

Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History

Chapter Two: The Earliest Period,

Chapter Three: Hui-yuan of Mt. Lu, and

Chapter Four: The Translation of Texts; Spurious Scriptures

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CHAPTER II: THE EARLIEST PERIOD

1. The Translation of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*

Buddhism was introduced into China from the countries of Central Asia and from India, so it is only natural that one of the first requisites of the new faith was for its scriptures to be translated into the Chinese language. The first translation project was initiated in China during the reign of the Latter Han Emperor Huan (reigned 147–167). The monk An Shih-kao is considered to be the first to translate texts into Chinese and is termed “the scripture-translating Tripiṭaka Master” (*i-ching san-tsang*). After him, towards the end of the reign of this Emperor Huan, the monks Chu Fo-shuo and Chih-ch’ien (var. Chih Lokakṣema) arrived in the capital city of Loyang. Here they translated many works of the Prajñāpāramitā corpus, and in so doing effectively began the introduction of Mahāyāna Buddhism into China. Of special interest to us is the fact that at this time Lokakṣema, together with Chu Fo-shuo, translated a text entitled the *P’an-shou san-mei ching*, the *Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra*, a translation finished in the tenth month of 179. It is recorded that two natives of Loyang, Meng Fu and Chang Lien, served as the copyists in this translation work, which is the first text dealing with the Buddha Amitābha to be translated into Chinese.

This work does not give a detailed description of the adornments of the Pure Land, Sukhāvātī, but rather teaches that by means of a certain

meditation, and concentration of mind, one is able to actually see the Buddha Amitābha of the Western Land. In other words, this text is famous for teaching a method by which one is enabled to see the Buddha while in a state of *samādhi*. Of all works dealing with Amitābha and his Pure Land, this was probably the first to be edited into final form, and other Pure Land scriptures, such as the *O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*, are detailed elaborations of this basic and original text. At the present time, there exist in the Chinese canon some four editions of this one work. Of these four, two of them are identically entitled the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*: one of these texts being made up of eight chapters (in one Chinese volume, or *chüan*) and the other of some sixteen chapters (in three Chinese volumes). Both of these works bear the statement "translated by Chih Lokakṣema of the Latter Han Dynasty," but it is improbable that one person would have translated two editions of the same work, which differ greatly one from the other, and yet give them exactly the same title. Volume two of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* records that, independently of the above, the Western Chin Dynasty monk, Chu Fa-huo (Dharmarakṣita?) translated a two-volume edition of this work, also entitled the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*. Perhaps, therefore, one of the two texts ascribed to Lokakṣema was actually translated by this Chu Fa-huo.

Also, a certain *Pa-p'o P'u-sa ching* is a variant translation of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*. This work is in one Chinese volume, and does not have any chapter divisions in it; the name of its translator has not been preserved for us. In volume three of the *Ch'u-san-tsang chi-chi*, in the *Catalogue of Old and Variant Scriptures* compiled by the Master An (An Shih-kao?), the name of this scripture is given as the *Pa-p'o-ta P'u-sa ching*. Thus we are able to tell that this work is from the oldest period of scriptural translations, the period dating from before the Fu-ch'in (the Yao Ch'in) Dynasty. Volume one of the *Ta Fang-teng Ta-chi ching*, in the Bhadrāpāla section (the *Hsien-huo fen*), also includes this text, and here it is entitled the *Hsien-huo ching* (the *Bhadrāpāla sūtra*). It is divided into seventeen chapters (in five Chinese volumes), and was translated by the monk Jñānagupta. This work is the longest and the most detailed in its narration of the four editions of this one text.

In addition to the above, in volume four of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in a section entitled "The Newly Compiled Continuation of the Scriptural Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures of Unknown Translators," two other works are mentioned. The first is a one-volume *P'an-shou san-mei Nien-fo chang ching* (the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Scripture*, the Section on Calling the Buddha to Mind), and the second a one-volume *I-ch'u P'an-shou san mei ching* (the *Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra*, a Variant Translation).

This *Nien-fo chang ching* is perhaps a translation of only one of the chapters of the longer work, whereas the *I-ch'u ching* is perhaps a variant of the *Pa-p'o P'u-sa ching*.

2. The Translation of the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Ping-teng ch'üeh ching*

In the San-kuo period of Chinese history, that is, from 222 to 253, the monk Wu Chih-ch'ien translated a large number of Buddhist scriptures, one of which was the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*, in two Chinese volumes, translated at some unknown date during this period. This work is presently included in the canon under this name, but the Koryō edition of this work has the title *O-mi-t'o san-ya-san-fo-sa-lo-fa-dan-kuo-tu-pien-tao ching*. The Sung Dynasty and the Yuan Dynasty editions give the title as merely the *O-mi-t'o ching*. [A different work was translated by the monk Kumārajīva entitled the *O-mi-t'o ching* and, in order to distinguish these two works, the earlier and longer work has traditionally been entitled the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*]. This is the oldest translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, a very important Pure Land scripture which describes in great detail the various vows generated by the Buddha Amitābha while he was still a Bodhisattva (lit: "still in the causal state"), and also describes the various adornments of the Pure Land, Sukhāvati.

Now, it appears that, based on the records of the *Li-tai san-pao chi* and the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu*, the *Wu-liang-shou ching* had been translated several times from the time of the Latter Han Dynasty onwards. According to these works, the first such translation was the two-volume edition, the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, translated in the Latter Han Dynasty by the monk An Shih-kaio. The second translation was the originally two-volume (not four-volume) edition entitled the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching* translated by the monk Chih-ch'ien. The third translation was the above-mentioned *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*, by the monk Wu Chih-ch'ien, and the fourth translation was a two volume *Wu-liang-shou ching* by the Wei Dynasty monk K'ang Seng-hui. The Wei Dynasty monk Po-yen translated the fifth, a two-volume work entitled the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. The sixth translation was a two-volume work, entitled the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, translated by the Western Chin Dynasty monk, Chu Fa-huo.

Now, of the six translations of this one work, the only ones mentioned in the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* are the translation of Wu Chih-ch'ien (the third listed above) and the translation of Chu Fa-huo (the sixth listed above). The only editions of these translations which presently exist are the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching* (the second and third listed above). This perhaps reflects the fact that in actuality there were only two translations of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* carried out up to the time of the Western Chin Dynasty.

Of these two extant works, all the various scripture catalogues are unanimous in ascribing the translation of the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* to the monk Chih-ch'ien. There seems to be no known variation to this attribution.

However, several different names are given as the translators of Chu Fa-huo's edition of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*; that is, the remaining four editions of the six listed above are now recognized as these variants.

Volume one of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* states that sometime in the Kan-lu period of the Wei Dynasty (256–259), the monk Po-yen translated the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping teng ch'üeh ching*. However, the fifth volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, in turn quoting the *Chin-shih tsa-lu*, [the *Miscellaneous Catalogue from the Chin period*, compiled by the Liu-Sung Dynasty monk Tao-tsu] and the *Chung-ching Mu-lu* [the *Catalogue of Scriptures*, compiled by the Liang Dynasty monk Pao-ch'ang], states that sometime during the Chia-ping period of this same Wei Dynasty (249–254) this work was translated under the title of *Wu-liang-shou ching* by the monk K'ang Seng-hui. But the fourth volume of this same work (the *Li-tai san-pao chi*), in its narration of the life of the monk An Shih-kao, states that, according to "a different catalogue" (a *pieh lu*), this scripture was translated by An Shih-kao. Furthermore, in this work's account of the life and activities of the monk Chih-ch'ien, Tao-tsu's *Catalogue of Wu* (the *Wu-lu*) is quoted to the effect that Chih-ch'ien translated this work as the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. In actual point of fact, however, these are nothing more than variant theories concerning the translation history of this important Pure Land scripture. In the second volume of this same *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, the Chu Fa-huo text, the *Wu-liang shou ching*, has the variant name of *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. Thus it appears to be clearly the case that the various different scripture catalogues called this work either the *Wu-liang-shou ching* or the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. Although these names differ considerably, they refer to only one text of this scripture.

The *Li-tai san-pao chi* relies heavily on a number of other, earlier scripture catalogues, such as the *Chin-shih tsa-lu*, and even the "different catalogue" (the *pieh-lu*) [both mentioned above], but can we consider these [presently lost] catalogues to be totally reliable? These various catalogues (more properly, the compilers of these catalogues) did not notice that one and the same scripture is attributed to a number of different translators, living for the most part in different dynasties. These catalogues appear to incorporate (and so to canonize) various theories with respect to the translators' identities without the least bit of critical judgment being brought to bear. If we arrange these theories in a chronological order, the attributions appear all the more ludicrous.

For the present then, we shall adopt the theories given in the *Li-tai san-pao chi* and the *K'ai-Yuan Shih-chiao lu*, that is, that the present text of the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching* is a product of the Latter Han Dynasty translator, Chih-ch'ien. The *Wu-lu* of Tao-tsu also gives this attribution. However, since this work has not been preserved for us, and

was already lost by the time of the compilation of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, it would appear very strange indeed if the compiler of this latter work had trusted to this earlier compiler's opinions. Even if the compiler of the *Li-tai san-pao chi* had seen this reference in some other document existing at that time, it is impossible to believe that there would be any reason to acknowledge this one specific tradition as the most accurate from among the rather many variant theories. Of the presently existing scripture catalogues, the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* is the oldest, and has proven to be a reliable source. We can thus safely believe that the Western Chin Dynasty monk, Chu-Fa-huo, translated the present text entitled the Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching. Even so, the attribution of this text to Po-yen (attribution in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* or to K'ang Seng-hui (attribution in the *Pao-chang Lu*) both place this translation in the Liang Dynasty, so perhaps it was a contemporary problem determining who the translator actually was.

The descriptions of the Pure Land given in this scripture are almost identical to those given in Chih-ch'ien's *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*; the number of the vows—twenty-four—is also identical, although the order of the vows and their contents differ. Thus, the Sanskrit texts upon which these translations were based, although similar, were different.

In addition to the above, the San Kuo—the Three Kingdoms—period and the Chin Dynasty saw the translation of a number of scriptures which recorded many tales giving biographical data concerning the person of the Buddha Amitābha. Such texts were Wu Chih-ch'ien's translations of the *Hui-yin san mei ching* (the Scripture of the *Prajñāmudrā Samādhi*) and the *Wu-liang men wei mi chih ching*; as well as, the *Teh-kuang t'ai-tzu ching* (the Scripture of Prince Guṇaprabha), the *Ch'ueh-ting tsung-ch'ih ching* (the Scripture of the Definitive Dhāraṇī), the *Hsien-ch'üeh ching* (the Bhadrakalpa sūtra), the *Ch'eng Fa-hua ching* (an edition of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka sūtra*), the *Ch'i chu-fang teng hsüeh ching*, the *Sheng ching*, and the (now lost) *Kuang-shih-yin Ta chih-chih shou-ch'üeh ching* (the Scripture on the Future Buddhahood of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta), all translated by Chu Fa-huo. In volume four of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in the section "Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures of Unknown Translators," two short works are mentioned, the *O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* (A Gāthā [in praise of] the Buddha Amitābha), and a *Hou-ch'u O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* (The Latter Work, a Gāthā [in Praise of] the Buddha Amitābha).

