

# Seeing through Images: Reconstructing Buddhist Meditative Visualization Practice in Sixth-Century Northeastern China

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INVESTIGATION INTO MAHĀYĀNA Buddhist meditative visualization practices has focused almost exclusively on the tantric and Pure Land traditions. Since these are what survive today, such an emphasis may appear reasonable. To read this situation back into earlier periods of Buddhist history, however, may be problematic. My own research indicates that, in medieval China, for example, Pure Land and tantric forms of meditative visualization practice formed but two sub-traditions within a larger, persistent mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition of meditative visualization. A hint of the diversity of meditative practices, visual and non-visual, within this mainstream tradition may also be glimpsed by examining the range of meditative practices, including visualization practices, within the medieval Tiantai (天台) lineage(s) centered largely within the southeastern China of that time.<sup>1</sup> In this article we will examine the meditative visualization practices, in particular the visualization of the Buddha's body and its marks, of another lineage system, the Ten Stages (*shidi*, 十地) lineages of northeastern China centered around the ancient city of Ye (鄴) in the late sixth and early seventh century CE. Many of the Tiantai visualization practices systematized by Zhiyi (智顛, 538–597) in the late sixth century in the southeast were, in fact, brought south from this northeastern area, largely conceived, by his teacher Huisi (慧思, 515–577), a native of that area.<sup>2</sup>

Our examination of the meditative visualization practices of the Ten Stages lineages will, in fact, involve a reconstruction of these practices. Since no description of these practices is extant, our reconstruction of these practices will focus on six main areas: (1) the repentance, or confessional, ritual (*chanfa*, 懺法) known as “The Buddha Names in Seven Registers,” a practice that most probably originated within the Ten Stages lineages; (2) the brief set of directions for the implementation of this ritual, the “Great Outline of the Method for Venerating and Paying Obeisance to the Buddhas at the Six Times of the Day” (“Liushi libaifofa dagang,” 六時禮拜佛

法大綱), which also probably originated within the Ten Stages lineages and which indicates that this ritual is one of visionary repentance; (3) the *Ten Stages Sutra* (Skt. *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*; Ch. *Shidi jing*, 十地經) and certain visualization sutras, especially the *Sutra on the Ocean Samādhi of Visualizing the Buddhas* (*Guanfo hai sanmei jing*, 觀佛海三昧經), that detail the practice of the meditative visualization of the buddhas; (4) recitation; (5) the development of a soteriological dimension for meditative visualization practice; and (6) summaries of the “Method for Venerating the Buddhas” (“Lifo fa,” 禮佛法) ascribed to Ratnamati, an Indian Buddhist monk who arrived in Luoyang (洛陽) in the early sixth century and whose disciple Huiguang (慧光, 468–537) was one of the founders of the Ten Stages lineages.

There are several things this article will not do. It will not provide a detailed examination of all of the varieties of meditative practice used in the Ten Stages lineages nor will it provide a detailed investigation of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” genre of visionary repentance, its subgenres, and which lineages or schools may have practiced these rituals.<sup>3</sup> These topics are beyond the scope of this study and deserve separate treatments. Rather, we will focus our attention on the meditative visualization practice suggested by the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” ritual inscribed on the cliff face outside of the cave carved for the Ten Stages monk Lingyu (靈裕, 518–605) in 589 CE. We will conclude our reconstruction of this practice with a brief discussion of its relationship to Tiantai meditative visualization practice and what this comparison might tell us about meditative visualization practice in general in northeastern China in the late sixth century.

Equally importantly we need to remind ourselves that our reconstruction proceeds from texts, most of which, if not all, depict normative situations. How any individual practitioner may have implemented these meditations is unknown, and perhaps unknowable. For any individual the best we may hope for is to glimpse the structure of their meditation(s) and what their meditation(s) focused on, not the details of how they actually practiced these meditations. We also need to remind ourselves that our reconstruction is from our perspective, although we base it on texts from the period under discussion. It may seem a reasonable reconstruction when we look at current meditative visualization practices in Chinese Buddhism, but it may be better to regard the system of meditation arrived at more as an “implied system,” one that describes an implied performance rather than the actual details of an individual practice. Finally, the reconstruction presented in outline here does not, of course, preclude other plausible reconstructions.

Before we begin our reconstruction, however, we need to provide a few introductory remarks about the significance of the meditative visualization of the Buddha’s form as well some background on the nature and impact of the Ten Stages lineages in northeastern China in the sixth century.

PROLOGUE: SOME EARLY ISSUES IN  
MEDITATIVE VISUALIZATION

In the centuries after the Buddha Śākyamuni's death an important theme that became increasingly prominent was the question of whether the Buddha was accessible after death, and, if so, how and "where." A linguistic example of this debate occurs with one of the so-called ten epithets of the Buddha, the word *Tathāgata*. It may be parsed as either "*tathā+gata*," or "Thus Gone," or as "*tathā+āgata*," or Thus Come. K. R. Norman has argued persuasively that the original sense was "Thus Gone."<sup>4</sup> For most early Buddhists, and later for most non-Mahāyāna Buddhists, the Buddha was only accessible, and could only be venerated, through his Dharma, or teaching. One avenue pursued by some of those Buddhists who felt access was in some way possible was to collect, and venerate, the Buddha's relics at *stūpas*, large mounded or tower-like edifices. While for some honoring the Buddha's relics may have been a way to show respect for the tradition's revered teacher and founder, for others it was much more: through the relic one was in the presence of the Buddha; through his physical remains he was somehow "connected" to this world. Yet, while a bodily relic constituted a Buddha presence, it was largely not a communicative one. The Buddha's presence was, by and large, a mute one, a frustrating legacy, perhaps, for the teacher of gods and men.<sup>5</sup>

With the shift from aniconic to iconic representation of the Buddha in art and the creation of Buddha images in the round by the beginning of the second century CE, whole new options were not only created but also exploited with amazing rapidity.<sup>6</sup> In a series of eight similes on the voice and body of the Buddha found only in the Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, or *Scripture on the Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines*, translated by Lokakṣema in 179 CE, one simile, the third, raises the issue of Buddha images. There the teacher Dharmodgata says:<sup>7</sup>

"It is like the images of the Buddha's form that people make after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. When people see these images of the Buddha's form there are none who do not kneel down and make offerings. His images are upright and handsome and their fine features perfectly resemble the Buddha's. When people see them there are none who do not praise them, sigh in admiration, take up flowers, incense, and colorful silks and make offerings [to them]. O Worthy One, is the Buddha's spirit in the image?"

The Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita said, "It is not in it. The reason why the Buddha image is made is, however, to desire to have people obtain merit from it...."

Dharmodgata's question is somewhat surprising in light of his statements that preceded it. Nothing has been mentioned about the images of the Buddha's form being living Buddha presences, although the actions of the people who see such images might suggest more than simple respect. The need to deny that these Buddha images have the Buddha's spirit in them indicates that the numbers of Buddhists who believed in and venerated such a living presence were not insignificant, even at that early date. In fact, through the last eighteen centuries of East Asian Buddhist history it is these twin tracks of merit accrual and the Buddha's presence that have been associated with the creation of Buddha images.

Another striking development was the rapid creation of Buddhist meditations based on the visualization of the Buddha image. Our earliest evidence for this practice comes from another early translation into Chinese, also by Lokakṣema in 179 CE, of the *Pratyutpannasamādhi-sūtra* (*Banzhou sanmei jing*, 般舟三昧經).<sup>8</sup> Here veneration and visualization of the Buddha image are portrayed not only as an efficacious meditative technique centered on the use of the Buddha's image (real or imagined) as a locus for meditation on the qualities of the Buddha, it is even more importantly, as the sutra itself stresses repeatedly, a means for coming into the actual presence of the buddhas. In their presence the practitioner receives their teachings, becomes enlightened through these teachings, and, finally, brings these teachings into the world for the benefit of other beings.<sup>9</sup> This sutra perhaps alludes to the recent, innovative character of its teaching when it mentions on a number of occasions that some Buddhists slander this sutra by saying that it is not a sutra spoken by the Buddha.<sup>10</sup> Remember that in both of the sutras the Buddha images in the round and the visualization of the Buddha image, either the discussion itself or the whole sutra dates significantly fewer than one hundred years after our first evidence for Buddha images in the round, itself a necessary precondition for any of these (textual) developments to have taken place.

Finally, what is important to note here is that this ideology of visualization also stated that the visualized image itself was a Buddha presence. The Thus Gone has quietly become the Thus Come. These three points also constitute important points of difference when we compare the Buddhist (and Asian) use of images and visualizations with the (Judeo-) Christian uses.

Buddhist art historians are fond of saying that the Buddha image is a presence that is an absence (i.e., of the actual Buddha). There may be a meditative corollary to this. Since Buddhists have regarded the truth to which the Buddha had awakened as somehow "beyond" our normal perceptions of the world, we might say that the more absent the (physical) presence of the image, the more present is reality as absence. The visualized image of the Buddha is closer to the actual reality of the Buddha than is the physical image itself, and it is communicative.

When we move to medieval China, this changes. The Chinese never had the historical Buddha as part of their living history. They collected and venerated relics. They produced and venerated Buddha images, often in astounding numbers, especially by the sixth century CE. Yet, I shall argue, it was by venerating the Buddha through Buddha visualization that some Chinese Buddhists felt that they were actually able to perceive the Buddha(s), both physically and, ultimately, soteriologically.

## 1. THE TEN STAGES LINEAGES

The basic problem in reconstructing Ten Stages' religious practice is that they are generally assumed to have had none. This attitude probably derives from the views of modern Japanese scholars who have classified the Ten Stages lineages as a philosophical school, a view that has, at least until recently, been largely followed by Western Buddhist scholars working on medieval China.<sup>11</sup> While such a characterization does not deny that those connected with these lineages engaged in religious practice, it has effectively deflected scholars' attention away from the actual practices associated with these lineages. Among some it has even helped foster the impression that those connected with this school did not engage in any significant practice. It is true that there were scholars and exegetes of real sophistication among those in the Ten Stages lineages. Yet, judging by the extant biographies of monks associated with these lineages, most, including the scholars and exegetes, engaged in regimens of religious practice. Our single most notable exception to this commitment may be Jingying Huiyuan (淨影慧遠, 523–592), monk, scholar and exegete, who has left us such notable works as the *Tacheng yizhang* (大乘義章) and the earliest extant commentary to the *Foshuo Guan Wuliangshou fo jing* (佛說觀無量壽佛經, the *Guan Wuliangshou jing yishu*, 觀無量壽佛經義疏).<sup>12</sup> Yet even a cursory survey of the biographies of those associated with the Ten Stages lineages indicate that he is the exception that proves the rule. In order to contextualize our reconstruction of Ten Stages' practice it will be useful to provide a thumbnail sketch of the Ten Stages lineages and their contributions.

Soon After Ratnamati (勒那摩提, d. ca. 513) and Bodhiruci (菩提留支, fl. 508–535) arrived in Luoyang in 508 CE they were commissioned by imperial decree to translate into Chinese the *\*Daśabhūmi[ka]vyākhyāna*, or *Extended Commentary on the Ten Stages Scripture* (hereafter the *Ten Stages Commentary*), attributed to the Indian Buddhist monk Vasubandhu. They were joined in this commission by Buddhaśānti (伏陀扇多) whom some have identified as the meditation master and painter known in our early sources as either Buddha (佛陀) or Bhadra (跋陀) (hereafter Buddha/bhadra; fl. 525–538). This translation was begun in the first decade of the fourth month of 508

and completed at the beginning of summer, 511.<sup>13</sup> According to statements in Daoxuan's (道宣, 596–667) *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* (續高僧傳, hereafter XGSZ), or *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*, completed in 667, differences of opinion arose between Bodhiruci and Ratnamati over the interpretation, and thus presumably the translation, of passages in the text. As a result, two, or possibly three, different versions were produced. Only later were these versions combined into a single text by Ratnamati's subsequent disciple Huiguang.<sup>14</sup> This conflated edition of the *Shidi jinglun* (十地經論), as the translation was known in Chinese, is the only version now extant.

These three monks figure much more prominently, however, in later Chinese Buddhist history than simply being the translators of the *Ten Stages Commentary*. They, together with Huiguang, Bodhiruci's disciple Daochong (道寵, fl. 520s), and Ratnamati and Buddha/bhadra's disciple Sengchou (僧稠, 480–560) either stand at the head of, or mark an important turning point in, a number of significant trends in later Chinese Buddhism.

Doctrinally, they provided translations of a significant number of Indian Yogācāra (Mind Only) and Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha-Nature < Womb of the Tathāgata) texts. In addition to the *Ten Stages Commentary*, we might mention also the *Sandhinirmocana-sūtra* (*Shenmi jietuo jing*, 深密解脫經), the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* (*She dacheng lun*, 攝大乘論), the *Jin'gang xian lun* (金剛仙論), and the *Anunatoāpurnatoānirdeśa-parivarta* (*Buzeng bujian jing*, 不增不減經).

Second, from Bodhiruci's disciple Daochong and Ratnamati's disciple Huiguang were formed two "schools" of early Chinese Yogācāra exegesis and practice known as North of the Road (*daobei*, 道北) and South of the Road (*daonan*, 道南) respectively. Both of these "schools," known collectively as the Ten Stages (Dilun) lineages, focused not only on an analysis of the ten stages of the bodhisattva's path of practice as found in the *Ten Stages Commentary*, and how this path was to be understood in terms of Yogācāra theories of the mind, but also on how this bodhisattva path was to be implemented in ritual and meditative practice. While both analysis and practice were necessary to tread this path, in my view, for most monks within these lineage traditions exegesis and doctrine were to a significant degree praxis driven. I part with traditional and modern wisdom on this point. The point of much of my work on the Ten Stages lineages, and one of the main points of this article, is that we cannot really understand Buddhism in northeastern China during the sixth and early seventh centuries unless we recognize the nature of the meditative and ritual practices that these lineages had.

Through imperial patronage, first in the Northern Wei (魏, 439–534), and later under the Eastern Wei (535–549) and Northern Qi (齊, 550–577) dynasties, the influence of these two "schools," and especially those lineages that stemmed from Huiguang and his disciples, spread throughout the region

east of the Taihang (太行) mountain range from Luoyang in the southwest, through Ye (near modern Anyang), reaching at least as far as Dingzhou (定州) in the northeast. This is the area known in medieval sources as the area “East of the Mountains,” or Shandong (山東).

Third, Huiguang and the self-styled Ten Stages lineages that stemmed from him were important for spreading the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, or clerical code, in northern China in the sixth and seventh centuries. Daoxuan, the great seventh-century commentator on the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, in fact, frequently stresses this fact in his XGSZ biographies of the various teachers in the Ten Stages lineages. Over the centuries the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* subsequently became the sole, standard *vinaya* for all of East Asia and the only continuing *vinaya* tradition in which nuns are still ordained.

