considered to be a case which includes this-worldly merit and magic in practicing the recitation of the name. If we read the passage carefully, however, we may not necessarily need to interpret it in that way at all. Rather, "Namo' mitābha-samyaksambuddha" may be better considered as Ānanda's expression of deep joy after seeing the adornment of the Pure Land. Therefore, the merit of healing, such as the blind gaining sight, is more properly understood as the working of light and its merits.⁶⁷

While one passage explains the this-worldly merits of light, another passage uses the word "light" synonymously with the word wisdom. For example, in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, there is a section on the light of bodhisattvas and arhats in the Pure Land:

One of the bodhisattvas is called Avalokiteśvara. Another bodhisattva is called Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Their light of wisdom is most excellent and the light from these bodhisattvas radiates in all directions.⁶⁸

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, such usages are found in the sūtras compiled during its period of early development. In Chinese Buddhist texts, light and wisdom are often used as compound words, such as *chih-hui-kuang*, *chih-kuang*, *hui-kuang* (light of wisdom). These terms are also found consistently in the later *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, describing Amida Buddha as light.

Therefore, in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, seeing the Buddha is explained as not merely seeing Amida himself but also seeing Amida's light. In the section of the three grades of aspirants to the Pure Land in the earlier editions of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, however, there are some examples in which seeing Amida and seeing the light are considered to be different, but I think these cases are exceptional.

How, then, does the sūtra explain the relationship of Amida's light and name? The following passage in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* is noteworthy:

The name of Amida Buddha's light is heard in innumerable buddha-lands in all eight directions, above and below. All heavenly beings and humans hear and know [the name]. Those who hear and know [the name] will certainly attain liberation [from samsara].⁶⁹

I think that the name and light are placed together in this passage since the virtue of the name and light are considered to be one. From this passage, it is clear that even in the earlier *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, light and the name are regarded as one. In this context, expressions like "having heard of the majestic virtue of Amida Buddha's light" seems very natural.

I have examined various issues concerning the idea of Hearing-the-Name. There are many issues which remain to be discussed in the future, such as the concept of Hearing-the-Name discussed in the *Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Discourse on the Ten Stages* by Nāgārjuna, the establishment of Pure Land teaching and the teaching of Hearing-the-Name, and the meaning of the act of "hearing" itself. As the answers to such problems became clear, so the position of Pure Land Buddhist thought will also become better understood.

Translated by Eisho Nasu

NOTES

1. Translator's note: This is a translation of the first section of the third chapter, "*Muryōjukyō ni okeru monmyō shisō: Monmyō shisō no haikei*," in the *Zotei: Muryōjikyō no kenkyū: shisō to sono tenkai* [A study of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*: development of its teaching (Expanded and revised)] (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 2000), pp. 249–277, by Prof. Ōta Rishō, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. Unless otherwise noted, all of the quoted passages have been translated into English by the translator. Minor editorial changes and revisions are made in the texts and notes according to the journal's editorial guidelines and conventions of academic publication in English. Additional notes are inserted occasionally to help readers to identify the original texts and their English translations if available. I also want to thank Mr. Harry Bridge (Institute of Buddhist Studies/Graduate Theological Union) and Mr. Yōdō Yamada (Ryukoku University) for their kind assistance. Although all changes and revisions are made with the permission of the author, any errors are solely the responsibility of the translator.

2. Also, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the idea of practice had developed systematically and gradually completed its method of practice, for example the development of the concept of the ten stages (*daśabhūmi*) of the bodhisattva, or the concept of the various stages of the bodhisattva elaborated in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. However, development of a systematic method of practices does not seem to have a clear connection to the development of Pure Land teaching. Kawanami Akira points out that there is no theory of stages of practice in Pure Land sūtras. See, Kawanami Akira, "Jōdokyō teki shūkyō taiken ni okeru soku no ronri to kaitei no ronri," *Jōdoshūgaku kenkyū*, 4 (1969): pp. 117–140.

3. *Mo-ho-pan-jo-po-lo-mi-to ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 8, p. 221-a.

4. *Ta-chih-tu-lun*, *Taishō*, vol. 25, p. 313-c.

5. *Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 9, p. 689-c.

6. *Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 10, p. 124-a.