The first of these works, the *O-mi-t'o fo chieh*, is no longer preserved, but the *Hou-ch'u O-mi-t'o fo chieh* does exist, and is in the Buddhist Canon. It is a short work, with only fourteen lines of five-word verses. The phrase "his twenty-four vows" (*shih erh-shih-ssu chang*) occurs in this work, and while it is not clear whether this is a translation from a Sanskrit or Indic original, or a native Chinese composition, there is no doubt that it does date from before the Liu-Sung Dynasty.

3. The Earliest Period of the Pure Land Faith.

As mentioned above, the monks Wu Chih-ch'ien and Chu Fa-hou translated scriptures concerned with the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitābha, and soon thereafter these came to be read and recited, and there gradually grew up a number of devotees who sought rebirth in this Western Pure Land. Volume forty-two of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, which quotes the *Ming-hsiang chi*, records that the Western Chin monk Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e and his disciple, the layman Wei Shih-tu, were in fact reborn in the Pure Land. According to this passage, Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e was a native of the land of Chao; he was always of a dignified and calm nature, and was diligent in attending religious ceremonies. During the reign of the Emperor Huan of the Chin Dynasty (265–274), Kung-ts'e died in Loyang. His friends and admirers, both monks and laymen, held a memorial service in the Po-ma ssu monastery in that city. When the scriptures were being read that evening, he suddenly appeared before them and said, "I have now been born in the world of Ease and Happiness (Sukhāvati) in the West, but I have come with a multitude of the Bodhisattvas to listen to the scriptures." This Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e is thus perhaps the first instance of a Pure Land devotee to appear in the extant Chinese literature. The second volume of T'ang Dynasty monk Fei-hsi's *Nien-fo san-mei Pao-wang lun* records that the Eastern Chin monk Chih Tao-lin and the layman Yü Hsiao-ching both composed a work praising the faith and the character of Kung-ts'e.

According to the *Ming-hsiang chi*, Kung-ts'e's disciple, the layman Wei Shih-tu, was born in Chi *chün* (present-day Chi *hsien*, Honan). According to this account he was a layman who gave himself over to painful ascetic practices, was skilled in literary composition, and on one occasion composed a confession ritual to be recited for the Upavāsatha Ceremony. He is reported to have died in 322. The miraculous character of his personality is recorded in great detail in Hao-hsiang's *Sheng-hsien ch'uan* (Biographies of Saints and Worthies), and it is also said that he was reborn in the Pure Land. Volume two of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* also records that Wei Shih-tu compiled an abridged edition of a Prajñāpāramitā text, a two-volume *Mo-k'o P'an-jo po-lo-mi Tao-hsing ching*, so, if this account is accurate, he appears to have also been an ardent student of the Prajñāpāramitā.

During the end of the Western Chin Dynasty, there lived the monk Chu Seng-hsien. He was a native of North China, and was earnest in both his study of the scriptures and in his cultivation of meditation. Sometime near the end of the T'ai-hsing period of the Eastern Chin Dynasty (321), he journeyed to South China. Here he contracted a serious illness and turned his thoughts to the Pure Land. Upon his death, the Buddha came himself and welcomed him into the Pure Land. At a slightly later date lived the

monk Chu Fa-kuang. A native of Hsia-p'i, he initially studied with the master Chu T'an-yin. After a while he left his master and came to reside in a cave on Mt. Hsien-ch'ing, where he would elucidate the ekayāna teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* and teach the methods for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land based on the teachings of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. He would constantly recite these two scriptures: if there was an audience he would lecture on these texts, and if he were alone he would merely chant them. In the Hsing-ning era (363–365), Chu Fa-kuang journeyed to Yu-ch'üeh (present day Yuan-wei shan, located in Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), where he made the acquaintance of Hsi Chao and Hsien Ching-chu. On one occasion he is also recorded to have aided in the curing of villagers during an epidemic. At this time, the monk Chu Tao-lin constructed an image of the Buddha Amitābha, and Chu Fa-kuang collected donations from various devotees and had a large temple constructed to house this image. These events are recorded in the fifth and the eleventh volumes of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*. In this account, however, when it speaks of Fa-kuang lecturing on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, this I believe refers to the Chu Fa-huo translation of the *Wu-jiang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. In any case, it is the first record of a lecture being given on a Pure Land scripture in China.

In the early years of the Eastern Chin Dynasty, there lived the monk Chih Tun (*tzu* Tao-lin). A native of Ch'en-liu (the present-day K'ai-feng), he early studied the *Tao-hsing ching* (a Prajñāpāramitā text, see above) and the *Hui-yin san-mei ching*. He was a close friend of the laymen Wang Hsia, Hsi Chao and Sun Ch'o. Chih Tun composed some works, among which are the *Chi-hsin Yü-hsüan lun*, and the *Tao-hsing Chih-kuai*, and died at age fifty-two in 366.

On one occasion he commissioned an artist to cast an image of the Buddha Amitābha, and himself composed a work in praise of this Buddha. This is preserved in volume fifteen of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*, entitled the *O-mi-t'o Fo-hsiang ts'an ping hsü* (Introduction and Praises of the Image of the Buddha Amitābha). This work contains the words, "In the five last reigns of this the Chin land, the true precepts of the Buddha have been esteemed. The *O-mi-t'o ching* has been recited, and [many] have vowed to be born in that Pure Land. Those who have not been lax in their sincerity have seen the miraculous welcoming at their deaths, and in transformation (*hua*) they have gone there and seen the Buddha. Their spirits (*shen*) have been enlightened and they have attained bodhi." This composition reflects the fact that Chih Tun himself recited Chih-ch'ien's translation of the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and that he too sought rebirth in the Pure Land as taught in that scripture. It is unclear which of the two above Buddha images, that of Chu Tao-lin or that of Chih Tun, was made first, but in any early years of the Eastern Chin Dynasty onwards, more and more images of the Buddha Amitābha came to be made and enshrined in various places.

In the sixteenth volume of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, in the section on the Bodhisattva Maitreya, it is recorded that during the Chin Dynasty there was a man by the name of Tsai K'uei (*tzu An-tao*) of the land of Ch'iao. He fled to the state of Wu and there studied the Buddhadharma. He made statues of the Bodhisattvas attendant on Amitābha, but those who looked at them criticized these works. So he continued work on them, improving their appearance. After three years they were finally finished and enshrined in the Ling-pao ssu Monastery in Shan-yin (located in present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang). Soon thereafter, the layman Hsi Chao of Kao-ping came and did homage to them; when he did so rays of light were emitted by the backs of the images, and it is recorded that "all those who witnessed this, be they cleric or laymen, gave rise to the Bodhi Mind." The ninety-fourth volume of the *Chin Shu* (the Standard History of the Chin Dynasty) records that during the reign of the Emperor Hsiao-wu of the Eastern Chin Dynasty this Tsai K'uei passed his civil service examination. This entitled him to be an Imperial Tutor to the Crown Prince. However, he declined this post, and on this occasion he fled his native state of Ch'iao for Wu. So, based on this information, he must have cast these images sometime during the T'ai-yuan period, 378 to 395.

The twenty-ninth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan* and the thirteenth volume of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin* state that the monk Tao-an in the fourth month of the third year of Ning-k'ang (of the Eastern Chin Dynasty, 375) had cast a metal image of Amitābha, approximately six feet seven inches in height, for the T'an-hsi ssu Monastery in Hsiang-yang (located in Hupei province). In the winter of the following year, its decorations and adornments were completed, and the monastery's name was changed to that of the Chin-hsiang ssu (the Monastery of the Golden Image). Furthermore, the fifteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi* preserves for us a poem of praises of this image composed by the monk Tao-an. This work is entitled "Introduction and Praises for the One-Chang Six-Sun Golden Image of Hsiang-yang, of the Chin Dynasty," but it does not say anything about this image being a statue of the Buddha Amitābha, nor does it anywhere refer to his Pure Land. The poem, however, has the phrase: "eminent indeed are the actions of Śākya[muni] in the world." Furthermore, the fifth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* only speaks of a copper image, and does not mention any name for it. Therefore, this image is not of Amitābha, but must be acknowledged as a statue of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

Soon after this event, the eminent monk Hui-yuan organized the White Lotus Society (*Pai-lien-she*) on Mt. Lu in the year 402, during the rule of the Eastern Chin Dynasty. In the organization of this society, its members made collective vows in front of an image of the Buddha Amitābha in a monastery, the P'an-jo t'ai ching-she (the Prajñā Pavilion Vihāra), as recorded in the text of these vows, composed by the layman Liu I-min. Thus, there was an image of the Buddha Amitābha enshrined on Mt. Lu

(located in present-day Chiu-chiang *hsien*, Kiangsi), at roughly the same period as the construction of the above-mentioned images.

A number of scriptural passages refer to the construction of Buddha images. The chapter "Four Things," in the *P'an-jo san-meï ching*, states that, if one wishes to quickly attain to this *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, he should construct an image of the human form of the Buddha. Also, in explaining the reasons for constructing an image of the Buddha, the chapter "On the Bodhisattva Dharmakṣema" in the tenth volume of the *Tao-hsing p'an-jo ching* states that even though the spirit (*shen*) of the deity is not within the image, if one should call the Buddha to mind, and make *pūjā* offerings to his image, then he will attain blessings. The *P'u-sa pen-yeh ching*, translated by Wu Chih-ch'ien, has the passage, "If one sees a picture of the Buddha, or his image, he should vow that all sentient beings may see such in all of the ten directions, and that their eyes may be without obstruction or covering." With these references as the authority for such activities, the Three Kingdoms period and afterwards saw an increased interest in the construction of Buddha images.

Most especially, the *P'an-jo san-meï ching* states "if one wishes to quickly attain to this *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, one should construct an image of the human form of the Buddha." This says clearly that if one visualizes, with one-pointedness of mind, an image of the human form of the Buddha, he will quickly attain to *samādhi*, and be able to see the True [form of the] Buddha. Such teachings are also taken up in the ninth volume of the *Kuan Fo san-meï hai ching*, in the chapter "Visualizing the Buddha," and the Visualization on an Image [of the Buddha] given in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. Such texts teach that one should set up an image of the Buddha and use it as a source of visualization. Also at this time, the passage in the *Tao-hsing p'an-jo ching* to the effect that construction of such images would be a source of blessings served as a further source of incentive for such pious works. Nevertheless, the primary and original purpose for the construction of an image of the Buddha was to serve as an object of meditation or visualization, for the more rapid success in the attainment of *samādhi*, and more specifically for the attainment of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, the *samādhi* in which the devotee sees at the present time (*pratyutpanna*) the real and true form of the Buddha. Thus, the construction of images of the Buddha Amitābha, in the early decades of the growing faith in him, was a response to this religious need. Later generations were to see the construction of these same images as actual representations of the deity in whom one was to take refuge, and who was to be worshiped and prayed to. Such images came to be worshiped and venerated, and the image then came to be regarded as an image of the True Buddha, of the Dharmakāya of the Buddha Amitābha, a function of the image somewhat at variance with the original, and scriptural, teaching with respect to such images.