Fourth, Bodhiruci, Ratnamati, and the monk Buddha/bhadra trained students in particular meditative practices that were to prove very influential throughout northern China well into the eighth century. From Bodhiruci Tanluan (曇鸞, 476–572 or 488–554), China’s first Pure Land thinker, developed meditative visualizations to ensure rebirth in the Amitābha’s Pure Land of Sukhāvati. Ratnamati and the monk Buddha/bhadra apparently cooperated in training a group of meditation monks, Daofang (道房, d. after 506), Master Ding (定師), Sengshi (僧實, 476–563), and, the most famous of them all, Sengchou. Summaries of Ratnamati’s meditative program in seven steps, extant in mid-seventh-century compendia, indicate that the meditative procedures in which these monks were trained probably combined meditation and repentance in the meditative visualization of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.<sup>15</sup> To this list of meditation monks we should also probably add Huiguang, following early inscriptions,<sup>16</sup> even though the later Chinese tradition regarded him primarily as an exegete and promoter of the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*. Of this group Sengchou was arguably the most famous meditation master in northern China in the mid-sixth century, and may have been influential in the history of the early Chan (禪; Jpn. Zen; Kor. Sōn) lineages.<sup>17</sup>

Possible evidence for Huiguang’s meditative practices may come, in part, from Lingyu, the most eminent and influential disciple of Daoping (道憑, d. 549), whom Daoxuan regarded as Huiguang’s closest and ablest student.<sup>18</sup> An inscription carved at a cave temple constructed for Lingyu in 589 presents us with a practice that is at once both ritual and meditation. Referred to in other contexts as the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers,” it represents a paradigm of meditative praxis that unites repentance and meditation around the meditative visualization of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Of cardinal importance in this context are repentance verses composed by Lingyu and a repentance prayer written by his colleague in the Ten Stages lineages, Tanqian (曇遷, 542–607),<sup>19</sup> both preserved in the mid-seventh-century Buddhist encyclopedia *Fayuan zhulin* (法苑珠

林), which demonstrate clearly that the repentance rituals in which they engaged had a soteriological trajectory.<sup>20</sup> This soteriological dimension was properly a function of the meditative component of the paradigm. That it had become a function of the repentance component at this time may provide us with significant clues to how they viewed the dynamics of liberation. By contextualizing the texts, rituals, and meditations as well as the issues that they raised we can, I think, reconstruct an important aspect of Ten Lineages practice at that time.

## 2. THE "BUDDHA NAMES IN SEVEN REGISTERS" REPENTANCE RITUAL

Lingyu's cave temple, now referred to as Dazhu sheng ku (大住聖窟), or Cave of the Great Resident Sage, is located at the western end of a valley formed by a ring of eight hills.<sup>21</sup> A cave dedicated to Lingyu's teacher, Daoping, is located near the crest of the hill at the eastern end of the valley. Lingyu's cave opens to the south. It is a square room about two meters on a side. When one enters one faces Vairocana seated in a niche on the northern wall who, together with his two attendants, faces south. In the niche in the western wall are Amitābha and his two attendants facing east; the eastern wall has Maitreya and two attendants facing west. To Vairocana's left is a vertical panel formed of seven squares, each containing one of the seven buddhas of the past. To Vairocana's right is a similar panel containing the first seven of the thirty-five buddhas of repentance beginning with Śākyamuni Buddha at the top. The remaining twenty-eight buddhas are presented, in a counterclockwise direction, in panels to the left and right of both Amitābha's and Maitreya's attendants. It appears that when the images of the buddhas and bodhisattvas to be venerated are arranged along the walls of a cave temple, the practitioner, by moving counterclockwise as the ritual proceeds, can keep his right shoulder moving toward the images to be venerated.<sup>22</sup> As one turns and looks out the entrance of the cave, there are three inscriptions on the inside of the south wall, one each to the left and right of the entrance and one above it. The inscription to the left of the entrance displays the images of the twenty-four Indian patriarchs together with short passages that identify them. It is perhaps our earliest extant such list.<sup>23</sup> To the right is inscribed a passage from the *Mahāsammnipāta-sūtra* on the decline of the Buddha's Dharma.<sup>24</sup> On the outside wall of the cave, on the right-hand side as one looks out, are a series of inscriptions in three registers.<sup>25</sup>

Among the inscribed passages taken from Buddhist sutras carved on the outside of the cave temple there is one passage that presents an abridged (*lue*, 略) rite of visionary repentance, the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" ("Qijie foming," 七階佛名).<sup>26</sup> This is inscribed at the left end of the lower reg-



ister and is preceded, as we move back eastward toward the cave's entrance, by lists of buddhas' names: the buddhas of the ten directions beginning with Sumerupradīpaprabhāsa Tathāgata (Xumi deng guangming, 須彌燈光明) in the east; the thirty-five buddhas; the fifty-three buddhas.

The "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" is what we might term a "hybrid canonical" text: while all of its components are canonical, the text itself as a combination of these components, and the liturgies associated with it, were composed in China.<sup>27</sup> As a ritual text the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" may be defined as a genre. Perhaps uniquely, we may define this genre by the fixed number and order of the groups of buddhas' names. Usually litanies of buddhas' names are the most flexible part of a ritual; they may be expanded and contracted as the situation requires. In the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" these registers are fixed. Subgenres here are defined by the different repentance prayers used. In the subgenre examined in this article the repentance prayer, including the verses at the end in the Dunhuang and canonically transmitted versions, is taken from the "Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance" found in the early (i.e., 266–420 CE) Chinese translation of the *Vinaya-viniścaya* (hereafter *VV*).<sup>28</sup> The prayer itself is composed of two parts: the confession and repentance of various groups of offenses; a transfer of merit.

For purposes of reference and to facilitate discussion I present a translation of the "Mt. Bao Lingquan Monastery Repentance Ritual" below. Since the last part of the prayer in the inscription is missing, I have supplied the remaining section through comparison with the Dunhuang and canonical versions.

The Text of the Abridged Repentance for Venerating [the Buddha Names] of the Seven [Registers]:<sup>29</sup>

1. Homage to All of the Buddhas of the [Ten] Directions [Beginning with] the Buddha of the Eastern [Direction] [\*Sumerupradīpa] prabhāsa;
2. Homage to All of the Seven Buddhas of the Past [Beginning with] [Vapaśin];
3. Homage to All of the Fifty-Three Buddhas [Beginning with] Dīpamkara;
4. Homage to All of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions [Beginning with] Bhadrāsī Tathāgata;
5. Homage to All of the Thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa [Beginning with] Krakucchanda Tathāgata;

6. Homage to All of the Thirty-Five Buddhas [Beginning with] Śākyamuni Tathāgata;
7. Homage to All of the Innumerable Buddhas of the Ten Directions;<sup>30</sup>
8. Homage to All of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions and the Three Times, Past, Present, and Future;

I take refuge and repent:

“In this way may all the buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, who constantly reside in the world, may these World-Honored Ones compassionately be mindful of me. I now in all cases repent those obstructing offenses that I have committed: the mass of offenses that I have committed in this life or in previous lives since beginningless time, no matter whether I have done them, instructed others to do them, or seen them done and taken pleasure in that; whether of pagodas, of the sangha, or of the possessions of the sangha of the four quarters, no matter whether I have taken them, instructed others to take them, or seen them taken and taken pleasure in that; or committed the five heinous sins that entail immediate [retribution] or the [four] *pārājika* offenses, no matter whether I have committed them, instructed others to commit them, or seen them committed and taken pleasure in that; the path of the ten unvirtuous actions, no matter whether I have done it, instructed others, or seen it done and taken pleasure in it; those obstructing offenses that I have committed, whether I have concealed them or not concealed them; those for which I should fall into such places as the hells, or the [realms of the] hungry ghosts or the animals as well as all the evil realms of existence, or into the border regions, or among the lowly and depraved, or among barbarians.<sup>31</sup> Now all the buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, should bear witness to and know me, should recall and hold me in mind.”

Again, before all the buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, I say:

“If I, in this life, or other lives, have ever practiced giving alms or kept the pure precepts, even to the extent that I have donated one morsel of food to an animal or practiced pure conduct, may these roots of goodness that I have bring sentient beings to maturity, may these roots of goodness that I have cultivate *bodhi*, may these roots of goodness that I have extend to ultimate {wisdom, may these

roots of goodness that I have may they all, the whole accumulated, compared, reckoned, or calculated amount, be transferred to supreme ultimate enlightenment.<sup>32</sup> Just as what the past, future, and present buddhas have done has been transferred, I also likewise transfer.”

The mass of offenses I all repent;  
All merits I completely rejoice in,  
And ask the buddhas, the virtuous ones [to teach];  
I vow to accomplish the unexcelled wisdom.

The past, future, and present buddhas,  
Among sentient beings most excellent,  
Limitless the ocean of their virtues,  
I take refuge in; hands joined I venerate you.)<sup>33</sup>

Before we examine the composition of this ritual a few comments are in order regarding the inscription and its relationship to the Dunhuang manuscripts, in particular Beijing 8344/Yu (宇) 16, and the edition of the text in the first fascicle of Zhisheng's *Ji zhujiing lichanyi*.

The Academia Sinica rubbing appears to be unique among extant rubbings of the Mt. Bao inscriptions in preserving much of the title: “The Text of the Abridged Repentance for Reverencing [the Buddha Names] of the Seven [Registers].” There are three lacunae: *Lue li qi ... chanhui deng wen* (略禮七...懺悔等文). Parallelism with the title of Beijing 8344/Yu 16 makes it very probable that the missing characters here are *jie foming* (階佛名), which, together with the preceding character for “seven,” gives us “Buddha Names of the Seven Registers.” This makes this inscription the earliest dated exemplar of this ritual text. As Daniel Stevenson has noted, among the dated Dunhuang manuscripts of this genre the earliest possible date would be 676 CE for Beijing *kun* (崑) 96.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, this manuscript, Beijing *kun* 96, represents another subgenre with a ritual format and prayer different from the ritual subgenre under discussion here. The earliest datable version of the text inscribed at Lingyu's cave temple outside of Mt. Bao is to be found in Zhisheng's *Ji zhujiing lichanyi* compiled in 730. The other datable Dunhuang manuscripts of this ritual all date to the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>35</sup>

Second, in Beijing 8344/Yu 16, in Zhisheng's (fl. 730) *Ji zhujiing lichanyi*, and in virtually all of the Dunhuang manuscripts that list these rosters, or arrays, of buddhas prior to the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Prayer,” the actual names of the fifty-three and thirty-five (and twenty-five) buddhas are listed at those points in the litany. In the Mt. Bao inscription the litany of buddha arrays is as presented above, i.e., the actual lists of these bud-

dhas' names are given separately prior to the text of the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers." The names of the twenty-five buddhas are inscribed at the beginning of the middle register on the cliff face, just above the names of the fifty-three buddhas. At Mt. Bao anyone reciting this ritual could insert the names of the fifty-three, thirty-five, or twenty-five buddhas by reading them into the ritual at the appropriate points in the litany of "registers." Whenever the list of twenty-five buddhas is included among the rosters, in all extant manuscripts it is inserted in the eighth position, after number 7 in our list above.

Finally, the *Ji zhujing lichanyi*, Beijing 8344/Yu 16, and most Dunhuang manuscripts insert not only the list of the twenty-five buddhas, but also the lengthy names of two buddhas taken from the *Dvadāśabuddhaka (sūtra)* (*Shier foming shenzhou jiaoliang gongde chuzhang miezui jing*, 十二佛名神咒校量功德除障滅罪經) translated by Jñānagupta in 587. Although the names of these two buddhas are associated with the late Dilun and early Huayan lineages, the relatively late date of translation of the *Dvadāśabuddhaka (sūtra)* apparently precluded any use of these names in the Mt. Bao inscription (and in Xinxing's "Rules for Receiving the Eight Precepts").<sup>36</sup> In the *Ji zhujing lichanyi* and in the relatively numerous Dunhuang manuscripts where these two names occur they are most commonly inserted after the names of the twenty-five buddhas, in ninth position.

One of the curiosities of the "Buddha Names of the Seven Registers" is that there are always at least eight "registers" of buddhas given, even in our earliest inscription at Mt. Bao. When the names of the twenty-five buddhas and the names of the two buddhas from the *Dvadāśabuddhaka (sūtra)* are added we can have up to ten "registers." While to date there has been no satisfactory explanation of this situation, I suspect that, if the number "seven" actually refers to the total number of rosters of buddhas, the first seven rosters in the Mt. Bao inscription were probably the original seven with the eighth roster in the Mt. Bao list<sup>37</sup> and the twenty-five buddhas being added later.

Let us look briefly at the structure of these arrays and the repentance prayer a little more closely. I mentioned above that the ritual of the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" inscribed at Mt. Bao might be referred to as a hybrid canonical text. Specifically, this means that it is constructed from three slightly overlapping sources. The *Scripture on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas, King of Healing and Supreme Healer* recommends that the practitioner reverence or venerate (*li*, 禮) six rosters of buddhas, numbers 1–3 and 5–7 of our inscription, as a preliminary to visualizing the two bodhisattvas, King of Healing and Supreme Healer.<sup>38</sup> The context in this scripture suggests strongly that these other arrays of buddhas be visualized also. We have already seen that the title of a Dunhuang manuscript, in fact, specifically links the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" ritual to this

scripture, entitling it “The Abridged Method of Repentance for Reverencing the Buddhas of the Seven Registers (Taken from) *The Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas the King of Healing and Supreme Healer.*”

The fourth array in the Mt. Bao inscription is found in two sources. In both sources it is ritually significant. One is the commentary on the *Ten Stages Scripture*, the *Daśabhūmivibhāṣa* (*Shidi piposha*, 十地毘婆沙), or *Discourse on the Ten Stages*, attributed to the famous second-century Madhyamaka thinker Nāgārjuna.<sup>39</sup> This list of ten buddhas forms the core of the “Chapter on Easy Practice” (“Yixing pin,” 易行品)<sup>40</sup> lays out an “easy,” rapid way to attain the stage of non-retrogression in the practice of the bodhisattva path, i.e., the first of the ten stages according to the Ten Stages lineages. The other is the *Scripture on the Visualization of the Ocean Samādhi of the Buddhas* (hereafter *Ocean Sutra*).<sup>41</sup> By visualizing these ten buddhas and reciting their names the practitioner will rapidly attain the direct realization that constitutes entry into the first stage of bodhisattva practice. These ten buddhas, in fact, stand for all the buddhas of the ten directions, the “substance” of the direct realization, who appear to the practitioner when he/she attains the first stage and validate his/her attainment. Meditation on this, or any, array of buddhas is meant to mirror, and perhaps even facilitate, the very enlightenment experience it seeks to attain.<sup>42</sup>

Although the thirty-five buddhas, the sixth register, are referred to in the *Scripture on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas, King of Healing and Supreme Healer*, the repentance prayer and the list of the thirty-five buddhas come from the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Ritual” found in the VV, one of the oldest repentance formats traceable in our sources. In the VV this repentance ritual not only explicitly stipulates that the repentance should be done “surrounded by” the thirty-five buddhas, it also enjoins the practitioner to visualize the qualities of these thirty-five buddhas. Upon successful completion of the ritual the buddhas will appear before the practitioner and provide him with those teachings that will lead him and all sentient beings to liberation.<sup>43</sup>

The inside of the cave temple on Mt. Bao also provides us with the earliest iconographic representation of these thirty-five buddhas. As the VV enjoins, and as described above, they surround the practitioner. The eighth register is supplied, I suspect, through the influence of the last line of the repentance prayer.

One other Dunhuang manuscript, undated, is important for situating the Mt. Bao inscription of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” ritual. The Dunhuang manuscript P. 2849 contains three texts: *Zhifa* (制法, Instituted Rules),<sup>44</sup> three short works on eating,<sup>45</sup> and *Shou bajie fa* (受八戒法, Rules for Receiving the Eight Precepts).<sup>46</sup> All three of these texts are arguably early compositions and were attributed to Xinxing, the founder of the

Three Stages Teaching (Sanjie jiao, 三階教).<sup>47</sup> This would place the original composition of the texts included in this manuscript in the 580s and early 590s. The Dunhuang manuscript itself may be a later copy.