7. There exist seven recensions of the sutra: a Sanskrit text, a Tibetan translation, and five Chinese translations. Five Chinese translations are:

1. *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching*, translated by Lokakṣema (Chih Lou-chia-ch'en) between 147 and 186, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 361, pp. 279b–299c. Fujita Kōtatsu, however, identifies the translator as Po-yen, ca. 258. Another theory attributes the translation to Dharmarakṣa.

2. *O-mi-t'ō san-yeh-san-fo sa-lo-fo-t'an kuo-tu-jen-tao ching*, commonly called *Ta A-mi-t'ō ching*, translated by Chih-ch'ien between 223 and 228, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 362, pp. 300a–317c. Another theory attributes the translation to Lokakṣema.

3. *Wu-liang-shou ching*, translated by Saṃghavarman (K'ang Seng-k'ai) in 252, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 360, pp. 265c–279a. According to Fujita Kōtatsu and other scholars, however, this translation was produced jointly by Budhabhadra and Po-yün in 421.

4. *Wu-liang-shou ju-lai-hui*, translated by Bodhiruci between 706 and 713, *Taishō*, vol. 11, no. 310-5, pp. 91c–101c.

5. *Ta-ch'eng wu-liang-shou chuang-yen ching*, translated by Fahsien in 991, *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 363, pp. 318a–326c.

According to the study of Fujita Kōtatsu, “Among these five translations the first two preserve an early form of the *Larger Sutra*. The next two, together with the Sanskrit and Tibetan recensions, show a more evolved form; the fifth an even more developed one; the three together manifest characteristics of an advanced form of the sutra” (Fujita Kōtatsu, “Pure Land Buddhism in India,” in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development* [Berkeley, Calif.: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1996], p. 7). For the studies on the Chinese translators of the sūtra, see Fujita Kōtatsu, *Genshi Jōdo shishō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), pp. 35–96.

8. Some scholars do not consider this vow as pledging the cause of birth in Pure Land. For example, Sonoda Kōkun thinks that although sentient beings will rejoice and dance when hearing the name of Amida praised by other buddhas in the ten directions, it is nothing but an expression of the mind of aspiration. He maintains that this is known by the fact that the passage of fulfillment of the vow corresponding with this vow does not exist. (Sonoda Kōyū, *Muryōjukyō shōihon no kenkyū* [Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1960], pp.14–15.)

9. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 301b.

10. Therefore, this vow is often called the vow of seven treasures in the Pure Land, spontaneous fulfillment of adornments, magnificent adornment of the Pure Land, etc.

11. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 300c.

12. Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1994), p. 268. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 272b.

13. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 273. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 273a.

14. Luis O. Gómez, *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), p. 95. See also, Yamaguchi Susumu, Sakurabe Hajime, and Mori Mikisaburō, eds.,

- Jōdo sanbukyō*, Daijō butten, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1976), p. 65.
15. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 311-312. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 279a.
16. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 244. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268b.
17. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 246. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268c.
18. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 247. See also *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268c-269a.
19. *Taishō*, vol. 25, p.313c.
20. Gómez, p. 75.
21. Ibid.
22. *A-ch'u-fo-kuo ching*, *Taishō*, vol. 11, p. 761c.
23. *Pu-tung ju-lai-hui*, *Taishō*, vol. 11, p. 110a.
24. Ikemoto Jūshin, *Daimuryōjukyō no kyōrishi teki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1969), p. 122.
25. Four Chinese translations are:
1. *Ta-fang-teng Ta-chi ching hsien-hu fen*, translated by Jñānagupta in 595, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 416, pp. 872a-897c.
 2. *Pan-chou-san-mei ching*, one-fascicle edition, translated by Lokakṣema, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 417, pp. 897c-902c. An English translation of this edition is made available by Hisao Inagaki, "*Pan-chou-san-mei-ching: Translation with Notes*," in *Fujita Kōtatsu hakase kanraki kinen ronshū: Indo tetsugaku to bukkyō*, Fujita Kōtatsu hakase kanraki kinen ronshū kankōkai, ed. (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1989), pp. 49-88.
 3. *Pan-chou-san-mei ching*, three-fascicle edition, translated by Lokakṣema, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 418, pp. 902c-919c. An English translation of this edition is made available by Paul Harrison, *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra* (Berkeley, Calif.: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998).
 4. *Pa-p'o-p'u-sa ching*, translator unknown, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 419, pp. 920a-924b.
26. An English translation of a Tibetan translation is made available by Paul Harrison, *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Tibetan Version of the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990).
27. *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 876a.
28. Kagawa Takao, "*Hanju-zanmai-kyō ni okeru jōdo shisō*," *Bukkyō daigaku kiyō*, 35 (1958): pp.100-117.