CHAPTER III: HUI-YUAN OF MT. LU

1. The Life of Hui-yuan

The monk Hui-yuan (334–416) organized the White Lotus Society on Mt. Lu (located in Chiu-chiang *hsien*), in Kiangsi province, and together with his disciples, both lay and clerics, he is reputed to have strenuously cultivated the *nien-fo san-mei*, the *samādhi* of calling the Buddha to remembrance. These were events of outstanding fame in the history of Chinese Buddhism for, beginning with them, Pure Land teachings underwent a sudden growth in popularity, and the influence of this organization, and of the personality of Hui-yuan, had a lasting impression on subsequent generations of Pure Land followers. Even today, Hui-yuan is generally venerated as the First Patriarch of the Pure Land Tradition, termed the “Lien tsung,” or the “Lotus (i.e., the White Lotus) Tradition.”

Hui-yuan was born during the reign of the Emperor Ch’eng of the Eastern Chin Dynasty, in Lo fan in the province of Ying-men (located in present-day Kuo *hsien*, Tai-chou, in Shansi). At the age of twelve he began his studies in the city of Hsü-lo (present-day Hsü-chou, Honan). He studied all of the six Confucian Classics, and is recorded to have been especially proficient in the teachings of Chuang-Lao (the works of Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu). At age twenty he went to the monastery of Tao-an, in the T’ai-hsing-heng Mountains (located in present-day Hun-yuan chou, Ta’ung fu, Shansi), and there attended Tao-an’s lectures on the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Here, too, he attained a state of awakening. Then, together with his younger brother, he shaved his head and became Tao-an’s disciple, taking now for the first time the name of Hui-yuan (his brother became Hui-ch’i). Day and night, Hui-yuan was earnest in the continuation of his studies. Soon Hui-yuan, with some four hundred other disciples, followed Tao-an to the city of Hsiang-yang, which, in 379, fell to the army of Fu Ch’ien. Tao-an was about to leave the city of Hsiang-yang to return to the city of Ch’angan, but Hui-yuan parted from his master and, together with ten of his disciples, went to Ching-chou (present-day Ching-ling *hsien*, Ching-chou fu, Hupei). In 381, he first settled on Mt. Lu, lodging in the Lung-ch’uan ching-she (the Dragon Spring Vihāra). Soon thereafter, the Military Commander of Chiang-chou, Huan Yin, constructed the Tung-lin ching-she and contributed it to Hui-yuan for his use. Hui-yuan took up residence in the Tung-lin ching-she, had a meditation hall constructed within the compound of this monastery, and had a temple raised with pictures of the Buddha painted on its walls. Soon, a statue of the Emperor Aśoka was

received from the city of Wu-ch'ang, and this image was installed in the temple. During this time Hui-yuan and his disciples gave themselves over to a constant round of services in the monastery. In 391, the Kuchan śramaṇa Sanghadeva was welcomed to Lu-shan, and it was here that he translated the *O-pi-t'an hsin lun* (the *Abhidharma Hṛdaya*) and the *San-fa-tu lun*. In the following year Hui-yuan dispatched his disciple, Chih Faling, to Central Asia to search for Sanskrit manuscripts of scriptures.

Hui-yuan's fame spread far and wide, and he gathered together a large number of both monastic and lay followers. Since it was his desire that his followers avoid worldly fame and devote themselves to the spread of the Buddha's teachings, in the seventh month of 402 he assembled some one hundred twenty-three of his followers, including the laymen Liu I-min and Lai Tz'u-tung, in front of an image of the Buddha Amitābha within the P'an-jo t'ai ching-she. There they had a *pūjā* offering and together made vows to be reborn into the Western Pure Land, and began their cultivation of the *nien-fo san-meī*. This is what has come to be known as the founding of the White Lotus Society, the *Pai-lien she*, and, as such, is the first founding on Chinese soil of a religious confraternity or fellowship dedicated to the worship of the Buddha Amitābha. Originally, however, it emphasized cultivation of the visualization-meditation of this Buddha.

On this occasion, the layman Liu I-min composed the text of their vows. Later he composed a series of poems in praise of the Pure Land of Amitābha, and in all, this work has come down to us as the *Nien-fo san-meī shih chi*, (A Collection of Shih poems on the *Samādhi* of Recalling the Buddha). Hui-yuan himself composed the Introduction, the *Hsü*, to this collection.

In the following year, Huan Hsüan proclaimed himself king in the Chiang-tung region and commanded that all should bow down to him in submission of his kingship, including the Buddhist monastic clergy. In opposition to this order, Hui-yuan composed the *Sha-men pu ching wang-che lun*, (An Essay on Why Śramaṇas Do not Tender Homage to Kings).

When Kumārajīva arrived in the northern capital city of Ch'ang-an, Hui-yuan initiated a correspondence with him, sending him articles in token of his friendship and respect for him. In his correspondence, Hui-yuan asked Kumārajīva to answer some eighteen doubts that Hui-yuan had with respect to certain points in Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine, the *Wen Ta-ch'eng chung shen-i Shih-pa-k'o*. In 405 (the seventh year of Hung-shih, of the Yao-Ch'in Dynasty), Kumārajīva finished his compilation of the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, a work traditionally held to be the master Nāgārjuna's commentary on the Prajñāpāramitā scripture. The Emperor Yao Hsing, ruler of the Yao-Ch'in Dynasty, sent a copy of this work to Hui-yuan, and requested him to compose an *Introduction* for it. Hui-yuan is also reputed to have compiled a twenty-volume abridgement of this work, the *Ta-chih-tu lun Yao-lüeh*.

At roughly this time, too, the monk Buddhahadra arrived in the capital city of Ch'ang-an; he soon left Ch'ang-an and took up residence on Mt. Lu, and there Hui-yuan requested him to translate the *Ta-mo-to-lo ch'an ching* (the Dhyāna Scripture According to Dharmatara). When this work was finished, Hui-yuan requested Buddhahadra to give instruction in its meditational techniques.

Hui-yuan lived on Mt. Lu for over thirty years without once leaving the mountain. He would see honored guests off, but only as far as the Hu Stream that bounded the fastness of the mountain.

Hui-yuan became ill in the eighth month of 416; on the sixth day of this month his condition became critical, and all the inhabitants of his monastery stood watch around his bed. He was requested to take a little wine as medicine, but he refused to do so on the grounds that it was not allowed in the *Vinaya*. He was requested to take a little rice gruel as medicine, and this he also refused to take for the same reason. He was then requested to take a little water mixed with honey; he summoned a *Vinaya* master and asked if such was allowed by the *Vinaya*. The master then began to read through the pages of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* searching out such legislation, but before he could finish his search, Hui-yuan died, being at that time eighty-two years of age. He was buried on the western slope of Mt. Lu; stones were gathered for a memorial *stūpa*, and the eminent writer Hsieh Ling-yün composed his memorial inscription.

Some four hundred years later, in 848, during the reign of the Emperor Hsuan-tsang of the T'ang Dynasty, Hui-yuan was awarded the posthumous title Pien-ch'üeh ta-shih, "the Great Master, Discerner of Enlightenment." In 939 he was again awarded the title of Ch'eng-ch'üeh, "of Correct Enlightenment." In 978 he was awarded the title of Huan-wu, "of Perfect Awakening." Finally in 1166 the Southern Sung Dynasty Emperor Hsiao-tsung combined a number of the above titles into a fuller title, Ch'eng-ch'üeh Huan-wu ta-shih, "the Great Master of Correct Enlightenment and Perfect Awakening." So we can see that his virtue was the object of veneration and honor for many generations after his death.

Hui-yuan composed a large number of works. The sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* records that Hui-yuan composed over fifty assorted "essays, introductions, inscriptions, praises, poems, and letters," filling ten volumes. His corpus is known as the *Lu-shan chi*, the *Mt. Lu Collection*, and this collection holds his complete works.

The seventh volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi* and the third volume of the *Ta-T'ang Nei-tien lu* record fourteen titles in a total of thirty-five volumes, beginning with his major works, the *Ta-chih-tu lun Yao-lueh* (in twenty volumes) and the *Wen Ta-ch'eng chung shen-i Shih-pa-k'o* (in three volumes). Of the works listed, his *Sha-men pu ching wang-che lun*, *Sha-men tsu-fu lun*, *Ming pao-ying lun*, and *San-pao lun* are preserved in the fifth volume of the *Hung-ming chi*. Various of his shorter works, such as

the *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi hsü* (his *Introduction* to Liu I-min's poems on the Pure Land, see above), and his *Ta-chih-tu lun ch'ao-hsü* are preserved in such compilations as the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, the *Hung-ming chi*, and the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*. His *Wen Ta-ch'eng chung shen-i Shih-pa k'o* also has the variant title of *Chiu-ma-lo-shih fa-shih ta-i* (The Major Teachings of the Dharma Master Kumārajīva), and this work has been included in the *Taishō Daizōkyō* under this title.

2. Hui-Yuan's *nien-fo* Thought

The organization of Pure Land activities initiated by Hui-yuan consisted of seeing the Buddha by means of the *nien-fo san-mei*, the *Samādhi* of Calling the Buddha to Remembrance; through this cultivation Hui-yuan and his disciples hoped to attain rebirth in the Pure Land. Since the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* had not yet been translated into Chinese, it must be recognized that the basis for this practice lay in the teachings of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*

According to his own *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi hsü* (preserved in the thirtieth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*), *samādhi* consists of concentrating the mind (*ch'uan ssu*) and calming the thoughts (*chi hsiang*), that is, developing one-pointedness of mind so that it is not dispersed in various kinds of thoughts. When one's thoughts are thus stilled, one can "penetrate into things" (*ch'e wu*). If the mind is one-pointed and thoughts are stilled, one's *ch'i* becomes empty and his spirit (*shen*) becomes clear and bright. A wisdom that clearly reflects all things will automatically be generated, and one will be able to penetrate into profound and minute things. However, there are various different kinds of *samādhi*, the most meritorious and the easiest to progress in being the *nien-fo san-mei*. The reason for this is that the Tathāgata has penetrated the mysterious and has exhausted all stillness; his spirit is totally at one with change and so conforms to all beings in accord with what is fitting for them. When one has entered this *samādhi*, all obscure knowledge is forgotten, and one is able to clearly reflect the external spheres of sense perception which normally condition the mind. That is, since this reflective wisdom has become clear, internal clarity of perception reflects external events, and all the myriad forms and images are generated; even those spheres which are not within the range of the eyes and ears are nevertheless heard and seen. If one's mind becomes exclusively concentrated and one-pointed, and all other thoughts are stilled, one will automatically generate this reflective mind, and it is clear that one will be able to see the realm or the sphere of the Buddhas.