Although this manuscript was known as early as 1987,<sup>48</sup> and recent studies by Nishimoto Teruma have demonstrated its importance for understanding the Three Stages school, its importance for untangling the complex filiations of rituals and texts associated with the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” has not yet been recognized. The *Rules for Receiving the Eight Precepts*, after a brief prologue, in fact provides Xinxing’s version of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” repentance ritual. Comments before and after this ritual make it clear that this is a self-contained repentance ritual. It begins with nine rosters of buddhas, including the twenty-five buddhas in eighth position. The ninth roster is the eighth roster in the Mt. Bao inscription, which, as we shall see, may be a distinctive creation of the Ten Stages lineages. Then follows a repentance prayer in seven sections, each section introduced with a refrain that may be peculiar to rituals associated with the Three Stages school: “May the buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time bear witness to and know your disciple, so-and-so” (十方三世諸佛當證知弟子某甲等). Although only the last two of these seven sections make use of text from the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Prayer,” the sequence of topics in the first five sections follows the sequence of topics presented in the first section of the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Prayer.” The sixth section quotes only a portion at the end of the first part of this repentance prayer, but the seventh section quotes the second part on the transfer of merit almost entirely. The ritual then ends with a short section for receiving the eight precepts. Through its use of the eight rosters of buddhas, a portion of the first part, and almost the whole second part of the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Prayer,” Xinxing’s ritual of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” shows its indebtedness to the Ten Stages’ form of the ritual inscribed at Mt. Bao. Xinxing himself, the founder of this school, hailed from Ye and many of the practices that he adopted (or adapted) were likely borrowed from those current in Ye during his lifetime. In this period Ten Stages doctrines, practices, and discourses provided much of the religious currency for this area.

### 3. THE VISUALIZATION I: THE “GREAT OUTLINE OF THE METHOD FOR VENERATING AND PAYING OBEISANCE TO THE BUDDHAS AT THE SIX TIMES OF THE DAY”

Although the sources for the Mt. Bao ritual program suggest that these eight registers of buddhas were to be visualized meditatively, and although we know from his biography that Lingyu practiced Buddha mindfulness (*nianfo*) meditation, we have no direct contemporary

evidence that this was, in fact, how this ritual was implemented. Anecdotal information from sources such as biographies do, however, give us some indication of the general stance of the text, practice, and discourse communities surrounding the capital of Ye in the late sixth century. This information suggests that the meditative visualization of the buddhas and bodhisattvas was most commonly done in arrays and not singly. Daochuo's (道綽, 562–645) biography of Tanluan, a northeasterner, for example, has the following exchange between Tanluan and Emperor Jing (靜, r. 534–550 CE) of the Eastern Wei (534–550):<sup>49</sup>

The Lord came and reprimanded the Dharma Master, “The buddha lands of the ten directions are all constituted as pure lands. Why is it the Dharma Master only fixes his intent on the west? Is not this giving rise to a biased view?” The Dharma Master said, “Since I am an ordinary person, my wisdom is shallow and short [sighted]. Since I have not yet entered the stages [of the bodhisattva path], I must constrain the power of my mindfulness (*nian*).

君子來呵法師曰十方佛國有為淨土法師何乃獨意注西豈非偏見生也  
法 師對曰吾既凡夫智慧淺短未入地位念力須均

Tanluan's religious practice focused only on the visualization of one buddha, Amitābha, his entourage, and the Pure Land in the west, not arrays of buddhas. The passage quoted suggests a contrast between this visualization of a single buddha and the visualization practices focused on arrays of buddhas pursued more generally in the Ye area at that time.

Our first direct, transmitted evidence that these registers, or rosters, of buddhas were to be visualized comes from a short text, “The Great Outline of the Method for Paying Obeisance to the Buddhas at the Six Periods” (“Liushi libai fo fa dagang,” 六時禮拜 佛法大綱) appended to the end of a text entitled “Text for Taking Vows at the Six Periods of the Day and Night” (“Zhouye liushi fayuan wen,” 晝夜六時發願文) found toward the end of Zhisheng's 730 version of the ritual. This text is known also from a number of undated Dunhuang manuscripts.<sup>50</sup>

*The Great Outline of the Method for Paying Obeisance to the Buddhas at the Six Periods.* At each of the three times during the day and the three times during the night you should solemnly hold incense and flowers. You should enter the pagoda and, visualizing the image, silently make your offerings, and circumambulate and venerate the Buddha. At dawn and at noon you should at both times separately intone the [names of the] fifty-three buddhas; the remainder should all be intoned as a group. At sunset and at the

early night you should at both times separately intone the [names of the] thirty-five buddhas; the remainder should all be intoned as a group. At midnight [and at late night] you should at both times separately intone the [names of the] twenty-five buddhas; the remainder should all be intoned as a group. Visualize these buddhas of the seven registers as if they were before your very eyes, meditating upon the qualities that the tathāgatas possess. In this way you should purify [yourself] and repent.<sup>51</sup>

晝三夜三各嚴持香華入塔觀象默供養行道禮佛平明及與午時並別唱五十三佛餘皆總唱日暮及與初夜並別唱三十五佛餘皆總唱半夜並別唱二十五佛餘皆總唱觀此七階佛如在目前思惟如來所有功德應作如是清淨懺悔

At the end of these instructions the practitioner is enjoined to “visualize these buddhas of the seven registers as if they were before your very eyes, meditating upon the qualities that the tathāgatas possess. In this way he should perform his purification and repentance.” This passage is virtually a direct quotation from the *VV* epilogue quoted above,<sup>52</sup> only the “buddhas of the seven registers” has been substituted for the “thirty-five buddhas.”

The “Text for Taking Vows at the Six Periods of the Day and Night” most likely derives from the Three Stages school and probably represents a form of Three Stages ritual practice.<sup>53</sup> The brief set of instructions for the practice of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” at the end was, however, most likely borrowed from the Ten Stages school. These instructions form an independent section and have no essential relationship to the vows section.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, that the concluding lines are a virtual quotation from the *VV* link these instructions intimately to the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance.” These lines do not occur in the parallel set of instructions Xinxing gives in section 10, “The Method for Venerating the Buddhas” (“Lifo fa,” 禮佛法) of the Three Stages manuscript *Zhifa* (P. 2849).<sup>55</sup> All of this demonstrates in a general way, I think, the existence and continuity of the meditative visualization of the buddhas and bodhisattvas from the late sixth through the early eighth centuries: the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Ritual” is embedded in the ritual of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” inscribed in 589 at Mt. Bao; the thirty-five buddhas themselves, before whom the practitioner is to perform the ritual are carved in the cave at which the ritual was to be performed; the injunction to visualize not only the thirty-five buddhas but all of the buddhas of the seven registers, taken virtually verbatim from the epilogue to the “Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Ritual” in the *VV* is repeated in a text appended to a Three Stages’ ritual that itself may well represent earlier Ten Stages’ practice; this injunction to visualize the buddhas does not occur in the parallel set of instructions in the *Zhifa*,



perhaps written by Xinxing himself. Consequently, I would suggest that by Zhisheng's time in the early eighth century this particular set of instructions, originally a text or pericope of the Ten Stages school, had become added to a set of vows redacted in the Three Stages school and was perhaps even regarded as original to it.

Outside of the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" ritual complex, early on associated with the Ten Stages school and only later associated with the Three Stages school by bibliographers, and the evidence of certain later Dunhuang manuscripts, the writings of the Three Stages school shows almost no connection with the "Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance Ritual." In fact, among the Dunhuang manuscripts of the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers," the only evidence linking these texts to the Three Stages school is this "Text for Taking Vows at the Six Periods of the Day and Night" and "The Method for Receiving the Eight Precepts" attributed to Xinxing, the latter found only in a single manuscript, P. 2849.

#### 4. THE VISUALIZATION II: THE *TEN STAGES SUTRA* AND THE TECHNIQUES ELABORATED IN THE *SUTRA ON THE OCEAN SAMĀDHI OF VISUALIZING THE BUDDHAS*

We have already referred to the cluster of six visualization sutras translated in the early fifth century. We have also noted that the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" has a close liturgical relationship one of these, the *Scripture on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas, King of Healing and Supreme Healer*. The visualization practices are detailed, however, in another of these visualization texts, the *Ocean Sutra*. We mentioned above that Tanluan's practice focused on the visualization of a single buddha, Amitābha, his two attendants Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and his Pure Land. The Tiantai meditative practices systematized by Zhiyi in the fourfold *samādhis* (*sizhong sanmei*, 四種三昧) also organize its meditative visualizations around single buddhas. Zhiyi received these practices from his teacher Huisi, a northerner from the northeastern area dominated by the capital cultures of Luoyang and Ye.<sup>56</sup>

The *Ocean Sutra* describes a different set of practices. After outlining specific preliminaries such as how to visualize the thirty-two major marks (*xiang*, 相) it describes how to visualize multiple buddhas, whether in set arrays, such as the seven buddhas of the past or the buddhas of the ten directions, or filling all of space.<sup>57</sup> Both sets of practices are relevant for our discussion.<sup>58</sup>

It is useful to begin with the visualization of the buddhas filling all of space. The instructions for this set of visualizations give us the basic directions for visualizing a buddha and how to extend this visualization to larger and larger areas. This visualization is also helpful in order to understand

the visualization practices that may have been performed by those wishing to enter the first stage of the bodhisattva path.

At the beginning of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, translated by Bodhiruci, Ratnamati, and Buddhasānta in 508, the Bodhisattva Vajragarbha (Jin'gang zang, 金剛藏) enters into the samādhi known as the "radiance of the Mahāyāna" (*dacheng guangming*, 大乘光明). When he attained this samādhi the faces of innumerable buddhas from the ten directions, all named Vajragarbha and filling all of space, appeared before him to seal his attainment.<sup>59</sup> Although this section of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* suggests that through this samādhi Vajragarbha attained direct realization of reality, and thus entered the stages of the bodhisattva path, the sutra itself is somewhat vague and does not link this samādhi with the attainment of a specific stage of the path.<sup>60</sup> The commentary on the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* attributed to Vasubandhu, the *Daśabhūmikaṣākyāyāna*, also translated by Bodhiruci in 508, is not much more specific. It only notes that the word "samādhi" indicates that Vajragarbha's attainment "is not in the realm measurable by thought" (*fei siliang jingjie*, 非思量境界).<sup>61</sup>

The first specific connection of the attainment of the samādhi of the radiance of the Mahāyāna with the stages of the path is found in Fazang's (法藏, 643–712) commentary on the *Huayen Sutra* (*Huayan jing*, 華嚴經).<sup>62</sup> There he connects the attainment of the radiance of the Mahāyāna, the first of the four great samādhis of the Mahāyāna, with the attainment of the first four stages of the path.<sup>63</sup> The alignment of these four great samādhis with the ten stages of bodhisattva practice is expanded and rearranged by Chengguan (澄觀, 738–839), the self-proclaimed fourth patriarch of the Huayan lineage.<sup>64</sup> Although the alignment of the radiance of the Mahāyāna and the other three samādhis with particular stages of the bodhisattva path may be innovations of the Huayan lineage, these alignments at least make explicit, I think, that the attainment of the radiance of the Mahāyāna is to be equated with the attainment of the bodhisattva path.

Aside from accumulating merit, receiving teachings, or obtaining rebirth in their pure lands, the importance of visualizing buddhas filling all of space may lie in the idea that, in preparing to enter the noble path (*āryamārga*), the practitioner meditates on a representation of that very reality that he or she expects to perceive directly in order to facilitate that direct perception. For the non-Mahāyānist this is normally a meditation on the four noble truths. After leading the meditator through a series of meditative exercises designed to help him develop proficiency in actualizing the different levels of meditative concentration (*dhyāna*; often referred to generally as *śamatha*) as well as proficiency in insight (*vipaśyanā*), the meditator is finally enjoined to meditate on the four noble truths. This is to prepare him for the actual direct perception of the reality of the four noble truths. This perception constitutes entry into the path of seeing (*darśana-mārga*) and the noble path.

Analogously, for those of the Ten Stages lineages, and those influenced by them in sixth-century northeastern China, meditating on the buddhas filling all of space may prepare the practitioner for the direct realization of the first stage of bodhisattva practice. Once attained the buddhas of the ten directions will then appear before you and seal your attainment.

After describing certain ritual and meditative preliminaries, the meditation of the buddhas filling all of space begins with the visualization of a single Buddha image mark by mark.<sup>65</sup> The practitioner may construct this visualization in reverse order, proceeding from the toes to the head, or in normal order, going from the head to the toes. For example,<sup>66</sup>

Those who are pleased to do the visualization in reverse should visualize from the toes of the image and proceed successively upwards. First visualize the toes. Fix your mind and make it focused, passing seven days having the toes of the Buddha as support. Whether your eyes are closed or your eyes are open make it so that you clearly and distinctly see the toes of the golden image. Then gradually, next, visualize the upper portions of both feet making it so that they are seen clearly and distinctly. Next visualize the leg<sup>67</sup> as that of the king of the deer. After the mind has become focused [on this], next proceed successively up to the *uṣṇīṣa*,<sup>68</sup> and from the *uṣṇīṣa* visualize the face.

Should this not be completely clear then again repent, redoubling your hard probing of yourself. When your precepts have become pure, you will see the face of the Buddha image clearly and distinctly distinguished like a likeness in a golden mirror.

After you have performed this visualization, visualize the fine hairs between the eyebrows as pearls of rock crystal curling to the right. When this mark has become manifest, you will see the Buddha's eyes and eyebrows as if they had been painted by a divine painter. After you have seen this thing, visualize the radiance of the forehead, making it distinct and totally clear.

The mass of marks done this way is called a "reverse visualization."

樂逆觀者從像足指次第仰觀初觀足指繫心令專緣佛足指經一七日閉目開目令了了見金像足指漸次復觀兩足趺上令了了見次觀鹿王蹠心既專已次第至髻從髻觀面若不明了復更懺悔培自苦策以戒淨故見佛像面如真金鏡了了分明作是觀已觀眉間毫如頗梨珠右旋宛轉此相現已見佛眉眼如天畫師之所畫作見是事已次觀頂光令分明了如是眾相名為逆觀

Since this passage summarizes the basic *process* to be used when visualizing these marks, few of the thirty-two major marks of the Buddha are actually

mentioned.<sup>69</sup> Two points in this passage are especially noteworthy. First, using the toes as an example, the passage emphasizes how each mark should be visualized and brought to clarity before proceeding to the next mark. Second, the passage points out a critical phase of the visualization when it gets to the visualization of the face. Should the face not be clear the text does not tell the practitioner to redouble his or her efforts at accomplishing the visualization. Rather the text instructs the practitioner to cease the visualization and undergo a period of repentance. This will purify the practitioner's karma sufficiently so that the visualization will then become clear and stable. This function of ritual repentance is a theme this text comes back to repeatedly. Although later practitioners of meditative visualization are not explicit on this point, this may also be one of the reasons why meditative visualization and repentance have had such a close relationship in China. I have been unable to find any comparably explicit linkage between repentance and meditative clarity in Indian Buddhist discussions of meditation.<sup>70</sup>

The text continues with a brief description of the visualization done in the normal order and then begins to describe the process of multiplying the Buddha image.<sup>71</sup>

After you have done it this way, to and fro, fourteen times, truly visualize a single image making it perfectly clear and distinct. When this visualization is entirely accomplished, whether coming out of meditation or entering into meditation, one will continually see the image standing before the practitioner. When you have seen one clearly and distinctly, then imagine two images. When you have finished seeing two images, next imagine three images, and so on until you get to imagining ten [images], making them all clear and distinct. After you have finished seeing ten images, imagine a whole room full of Buddha images so that no spaces or cracks are between them.

如是往返凡十四遍諦觀一像極令了了觀一成已出定入定恒見立像在行者前見一了了復想二像見二像已次想三像乃至想十皆令了了見十像已想一室內滿中佛像間無空缺

The text then describes another round of purification, vows, and ritual repentance, this time in much greater detail.<sup>72</sup>

After you have made the room full [of Buddha images], return again to zealously lighting incense and scattering flowers. Sweep the stūpa, plaster the earth, bathe the assembly of monks, and massage and provide physical relaxation<sup>73</sup> for your father, mother,

teacher, and elders. Wash your body, rubbing oil on your feet. Beg for food in the four directions and, the good and fine [food] that you obtain, proffer to your teacher and elders and divide and offer to your father and mother.