29. *Taishō*, vol. 14, no. 449, pp. 401a–404c.
30. Nakamura Hajime, “Jōdo shinkō ni tomonau mondai no fuhensei to tokushusei,” *Satō Mitsuo hakase koki kinen: Bukkyō shisō ronsō*, Satō Mitsuo Hakase koki kinen ronbunshū kankōkai, ed. (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1972), p. 202.
31. Gerhard Rosenkranz, *Der Weg des Buddha: Werden und Wesen des Buddhismus als Weltreligion* (Stuttgart: Evangelische Missionsverlag, 1960), p. 268.
32. Jan Gonda, *Notes on the Names and the Name of God in Ancient India* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1970), p. 25.
33. Sakamoto Hiroshi, “Na e no kodaiteki shinkō” (Ancient Beliefs of Name), *Ōtani daigaku kenkyū nenpō*, 16 (1963): pp. 41–71.
34. *Taishō*, vol. 25, p. 313b .
35. Ui Hakuju, *Indo tetsugaku kenkyū*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), p. 401.
36. Yamaguchi Susumu, “Nyorai ni tsuite, tokuni hōjin no imi ni kanshite,” *Kyōka kenkyū* 72 (1974): pp. 2–10.
37. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 300c.
38. For example, Iwamoto Hiroshi, “Jōdokyō, sono kyojō to jitsuzō,” *Chūgai nippō* (1972, January 20).
39. Itō Gikyō, in his *Zoroastriā-kyō kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979), compares Zoroastrianism and Pure Land teaching. He closely investigates the similarities of these two traditions.
40. *Taishō*, vol. 26, p. 32c, and p. 42a-c.
41. *Taishō*, vol. 25, p. 313a-b, and p. 712b.
42. Mano Ryūkai, “Jōdokyō kyōten no bunkengakuteki kenkyū,” *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū*, 21 (1975): pp. 1–15.
43. It is thought that the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* and *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* are included in Hearing-the-Name group, and the *Lotus Sūtra* is included in Calling-the-Name group.
44. Ujitani Yūken, “Hearing-the-Name ōjō no shisō ni tsuite,” *Dōbō gaku* 8 and 9 (1962): pp. 89–106.
45. *Taishō*, vol. 12, pp. 309c–311a.
46. For example, Shizutani Masao, in the *Shoki daijō kyōten no seiritsu katei* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1974), thinks that the current edition of the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching* is based upon two separate parts: the story of the bodhisattva Dharmākara and his twenty four original vows, and the part of the adornment of Pure Land and three levels of sentient beings attaining birth in the Pure Land. The introduction and passages of circulation were then added.

47. Ikemoto, p. 125.
48. *Taishō*, vol. 12, pp. 301a-b and 302c.
49. Gómez, p. 71.
50. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 270a.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Yamaguchi, pp. 2–10.
53. Nagao Gajin, “Busshinron wo megurite,” *Tetsugaku kenkyū*, 521 (1971): pp. 1–26.
54. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 272.
55. Unebe Toshihide, “Bonbun Muryōjukyō ni okeru shobutsu to shujō no koō,” *Dōbō bukkyō*, 6 (1974): pp. 133–166.
56. Gómez, p. 108.
57. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 270. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 272c.
58. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 359. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 348a.
59. Hisao Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodō, 1998), pp. 210–211. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 835c.
60. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 256. See also, *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 270b.
61. *Taishō*, vol. 9, p. 417a.
62. *Taishō*, vol. 10, pp. 72a–80b.
63. Kagawa Takao, “Bukkyō ni okeru kōmyō shisō no tenkai,” in *Fujiwara Kōdō sensei kokikinen: Shigaku bukkyōgaku ronshū*, Fujiwara Kōdō sensei kokikinenkai, ed., vol. 2 (1973), pp. 863–883.
64. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 316b-c.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 316c.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 298c.
67. In the later editions of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, there is a vow called “peace and happiness by touching the light (*sokkō nyūnan*)” (the thirty-third vow of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*). In the vow, it is pledged that sentient beings’ minds will become peaceful and calm by touching the light of Amida and will gain happiness surpassing that of human and heavenly beings. See *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 268c.
68. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 308b.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 303a.