In the vows written by Liu I-min for the White Lotus Society, the *Pai-lien she shih-wen* (preserved in volume fifteen of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*), it says, "The spirit can be felt, but cannot be discovered by means of

any tracks if one would feel it. If there is anyone who feels that he perceives it, then it is mysterious and beyond knowing. If one would search it out, then it is masterless and as vast and deep as a river or bay" That is, if one takes the Buddha as the object of his visualization, then it is easy to feel this spirit. But if there is no object of visualization or meditation, then it is vague and formless, and can be as unknown as the depth of a bay or river, and one will be unable to accomplish his *samādhi*. We can see to what extent Hui-yuan regarded the *nien-fo san-meī* as being lofty in its merits, and easy to progress in.

Also, a letter sent from Hui-yuan to Liu I-min (preserved in the seventeenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*) records that "I-min was extreme in his diligence and energy, kept all of the prohibitory precepts, and spent over half a year in one-pointed sitting in meditation. He perceived the Buddha in *samādhi*, and would encounter the image [of the Buddha] while walking along the road. The Buddha would appear to him in the sky, and his light would brighten both heaven and earth, turning all things to a golden color." That is, Liu-I-min attained this *nien-fo san-meī*, the *samādhi* of calling the Buddha to remembrance, and saw the Buddha everywhere. From the above testimony then, we can clearly see that the White Lotus Society founded by Hui-yuan on Mt. Lu had for its aim the cultivation of the *samādhi* as described in the *P'an-shou san-meī ching*. The goal of this cultivation was to see the Buddha while one was still alive (*hsien-shen chien-fo*).

In his correspondence with Kumārajīva, Hui-yuan once asked him concerning the Buddha that is perceived in *samādhi*, and Kumārajīva's reply is preserved. When one sees the Buddha in the *samādhi* as described in the *P'an-shou san-meī ching*, the scripture likens this to going to another country in a dream, and there talking with people, and the scripture uses this simile of the dream many times. But a dream is of the realm of ordinary, unenlightened beings, and is ultimately not real; if in a dream one gives rise to delusions, or if he gives rise to understanding, this is still nothing more than a construction of the mind. But, according to that scripture, it is taught that if one sees the Buddha through this *nien-fo san-meī*, one can ask the Buddha questions concerning Dharma, and have one's doubts resolved. Now, if seeing the Buddha in this *samādhi* is identical to seeing the Buddha in a dream, it will be only a construction of one's own mind, and he will be only a Buddha seen in a dream. It is impossible that such a Buddha would be able to put an end to our doubts. But if the Buddha truly comes to us from a sphere external to ourselves, then it is not fitting to use the dream simile.

Also, the scripture teaches that the *samādhi* is attained through three things—the keeping of the Precepts without transgressing them, the power of the merits of the devotee, and the miraculous, supernormal power of the Buddha. Now, is this miraculous, supernormal power of the Buddha that of the Buddha as perceived in the *samādhi*, or is it the power of the Buddha

that comes to the devotee from outside of himself? If this refers to the Buddha perceived in the *samādhi*, a mere construction of one's own thoughts, his miraculous powers likewise simply come out of the devotee's own person. But if this really refers to a Buddha external to the *samādhi*, and this holy one exists apart from any dream, it is not fitting that its existence should be likened to a dream as in the simile.

In reply to this, Kumārajīva answers that there are many ways in which one may see a Buddha. One may attain divine eyes and divine ears and so see the Buddha, or one may attain supernormal powers (*rddhi*) and fly to where the Buddhas of the ten directions reside. One is then able to see the Buddha, and ask the Buddha concerning the Dharma, having one's doubts removed. But, if one has not yet cut off his desires, and so has not attained these supernormal powers, it is best to constantly meditate on all the various Buddhas of the present time, such as the Buddha Amitābha. If one is able to concentrate his mind on one object, then he will be able to see the Buddha and have his doubts resolved. Keeping one's mind in one place is the basic reason for searching out the path of the Buddhas. But if one is without faith, then one will not know how to cultivate the teachings of *dhyāna* and *samādhi* and, if one is unable to attain supernormal powers, then he will never be able to see all the Buddhas. It is for this reason, then, that the scripture uses the simile of a dream, for by the power of a dream one is able to travel to distant places and see distant things. In a similar manner, if one enters into the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, it is by the power of the *samādhi* that one is able to see the Buddhas in other distant places.

Now the Buddha seen in the *samādhi* comes basically from one's own cognitive discriminative thoughts, but the sphere that does the seeing is neither empty nor false. The reason for this is that all the scriptures taught by the Buddha Śākyamuni clearly teach that the Buddha Amitābha does possess all the marks of a physical body. Also, the *P'an-shou san-mei ching* posits many different kinds of teachings, one being that one should call to remembrance the fact that the Buddha Amitābha is now in the west. And not only this, but the body of the Buddha has, indeed, definite and definitive marks. So even though some may say that this image is the product of cognitive and discriminative thoughts, and is both empty and false, it is taught in scripture that the body of the Buddha arises from all of its various conditions and is without self-nature, being ultimately empty and still, like a dream or a phantom. Therefore, if one cultivates as one is taught (in scripture), one should not hold that only the seeing of the body of the Buddhas is empty and false. For if one holds that this is empty and false, then one must also say that all things are empty and false. With respect to the use of the dream simile in the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*, Huiyuan asks, since dreams are empty and false, is not the Buddha perceived in the *samādhi* likened to a dream also empty and false? In response to Huiyuan's question as to whether this *samādhi* is not the "sphere which is only

a shadow," as taught in the Wei-shih Tradition, Kumārajīva answers that the use of the dream is only a simile, and that the Buddha perceived in the *samādhi* is not empty and false like the realm of dreams, but that it is through the power of the *samādhi* that one is able to see the Buddha Amitābha who is presently existing in the far distant West. This image of the Buddha as perceived by the devotee is best explained as being of "the sphere which embraces substance," as taught in the Wei-shih Tradition.

Hui-yuan's acceptance of this teaching is seen in a phrase composed by him in his *Introduction* to the *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi*, where he says, "The Honored One who has plumbed the mysterious and who has delimited stillness is termed the Thus-Gone (*Tathāgata*). He has embodied his spirit and is one with change, and this without any limit whatsoever. Thus, in order to cause one to enter into this *samādhi*, in a most mysterious manner he forgets all cognitive thoughts, and his mind is illumined by the reflection of the external spheres of sense perception." In other words, Hui-yuan now came to understand that the Buddha comes from a sphere external to the devotee, and causes the devotee to see his form.

3. The White Lotus Society: Hui-yuan's Disciples

North China, at this time, saw the capital city of Ch'ang-an conquered and overrun several times, and was in a state of almost uninterrupted war and chaos. The south of China was a land of peace and tranquility, and, most especially, Mt. Lu was a scene of serenity and great natural beauty.

Not only was it truly a location cut off from the affairs of the outside world, but it was a site wherein a great monk dwelled, Hui-yuan, and where the Buddha-dharma was proclaimed. Thus, many Chinese literati of the day, longing for a site for still contemplation and rest from the turmoil of the world, flocked to Mt. Lu in great numbers, until it came to be said that the visitors on the mountain numbered some three thousand! The members of the White Lotus Society numbered one hundred and twenty-three, as is stated in the vows composed by Liu I-min. Through the years, various works have attempted to give us the names of the members of the society. The fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* gives the names of only four of the society's members: Liu I-min of P'eng-ch'eng (present-day Hsueh-chou, Kiangsi), Chou Hsü-chih of Yin-men (present-day Tai hsien, Shansi), Pi Ying-chih of Hsin-ts'ai (present-day Hsin-ts'ai hsien, Honan), and Tsung Ping of Nan-yang. The sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* gives only three more names in addition to those given above: Lai Ts'utsung of Yü-chang (present-day Nan-ch'ang hsien, Kiangsi), Chang Lai-min, and Li Shih.

The T'ang Dynasty monk, Fei-hsi, in the second volume of his *Nien-fo san-mei Pao-wang lun*, gives the names of nine members of the White

Lotus Society; Hui-ch'ih (Hui-yuan's younger brother), Hui-yung, Tsung Ping, Chang Yeh, Liu I-min, Lai Tz'u-tsung, Chou Hsü-chih, Hsieh Ling-yun, and Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e.

The *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan* (the Biographies of the Eighteen Eminent Worthies of the Tung-lin Monastery) gives the names of eighteen persons: Hui-yuan, Hui-yung, Hui-ch'ih, Tao-sheng, T'an-shun, Seng-ying (a mistake for Hui-ying), T'an-heng, Tao-ping, T'an-hsien, Tao-ching, Buddhayasa, Buddhabhadra, Liu Ch'eng-chih, Chang Yeh, Chou Hsü-chih, Chang Ch'uan, Tsung Ping, and Lai Tz'u-tsung.

The twenty-sixth volume of the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* mentions the one hundred and twenty-eight members of the original White Lotus Society in a section separate and apart from these eighteen worthies. The *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* then gives the names of some thirty-seven persons who in the authors opinion were original members of the society: T'an-i, T'an-yü, Seng-chi, Hui-kung, Fa-an, and Fa-ching; Fa-ling, Hui-pao, Hui-yao, Seng-ch'e, and Hui-jan (whose biographies are included in the *Tung-lin ch'uan*); T'an-wei and Tao-hung (who are mentioned in the Lu-shan chi); T'an-lan and Fa-yeh (who are mentioned in the Ch'ih-shih ch'uan); Hui-i, Hui-yen, Hui-kuan, and T'an-kuo (who are mentioned in the biography of Buddhabhadra); Yuan-pi (mentioned in the biography of the master T'an-yu, above); Seng-kuang (mentioned in the biography of the master Seng-ch'i, above); Hui-chan, Hui-lan, Ch'ueh-kung Ts'e, Pi Ying-chih (mentioned in the biography of the master Hui-kung, above); Meng Huai-yü (mentioned in the biography of Liu I-min); Wang Chiao-chih, Yin Yin, Mao Hsiu-chih, Ku wei, Wang Mu-yeh, Ho Hsiao-chih, Fan Yueh-chih, Chang Wen-i, and Meng Ch'ang-shih (mentioned in the Lu-shan chi); and Meng Ssu-ma and Lu Hsiu-ching. In addition to these names, the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* also gives T'ao Yuan-ming, Hsieh Ling-yün, and Fan Ning as the names of "various worthies who did not enter the society." The many names given in the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* are perhaps the names of the clerical disciples of Hui-yuan, or just the names of persons who happened to have visited Hui-yuan on Mt. Lu, many of whom had no direct contact with the founding of the White Lotus Society.

Let us take a closer examination of the names given in the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*.

Hui-yung is listed, in the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as being the abbot of the Hsi-lin ssu Monastery on Mt. Lu, and as being a close personal friend of Hui-yuan. He is also reported to have desired to be reborn in the western Pure Land by means of his intense cultivation of severe physical austerities, so perhaps he became a member of the White Lotus Society.

Hui-ch'ih was, as we have seen, the younger brother of Hui-yuan. Although he may have desired rebirth in the western Pure Land, he left Mt.

Lu for the state of Shu in 399 (three years before the founding of the society), so he could not have participated in the society's founding.

Tao-sheng and Hui-ying are both recorded, in the fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* and in the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, respectively, to have lived on Mt. Lu, but it is not recorded that they especially strove for rebirth in the Pure Land.