After you have performed these activities, make a great vow: "I am now visualizing the buddhas. With the merit from this may I not vow to be a human, god, *śrāvaka*, or *pratyekabuddha*. May I correctly desire to focus my quest on the buddhas' way of bodhi." After you have made this vow, if you truly and wholeheartedly quest for the Mahāyāna, you should perform repentance (*chanhui*). After you have performed repentance, next you should perform a request for the buddhas [to teach] (*qing fo*). After you have performed a request for the buddhas [to teach], next you should perform a rejoicing [in the merits of others] (*suixi*). After you have performed a rejoicing [in the merits of others], next you should perform a transference [of merit]. After you have performed a transference [of merit], next you should perform the making of vows.

After you have performed the making of vows, you should straighten your body, sit upright, fix your awareness in front of you, and visualize the buddhas as the meditational object,<sup>74</sup> making them gradually expand and become larger.

滿一室已復更精進燒香散華掃塔塗地澡浴眾僧為父母師長案摩調身洗浴身體上塗足油四方乞食得好美者先上師長分奉父母作是行已發大誓願我今觀佛以此功德不願人天聲聞緣覺正欲專求佛菩提道發是願已若實至心求大乘者當行懺悔行懺悔已次行請佛行請佛已次行隨喜行隨喜已次行迴向行迴向已次行發願行發願已正身端坐繫念在前觀佛境界令漸廣大

Here again we see one of the organizational features of this text and this visualization: the alternation of periods of meditational visualization with periods of purification and ritual repentance. Again two points in this passage are noteworthy. First, it outlines the ritual paradigm within which repentance takes place, the five-limbed *pūjā*. This is referred to slightly later in the text as the *wu fa* (五法), the five methods.<sup>75</sup> This is the earliest enumeration of the five-limbed *pūjā* that I have been able to locate thus far.

Second, we see here in a more explicit and developed form the triadic relationship among precepts and vows, repentance, and visualization (or visionary experience) first encountered in embryonic form in the *Ugradattapariprcchā* and later in more developed form in the *VV* and later *Triskandha* texts.<sup>76</sup> Nobuyoshi Yamabe has recently argued that repentance and visionary experience (if not visualization practice) were essential

components in the bestowal and maintenance of the bodhisattva vows, or precepts.<sup>77</sup> In brief, before you can receive the bodhisattva precepts, you must purify yourself through the performance of repentance rituals and receive signs (*hao xiang*, 好相) from the buddhas, in a vision or a dream, that this purification has been accomplished. When the buddhas appear to you they may even bestow the precepts upon you in this vision or dream. Your human master then either bestows upon you the bodhisattva precepts or simply testifies to your experience before a statue of the Buddha.<sup>78</sup>

In the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” and in the visualization practices we have been surveying here precepts, repentance, and visualization also form a unit, but the emphasis is on maintaining moral and mental purity in order to accomplish the goal of meditative visualization. We should not forget, however, that many of the monks in the Ten Stages lineages about whom we have information were deeply involved in the study of the vinaya. Also, in Lingyu’s biography, when Lingyu announced that he would soon pass away, people flocked to him to receive the precepts.<sup>79</sup>

The *Ocean Sutra* then proceeds at length to describe how the visualization of the buddhas is to be expanded and made larger. Beginning with a room full of buddhas, for example, the practitioner should expand the visualization to the size of a monastery, then by stages to an area covering one *yojana*,<sup>80</sup> one hundred yojanas, one Jambudvīpa (8,000 yojanas wide), the other continents of the world system—first Pūrvavideha in the east (8,060 yojanas wide), then Aparagodāniya in the west (8,900 yojanas), and finally Uttarakuru in the north (16,000 yojanas)—one hundred Jambudvīpas, one hundred *koṭis* of the four continents, and finally all of space in the ten directions. There should be no cracks or spaces anywhere in these visualizations and each and every Buddha image in all of these visualizations should clearly and distinctly display his thirty-two major and eighty minor marks.

The visualization of the buddhas of the ten directions is outlined in chapter 11, “Calling to Mind the Buddhas of the Ten Directions” (“Nian shifang fo,” 念十方佛).<sup>81</sup> This visualization provides us with the basic pattern for visualizing an array of buddhas. The basic pattern is laid out in the visualization of Bhadrāsri Buddha and his buddha land “Aśoka” in the east. This visualization illustrates the meditative visualization that corresponds to the fourth roster of buddhas in the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers.”<sup>82</sup>

The Buddha announced to Ānanda: “How does the practitioner visualize the buddhas of the ten directions? One who visualizes the buddhas of the ten directions begins with the eastern direction. In the east there is a world; the country is called ‘Jeweled Security and

Stability.<sup>83</sup> Immeasurable koṭis of jewels take on koṭis of thousands of forms, which are thereby used to form [the land].

“The Buddha is called Bhadraśrī, who both lets forth innumerable rays of light to illuminate everywhere hundreds and thousands of countries and, with innumerable koṭis of replicate bodies<sup>84</sup> and all of his transformation bodies,<sup>85</sup> sets himself in front of the practitioner. The color of his body is like a golden mountain, upright, solemn, and fully without comparison. He sits in a large diamond cave. The rays of innumerable varieties of jewels adorn and form halls and pavilions. In front of each and every hall and pavilion are hundreds of koṭis of jeweled trees as immeasurable as motes of dust. Below each and every jeweled tree are eighty-four thousand Lion Seats.<sup>86</sup> Each and every Lion Seat has a replicate body of the Buddha, seated cross-legged,<sup>87</sup> in samādhi seated below the jeweled tree. The body of Bhadraśrī Buddha is two hundred fifty koṭis of *nayutas* of yojanas long.<sup>88</sup> Each and every hair follicle on his body [shows] all the unsurpassable [thirty-two] major and [eighty] minor marks as innumerable as motes of dust. In each and every major and minor mark are innumerable transformation buddhas.

“Each and every transformation buddha’s height appears lofty and majestic, like Mt. Sumeru. [Each] lets forth a great radiant brightness, seated on a jeweled lotus flower set in empty space. Each of the replicate bodies of all the buddhas emits a subtle and wondrous radiant brightness that puts forth innumerable hundreds and thousands of transformation buddhas. Each and every transformation buddha sits on a jeweled lotus flower. Each and every lotus flower has one thousand pennants and tubular banners. Each and every pennant and tubular banner gives off hundreds of koṭis of subtle and wondrous sounds. [From] among all of these sounds are taught the visualization of the innumerable buddha-bodies of the ten directions.

“When these marks become manifest, one will see the realms of the ten directions as if they were diamonds. The color of the hundreds of koṭis of jewels will neither decrease nor increase. After one has seen these [thirty-two] marks, in front of all the buddhas, one will receive the Dharma at the princely throne. One in a realm such as this is named a bodhisattva of the *gotrabhūmi*.”<sup>89</sup>

佛告阿難云：何行者觀十方佛觀十方佛者東方為始東方有世界國名寶安隱無量億寶有億千色以用合成佛號善德亦放無數光普照百千國亦與無數億分身諸化佛住於行者前身色如金山端嚴無比坐大金剛窟無數雜寶光莊嚴為堂閣一堂閣前無量微塵數百億諸寶樹一一寶樹下八萬四千師子座

The meditator then visualizes the buddhas of the other nine directions proceeding from the southeast to the northeast and concluding with the zenith and nadir. Each of these nine sections builds on the visualization of Bhadraśrī and his land but alters or augments the basic description to indicate those features that are peculiar to each of the other nine lands.

Chapter 11 then concludes with a short section on how one should venerate, make offerings to, and be mindful of the Buddha(s) when one enters a pagoda, or stūpa, and venerates the Buddha image there.<sup>90</sup> Specifically it mentions that to venerate one buddha is to venerate all buddhas, a refrain often seen in the slightly later writings of the Huayan thinkers beginning with Zhiyan (智儼, 602–668). The passage also suggests briefly how to integrate the visualization of the buddhas of the ten directions with actual, and visualized, offerings of incense and flowers to the pagoda's Buddha image. Although here making offerings to and bowing before an image of the Buddha takes place in a ritual setting,<sup>91</sup> it may also provide an example of how to extend the visualization to more common settings. All of this suggests that the visualization of the buddhas of the ten directions is not just a visualization to be practiced during periods of formal, seated meditation.

## 5. RECITATION

When Lingyu passed away in 605 at the age of eighty-eight, Daoxuan recorded that that he did so while in the “meditative concentration of a verbally supported Buddha mindfulness” (*jīng lǐ kǒuyuan nianfo*, 靜慮口緣念佛). Whatever the content of Lingyu's meditation, Daoxuan indicates not only that it was accompanied by a recitation of some sort, but also that it was supported by this recitation. Since it was a *nianfo*, or Buddha mindfulness (*buddhānusmṛti*) meditation, we would expect that the meditation would have focused on a buddha or array(s) of buddhas together with a recitation of their names. This expectation is strengthened by our considerations above of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” repentance ritual and the visualization practices it employed. A Pure Land emphasis is also obvious in the long form of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” ritual preserved in Zhisheng's *Ji zhujiing lichanyī*. As with the abridged form of the ritual that precedes it, it was probably written by someone in the Ten Stages lineages, possibly even by Lingyu himself. Of course, *nianfo* practices involving the visualization of a buddha, particularly Amitābha or Maitreya, together with the recitation of his name are known from this period and slightly later. The visualization sutras, including the *Ocean Sutra*, however, are curiously silent about recitation being a component of Buddha visualization practice.

Evidence for recitation as a support for visualization practice does, however, appear in at least one Indian Buddhist meditation manual, the



*Visuddhimagga*. There the meditation used to instruct the practitioner in the development of the four *dhyānas* (Pāli *jhāna*) of form is the visualization of the earth disk, the earth *kaṣiṇa* meditation. As the meditator prepares to enter the first, second, third, and finally, the fourth *jhāna* he is enjoined prior to each stage to fix his attention not only on the image of the earth disk but also on a word for “earth” to provide support for his visualization.<sup>92</sup> While this hardly proves that visualization and recitation are always to be connected in this fashion, I think it suggests in a natural way a possible, even probable, wide-ranging correlation between the visualization of an image and the use of the name of the thing visualized as a linguistic support. In the case of the visualization of the bodily image of a buddha together with the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks, his name would function as the natural support for this visualization.

Despite the extreme paucity of studies of religious recitation, not only in Buddhism but also in religions generally, our brief remarks here can only point to the relevance and importance of recitation in certain forms of meditative practice. Unfortunately, we must leave this topic here, since the broader uses of recitation in religious and meditative practice would take us well beyond the scope of this study.

## 6. THE SOTERIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF MEDITATIVE VISUALIZATION AND VISIONARY REPENTANCE

Buddhānusmṛti (nianfo) initially appears in texts as a series of meditations on the epithets and qualities of the Buddha. From there it expanded into meditations on the acts of the Buddha and into visualizations of the bodily form of the Buddha, complete with his thirty-two major and eighty minor marks. Finally it expanded into the visualization of the buddhas of the ten directions filling all of space. In the earliest extant visualization text, the *Pratyutpannasamādhi-sūtra* translated into Chinese in 179 CE, the visualization of the Buddha(s) was primarily for the purpose of going into the presence of these buddhas, obtaining teachings appropriate to the practitioner (and the age in which s/he lived), and bringing these back into the human world in order to enlighten all beings. Such visualizations could also be used to obtain rebirth in the various buddha realms. Finally, although this was not as clearly articulated in the early visualization texts, by the early fifth century the visualization of the Buddha’s bodily form could also be used to attain a direct realization of the reality of the Buddha’s nature. The usual doctrinal justification in visualization texts in the early fifth century, including the *Ocean Sutra*, was to pay homage to the *Prajñāpāramitā* and to realize the ultimate emptiness of the Buddha’s form and marks. To see these as empty was to perceive directly the nature of the Buddha and thus to see all dharmas as empty.

Beginning with the *Jin'gang xian lun* (Vajrasī's (?) Commentary [on the *Vajracchedikā* (*Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*)]), purportedly a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Jin'gang bore boluomi jinglun* (Treatise on the Diamond Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom), translated by Bodhiruci in 535, a new element was introduced into the debate in China.<sup>93</sup> Although this work appears to have had little impact in India or Tibet, in the northeastern China of the sixth century it added important new elements to the Yogācāra debate and to meditative practice. In an effort to explain both the *Vajracchedika's*, or *Diamond Sutra's*, denial that the Buddha can be known through his major and minor marks as well as the efficacy of knowing the Buddha through those very marks, the commentary introduced the concept of the "two kinds of *dharmakāya*" (*erzhong fashen*, 二種法身). Here the "dharmakāya of the dharma-nature" (*faxing fashen*, 法性法身; Skt. *dharmatādharma-kāya*) was distinguished from the "dharmakāya of expediency" (*fangbian fashen*, 方便法身; Skt. *upāyadharmakāya*). The dharmakāya of the dharma-nature is the dharmakāya in its ultimate nature.<sup>94</sup> The dharmakāya of expediency is the dharmakāya that responds to activities and includes both the *sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*. What is noteworthy for our discussion is that this idea linked the Buddha's major and minor marks—features of the dharmakāya of expediency—intimately to the dharmakāya of the dharma-nature. Meditative visualization of the Buddha's form with his marks is at once a gateway to and a meditation on the ultimate nature of the dharmakāya.

To see the Buddha merely through the visualization of his major and minor marks is, however, denied. The *cakravartin*, the world monarch of Indian political ideology, also displays these marks. On the other hand, to see these marks as empty and as the natural expression of the dharmakāya of dharma-nature, i.e., as representations of the dharmakāya of expediency, is to see them in their true context. Seen in their true context, the meditative visualization of the Buddha with his major and minor marks can be efficacious.

An index of how this concept of the twofold dharmakāya was received and how it was used to explain the efficacy of Buddha visualization may be seen in Tanluan's commentary (*zhu*, 註) to the \**Sukhāvativyūhupadeśa* (*Wuliangshou jing youpotishe yuan sheng jie*, 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈), the *Verses on the Vows for Rebirth: An Upadeśa on the Amitāyus-sūtra*.<sup>95</sup> First, Tanluan introduced the distinction between the dharmakāya of dharma-nature and the dharmakāya of expediency in a straightforward, matter of fact way, as if it were already common knowledge.<sup>96</sup> He then states that "the dharmakāya of dharma-nature produces (*sheng*, 生) the dharmakāya of expediency; the dharmakāya of expediency expresses (*chu*, 出) the dharmakāya of dharma-nature," and argues that "while different they are indivisible, one yet cannot be made the same" (*yi er buke fen yi er buke tong*, 異而不可分一而不可同). Elsewhere this idea of the inseparability and interfusion of the two types

of dharmakāya is used to inform his discussion of the meditation on the major and minor marks.<sup>97</sup> Quoting and commenting on a passage from the *Guan Wuliang shou fo jing* on why one should imagine the buddhas (*xiangfo*, 想佛), i.e., visualize them,<sup>98</sup> Tanluan explains:<sup>99</sup>

When the mind imagines the Buddha, this mind is just the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks of form. Just when the minds of sentient beings imagine the Buddha, the major and minor marks of the Buddha's body appear and manifest in the minds of sentient beings. It is as when the water is clear, the form of the image is manifest; the water and the image are neither the same nor different. Therefore it is said that the body of the Buddha with its major and minor marks is just this mind imagining [them].