T'an-shun was, according to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* (in the biography of Tao-tsu), a native of Huang-lung. When young, he studied under Kumārajīva, and afterwards studied under Hui-yuan. He later moved to the Chu-lin ssu Monastery in Chiang-ling (present-day Chiang-ling *hsien*, Hupei), where he became its abbot. According to the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, he died in 425 at the age of seventy-eight.

T'an-heng is listed in the *Index* to the *Ming-seng ch'uan Mu-lu* (written by the Liang Dynasty monk Pao-ch'ang) as a resident of the Tung-ssu (the Eastern Monastery) on Mt. Lu, even though his biography is not included in the *Meisōdendshō* of Shūshō. According to the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, T'an-heng was a native of Ho-tung (present-day Yung-ch'i *hsien*, Shansi); he became a monk under Hui-yuan and was widely read in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature. Going to Mt. Lu, he is reported to have exclusively practiced Pure Land practices, dying in 418 at the age of seventy-one.

Tao-ping is reported, in the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, to have been a native of Ying-ch'uan (present-day Yu *hsien*, Honan). At an early age, he became a disciple of Hui-yuan and read both the scriptures *Vinayas*, as well as being conversant in the Chuang-Lao teachings. He is reported to have constantly practiced the *nien-fo san-mei*. At the request of the Governor of Yu-chang, one Wang Ch'ien, Tao-ping was requested in 418 to succeed Hui-yuan as the leader of the monastic community on Mt. Lu, dying in this position at the age of seventy in 435. Thus Tao-ping was the second master of the Tung-lin Monastery on Mt. Lu.

T'an-hsien is described in the *Ming-seng ch'uan Mu-lu* as a (Liu)-Sung Dynasty inhabitant of Mt. Lu and, in the biography of Tao-tsu given in the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, was described as having a cultivated and refined demeanor. He composed a commentary on the *Wei-mo ching* (the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*), as well as a work entitled the *Ch'ing-t'ung lun* (An Essay that Penetrates All). In the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, T'an-hsien was a native of Kuang-ling (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu), who compiled the records of the White Lotus Society and wrote the biographies of those who attained rebirth, dying in 440 at the age of seventy-nine.

Tao-ching was, according to both the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* and the *Tung-lin ch'uan*, a great-grandson of the eminent calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih. At an early age he became a disciple of Hui-

yuan, but only undertook one precept, as well as the *nien-fo* practice, which he cultivated day and night without ceasing. After the death of Hui-yuan, Tao-ching moved to Mt. Jo-hsieh (located in present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), dying there at the age of fifty-one in 420. According to the twenty-third volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*, the Liu-Sung Dynasty layman Chang Ch'ang composed a eulogy for the Master Tao-ching upon his death, the *Jo-hsieh shan Ching Fa-shih lei*, which is preserved for us in the pages of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*.

The above five monks—T'an-shun, T'an-heng, Tao-ping, T'an-hsien, and Tao-ching—were direct disciples of Hui-yuan, and so may have become members of the White Lotus Society.

The biography of the monk Buddhayaśa is given in the fourteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* and in the second volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, but nowhere in these works is it recorded that he ever lived on Mt. Lu. However, according to the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, he moved to Mt. Lu in 412, and there became a member of the Society. This account is perhaps not factual.

Buddhabhadra, however, did live on Mt. Lu. Acceding to the request of Hui-yuan, he translated a meditation scripture, and later, after leaving Mt. Lu, Buddhabhadra lived in Yang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu), where he translated the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Kuan Fo san-mei ching*. According to the second volume of the *Nien-fo san-mei Pao-wang lun*, Hui-yuan learned the *nien-fo san-mei* from Buddhabhadra. If this was the case, relations between Hui-yuan and Buddhabhadra must have been very close, but I think it improbable that an Indian Tripiṭaka Master would have joined the White Lotus Society.

Let us now take a close look at some of the individuals who are reputed to have been among the one hundred and twenty-three members of the White Lotus society.

According to the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk T'an-i was a native of Yu-hang (present-day Ch'ien-t'ang *hsien*, Hang-chou *fu*, Chekiang). He initially went to Mt. Lu, where he studied with Hui-yuan, and later left for North-Central China (the Kuan-chung area), where he studied with Kumārajīva. In 417, he went to Mt. Ch'in-wang near K'uai-chi (located in present-day Hang-chou, Chekiang), where he constructed the Fa-hua ching-she (the *Lotus [Sūtra] Vihāra*), dying there in 450 at the age of sixty-nine.

T'an-yu was, according to the *Ming seng-ch'uan Mu-lu*, a resident of the Tung-ssu Monastery on Mt. Lu. According to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, he was a native of the Kuan-chung area of North-Central China, and was an official in the employ of the state of Ch'in, rising to the rank of General. He met the master Tao-an and became a monk under his guidance, and later moved to Mt. Lu to study under Hui-yuan. It was T'an-yu's task to write letters for Hui-yuan, and on several occasions he

delivered them to Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an. He carried out this task for over ten years, moving later to the Chu-lin ssu Monastery (the Bamboo Grove Vihāra, Skt. *Veluvana-vihāra*) in Ching-chou (present-day Chiangling *hsien*, Hupei), where he eventually died.

The monk Seng-chi moved to Mt. Lu sometime during the T'ai-yuan period (376–397), where he studied under Hui-yuan. Later, he became seriously ill and began to concentrate his thoughts on the Buddha Amitābha. Hui-yuan sent a light to him; he took this and set it on a low table for use as an object of concentration, and thus stilled his thoughts. At night, the congregation of monks would assemble and recite the *Wu-liang-shou ching* repeatedly, and as a result it is reported that Seng-chi perceived the Buddha of Unlimited Life in his dream.

Since these above monks were disciples of Hui-yuan, it is probable that they joined the White Lotus Society.

Hui-kung was, according to the *Tung-lin ch'uan*, a native of the city of Feng-ch'eng in Yu-chang (present-day Feng-ch'eng *hsien*, Kiangsi), and was a fellow student of the monks Seng-kuang, Hui-chan, and Hui-lan. These three monks died one after the other, each giving off miraculous signs. Later, Hui-kung himself became seriously ill and turned all of his attention to the Pure Land. At his death, the Buddha came in person and welcomed him to the Pure Land.

Fa-an was, according to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, a disciple of Hui-yuan; he was energetic in the keeping of the Precepts, lectured on many various scriptures, and at the same time also cultivated meditation. Sometime during the I-hsi period (405–419), he is reputed to have removed a plague of tigers that was terrorizing the inhabitants of the Hsin-yang *hsien* (is this present-day Ching-shan *hsien*, Hupei?). In their gratitude the villagers turned a local shrine into a Buddhist monastery, installing Fa-an there as its abbot.

Fa-ching was the monk, according to the fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* (in the biography of Hui-yuan), whom Hui-yuan dispatched to Central Asia to search out the Sanskrit manuscripts of Buddhist scriptures. Fa-ling, according to the *Hua-yen ching chi* (an Account of the Hua-yen Scripture), preserved in the ninth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, brought a Sanskrit edition (*hu pen*) of the *Hua-yen ching* (the Avatamsaka) from Khotan to China, this edition of the text being 36,000 *gāthās* in length. Also, the *Introduction to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya Piṭaka* records that Fa-ling went to Khotan in 392, where he met Buddhayaśa.

Hui-pao's name occurs in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* biography of Hui-yuan. Hui-yao is mentioned in the biography of Tao-tsu in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* as having constructed a water clock in the mountain (Mt. Lu?). In the waters of a spring he set up some twelve leaves, and when they had all revolved in the current one knew that some twelve hours had passed.

Seng-ch'è is recorded in the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* as having studied with Hui-yuan. He widely studied all of the various scriptures, but was most proficient in the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. At age twenty-three, he lectured on the *Hsiao-p'in Prajñāpāramitā*, and later moved to Chiang-ling, where he died in 452 at the age of sixty-nine.

Nothing is known about the monks Hui-jan and T'an-wei. The monks Tao-hung and T'an-lan were disciples of Hui-ch'ih, the younger brother of Hui-yuan. The monks Fa-yeh, Hui-i, Hui-yen, and Hui-kuan participated in Buddhahadra's translation activities. Of them, the monks Hui-yen and Hui-kuan followed Buddhahadra in his move to Mt. Lu, but there is no record of any interest by them in the Pure Land activities of the mountain.

T'an-kuo was the disciple of T'an-yu, and the monk Yuan-pi was the disciple of Seng-chi. The monks Seng-kuang, Hui-chan, and Hui-lan were fellow students with Hui-kung, but they appear not to have had any direct relationship with Hui-yuan. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the layman Ch'üeh Kung-ts'è died during the reign of the western Chin Emperor Wu.

The layman Lu Hsiu-ching was a Taoist adept (*tao-shih*) and it is reported, in the sixth volume of the *Pien-ch'eng lun*, and in the twenty-third volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan* (in the biography of T'an-hsien), that in the year 555 he debated the relative merits of Buddhism and Taoism with the monk T'an-hsien. Since the activities of these two persons are over a century and a half later than the formation of the White Lotus Society, it is of course impossible that they could have participated in its formation. Thus, the obvious conclusion that we must draw is that the biographical information given in both the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan* and in the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi*, at least with respect to the formation of the White Lotus Society, is unreliable and in general poorly compiled.

In the account of the formation of the White Lotus Society, given in the fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, only the names of laymen such as Liu I-min are given. However, based on this account, we can see that the society was organized primarily with lay membership, and that there were comparatively few clerical members among the disciples of Hui-yuan. Let us then take a closer look at the lay disciples of Hui-yuan.

Liu I-min (*wei* Ch'eng-chih, *tzu* Chung-ssu) was, according to the *Tung-lin ch'uan*, proficient in the Chuang-Lao teachings. Later in his life, he moved to Mt. Lu where he studied under Hui-yuan. Constructing a house for himself on Mt. Lu, he constantly gave himself over to meditation, often perceiving the light emitted by the Buddha. It was here that he died in 401, at the age of fifty-eight. In light of the fact that he composed the vows of the White Lotus Society, he was perhaps the lay leader of the society. He is also reported to have been well versed in the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, and was a close friend of the monk Tao-sheng. According to the *Fa-lun Mu-lu* (preserved in the twelfth volume of the *Ch'u*

san-tsang chi-chi), he composed a text entitled the *Shih-hsin wu i* (The Principle of the Emptiness of the Mind), as well as a letter to the monk Chu Tao-sheng.

Chou Hsü-chih (*tzu* Tao-tsu), according to the ninety-third volume of the *Sung Shu*, was at an early age proficient in the Five Classics, and also in apocryphal texts. He also enjoyed solitude, and there would read the texts of Lao-tze and the *Book of Changes*. He later moved to Mt. Lu and took Hui-yuan as his master. Chou Hsü-chih, Liu I-min, and T'ao Yuan-ming were termed the "three recluses of Hsün-yang" (*Hsün-yang san-yin*; Hsün-yang is the present-day Chiang-ning *fu*, Kiangsu). During the reign of the Liu-Sung Emperor Wu, he was formally invited to move to Chien-k'ang (present-day Chiang-ning *fu*, Kiangsu), and it was here that he died in 423 at the age of forty-six.

Tsung Ping (*tzu* Hsiao-wen) is also mentioned in the *Sung Shu*. According to this work, he was skilled in playing the *chün* and in calligraphy. "Energetic and profound in principles," he eventually moved to Mt. Lu, where he studied under Hui-yuan. He later moved to the San-hu (Three Lakes) section of Chiang-ling and built himself a house there, where he lived in seclusion. He declined an invitation from the Emperor Wu, and eventually died at the age of sixty-eight in 443. The second volume of the *Hung-ming chi* preserves a work written by him entitled the *Ming Fo lun* (An Essay Elucidating the Buddha; it has the variant title *Shen pu-mieh lun*, Essay on the Indestructibility of the Spirit). The third volume of the *Hung-ming chi* also contains a series of questions and answers that Tsung Ping had with Ho Ch'eng-t'ien.

Lei Tz'u-tzung (*tzu* Chung-lin) is also mentioned in the ninety-third volume of the *Sung Shu*. In his youth he moved to Mt. Lu, taking the master Hui-yuan as his teacher. He enjoyed studying and became proficient in the three *li-s* (*I-li*, *Chou-li*, and *Li-chi*) and in the *Shih-ching*, the Classic of Poetry. He took the official examinations in 438 and, moving to Chien-k'ang, he opened a school on Mt. Chi-lung where he taught for many years. He eventually returned to Mt. Lu; later he built himself a hermitage called the Chao-yin kuan on Mt. Chung, dying here at the age of sixty-two in 448.

Chang Yeh (*tzu* Lai-min) is mentioned in the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan* as a relative by marriage of T'ao Yuan-ming. He studied both Chinese literature and the Sanskrit language, and was very proficient in literary composition. He left his family and moved to Mt. Lu, where he cultivated the Pure Land practices together with Liu I-min, and it was here that he died at the age of sixty-eight in 418. Chang Ch'uan (*tzu* Chi-shih) was a distant relative of Chang Yeh. He is said to have "deeply entered into enlightenment," and died at age sixty-four in 423.

Hsieh Ling-yün is mentioned in the sixty-seventh volume of the *Sung Shu*, where it relates that he was a native of Yang-hsia, Ch'en *chün* (present-day T'ai-k'ang *hsien*, Honan). He was enfeoffed as Duke of T'ang-yueh,

and was renowned in his day for his literary compositions. He died at the age of forty-eight in 434. The story is told that he once sought to join the White Lotus Society, but that Hui-yuan refused him entry because "his mind was dispersed." Hsieh Ling-yün wrote Hui-yuan's memorial inscription (preserved in volume twenty-six of the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi*). Also, in the fifteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*, there is preserved a piece, the *Wu-liang-shou sung* (Verses in Praise of the Buddha of Unlimited Life), written to cap the verses of his nephew, the monk Hui-lien. Volume twenty-three of this same work preserves a eulogy written by him for Hui-yuan, the *Lu-shan Hui-yuan fa-shih lei*, but in this work, the year of Hui-yuan's death is given as 417 (I-hsi 13), and his age at death as eighty-three. This does not tally with the information given in the inscription on Hui-yuan's memorial stūpa (*Fo-tsu t'ung-chi*, vol. 26), nor with the biography of Hui-yuan given in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, so the authenticity of this piece is suspect. Volume thirty of the *Kuang Hung ming chi* also contains a four-stanza poem, the *Nien-fo san-mei shih*, composed by the King of Lang-yeh, Wang Ch'i-chih, but perhaps this has been included in the *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi*.

CHAPTER IV: THE TRANSLATION OF TEXTS;
SPURIOUS SCRIPTURES

1. The *O-mi-t'o ching*: Kumārajīva

Kumārajīva was brought from Ku-tsang (present-day Wu-wei hsien, Kansu) to Ch'ang-an in 401, and here he translated, among other important texts, the *O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Shih-chu pi-p'o-sha lun*. The *O-mi-t'o ching* is in one Chinese volume and has the variant title *Wu-liang-shou ching*. This scripture describes in summary form the adornments of the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitābha. From the time of its translation into Chinese, it was immensely popular and came to be read and recited throughout the country. It was retranslated from the Sanskrit into Chinese in 650 by Hsüan-tsang, and this translation is entitled the *Sheng-tsang Ching-t'u Fo She-shou ching*.

The authorship of the *Shih-chu pi-p'o-sha lun* (Skt. *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*) is ascribed to Nāgārjuna. It is made up of some thirty-five chapters, and in its Chinese translation it fills seventeen volumes. This work gives the teachings of the two types of paths, the difficult and the easy path, in its chapter "On Easy Practice," and here it is taught that calling on the names of the ten Buddhas of the ten directions, and thereby attaining the stage of "non-regression," constitutes the Path of Easy Practice. This same chapter also has a *gāthā* which especially praises the Pure Land of Amitābha.

Kumārajīva also has a one-volume work, the *Ssu-wei lüeh-yao fa*, which has the phrase in it, "the meditation on the Buddha of Unlimited Life," but this work is perhaps his own composition, and so may not reflect an Indian original.

Another work, the *Lo-shih fa-shih ta-i*, in three volumes, records Kumārajīva's answers to the questions posed to him by Hui-yuan, and gives his views on perceiving the Buddha in *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter.

Nāgārjuna says, with respect to the Pure Land, that there are those who say that each Buddha has his own land, gained as a result of the fruition of his good karma (a *kuo-pao t'u*). Ordinary sentient beings do not have such lands and can only be born within them, or are only able to see such "recompense lands" (*ying-t'u*), as are manifested to them by a Buddha. In other words, only a Buddha attains such a land. In opposition to this, Kumārajīva's disciple, Tao-sheng, teaches that the Buddhas do not have Pure Lands, for they are beings who are totally liberated from all bondage to physical matter, and one should not say that they actually dwell in such

lands. These “lands” are actually resultant states experienced through the karmic force of all sentient beings; Buddhas merely enter into these “recompense lands” in order to save their inhabitants.

These views are given in volume one of the *Chu-Wei-mo ching*, and in Tao-sheng’s *Shih-ssu k’o Ching-t’u i* (Fourteen Points with Respect to the Pure Land), preserved for us in volume twenty-one of Yen-shou’s *Tsung-ching lu*. In this work, Tao-sheng stresses his belief that the state of Buddhahood does not include within itself any trace of physical matter (*rūpa*), and that the True Body (*kāya*) of the Buddha is not a physical body, but is only the place where the nature of the Buddha’s wisdom abides. As a consequence, one cannot say that this True Body has any such dwelling.

According to the fifth volume of Chi-tsang’s *Ta-ch’eng hsuan lun*, the Liang Dynasty monk Fa-yün also taught these doctrines of Tao-sheng. This monk taught that “when speaking with regard to the teacher, one says ‘the land of the Buddha,’ but the Buddha actually does not have a ‘Pure Land’; such a land is only experienced in response to the karmic actions of sentient beings.”

Prince Shōtoku, in the first volume of his *Yuimakyō gisho* states that there are two types of lands: the recompense land of all sentient beings, and the response land (*ōdo*) of the Tathāgatas. Pure or impure lands are experienced due to the good or evil karma of sentient beings, so such lands should both be termed the “recompense lands of sentient beings.” The Tathāgata is immersed in the principles of the Absolute, and he has long freed himself from the sphere of names and characteristics, so such lands should not be termed his own lands; rather, he merely enters into the recompense lands experienced by sentient beings in order to carry out his work of converting and saving them. It is for this reason then, that these lands are called “lands of response.” Prince Shōtoku’s theories also teach that the Buddha does not actually have a Pure Land, a theory perhaps adopted by Prince Shōtoku from the theories of the monk Fa-yün.

Also, according to Chi-tsang’s *Hua-yen ching yū-i*, a disciple of Kumārajīva—the monk Seng-ying—had the theory that the various lands could be divided into five kinds: the Pure Land, the Impure Land, an Impure-Pure Land, a Pure-Impure Land, and a Mixed Land; a land that was totally pure was termed a Pure Land; a land that was totally impure was termed an Impure Land; a land that was at first impure, but which later turned into a pure land, was called an Impure-Pure Land; a land that was at first pure, but which later turned into an impure land, was called a Pure-Impure Land; and a land wherein both pure and impure aspects subsisted together was called a Mixed Land. We do not have any details of Seng-ying’s theories, but Chi-tsang employs this five-fold division very frequently. According to him, all sentient beings and Buddhas have these five types of lands, so that there are ten different types of lands altogether. Chi-tsang therefore holds that both Buddha and sentient beings have Pure-

Impure Lands, and is perhaps trying to reconcile his own theories with those of both Kumārajīva and Tao-sheng.

Volume nineteen of the Sui Dynasty monk Ching-ying Hui-yuan's (not to be confused with the Chin Dynasty master of Mt. Lu) work, the *Ta-ch'eng i-chang*, criticizes these three theories in the section dealing with the Pure Land. Tao-sheng maintained that beings have a land and that Buddhas do not have one; but that the Buddha manifests himself as a phantom, and in this way dwells in the same land as do sentient beings. With respect to this theory, we could say that since it embraces the Absolute and proceeds from characteristics (i.e., is posited from the Buddha's point of view), it is the theory that "embraces the Absolute and which proceeds from characteristics" (*she-shih ts'ung-hsiang lun*). Alternately, Kumārajīva holds that all Buddhas have lands, but that sentient beings do not actually have any; and that they see only one Buddha Land, and that in accord with their karmic attentions. With respect to this theory, we would say that, since it embraces the characteristics [of the lands] and proceeds from the Absolute, it is the theory that "embraces characteristics and which proceeds from the Absolute" (*she-hsiang ts'ung-shih lun*). The third theory, held by a certain person (i.e., Seng-ying), states that both the Buddhas and sentient beings have lands, and is based on the principle that such lands differ in their resultant states according to individual karma. Since this theory acknowledges real lands to both these beings (to Buddhas and to unenlightened sentient beings), this is the theory which "differentiates characteristics and which allows for different, actual [lands]" (*fen-hsiang i-shih lun*).

Volume nine of Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua ching hsüan-lun* criticizes these masters. This work states that Kumārajīva's theory holds that only the trace body [of the Buddha] has a land, but that he loses sight of the basic land; while Tao-sheng's theory holds that only the Dharmakāya Buddha has a land, and loses sight of the fact that there is a trace land. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that at this time there was a lively controversy between Kumārajīva and his disciples with respect to the real nature of the Buddhas' lands.