"This mind makes buddhas" means that the mind is able to make buddhas. This mind is the Buddha. Outside of the mind there is no Buddha. It is like fire that comes out from the wood but the fire cannot be separated from the wood. Since it cannot be separated from the wood, it is able to burn the wood. Wood becomes fire which burns the wood which just becomes fire.

心想佛時是心即是三十二相八十隨形好者當眾生心想佛時佛身相好顯現眾生心中也譬如水清則色像現水之與像不一不異故言佛相好身即是心想也是心作佛者言心能作佛也是心是佛者心外無佛也譬如火從木出火不得離木也以不離木故則能燒木木為火燒木即為火也

The mind of the meditator, the bodily form of the Buddha with his major and minor marks (the dharmakāya of expediency), and the ultimate nature of the Buddha (the dharmakāya of the dharma-nature) are inseparable but not the same. The key is for the practitioner is to see that—following the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts—the marks, as all dharmas, are empty and at the same time—according to the *Yogācāra*—a natural and intrinsic expression of the Buddha's ultimate nature, which are meditatively efficacious.

A similar formulation, but with quite different roots, emerged in the doctrinal, ritual, and meditative syntheses of Zhiyi in the late sixth century in southeastern China around Jiankang (建康), modern Nanjing. First, Southern Chinese debates since the early fifth century were concerned, initially, with buddha-nature (*fo xing*, 佛性) and whether all beings could attain liberation, and later, with paradigms that explored the relationship of buddha-nature to sentient, especially human, beings. This was, in effect, the Chinese Buddhist version of the perennial Chinese debate over human nature (*ren xing*, 人性) whose parameters had been laid out initially by Mengzi (孟子, late fourth century BCE) and Xunzi (荀子, third century BCE). Second were a series of triadic structurings of Buddhist formulations

of the two truths, the ultimate and the conventional, from the mid-fifth through the sixth centuries, influenced in complex ways by Chengshi (成實) scholasticism and debates.<sup>100</sup> Zhiyi wedded these to a Sanlun (三論), or Chinese Madhyamaka, formulation of emptiness and the practice of the meditative visualizations of buddhas and bodhisattvas inherited from his teacher Huisi. These are expressed most succinctly in Zhiyi's formulations of the three truths (*san di*, 三諦) and the three contemplations (*san guan*, 三觀).<sup>101</sup> Both are organized around the structure: conventional existence (*jia*, 假, or *jiaming*, 假名), the emptiness (or ultimate reality; *kong*, 空) of conventional existence, and the middle way (*zhongdao*, 中道), which is the complete integration and interfusion of the first two. The three contemplations proceed from conventional existence to the realization of its emptiness, to a reexamination of conventional existence from the standpoint of emptiness, and finally to the realization of their total fusion, interpenetration, and mutual inclusion. The realization of the middle way is the perfect realization of buddha-nature.<sup>102</sup>

The similarities here with the meditative model that we have outlined for Tanluan and, by extension, the Ten Stages lineage of Lingyu are obvious. It is usually regarded that Zhiyi made little explicit use of Yogācāra doctrine and texts, yet the results of his synthesis are strikingly similar. Let us put his formulations of the three truths and three contemplations into the context of meditative visualization. We begin with the visualization of the Buddha's form together with the major and minor marks as we might perform it in the context of the fourfold samādhi system. We then endeavor to perceive this form as empty. To use another of Zhiyi's formulations we move from the realm of phenomenon (*shi*, 事) to the realm of principle (*li*, 理). To the extent that our perception of emptiness negates the phenomenal form of the Buddha, his form, and marks, indeed, all appearances, this realization of the emptiness of the Buddha's body is still biased. We need to perceive emptiness in the form and marks of the Buddha (and in the appearance of the conventional world) without abolishing them. When these two aspects have been brought into balance and seen as mutually inclusive, our perception of the truth is no longer biased and we see the highest truth of the middle way. In other words we now have an unhindered perception of the buddha-nature as it exists in itself.

We started with the text of a repentance ritual inscribed in 589 on the wall outside of Lingyu's cave temple on Mt. Bao. By linking this up with other scriptural and ritual texts that would have been known to Lingyu, and by looking at the context of short instructional texts related to this specific ritual, we have argued that this ritual of repentance inscribed at Mt. Bao most likely took place within the context, not only of ritual recitation, but also of meditative visualization. We then explored what the roots and the contours of such meditative visualizations may have looked

like. By also introducing certain doctrinal innovations, notably the concept of the twofold dharmakāya that entered northeastern China in the early sixth century, we were able to argue that this provided a certain doctrinal justification, if not legitimacy, for the use of meditative visualization as a soteriologically sufficient meditative praxis. Such, at least, are the broad outlines of the situation.

Our final consideration in this section addresses what Lingyu and some of his contemporaries regarded as the goal of the repentance rituals they performed. On the surface rituals of karmic repentance would not appear to be problematic. They eliminate the future undesirable karmic results of one's past and present bad actions. The elimination of bad karma has no real direct impact on furthering one's progress along the path of spiritual development (*mārga*). Eliminating bad karma, however, could have an indirect impact by allowing one to obtain a favorable rebirth. In such a rebirth one would have better opportunities to practice the teachings of the buddhas and advance spiritually. To directly affect one's progress along the path of spiritual progress, the practitioner had to eliminate the *kleśas*, or defilements. In this view *kleśas* cannot be eliminated through rites of karmic repentance; they must be removed through meditation, or, more accurately, meditative realization.<sup>103</sup>

It is thus of more than passing interest then that two eminent members of the Ten Stages lineage, from different branches of the lineage, composed repentance prayers in which they stated that karmic repentance eliminated *kleśas*. Both of the monks were members of the South of the Road school descended from the Ratnamati and Buddha/bhadra lineage through Huiguang. The first prayer is by Lingyu. Tanqian,<sup>104</sup> the author of our second prayer, was the student of Tanzun (曇遵, 492–576),<sup>105</sup> one of the ten great disciples of Huiguang.

Daoshi (d. 668), who included both prayers in chapter 86, "The Chapter on Repentance" ("Chanhui pian," 懺悔篇) in his encyclopedia of Buddhism, the *Fayuan zhulin*, recommended that these prayers be used as substitutes for those prayers found in the translations of Indian rituals and liturgies. Daoshi regarded the Indian repentance prayers as prolix and disorganized and he feared that the repentance that they provided might not be comprehensive. The prayers by Lingyu and Tanqian, both based ultimately on the *Daśabhūmikaśāstra*, by contrast for Daoshi were concise, comprehensive, and unsurpassed among all of the repentance prayers then available.<sup>106</sup>

Lingyu's prayer is in verse. It is not clear whether this prayer was meant to substitute for the repentance prayer found in the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" inscription on the wall outside of his cave temple, and, if so, under what conditions. The title suggests, however, that they may have been used as supplemental verses for recitation. Also,

although entitled “Gāthās for a Generalized Repentance Prayer on the Ten Unvirtuous [Actions]” (“Zong chan shi’e jie wen,” 總懺十惡偈文), no mention is made in the verses of these ten unvirtuous actions. The relevant passage on kleśa is found at the end of Lingyu’s *gāthā*.<sup>107</sup>

All the buddhas, at that time,  
 Are all entirely unable to save [me];  
 They can only remove what I myself confess;  
 The errors and faults I have committed.  
 Responding to the mind of the buddhas and bodhisattvas,  
 According with the originally pure nature,  
 The opacity [existent] since beginningless time  
 From this, gradually becomes slight and tenuous.  
 Therefore, taking to heart my shame and regret,  
 With profound mind I repent all offenses.  
 I pray the buddhas to let forth the radiance of their compassion,  
 And shine it on suffering sentient beings,  
 [So that] the accumulations of kleśas that there are  
 All be entirely dissipated and eliminated.

諸佛於爾時	皆悉不能救
唯除子發露	所造諸愆咎
應佛菩薩心	隨順本淨性
無始時無明	自此漸微薄
是故懷慚愧	深心海諸罪
願佛放慈光	照及苦眾生
所有煩惱聚	皆令悉消滅

Tanqian’s prayer is actually organized around the ten unvirtuous actions and in structure and content is reminiscent of the repentance prayer in the “Buddha Names of the Seven Registers” at Mt. Bao and in the VV. The prayer is divided into a repentance prayer proper at the beginning and a short section on vows at the end, a format standard for medieval Chinese repentance prayers. It is followed by four couplets in five-character verse. Although Daoshi gives us no indication of whether or not this prayer and its concluding verses were to be recited within a “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” format in which rosters of buddhas’ names are also recited, the structural similarity of this prayer and its verses to the Mt. Bao inscription are suggestive. The relevant section occurs at the end of the repentance prayer proper.<sup>108</sup>

From beginningless time the ten unvirtuous actions are all produced from kleśas and wrong views. Now, as a result of relying

on the power of the correct view of buddha-nature, I profess my repentance. May all these be removed and annihilated. It is like a bright pearl thrown into turbid water; through the awesome virtue of the pearl the water immediately becomes settled and clear. The awesome power of the buddha-nature is also like this. Throw it into the turbid water of the kleśas, the five heinous sins, and the four pārājikas of sentient beings, and it immediately becomes settled and clear.

無始已來十不善業皆從煩惱邪見而生令依佛性正見力故發露懺悔皆得 除滅譬如明珠投之濁水以珠威德水即澄清佛性威德亦如是投諸眾生四重五逆煩惱濁水即澄清

The goal of the repentance ritual in both of these repentance prayers is not just to remove undesirable karma, but kleśas as well. Repentance rituals and liturgies are consequently regarded as soteriologically sufficient for the attainment of buddhahood. A phrase used in southeastern Chinese repentance liturgies of the same period expressed this succinctly, *miezui chengfo* (滅罪成佛), “Attain buddhahood by annihilating one’s offenses.”<sup>109</sup> If this is a correct reading of the dynamics of repentance rituals understood at that time, the ability to attain the ultimate goal of Buddhism through the performance of simple rituals of repentance must have contributed significantly to their popularity.

Zhiyi in the south attempted to sort this out in his monumental treatise on meditation, the *Mohe zhiguan* (摩訶止觀), originally delivered as a series of lectures in the early 590s, by distinguishing between *shichan* (事懺), phenomenal repentance, and *lichan* (理懺), repentance at the level of principle.<sup>110</sup>

Phenomenal repentance repents the path of suffering and the path of karma. Repentance at the level of principle repents the path of kleśa. The text says, “Should one commit a breach of the precepts, from those for novices up to those for full *bhikṣus*, one must abide by this to be brought back to life.” This is just the passage that refers to repenting the path of karma. “The sense organs, eye, ear, etc., are clean and pure.” This is just the passage that refers to repenting the path of suffering. “On the seventh day one will see the buddhas of the ten directions, hear their Dharma, and obtain the stage of non-retrogression.” This is just the passage that refers to repenting the path of kleśas.

事懺懺苦道業道理懺懺煩惱道文云『犯沙彌戒及大比丘戒若不還生無有是處』即懺業道文也『眼耳諸根清淨』即懺苦道文也『第七日見十方佛聞法得不退轉』即懺煩惱道文也

For Zhiyi this is also the distinction between ritual repentance and meditation. For Zhiyi meditation is largely the meditative visualization of the buddhas performed within the context of the five-limbed *pūjā*, the *wuhui* (五悔), or fivefold repentance, that became standard for the Tiantai tradition. Importantly, the overarching paradigm is one of repentance, no matter whether it is a matter of ritual repentance or meditative visualization.

It is useful in this context to note Zhiyi's view of the efficacy of ritual repentance and meditation. In section 5, at the end of his *Fahua sanmei xingfa* (法華三昧行法), *Procedure for Performing the Lotus Samādhi*,<sup>111</sup> Zhiyi discussed those signs that confirmed the successful practice of this ritual. He distinguished three classes of practitioners, those with inferior, intermediate, and superior karmic endowments.<sup>112</sup> Within each class he further distinguished three grades, those of the lowest, middling, and highest order. At the lowest of these nine orders the practitioner may experience such things as numinous anomalies, good dreams, or a sharpening of the senses.<sup>113</sup> The practitioner of the highest of the nine orders, however,<sup>114</sup>

while engaged in walking, sitting, or reciting, [may] feel his body and mind suddenly become pure, whereupon he enters deep dhyāna absorption. Enlightened insight distinguishes [all things] clearly, [and yet] his mind experiences no fluctuation. Immersed in such a condition of dhyāna absorption he sees the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy [Samantabhadra], the World-Honored [Buddhas] Śākyamuni and Many Jewels [Prabhātaratna], and their manifestation bodies, as well as the buddhas of the ten directions. He acquires unimpeded great *dhāraṇī*, realizes purification of the six senses, [acquires the power to] universally manifest bodies of form [throughout the universe], opens forth the wisdom/views of a buddha, and enters the ranks of bodhisattvahood, all as is expounded at length in the *Sutra on the Visualization of Universal Worthy*.<sup>115</sup>

In other words, by Zhiyi's own testimony, through the performance of a cycle of ritual repentance and its accompanying meditative visualization(s), a practitioner may be able to attain direct perception of reality and be able to enter the bodhisattva path.

Zhiyi's distinction between *shichan* and *lichan* is also the tack that Daoshi adopted in the "Chapter on Repentance" to interpret different approaches to repentance.<sup>116</sup> His colleague Daoxuan also used this distinction to organize his discussion of repentance, albeit largely within the context of the *vinaya*.<sup>117</sup> Daoxuan also ranked these two types of repentance in terms of the capacities of the practitioners: the practice of



phenomenal repentance was for those who were “foolish and stupid” (*yudun*, 愚鈍), the practice of repentance at the level of principle was for those of “keen faculties” (*ligen*, 利根).<sup>118</sup>

It is not at all clear, however, that this distinction between *shichan* and *lichan* is one that *Lingyu* and *Tanqian*, and perhaps their colleagues, would have known, although it may have been one that they might have appreciated. The coordination of *shichan* and *lichan* with practitioners of dull and keen faculties was probably also unknown to them, and, equally probably, might have been a distinction they (and *Zhiyi*) may not have appreciated. For them, and for the elite southern liturgical tradition that *Zhiyi* would have been familiar with, repentance removed both karma and *kleśa* and was a soteriologically efficacious technique. Coupled with the traditional soteriological techniques of meditation, especially meditative visualization, these repentance techniques must have seemed to their practitioners to have been quite formidable. Judging by the testimony of *Daoshi* and *Daoxuan*, as well as the *Tiantai* tradition, *Zhiyi*’s resolution of the proper function of ritual repentance and meditation was generally accepted by the mid- to late seventh century.

#### 7. SUMMARIES OF RATNAMATI’S “METHOD FOR VENERATING THE BUDDHAS” (“LIFO FA,” 禮佛法)

A noticeable anomaly in the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” is that there are never just seven registers. There are no known exceptions to this. Even the earliest form of the ritual inscribed at Mt. Bao has (at least) eight registers. Our suspicions should be further aroused by the use of the word *jie* (階), translated as “register” in the title of this ritual. It does not mean a (vertical) “register,” “roster,” or “array.” Rather it means a (horizontal) “step,” “stage,” or “level.” Although it is true that *Zhisheng*’s *Ji zhujing lichanyu* and a number of Dunhuang manuscripts include a short phrase that indicates that the “previous seven [*sic*] registers are presented in sequence based on the text of the *Sutra of the King of Healing and Supreme Healer*” (*yishang qijie yi Yaowang Yaoshang jing wen cidi*, 已上七階依藥王藥上經文次第),<sup>119</sup> it is not clear who may have added this phrase or when. It is possible that this phrase was not original to this ritual. If it were not original to this ritual—this is, after all, only a modest proposal—there may be other plausible interpretations of the term *jie*. This issue has, in fact, already been broached, first by *Yabuki Keiki* in 1927 and most recently by *Hirokawa Gyōbin* in his 1982 study of the Dunhuang manuscripts of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers.” Since both assumed that the ritual complex as a whole was the creation of the Three Stages school, they interpreted the phrase “seven registers” to refer to the “seven teachings”

(*qifa*, 七法) found in Xinxing's *Duigen qi xingfa* (對根起行法), *The Practice that Arises in Accord with Capacity*.<sup>120</sup> The seven are: (1) I take refuge in the buddhas completely, (2) I take refuge in the Dharma completely, (3) I take refuge in the sangha completely, (4) I shall save all sentient beings completely, (5) I shall cut off all evils completely, (6) I shall cultivate all good completely, and (7) I shall seek out all good friends completely.