It is recorded in the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* that Seng-ying was a native of Ch'ang-yueh, Wei *chün*, and that he studied with Kumārajīva and learned meditation from him. He also participated in Kumārajīva's translation activities, and is recorded to have upheld all the rules of conduct in his daily deportment, and to have widely praised (i.e., disseminated) the teachings of the scriptures. He transferred all the merit of his various actions to his vow to be reborn in the Land of Peace and Nourishment (Sukhāvati), and due to his devotion to the Western Pure Land, whether he was walking, standing still, sitting down, or lying down, he would always face the West. Eventually, he became aware that the end of his life was approaching; he went into his room, bathed, lit incense and

bowed in prostration; he then faced the west, joined his palms together, and in this fashion died. We know from this account that he was a sincere seeker of rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

2. The *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and Related Texts

In the Liu-Sung Dynasty, various scriptures were translated one after the other, the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the *P'ei-hua ching*, and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and with their translation the major corpus of the Pure Land scriptures was completed.

According to the account given in volume two of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, the monk Buddhahadra translated the *Hsin* (New) *Wu-liang-shou ching* in two Chinese volumes in the year 421, during the Liu-Sung Dynasty. The translation was carried out in the Tao-ch'ang ssu Monastery in the city of Yang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu hsien, Kiangsu). But this work also records that, in the same year and the same monastery (with the variant, in the Liu-ho-shan ssu Monastery), it was the monk Pao-yün who translated the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*. However, it is inconceivable that two Tripiṭaka masters would translate exactly the same work at the same time and place. Perhaps these accounts mean to tell us that, initially, two persons worked on the translation, that is, Buddhahadra and Pao-yün, and that later Pao-yün revised the translation. This we may infer from the fact that the second volume of *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in the section "Catalogues of Newly Compiled and Variantly Translated Scriptures," mentions among the different translations of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* only the scripture translated by Pao-yün, and does not mention the text translated by Buddhahadra at all. Furthermore, these two texts are listed in all the catalogues subsequent to the *Li-tai fa-Pao chi* as missing texts, even though the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* does not list the text as missing. We know from this, then, that the text ascribed to the hand of Pao-yün was in circulation at that time. Now the present text of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* which is preserved in the Buddhist Canon has traditionally been considered a translation by the monk K'ang Seng-hui, who worked during the Ts'ao Wei Dynasty. It is my opinion that this scripture was actually translated by Pao-Yün, and that the attribution of it to K'ang Seng-hui is a mistaken attribution.

As we have mentioned above, the *Chin-shih tsa-lu* (A Catalogue of Miscellaneous Works from the Chin Period) says that K'ang Seng-hui translated the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, but that this actually refers to the scripture entitled the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng-ch'üeh ching*. This attribution, then, is nothing more than another theory concerning the translator of the *Ping-teng-ch'üeh ching*. We have also mentioned that the

Wu-liang-shou ching translated by Chu Fa-huo is also variously called the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*, as listed in the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*. But, regardless of this, the *Li-tai san-pao chi* holds that this text is actually a different work, that is, that the *Ping-teng-ch'üeh ching* was translated by the Latter Han Dynasty monk Chih-ch'ien, while the *Wu-liang-shou ching* was translated by K'ang Seng-hui.

Now the scripture translated by Pao-yün was called the *Hsin* (the New) *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in order to show that this work was greatly different from the older *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Ping-teng-ch'üeh ching*. The two older texts did not have an introduction section, and Amitābha is only given some twenty-four vows. In opposition to this, Pao-yün's scripture has an introductory section, and Amitābha's vows have exactly doubled to forty-eight. In the latter text, too, Ajātaśatru does not attend this sermon, and the Parinirvāṇa of Amitābha and the attainment of Buddhahood by Avalokiteśvara are not mentioned, as in the earlier texts. There are, in addition, many differences between the earlier two texts and this later text, and I think that this is perhaps the reason the later scripture was called the "new" scripture, the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*.

Furthermore, a number of words and phrases used in the *Introduction* to the scripture are very similar to those used in Pao-yün's translation of the *Fo pen-hsing ching*, a biography of the Buddha. Most especially it is his use of the phrase "Fo hua-yen san-meī" (the Buddha Avataṃsaka *samādhi*) which testifies to the fact that the monk Buddhahadra, the translator of the full *Hua-yen ching*, participated in the translation of this scripture, too. Our conclusion, then, is that the present *Wu-liang-shou ching* as it is preserved in the Canon was not translated by K'ang Seng-hui, as is traditionally supposed, but is none other than the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*, which was translated by the monk Fa-yün, working in the Liu-Sung Dynasty.

The scripture entitled the *P'ei-hua ching* (Skt. *Karuṇā puṇḍarīka*) was translated by the monk Dharmarakṣa during the Northern Liang Dynasty. He came to Liang-chou (present-day Wu-wei *hsien*, Kansu) sometime during the reign of the Eastern Chin Emperor An, and in 419 (the eighth year of Hsüan-shih, of the Northern Liang Dynasty) he translated this scripture, which is made up of some fourteen chapters, and, in Chinese translation, fills some ten volumes. The second volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* lists this work, and gives the following comment: "another catalogue says that this was translated by the upadhyaya Kung." The master Kung is the monk Tao-kung, who translated the *Pao-liang ching* sometime during the reign of the Eastern Chin Emperor An, in *Ching chou*, and who was, in addition, a contemporary of Dharmarakṣa.

There is also another translation of this same scripture, entitled the *Ta-ch'eng P'ei fen-t'o-li ching* (The Mahāyāna Compassion Puṇḍarīka Scripture), of thirty chapters, filling in translation some eight Chinese volumes. All the catalogues list this as a scripture "of an unknown translator," but

this translation of the text was perhaps done by the monk Tao-kung.

Both translations of this scripture are generally the same in their contents. The story of the sūtra centers on a previous incarnation of the Buddha Amitābha, when he was the King "Uncontentious Mind," and the scripture contrasts the person of the Buddha Amitābha with that of the Buddha Śākyamuni, and also contrasts the Pure Land of Amitābha with the Impure Land of Śākyamuni. The figure of Amitābha is representative of those Buddhas who attain to Buddhahood in a totally pure land; the text goes into some detail concerning the marks of the future Buddha Amitābha's giving rise to Bodhicitta, and speaks of his vows, numbered at fifty-two. By virtue of the fact that the Buddha's vows are also fifty-two in the *P'ei-hua ching*, this scripture is presumably related to the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, mentioned above.

This scripture became very popular during the Ch'i and Liang Dynasties, and many episodes and stories were excerpted from it and given an independent circulation. Volume four of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in the section "A Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures whose Translators are Unknown," lists five works which appear to be independent texts, but were merely excerpts from this longer *P'ei-hua ching*: these are the *Wu-pai wang-tzu tso ching-t'u yuan ching* (The Scripture of the Five Hundred Princes Making Vows for the Pure Land), the *Pao-hai fan-chih ch'eng-chiu ta-p'ei ching* (The Scripture of the Brahmin Ratnasamudra Perfecting Great Compassion), the *Pao-hai fan-chih ch'ing ju-lai ching* (The Scripture of the Brahmin Ratnasamudra Requesting the Tathāgata), the *Kuo-ch'u hsing t'an-p'o-lo-mi ching*, (The Scripture of the Past Cultivation of Dāna Pāramitā), and the *Tang-lai hsien-ch'e chu-o-shih-chieh ching* (The Scripture of the Future Selecting of All Evil Worlds). In addition, the second volume of the *Chung-ching mu-lu* (A Catalogue of All Scriptures), compiled by the Sui Dynasty monk Fa-ching, lists nineteen other scriptures, such as the *Kuan-shih-Yin ch'iu shih-fang fo ko-wei shou-chi ching* (The Scripture of Avalokiteśvara Searching out the Buddhas of the Ten Directions for the Purpose of Receiving Predictions), and records that they are all excerpts from the larger *P'ei-hua ching*. This serves as ample evidence of the great popularity of this work at this time.

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The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* is a scripture which explains in detail the existence of the Buddha Amitābha, the two Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-shih-yin) and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Ta-shih-chih), and the visualization of all the various adornments of the Pure Land Sukhāvati, which would serve to remove one's karmic hindrances and enable one to attain rebirth in that land.

The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, together with the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *O-mi-t'o ching*, have come to be termed "the Three Pure Land Scriptures" (*ching-t'u san-pu-ching*), and, especially in Japan, these three texts are the Pure Land scriptures *par excellence*, to the exclusion of almost all other scriptures.

Who is the translator of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*? The fourth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* records that the name of the translator is lost, whereas the third volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* records that in the first year of the Yuan chia era (424), during the reign of the Emperor Wen of the Liu-Sung Dynasty, this work was translated by the monk Kālayaśas in the city of Chien-yeh, (present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu). Beginning with Fa-ching's catalogue, the *Chung-ching mu-lu*, all subsequent catalogues have adopted this attribution.

The *Li-tai san-pao chi* states that, in addition to this translation by Kālayaśas, there have also been two other translations of this work, one done in the latter Han Dynasty, and one done in the Eastern Chin Dynasty, both by unknown translators. This account appears to combine both theories of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* and the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, but the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*'s statement that the translator of this scripture is unknown, and that the work was done in two dynasties, the Latter Han and the Eastern Chin, is without foundation or reason, and we need not pay any attention to it.

This work went through only one translation, and its translator according to the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, is Kālayaśas: only the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* says that the translator is unknown.

According to the second volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* and the third volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Guṇabhadra arrived in Kuang-chou (present-day Kuang-tung city, Kwangtung) by the sea in the year 435, and a while later translated the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in one Chinese volume, in the Hsin-ssu in Chiang-liang (present-day Chiang-ling hsien, Hupei). This work is another translation of the *O-mi-t'o ching*, which traditionally has been lost, and so has not been preserved for us. However, at the present time, there is a text preserved in the Buddhist Canon entitled the *Pa i-ch'ieh yeh-chang ken-pen teh-sheng ching-t'u shen-chu*, with the annotation following the title that says: "excerpted from the Smaller *Wu-Liang-shou ching*." It further states that it was "re-translated by Imperial Command by the Liu-Sung Dynasty Indian Tripiṭaka Master Guṇabhadra." This *dhāraṇī* text was excerpted from Guṇabhadra's translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, but is not recorded in any of the catalogues listed in the *Ch'u-san-tsang chi-chi*.

According to the *O-mi-t'o ching pu-ssu-i shen-li chüan* (Account of the Inconceivable Powers of the Amitābha Sūtra), The Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna vowed to be born into Sukhāvāti, and in a dream perceived this *dhāraṇī*.

This *dhāraṇī*, in turn, was recited by the Tripiṭaka Master Yaśa to the monk Hsiu of the T'ien-p'ing-ssu Monastery with the following comment: "This scripture has not originally come from a barbarian land . . ." Now this Tripiṭaka Master Yaśa is the Northern Ch'í Dynasty Master Narendrayaśa, and the T'ien-p'ing ssu Monastery is the monastery where he did his translation work in the capital city of Yeh (present-day Lin-chang *hsien*, Honan). If this is the case, then the translation of this *dhāraṇī* should have been recorded in the biography of this Narendrayaśa, and its attribution to the hand of Guṇabhadra is a misattribution.

3. Spurious Scriptures

In China there have been a very large number of works composed to resemble scriptures. The fifth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* records the contents of An kung's *Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures* (An kung: the monk Tao-an), which records twenty-six different titles (in thirty Chinese volumes) which are of doubtful (i.e., non-Indian) origin. The *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* also lists the contents of the *Hsin-chi i-ching wei-hsien tsa-lu* (Newly Compiled Miscellaneous Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures and Spurious Compositions), which in turn lists forty-six titles of works connected with bhikṣus and twenty-one titles connected with the bhikṣuṇīs.

Various other catalogues have also set up the two categories, "doubtful scriptures" and "spurious scriptures"; these categories being seen in such catalogues as Fa-ching's *Chung-ching mu-lu* (Sui Dynasty), Yen-tsung's *Chung-ching mu-lu* (same dynasty), and Chih-sheng's *K'ai-Yuan Shih-Shih-chiao-lu* (T'ang Dynasty), and these catalogues list a large number of works within both of these categories.

Spurious or forged texts began to appear from earlier than the Fu-Ch'ín period onward, and their number began to increase gradually as time progressed. Most such texts have been lost over the years, but some, listed as spurious in the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu* and in other catalogues, have found their way into the Canon. Furthermore, spurious texts have been quoted extensively in such anthologies as the *Ching-Lü i-hsiang*, *Chu-ching yao-chi*, and the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*. In addition to this, manuscript finds have been made of these works at Tun-huang and various other places, so we can get at least some idea of their contents and ideas.

A number of such spurious works are concerned with the Buddha Amitābha, such works as the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh tsun ching* (The Venerable Scripture of the Meritorious Qualities of the Good King and Emperor), the *Yao-shih liu-li kuang ching* (The Vaidūrya Light Scripture of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru), the *Hsü-mi ssu-yü ching* (Scripture of the Four Areas around Mt. Sumeru), and the *Shih wang-sheng O-mi-t'o fo-kuo ching* (The Scripture of Amitābha's Buddha Land of Ten Rebirths).

The first of these works, the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh tsun ching*, is first listed in the *An kung I-ching lu* (above, Tao-an's Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures) where it is stated as being of either one or two volumes in length. Passages from this scripture are quoted in the last volume of Tao-ch'ò's *An-lo chi* (see below, Chapter XII). The passage in question says that if there is a person who practices the way, and who wishes to be reborn in the Western Land of Amitābha, he should call [this Buddha] to remembrance for one or seven days, both day and night, and furthermore during this period of time he should repent [of his transgressions]; and should he hear someone speak of the merits of this Good King, at the end of his life there will appear eight Bodhisattvas who will fly towards him and welcome him, and take him to the Western Land of Amitābha. The teaching of the eight Bodhisattvas, such as Badava, etc. welcoming the devotee to the Pure Land (the same list of eight Bodhisattvas as given in the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*), is also recorded in some earlier texts, such as the *Pa Chi-hsiang shen-chu ching* and the *Pa-yang sheng-chu ching*.

In the fifth volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, it is recorded that the *Pa chi-hsiang shen-chu ching* was translated by the monk Wu Chih-ch'ien, and in the sixth volume of this same work it is recorded that the *Pa-yang shen-chu ching* was translated by the Western Chin translator, the Indian monk Chu Fa-huo. However, the fourth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* lists both of these texts in the catalogue the *Shih-i tsa-ching lu* (The Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures whose Translators are Unknown). The text of the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh tsun ching* is in all likelihood based upon these texts.

The fourth volume of the *Kuan-ting ching* (the Abhiṣeka Sūtra), in the section entitled "The Scripture of the *dhāraṇī* by which the Four Hundred Binding Deva Kings Protect One's Person," also teaches that eight Bodhisattvas, beginning with the Bodhisattva Badava, will conduct the spirit of the devotee at his death to rebirth in the West, and the twelfth volume of this same *Kuan-ting ching*, the *Vaidūrya Light Scripture of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru* (see above) teaches that if anyone in the four classes of Buddhist devotees constantly keeps the six days of the monthly fast, and cultivates three long fasts yearly, and if he is energetic in austerities both day and night, and if he vows to be reborn in the Western Land of Amitābha, and so calls to remembrance [this Buddha] for one to seven days, and if furthermore during this period of time he repents [of his transgressions], and should he hear of the merits of the fundamental vows of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru, then, at the end of his life, eight Bodhisattvas—Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Akśayamati, Pao-ts'an-shan, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Yao-shang, and Maitreya—will fly to the devotee and welcome his spirit, conducting it to birth in the middle of a lotus.

This teaching is identical to that of the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh ching*, the sole exception being that the deity Shan-wang (the Good King)

is replaced by the person of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru, and that the phrase "the eight Bodhisattvas" is replaced by their being named. We can thus easily see that there is a close connection between these two scriptures.

This is especially the case when we see that, according to the "Newly Compiled Miscellaneous Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures and Spurious Compositions," preserved in the fifth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* (see above), this *Vaidūrya Light Scripture of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru* is reputed to have been excerpted by the bhikṣu Hui-chien of the Lu-yeh ssu Monastery, Mo-ling (present-day Chiangning *hsien*, Kiangsu), in the year 457, thus proving its spurious (i.e., non-Indian) origins.

The *Hsü-mi ssu-yü ching* (The Scripture of the Four Areas around Mt. Sumeru), also termed the *Hsü-mi-hsiang t'u-shan ching* (The Scripture of the Configurations of Mt. Sumeru), is quoted in the *Erh-chiao lun* by the Northern Dynasty monk Tao-an (preserved in the eighth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*), in the last volume of Tao-ch'ó's *An-lo chi*, and in the fifth volume of Fa-lin's *Pien-ch'eng lun*. According to the quotation in the *An-lo chi*, at the creation of Heaven and Earth, at a time when there were no sun, moon or stars, and people were very much afflicted, the Buddha Amitābha sent the Bodhisattva Pao-ying-sheng to China to become Fu-hsi, and sent the Bodhisattva Pao-Chi-hsiang to become Nü-kua. At this time, these two Bodhisattvas discussed among themselves what needed to be done, and they ascended to the Heaven of Brahma and there took seven precious stones, and with them made the sun, moon, stars, and the twenty-eight major constellations and so illumined the whole world; and they determined the four seasons, spring, autumn, winter, and summer. The reason that the sun, moon, and all the stars revolve in a westerly direction is that all celestial bodies, and all mankind, bow in reverence to the Buddha Amitābha, who dwells in that direction.

In this work, then, the ancient and famous Chinese gods Fu-hsi and Nü-kua are made messengers of the Buddha Amitābha. Based upon a legend that it was she who created the heavens, Nü-kua is now made the creator deity of the sun, moon, and stars, and the teaching that the sun and moon move in a westerly direction to worship the Buddha Amitābha shows that she is the messenger of the Buddha Amitābha.

These are all contrived legends, based, it would appear, on the *Ch'ing-ching hsing ching*, wherein the Buddha Śākyamuni sends Mahākāśyapa to China to become Lao-tzu, the Bodhisattva Kuang-ching (Vimalaprabha?) to become K'ung-tzu (Confucius), and the Bodhisattva Yueh-kuang (Candraprabha?) to become Confucius' famous disciple Yen-hui. This work was probably created during the Northern Chou Dynasty, a period which saw a flourishing of the debate between the Buddhists and the Taoists.

The *Shih wang-sheng O-mi-t'ó fo-kuo ching* is also termed simply the *Shih wang-sheng ching*. The major thrust of this scripture is the teaching of

the ritual of the ten types of right remembrance (of calling to remembrance, of recitations?) which will lead to rebirth in the land of the Buddha Amitābha. This work has been included in the *Dai-Nippon Zokuzōkyō*, and teaches that the Buddha Amitābha dispatches twenty-five Bodhisattvas, headed by Avalokiteśvara, to protect the Pure Land devotee from being plagued and disturbed by evil demons and spirits. This text and passage have been quoted in Tao-ch'ō's *An-lo chi*, and in Shan-tao's *Wang-sheng li-tsan* and *Kuan-nien fa-men* as the textual proof of such protection of the Pure Land devotee.

Furthermore, this scripture has obvious connections with the *Ssu t'ien-wang ching* (the Scripture of the Four Heavenly Kings) and the third volume of the *Kuan-ting ching* (the Abhiṣeka Sūtra; see above), where it is taught that if one keeps all the Five Precepts, then twenty-five good spirits (*shan shen*) will be dispatched to the devotee's front door, there to guard against evil spirits. Also, the *Ching-tu san-mei ching* (quoted in Shan-tao's *Kuan-nien fa-men*) teaches that if one keeps the precepts of abstinence during the six fast days and the eight days commemorating these good kings, then the Buddha will order the six Deva kings of *kāma-dhātu* to dispatch some twenty-five good spirits to the devotee to always protect him. It is perhaps from these above scriptures that the *Shih wang-sheng ching* took its teaching of the twenty-five protective deities. Furthermore, the second volume of Chieh-chu's *Wang-sheng ch'uan* (preserved in the Shimpukuji temple, Nagoya) records that the Indian Jñānadharmā brought a representation of Amitābha and his twenty-five Bodhisattvas to China from India, and if this account is true, perhaps it is this picture which was the direct impulse for the teaching of these twenty-five deities protecting the Pure Land devotee.

The biography of Chi-tsang, preserved in the eleventh volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, states that in the early years of the T'ang Dynasty Chi-tsang constructed images of twenty-five deities, and that he worshiped them with great devotion.

What deities did these images represent? If they were the images of these twenty-five Bodhisattvas, then we must also say that Chi-tsang was a believer in the teaching of the twenty-five Bodhisattvas' protection of the Pure Land devotee.

The third volume of Seng-hsiang's *Fa-hua ch'uan chi* records that when the monk Chih-yuan of Chiang-nan was about to die, he saw twenty-five holy beings coming to welcome him to the Pure Land, and so was reborn in the Pure Land. This doubtlessly records a belief in the *Shih wang-sheng ching*, and we must realize that this text served as the scriptural basis for the teaching, in Japan, of the devotee's being welcomed into the Pure Land by the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas.

In more recent times, a scripture entitled the *O-mi-t'ō fo ch'üeh chu ta-chung kuan-shen ching* (The Scripture of the Buddha Amitābha Awaken-

ing All the Multitude and Seeing Their Bodies) was discovered among the manuscripts of Tun-huang. This scripture is an elaboration of the *Shih wang-sheng ching*, and so constitutes a further proof of the popularity and spread of the belief in these twenty-five Bodhisattvas, and of their close tie with the Pure Land faith. Volume fifteen of the *Ta-Chou kan-ting chung-ching mu-lu* lists the *Shih wang-sheng ching* as a forgery and, later, the eighteenth volume of the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu* lists the *Shih wang-sheng ching* together with the above *Ch'üeh chu ta-chung ching* as being forged texts.

There are, of course, other forged texts relating to belief in the Buddha Amitäbha, such as the *Sui-yuan wang-sheng shih-fang ching-t'u ching* (volume eleven of the *Kuan-ting ching*), and the *Chan-ts'a shen-o Yeh-Pao ching*. More and more, such texts came to be composed during the years that saw the growth of the Pure Land faith, and this must be seen as a result of the general importance of the faith.