What I am modestly proposing here is that, since the ritual known as the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" probably originated within the Ten Stages lineages, the phrase "seven registers" may originally have referred to something else entirely, namely to a seven-stage program of practice introduced into China by Ratnamati. If so, the reconstructed title of the ritual (略禮七[階佛名]懺悔等文), inscribed at Mt. Bao, might then be read "The Abridged Text of the Repentance for Venerating the Buddhas and Their Names in Seven Stages" rather than "The Text of the Abridged Repentance for Reverencing [the Buddha Names] of the Seven [Registers]." Since the original text presented by Ratnamati was regarded by late sixth- and early seventh-century monks as prolix and disorganized, it was summarized by his disciples. Three different versions of this summary are extant. Two, by Daoshi and his colleague Daoxuan, are quite similar.<sup>121</sup> The categories, organization, and perhaps half of the language in each are identical. The third, by the Huayan monk Zhiyan,<sup>122</sup> employs quite different language but has the same basic organization and is clearly related to the versions presented by Daoshi and Daoxuan (see table 1). All three texts list a program in seven steps or stages (a recognized meaning of *jie*). In all three texts the practitioner attains a direct perception of reality and irrevocably enters the path at the fourth stage.

In both Daoshi's and Daoxuan's versions the practices of the third stage, which are to prepare the practitioner and guide him to the perception of the fourth stage, are specified in a general way. Daoshi's version runs,<sup>123</sup>

The third is "veneration in which body and mind are respected and revered." In hearing or intoning the name[s] of the Buddha[s], you are immediately mindful of the Buddha's body as if he were right before your eyes, major and minor [marks] complete, fully adorned and radiantly effulgent. [All] mental characteristics are accomplished. Deeply moved (*gan*), you face the body of the Buddha. As his hand strokes the top of your head, [you say,] "May you remove my karmic offenses." Therefore, in form and mind you are respectful and reverent and are without any other thoughts. Your offerings are respectful and reverent yet psychologically you feel it is not enough. In your mind you imagine [the buddhas] appearing before you. You focus and fix [your mind on them] dispassionately, so that they might guide and benefit men and

Table 1  
Sevenfold Method of [Buddha] Veneration

	Zhiyan's "Regulated Model for Venerating the Buddhas" <sup>a</sup>	Daoxuan's "Sevenfold Method of [Buddha] Veneration" <sup>b</sup>	Daoshi's "Sevenfold Method of [Buddha] Veneration" <sup>c</sup>
1	Veneration that Accomplishes a Transgression	Veneration that Is Egotistical and Proud	Veneration in Which One's Mind Is Egotistical, Proud, and Arrogant
2	Apparent Veneration	Veneration in Which One Chants in Harmony	Veneration in Which One Chants in Harmony and Seeks Fame
3	Veneration that Reverences Virtue	Veneration in Which Body and Mind Are Respected and Revered	Veneration in Which Body and Mind Are Respected and Revered
4	Veneration that Annihilates Transgressions	Veneration of the Buddhas in Which Wisdom and Purity Burst Forth and One Attains a [True] Understanding of the Buddha Realm	Veneration in Which Wisdom and Purity Burst Forth
5	Veneration that Transfers Merit to Sentient Beings	Veneration that Is a Revering and Offering and in Which One Clearly and Universally Enters the Dharmadhātu	Veneration in Which One Universally Enters the Dharmadhātu
6	Veneration that Transfers Merit to Bodhi	Veneration of One's Own Body as the Buddha in Which One Clearly and Correctly Contemplates	Veneration in Which One Correctly Contemplates and Cultivates Sincerity
7	Veneration that Transfers Merit to the Limits of Reality	Veneration in Which One Clearly [Understands] the Impartiality of the True Characteristic, the Three Jewels, and the Self and Other	Veneration of the Impartiality of the True Characteristic

a. *Huayan jingnei zhangmen deng za kongmu zhang* (Taishō, vol. 45, no. 1870, p. 540b–c).

b. *Shihmen Guijingyi* (Taishō, vol. 45, no. 1896, p. 865a–c).

c. *Fayuan zhulin, juan 20* (Taishō, vol. 53, no. 2122, pp. 435a–436a).

gods to act in the highest, to act the best. Although the merit is great, it is still not yet that this is wisdom. Afterwards many fall back and perish. This is named the “veneration of body and mind.”

第三身心恭敬禮者開唱佛名便念佛身如在目前相好具足莊嚴晃曜心相成就感對佛身手摩其頂除我罪業是以形心恭敬無有異念供養恭敬情無厭足心想現前傳注無味導利人天為上為最功德雖大猶未是智後多退沒是名身心禮也

This passage is important in at least two respects. First, we again see repentance and meditation united in the visualization of the buddhas. But the practice is not stable. The practitioner can backslide. What you need to do is advance further and perceive reality directly. The practices needed to accomplish this, however, are those of the third stage. While Zhiyan’s version is not as explicit about the practices involved, based on our discussion so far we can, I think, glimpse their general outlines in his summary. In Zhiyan’s version the third stage is as follows:<sup>124</sup>

Third is the “veneration that reveres the qualities.”<sup>125</sup> You revere uppermost the characteristics (*xiang*) of the Tathāgata’s immeasurable qualities (*gongde*), which are like a mountain of gold, and obtain a compliance that accords with the real. This is called “veneration that reveres the qualities.”

三敬德禮敬上如來無量功德相如金山得順如實名敬德禮

The title of the Zhiyan’s fourth stage is *mieguoli* (滅過禮), the “veneration that annihilates transgressions.” Since the practitioner attains true realization of the path at this fourth stage, these transgressions are destroyed through the power of meditative realization, not rites of repentance. Yet together with the suggestion of some sort of visualization practice at the third stage, the title of the fourth stage indicates that some sort of repentance practice may well have accompanied the visualization practice employed at the third stage.<sup>126</sup> Given the testimony of Daoshi’s and Daoxuan’s version and the likelihood that Zhiyan received this text through the Lingyu lineage to which he was heir, it is not unreasonable to infer that the practice performed at Zhiyan’s third stage, in fact, may have involved repentance and meditation united in the visualization of the buddhas seen in Daoshi’s version.

Second, these three summaries firmly establish that meditative visualization and visionary repentance were an essential part of Ratnamati’s program of practice. As such it is highly likely that these practices formed an important part of his Chinese disciples’ training and

that repentance rites, meditative visualization, and visionary repentance were a key part of Ten Stages' practice from the beginning. That Daoshi, Daoxuan, and Zhiyan likely obtained their versions of these texts from monks in the Ten Stages school, or from monks who traced themselves back to this school, indicates also that some form of these techniques were probably still being handed down within the Ten Stages school through the mid-seventh century.

Ratnamati's program may have made more extensive use of repentance rites than we have already indicated. After the practitioner enters the path at the fourth stage, his realization stabilizes in the fifth stage and he sees that he has never been apart from the *dharmadhātu* (*fajie*, 法界), that he is not inside nor outside of the buddhas nor are they inside or outside of him, and that he and each of the buddhas is all encompassing. He sees that the buddha-nature, his own nature, is equally everywhere (*pingdeng*, 平等) and neither increases nor decreases. At the sixth stage the practitioner realizes that his body, his essence, is no different than the buddhas'.

The seventh stage is largely the same as the sixth, yet there is still a lingering sense of duality that must be eliminated. According to Daoshi's and Daoxuan's versions, "there still persists, in your veneration and in your visualization, [the concept] that self and other are both different" (*you cun you li you guan zita wuyi*, 猶存有禮有觀自他兩異).<sup>127</sup> Daoshi's version expanding on this says, "When you see the Buddha, he can be honored, can be revered; just when you see ordinary people, they can be despised, can be treated disrespectfully" (*ruo jian fo kezun kejing ji jian fan kebei keman*, 若見佛可尊可敬即見梵可卑可慢).<sup>128</sup> These passages appear to be speaking to the general problem in the Mahāyāna of eliminating the last lingering traces of dualism from your meditation, of viewing yourself as in some sense different than the object of your meditation. Since these passages tell us that at this stage there is still veneration and visualization of the buddhas, they suggest that not only the last, lingering traces of a devotional, meditative visualization of the buddhas that hesitates to erase the final boundary between the practitioner and the buddhas, but also the last traces of the view, inculcated through repeated repentance, that the practitioner and the common man are sinful.

## CONCLUSION

This article has investigated a specific case of ritual and meditative practice in late sixth-century northeastern China. In particular it has argued for a reconstruction of ritual repentance and meditation united around the meditative visualization of the buddhas and bodhisattvas as an important set of practices used within the Ten Stages lineages/school. Such a recon-

struction coordinates well with the Ten Stages recognized emphasis on vinaya and serves to dispel the assumption that the school was primarily philosophical in nature with no significant spiritual practice.

Our investigation has also highlighted a number of areas that need further study. First, the repentance ritual "The Buddha Names in Seven Registers" probably originated within the Ten Stages school. The contemporary Three Stages school version of this ritual was an adaptation of this ritual. How the Ten Stages form of this ritual became so totally identified with the Three Stages school by the early eighth-century that its Ten Stages origins were lost will require further study. Second, the parallels (and differences) between the ritual and meditative scheme of the Ten Stages school and the ritual and meditative practices of the Tiantai school, a significant portion of which derive from this same northeastern area, suggest to this author a deeper regional concern with these sorts of Buddha devotional practices. If so, it may help to explain, for example, why five of the six meditative traditions Daoxuan identified as operating in late sixth-century China, and which Jinhua Chen has recently investigated, were in Daoxuan's account, largely in accord.<sup>129</sup> Our investigation also indicates a possible method for isolating such regions of practice and communities of practice: begin by trying to triangulate persons, ritual, and meditative practices, and, where possible, archeological sites in order to try and characterize discourse communities, communities of practice, and discourses of practice. If it were then possible to begin to characterize larger, regional varieties of practice, this in turn might shed new light on the various recognized Buddhist "schools" in these areas and, in particular, on their varieties of doctrinal discourse. This is obviously a huge undertaking, but this article suggests that it may be possible.

Third, by reinserting specific practices of meditative visualization into a "mainstream" Chinese Mahāyāna school, this article suggests in a concrete way how mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhist meditative visualization may have looked and operated. As in the previous point, by turning our perspective around, we may be in a better position to appreciate contemporary Pure Land applications, and later tantric elaborations, of these techniques.

## NOTES

1. I.e., the area surrounding the modern city of Nanjing (南京) and extending south and southeast, the so-called Jiangnan (江南) region. The Japanese scholarship on early Tiantai (Jpn. Tendai) meditative practices is enormous. For general surveys of the meditative corpus see, for example, Sekiguchi Shindai, *Tendai shōshikan no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1954); and Ikeda Rosen, *Maka shikan kenkyū josetsu* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1986). A useful treatment of the specific meditation manuals compiled by Zhiyi is Sekiguchi Shindai, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969). The only treatment in English of the Tiantai corpus of meditative visualization practices, especially those organized under the rubric of the fourfold samādhi (*sizhong sanmei*, 四種三昧) system, is by Daniel Stevenson, “The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T’ien-t’ai Buddhism,” in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Peter N. Gregory, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 4 (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1986), pp. 45–97; and “The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samadhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, and Early T’ang Buddhist Devotionalism” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1987). For a discussion of Zhiyi’s great meditative manual, the *Mohe zhiguan* (摩訶止觀), together with a translation of its first, synoptic chapter, see Neal Donner and Daniel Stevenson, ed. and trans., *The Great Calming and Contemplation: A Study and Annotated Translation of the First Chapter of Chih-i’s Mo-ho chih-kuan*, Kuroda Institute, Classics in East Asian Buddhism (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993). The *Mohe zhiguan* is being completely translated into English by Paul Swanson; for his annotated translation of the first six fascicles (*juan*, 卷), roughly 40 percent of the whole text, together with substantial quotations from Zhiyi’s earlier meditation manuals and a dictionary of Tiantai terminology, see Paul Swanson, trans., *The Great Cessation-and-Contemplation (Mo-ho chih-kuan)* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 2004), CD-ROM. Much of Swanson’s material is online: <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/staff/staff.htm>. Among the other writings on meditation attributed to Zhiyi two meditation manuals stand out: the *Shichan boluomi cidī famen* (釋禪波羅蜜次第法門; *Taishō*, vol. 46, no. 1916), known in the literature by a variety of names but commonly referred to as the *Cidī chanmen* and the *Xiuxi zhiguan zuochan fayao* (修習止觀坐禪法要) (*Taishō*, vol. 46, no. 1916), commonly known as the *Xiao zhiguan* (小止觀), or *Small Śamatha-Vipaśyanā*. In contrast to the *Mohe zhiguan*, which describes the “perfect and sudden” (*yuandun*, 圓頓) approach to meditation, the *Cidī chanmen* outlines the gradual approach. Although virtually unstudied by Western scholars, significant portions of this manual are quoted in the notes to Swanson’s translation of the *Mohe zhiguan*. Perhaps because of its

brevity and generality the *Xiao zhiguan* has been the most accessible of the Tiantai meditation manuals outside of the Tiantai tradition. On the *Xiao zhiguan* see Sekiguchi, *Tendai shōshikan no kenkyū*. It has been translated into English at least five times: the concise, but incomplete, translation of Kakuso Okakura, "On the Method of Practising Concentration and Contemplation," *Harvard Theological Review* 16, no. 2 (April 1923): pp. 109–141; the incomplete translation in Swanson, *The Great Cessation-and-Contemplation*; and complete translations by Dwight Goddard and Bhikshu Wai-tao, "The Practice of Dhyana for Beginners," in *A Buddhist Bible*, ed. Dwight Goddard, 2nd ed., revised and enlarged (Thetford, VT: E. P. Dutton, 1938; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), pp. 437–496; Lu K'uan Yü (Charles Luk), "Śamatha-Vipaśyanā for Beginners (T'ung meng chih kuan)," in *Secrets of Chinese Meditation*, ed. Lu K'uan Yü (London: Rider & Company, 1964), pp. 111–156; and Michael Saso, *Zen Is for Everyone: The Xiao Zhi Guan Text by Zhi Yi* (Carmel, CA: New Life Center; Honolulu: Tendai Institute; distributed by University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).

2. See Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi," pp. 50–51. Here northeastern China for our purposes includes the Yellow River watershed east of Luoyang and the area northeast of Luoyang and east of the Taihang mountain range.

3. Jinhua Chen provides a study of late sixth- and early seventh-century Buddhist meditative traditions from the vantage point of Daoxuan's essay, the "Xichan lun" (習禪論), or "Critical Discussion on the Practice of Meditation" appended to the fifth section (of six) of his biographies of monks characterized as meditators (*xichan*) in his *Xu Gaoseng zhuang* (續高僧傳, XGSZ, *Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, pp. 595c.26–597b.23). See, Julia Chen, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship: Tanqian in Sui Buddhism and Politics*, Italian School of East Asian Studies, Essays, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 2002). The translation and much of his discussion of this essay are also included in Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*, pp. 149–179.

4. See K. R. Norman, "Death and the Tathāgata," in *Bukkyō bunkagaku ronshū: Maeda Egaku hakushi shōju kinen*, compiled by the Maeda Egaku hakushi shōju kinenkai (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1991), pp. 1–11.

5. Two good recent studies of relics in Buddhism are by John Strong, *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); and David Germano and Kevin Trainor, eds., *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004).

6. The rise of the visual and its implications for Buddhist culture, doctrine, and practice has recently been studied by David McMahan, *Empty Vision: Metaphor and Visionary Imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).



7. *Daoxing Boruojing* (道行般若經), ch. 10 (*Taishō*, vol. 8, no. 224, p. 476b.17–22). The eight similes of the Buddha's voice and body are as: (1) a lute, (2) a pipe, (3) an image, (4) a drum, (5) a painting, (6) a palace of the gods, (7) an echo, and (8) a magically created man. For a more complete discussion of these similes see Lewis Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images," *Artibus Asiae* 36, no. 4 (1974): pp. 287–291.

8. This has recently been translated into English by Paul Harrison; see Paul Harrison, trans., *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*, BDK English Tripiṭaka, 25-II (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998). For a critical edition of the later Tibetan versions of this sutra, as well as an English translation of this edition, see Paul Harrison, ed., *The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Sammukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra*, *Studia Philologica Buddhica*, Monograph Series, no. 1 (Tokyo: Reiyukai Library, 1978); and Paul Harrison, trans., *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Tibetan Version of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Sammukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra*, *Studia Philologica Buddhica*, Monograph Series, no. 5 (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990).

9. See, e.g., Harrison, *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*, p. 18: "It is the same, Bhadrāpāla, for the minds of the bodhisattvas: when they perform this calling to mind, the famous great mountains and the Mount Sumerus in all the Buddha-realms, and all the places of darkness between them, are laid open to them, so that their vision is not obscured, and their minds are not obstructed. These bodhisattvas mahāsattvas do not see through [the obstructions] with the divine eye, nor hear through them with the divine ear, nor travel to that Buddha-field by means of the supernormal power of motion, nor do they die here to be reborn in that Buddha-field there, and only then see; rather, while sitting here they see the Buddha Amitābha, hear the sutras which he preaches, and receive them all. Rising from meditation they are able to preach them to others in full."

10. See, e.g., Harrison, *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*, pp. 28 and 29.

11. See, for example, the division of late Six Dynasties and early Tang (唐) dynasty schools into philosophical and practice traditions in the very influential article by Stanley Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of T'ang Buddhism," in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 268–274. In addition to the Ten Stages lineages other schools classified as philosophical include Tiantai, Faxiang (法相), and Huayan (華嚴).

12. The most extensive treatment in English of Huiyuan's commentary to the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, or *Visualization Sutra* as it is called by Pure Land scholars and adherents, is by Kenneth Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese*

*Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine: Ching-ying Hui-yüan's Commentary on the Visualization Sutra* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990). Although Huiyuan's commentary is the earliest commentary to this sutra to survive, it has been relatively neglected until recently, since Huiyuan has not been considered "orthodox" by Japanese Pure Land scholars (both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū). The *Dacheng yizhang* still awaits significant study. On Huiyuan's ambivalent attitude toward meditative practice see John McRae, "The Northern School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1983), pp. 43–44.

13. See Cui Guang's (崔光) preface to the *Ten Stages Commentary* (*Taishō*, vol. 26, no. 1522, p. 123b.1–5). For a brief synopsis of the debate over the authenticity of this preface see Stanley Weinstein, "The Concept of *Ālaya-vijñāna* in Pre-T'ang Chinese Buddhism," in *Essays on the History of Buddhist Thought Presented to Professor Reimon Yūki* (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1964), p. 48 n. 4.

14. Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*, p. 25 and n. 41, argues for the alternative dates (after 476–after 560). The account of the different translations is given in Bodhiruci's biography in XGSZ (*Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, p. 429a.5–16). The information that Huiguang was the one to combine the different translations is found in Huiguang's biography; see XGSZ, *Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, p. 607c.19–20. The *Lidai sanbao ji* (歷代三寶紀), a catalogue of Buddhist scriptures compiled by Fei Changfang (費長房) in 597, states that in the beginning Bodhiruci helped Ratnamati in translating the text. Because of their different views, however, the two men quarreled over how to interpret and translate the text. Bodhiruci then withdrew and made his own translation (*Taishō*, vol. 49, no. 2034, p. 86b.27–c.1). For a brief account of this early sixth-century Yogācāra group and their attempts to come to grips with such Yogācāra concepts as the *ālaya-vijñāna* (storehouse consciousness) and whether Yogācāra advocated eight or nine consciousnesses, see Weinstein, "The Concept of *Ālaya-vijñāna*," pp. 34–35. Weinstein suggests that we may get some idea of the different views that divided Bodhiruci and Ratnamati by examining the debates that divided their disciples.

15. See below, section 7.

16. Pei Cui's (裴灌, ca. 665–736) "Inscription for Shaolin Monastery" ("Shaolinsi bei," 少林寺碑). For a transcription and translation, see Mamoru Tonami, *The Shaolin Monastery Stele on Mount Song*, trans. P. A. Herbert, ed. Antonino Forte, Italian School of East Asian Studies, Epigraphical Studies, no. 1 (Kyoto: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 1990), pp. 29–42. Huiguang and Buddha/bhadra's other disciples are mentioned on pp. 30 (line 32) and 37. A good introduction to this stele, its scholarship, and issues concerning it is provided by Tonami in *The Shaolin*

*Monastery Stele*, which includes revisions to the Japanese edition by the author and further annotations by P. A. Herbert.

17. On Sengchou's life and his influence in the sixth and early seventh centuries see McRae, "The Northern School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," pp. 31–50; and Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*, pp. 28–29, 151–154, and 170–179.

18. XGSZ (*Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, p. 548c.15).

19. On Tanqian and his importance and contributions to the Ten Stages lineages and the Buddhism of this period, see Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*. For a translation of the relevant section of Tanqian's repentance prayer see pp. 62–63 of this essay and Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*, p. 96 n. 25.

20. The soteriological dimension derives from the claim that repentance rituals eliminated not only karma but *kleśa*, or defilements, as well. On how advancement on the Buddhist path to liberation was defined largely in terms of the *kleśas* eliminated, see, e.g., Collett Cox, "Attainment through Abandonment: The Sarvāstivādin Path of Removing Defilements," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Robert M. Gimello, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 7 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), pp. 63–105.

21. Daoxuan, in his biography of Lingyu, refers to this cave temple as the "Jingang xingli zhuchi Naluoyan ku" (金剛性力住持那羅延窟), or "The Cave of Nārāyana Upholder of the Residence of the Power of the Adamantine Nature"; see *Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, p. 497b.11–12.

22. This contrasts, of course, with the practice of circumambulating a stūpa or central image of a buddha or bodhisattva. Here the practitioner moves clockwise, thereby showing respect to the buddha or bodhisattva by keeping his or her right shoulder toward the image.

23. All of the images in the cave are identified in the inscription written above the entrance on the outside; See Lee Yu-min, "Baoshan Dazhushengku chutan" (寶山大住聖窟初探, Preliminary Study of the Tu-chu-sheng Cave at Mt. Pao), *Gugong xueshu jikan* (故宮學術季刊) 16, no. 2 (Winter 1998): p. 8. Photographs of these images (only some of the thirty-five buddhas are represented) are provided in plates 2–20 in Lee, "Baoshan Dazhushengku chutan," pp. 43–52. A transcription of the text accompanying the images of the twenty-four Indian patriarchs is provided at Lee, "Baoshan Dazhushengku chutan," p. 42.

Tokiwa Daijō (常盤大定) and his team were the first modern scholars to investigate Mt. Bao, its inscriptions, and its structures. After they arrived there on November 30, 1921 they extensively photographed the site and took rubbings of every inscription. Transcriptions of many of the more important rubbings were published in Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi,

*Shina Bukkyō shiseki* (Kyōto: Bukkyō Shiseki Kenkyūkai, 1927), text, 3, 159–210; photographs of the site and certain of the rubbings were published in Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina Bukkyō shiseki* (1931), plates, 3, #127–147. The full set of rubbings and photographs is kept at Kyoto University's Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūsho (人文科學研究所). Many of the rubbings of the inscriptions have been recently republished, retranscribed, and translated into Japanese by Ōuchi Humio, "Hōsan Reisenji sekkutsu tamei no kenkyū" (寶山靈泉寺石窟塔銘の研究, "A Study of the Buddhist Pagoda Inscriptions in the Baoshan Lingquansi Grottoes: Baoshan Lingquansi of the Sui and Tang Dynasty"), *Tōhō gakuho* (東方學報) 69 (March 1997): pp. 287–355. He also provides a table for all of the Mt. Bao inscriptional rubbings kept at the Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūsho (pp. 336–345). In 1928 the Guomindang (國民黨) issued a law laicizing the Buddhist and Daoist clergy and confiscating their temples and monasteries; see, e.g., *Xu Anyang xianzhi* (續安陽縣志) (Beiping [北平]: Wenlan yigu songyin shuju [文嵐移古宋印書局], 1933), 12, ch. 11.1b–2b. Wei Juxian, in *Zhongguo kaoguxue shi* (中國考古學史), *Zhongguo wenhua shi congshu* (中國文化史叢書), vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), p. 197, quoting an article published in the December 27, 1934 issue of Nanjing's *Zhaobao* (朝報), notes that at that time all of the larger statues in the cave temples had had their heads chopped off by profiteers collaborating with locals. Presumably, the monastery was largely if not totally deserted by that time. See also Zhang Zhi, *Anyang kaoshi: Yin, Ye, Anyang kaozheng ji* (安陽考釋殷鄴安陽考證集) (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1997), pp. 172–183.

24. For a diagram showing the relative placement of all of these elements in the cave see Lee, "Baoshan Dazhushengku chutan," p. 27. At the top of the same page she also provides a table that gives all of the names of the thirty-five buddhas still legible and their placement relative to Vairocana, Amitābha, and Maitreya.

25. All of the inscriptions on the inside and outside of the cave are transcribed as they now appear in the appendix to Lee, "Baoshan Dazhushengku chutan," pp. 34–42. See also note 24, above.

26. This has become the accepted translation for the name of this ritual. There are, however, indications that this translation may be misleading. As we shall discuss later, there are always at least eight "registers" of buddhas. In addition, the word *jie* does not properly mean "register." It normally refers to a "step, stage, or level." For a tentative, alternative suggestion regarding the meaning of the title of this ritual see section 7, below.

27. That a text was regarded as canonical did not always mean, however, that it was translated from an Indic original. Six of the registers listed in this ritual come from *The Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas the King of Healing and Supreme Healer* (佛說觀藥

王藥上二菩薩經) (*Taishō*, vol. 20, no. 1161). This text, together with five other visualization texts supposedly translated in the first third of the fifth century, form a cluster known collectively as the Visualization Sutras (*guan jing*, 觀經). They all share a number of common features. The authenticity of at least two of these have been called into question: the *Foshuo Guan Wuliangshou fo jing* (*Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 365), and the *Guan fo sanmei hai jing* (觀佛三昧海經) (*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643). For a discussion of the first text see Meiji Yamada, ed., *The Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life as Expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha* (佛說觀無量壽佛經), trans. and annotated by the Ryukoku University Translation Center (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1984), pp. xi–xl; for a discussion of the second, see Nobuyoshi Yamabe, “The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha: The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asia as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1999), pp. 115–124 and 186–215. Because of the many similarities among these six texts, questioning the authenticity of these two works in turn raises the issue of whether any of these texts are based on an Indic original.

28. *Jueding pini jing* (決定毘尼經) (*Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 325, pp. 38c–39a). The text is also known as the *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra*. It was later retranslated in the early eighth century by Bodhiruci as part of the Chinese *Ratnakūṭa* collection.

29. The text in curly brackets is supplied through reference to the parallel texts, Beijing 8344/Yu 16 from Dunhuang and the first fascicle of Zhisheng’s (智升, fl. 730 CE) *Ji zhu jing lichanyi* (集諸經禮懺儀) (*Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1982, pp. 456c–457a) compiled in 730 CE. Beijing 8344/Yu 16, whose text is representative of this subgenre among the Dunhuang manuscripts, entitles this ritual “The Abridged Method of Repentance for Reverencing the Buddhas of the Seven Registers [Taken from] *The Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas the King of Healing and Supreme Healer* (佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經等略禮七階佛懺悔法).”

The conventions followed in the numbering of these arrays of buddhas are: numbers in **bold** indicate those arrays of buddhas referred to in the *Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on the Visualization of the Two Bodhisattvas the King of Healing and Supreme Healer*; and underlined numbers refer to those arrays of buddhas for which the individual names are to be recited and whose names have been inscribed prior to the repentance prayer in the lower register on the wall outside Lingyu’s cave.

30. Other versions of this ritual indicate that this list begins with Akṣobhya Tathāgata; see, e.g., Beijing 8344/Yu 16 and *Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1982, p. 456c.4.

31. I.e., the *mlecchas* (*miliche*, 彌戾車).

32. *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* (*anouduoluo sanmiao sanputi*, 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提).

33. This last curly-bracketed portion has eroded away at Mt. Bao and has been supplied from the parallel versions. Whether the Mt. Bao inscription included the verses that normally conclude this prayer or any other supplementary text cannot be determined from any of the extant rubbings from the site.

34. Daniel Stevenson, "The T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samadhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, and Early T'ang Buddhist Devotionalism" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1987), p. 281. The Dunhuang manuscript *kun* 96 is dated to the fifth day of the first lunar month of the third year of the *shangyuan* (上元) reign period. There are two periods with this title: 674–675 and 760–761. Both are thus officially only two years long. In the first instance the reign period was changed to *yifeng* (儀鳳) in the eleventh lunar month of 676; that year then retroactively became the first year of that reign period. In the second case the *shangyuan* reign period ended on the twenty-first day of the ninth lunar month of 761; the new reign period was used only after this date. There was no third year. If Beijing *kun* 96 was written or copied early in the third year of *shangyuan* this would have to have taken place prior to the eleventh lunar month of 676.

35. The dated manuscripts are listed by Hirokawa Gyōbin, "Tonkōshutsudo *Nanakai butsumyōkyō* ni tsuite: Sangaikyō to Jōdokyō to no kōshō," *Shūkyō kenkyū* 50, no. 4 [no. 251] (March 1982): p. 76.

36. The absence of these two names in P. 2849 also supports the thesis that the contents of the manuscript as we have them may indeed be early and represent these texts as the late sixth-century Three Stages communities knew them.

37. Forms of the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers" that utilize a "Samantabhadra Repentance" prayer, rather than the "Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance" prayer, mostly omit this roster. Also, at least one text of the "Buddha Names of the Seven Registers" that uses the "Thirty-Five Buddha Repentance" prayer omits this roster; see S. 4781 (*Dunhuang baozang* [敦煌宝藏] [hereafter *DHBZ*] 37.664b).

38. *Taishō*, vol. 20, no. 1160, p. 664b.1–5. For a study and translation of this text and other texts related to the Healing Buddha (Bhaiṣajyaguru), see Raoul Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1989); this text is translated on pp. 115–148.

39. For a translation of this section see Hisao Inagaki, ed. and trans., Ōjōronchū: *T'an-luan's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998), pp. 139–147. In addition to translating the "Chapter on Easy Practice" (verses and commentary) as

well as all of the verses in the *Daśabhūmivibhāṣa*, Inagaki's work provides very useful tables and annotated lists for those buddhas whose names appear in this chapter. It is important to note that this chapter forms an introduction, or prologue, to the next chapter on the elimination of karma which outlines a four-limbed *pūjā* of repentance (*chanhui*, 懺悔), requesting the buddhas to stay in the world and teach (*quanqing*, 勸請), rejoicing in the merits of others (*suixi*, 隨喜), and transfer of merit (*huixiang*, 迴向). These two chapters in effect outline a repentance ritual where the first chapter parallels our rosters of buddhas and the second provides the repentance prayer and ritual format for the repentance.

40. *Taishō*, vol. 26, no. 1521, pp. 41b–42c.

41. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, pp. 678a, 688b–c, and 694b–c. This text has recently been the subject of an extensive study by Nobuyoshi Yamabe, "The *Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi*."

42. See p. 50 of this essay.

43. In the ritual's prologue the practitioner is instructed to perform the repentance surrounded by the thirty-five buddhas (*sanshi wu fo qian*, 三十五佛邊; other versions of the text read *qian* [前] for *bian* [邊], "in front of the thirty-five buddhas"); see *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 325, p. 38c.19. The injunction to visualize the thirty-five buddhas is given in the ritual's epilogue:

In this way the bodhisattva should visualize the thirty-five buddhas as if they were in front of your very eyes, meditating upon those qualities that the tathāgatas possess. In this way he should perform his purification and repentance. Should the bodhisattva be able to purify these offenses, at that time the buddhas will manifest their bodies before him and will also explain a variety of practices in order to convert sentient beings....

菩薩如是觀三十五佛如在目前思惟如來所有功德應作如是清淨懺悔菩薩若能淨此罪已爾時諸佛為其現身為度眾生亦說種種諸行....

44. P. 2849 (*DHBZ* 124.466b–472b). See also note 55, below.

45. P. 2849 (*DHBZ* 124.472b–474a).

46. P. 2849 (*DHBZ* 124.474a–476a).

47. See Nishimoto Teruma, "Sangaikyō shinshutsu shiryō P 2849 no kisoteki kenkyū," *Nanto Bukkyō* 72 (1995): pp. 75–85 (*Zhifa*), 85–86 (texts on eating), 86 (*Shou bajie fa*); *Sangaikyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1998), pp. 190–196, 196–197, and 197–198.

48. See Stevenson, "The T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samadhi," pp. 278–279.

49. *Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1958, p. 14c. For an alternative translation see Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, p. 18. My translation of *jun* (均) as "constrain," i.e., focus, is based on the simile that Tanluan provides immediately following this passage:

“It is as when one drives an ox with some grass placed before it; its thought should be fixed on the manger” (Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū*, p. 18). Although we know from Daoxuan’s biography of Tanluan (*Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, p. 470a–c) that Emperor Jing respected Tanluan and even bestowed upon him the title “Divine Phoenix” (*shen luan*, 神鸞), the point here is not whether this exchange actually took place. The passage’s importance lies rather in how, using Tanluan’s position as a foil, it speaks to the general perceptions of Buddhist practice around Ye in the late sixth century.

50. See, e.g., B. 8309/*Run* (閏) 43 (DHBZ 109.609a–b), B. 8310/*Diao* (調) 81 (DHBZ 109.611a–b), B. 8317/*Yu* (玉) 91 (DHBZ 109.632b), B. 8319/*Hao* (號) 13 (DHBZ 109.643a–b), B. 8329/*Di* (帝) 2 (DHBZ 110.6a–b), S. 1306 (DHBZ 10.34a–b), S. 2360 (DHBZ 18.564a–b), S. 2574 (DHBZ 21.202b). This is also the title of chapter 10 of Xinxing’s *Zhifa*; see DHBZ 124.470a. These Dunhuang manuscripts confirm that the “Text for Taking Vows at the Six Periods of the Day and Night” ends at this point. The short epilogue that follows was probably written by Zhisheng himself. Only one Dunhuang manuscript contains this epilogue, S. 2574 (DHBZ 21.202b).

51. *Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1982, p. 465c.2–8. Reading *guang* (廣) in *Ji zhujing lichanyi* as *ying* following VV as well as most Dunhuang manuscripts; see previous note. The ritual of the “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” comprises the whole of the first *juan* (卷) (of two) of Zhisheng’s *Ji zhujing lichanyi*. Stevenson, “The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samadhi,” p. 277, has stated that Zhisheng’s bibliographic catalogue, the *Kaiyuan shi jiao lu* (開元釋教錄), also completed in 730, may be the first catalogue to attribute liturgies of the “Buddha Name in Seven Registers” to Xinxing; it lists expanded (*guang*, 廣) and abbreviated (*lue*, 略) versions, both in one *juan*; see *Taishō*, vol. 55, no. 2154, p. 678c. Hirokawa Takatoshi [Gyōbin], “Tonkō shutsudo *nanakai butsumyōkyō* ni tsuite,” p. 72, notes both that the *Ren ji lu du mu* (人集錄都目), a catalogue that slightly predates Zhisheng’s catalogue, lists the abbreviated version in five sheets (*zhi*, 紙), and that the *Zhenyuan xinding shi jiao mu lu* (貞元新定釋教目錄), a catalogue completed by Yuanzhao (圓照) in 800, lists the expanded version in thirty sheets. Stevenson (“The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samadhi,” p. 278) and others have conjectured, rightly I believe, that most, or even all, of the Dunhuang manuscripts containing the so-called longer “Buddha Names in Seven Registers” ritual probably represent the abbreviated version. They do not seem to have noticed, however, that the version Zhisheng presents in his *Ji zhujing lichanyi* matches the relative length of the expanded version rather closely, i.e., thirty sheets vs. twenty-four registers (in one *juan*) in the *Taishō* version of Zhisheng’s text and five sheets vs. four registers for the shorter version, a 1:6 ratio. Consequently, I suspect that the text that Zhisheng gives us after the shorter version he provides at the beginning of the chapter (*Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1982, pp. 457b.18–465b.9) is actually the expanded version.



52. See note 43, above.

53. The opening supplication to the buddhas in the vow text is, as we have noted, idiosyncratic to Three Stages' rituals: "May the buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time bear witness to and hold in mind your disciple, so-and-so" (十方三世諸佛當證知弟子某甲等). This formulaic supplication also precedes each of the seven sections of the repentance prayer Xinxing uses in his version of the "Buddha Names in Seven Registers," opens the ritual recitation for the "Method for Receiving the Eight Precepts" ("Shou bajie fa," 受八戒法), and occurs as a constant refrain throughout that text; see P. 2849 (DHBZ 124.474a–476a).

54. B. 8317 (DHBZ 109.632b) has an abridged "Method for Taking Vows at the Six Periods of the Day and Night" that does not conclude with this set of instructions. This demonstrates that at least some medieval Chinese Buddhists regarded this set of instructions as a separate text.

55. In the Dunhuang manuscript containing the Three Stages' *Zhifa* (P. 2849; DHBZ 124.466b–72b), section 10, "The Method for Venerating the Buddhas" ("Lifo fa") (DHBZ 124.470a), contains the first part of these instructions—which rosters of the ritual are to be done in summary (*zong*, 總), i.e., reciting the roster name only, and which were to be recited separately (*bie*, 別), i.e., reciting each buddha's name in the roster, at which parts of the day or night—but does not include these last lines that are a virtual quotation from the *VV*. Instead it concludes these instructions with a description of how the group performing the ritual is to coordinate the chanting with the bowing and what to do if one did not have the strength to keep up with the group while practicing the ritual. Nishimoto Teruma ("Sangaikyō shinshutsu shiryō P 2849 no kisoteki kenkyū," p. 84) argues plausibly that this *Zhifa* is in fact the text referred to by Daoxuan in his biography of Xinxing as the *Shandong suozhi zhongshi zhufa* (山東所制眾事諸法), "The Rules for the Affairs of the Congregation Which Were Instituted East of the Mountains." "East of the Mountains" refers to the area east of the Taihang mountain range, i.e., while Xinxing was still residing in the Ye area. While it is unclear when Xinxing left Ye to go to Chang'an, it may have been as early as 583, but definitely no later than 589; See Nishimoto, *Sangaikyō no kenkyū*, pp. 60–61.

56. For a summary of this system in English as well as references to the relevant Japanese bibliography see Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi." For references to those practices specifically identified as coming from Huisi, see Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi," pp. 50–51. Of the six meditative practices organized into the fourfold samādhi system only the last, the *suizi yi* (隨自意), does not require any visualization practice; see Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi," pp. 75–84.

57. The *Ocean Sutra* is divided into twelve sections: (1) "The Six Similes"

(“Liu bi,” 六譬), (2) “The Ground of Sequential Visualization” (“Xu guan di,” 序觀地), (3) “Visualizing the Marks” (“Guan xiang,” 觀相), (4) “Visualizing the Heart of the Buddha” (“Guan foxin,” 觀佛心), (5) “Visualizing the Heart of the Four Immeasurables” (“Guan si wuliang xin,” 觀四無量心), (6) “Visualizing the Four Awesome Qualities” (“Guan si weiyi,” 觀四威儀), (7) “Visualizing the Organ of the Horse King” (a treatment of the Buddha’s male organ) (“Guan ma wang zang,” 觀馬王藏), (8) “The Fundamental Practices” (a small collection of *Jātaka* stories, i.e., stories of the Buddha’s previous births) (“Ben xing,” 本行), (9) “Visualizing the Image” (“Guan xiang,” 觀像), (10) “Calling to Mind the Seven Buddhas” (“Nian qi fo,” 念七佛), (11) “Calling to Mind the Buddhas of the Ten Directions” (“Nian shifang fo,” 念十方佛), (12) “Secret Practices for Visualizing the Buddhas” (“Guanfo mixing,” 觀佛密行). For the seven buddhas see *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, p. 693a–c; for the buddhas of the ten directions see *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, p. 693c–695b; for the buddhas filling all of space see *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, p. 690a–693c.

58. Charles Jones, “Toward a Typology of *Nien-fo*: A Study in Methods of Buddha-Invocation in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism,” *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, 3rd ser., 3 (Fall 2001): pp. 224–225, summarizes Mochizuki Shinkō’s discussion of four types of nianfo (念佛), buddhānusmṛti or Buddha mindfulness, ostensibly outlined by Zongmi (宗密, 780–841 CE). The second and third types are the “mindfulness of contemplating the image” (*guan xiang*, 觀像) and “mindfulness of contemplating the characteristics” (*guan xiang*, 相). Whether such a distinction between contemplating (or visualizing) the image and visualizing the characteristics (marks) was made during the time period under discussion here is not yet known. The fifth-century texts that treat meditative visualization appear to regard them as two variations on the same meditation, each supporting the other.

59. *Taishō*, vol. 10, no. 287, pp. 535c.12–536a.21. For a translation see Honda Megumu, “Annotated Translation of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*,” in *Studies in South, East, And Central Asia*, ed. Denis Sinor, Śata-Piṭaka Series, Indo-Asian Literatures, vol. 74, ed. Raghu Vira (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), pp. 118–121.

60. The sutra notes, for example, that Vajragarbha attained “the ultimate essence of meditation”; see *Taishō*, vol. 10, no. 287, p. 536a.16–17 and Honda, “Annotated Translation of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*,” p. 120.

61. *Taishō*, vol. 26, no. 1522, p. 124a.7. The *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* and the *Daśabhūmikavyūkyāna* were, of course, two fundamental texts for the Ten Stages lineages.

62. See *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* (華嚴經探玄記; *Taishō*, vol. 35, no. 1733, pp. 280a, 411a). Fazang was the main disciple of Zhiyan and the great

systematizer of Huayan thought. Zhiyan, later designated the second patriarch of the Huayan lineage, was also a member of the Ten Stages lineages, being a third generation successor of Lingyu. He attained direct realization through meditation on the “six characteristics” (六相) listed in the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*. For a detailed discussion of Zhiyan, his life, and his works, see Robert Gimello, “Chih-yen, (602–668) and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1976).

63. The four great samādhis are: the radiance of the Mahāyāna; the king of compiling merit and virtue (*ji fude wang*, 集福德王); the Bhadrāpāla (*fahu sanmei*, 法護三昧); the Śūrangama (*shoulengyan*, 首楞嚴).

64. *Da fangguang fo huayan jing shu* (大方廣佛華嚴經疏) (*Taishō*, vol. 35, no. 1735, p. 879b).

65. Apart from Yamabe’s 1999 dissertation, the *Ocean Sutra* has been little studied; no translation into any Western language exists. A Sogdian fragment translated from the Chinese and corresponding to much of this chapter (*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, pp. 690c.5–692c.28), however, exists and has been much studied. Now kept in the British Library it has been studied extensively by David MacKenzie, ed. and trans., *The Buddhist Sogdian Texts of the British Library*, Acta Iranica, vol. 10. Troisième Série, Textes et Mémoire, vol. 3 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 1.53–77, 2.49–70, 3.67–108) who has published a photographic facsimile of the Sogdian translation, an English translation, notes, a general glossary, and references to all of the previous scholarship on the text. Among the earlier studies of this fragment particular mention should be made of Friedrich Weller’s (“Bemerkungen zum sogdischen Dhyāna-Texte,” *Monumenta Serica* 2 [1936–1937]: pp. 341–404; *Monumenta Serica* 3 [1938]: pp. 78–129) extensive philological study of the Sogdian and Chinese versions, Émile Benveniste’s extensive notes to the text, and Paul Demiéville’s French translation, without notes, of the corresponding Chinese portion of the text.

66. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, p. 690c.20–28.

67. *Chuan* (踠, also written 膾), usually glossed as “calf” (*feichang*, 腓腸). Some translate *chuan* as calf (Yamabe, “The *Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi*,” pp. 230, 242), some as “thigh” (William Soothill and Lewis Hodous, eds., *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* [London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1937], p. 60a, q.v. 三十二). The Sanskrit *aiṇeya*(*eṇiya*)-*jaṅgha* (Pāli *eṇijaṅgha*) refers generally to the leg of the aiṇeya deer (or antelope). In *Mahāvīyūtpatti*’s list of the thirty-two marks (#236–267) it is the last mark. In *Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten* (Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankōkyōkai, 1958), treatment of the thirty-two marks (vol. 2, pp. 1554–1560), it is number 8 (vol. 2, p. 1556a); see also Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 155ab, and 158a.

68. *Ji* (髻), i.e., the topknot on the crown of the head.

69. The visualization of the individual marks is treated somewhat haphazardly and incompletely in chapter 3, which comprises almost 40 percent of the whole text; see *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, pp. 648c–668b.

70. Early on, of course, Buddhists created the model of the *trīṇi śikṣāṇi* (Ch. *san xue*, 三學): *śīla/sīla*, “morality or precepts”; *samādhi*, “concentration or trance”; and *prajñā/paññā*, “wisdom.” In this model each is the basis for the next: morality, or the observance of the precepts, reduces mental anguish and attachment and promotes the stability that nourishes the cultivation of concentration or trance; trance gives rise to clarity, which makes the penetrating vision of wisdom possible; see, e.g., Robert Buswell, Jr. and Robert Gimello, introduction to *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought* (see note 2), pp. 6–7. To the best of my knowledge, however, no Buddhist in India connected the purification of the precepts through repentance to the development of mental or transcendent clarity with such specificity.

71. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, p. 691a.3–7.

72. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, p. 691a.7–16.

73. *Tiao shen*, “regulate the body,” carries the sense of physically relaxing the body. This sentence may also be rendered, “Relax the body through massage.”

74. *Jingjie* here probably represents the Sanskrit word *viśaya*, “range, sphere, object of perception”; see Friedrich Weller, “Bemerkungen zum sogdischen Dhyāna-Texte,” *Monumenta Serica* 2 (1936–1937): pp. 392–394. Here it cannot indicate a buddha-field, since we have not yet covered that in the visualization. Rather it must indicate the buddhas as “objects of [mental] perception,” i.e., as objects of meditation. That the text does not expect the practitioner to actually see the buddhas at this point is made clear by its choice of terms: the practitioner is to visualize (*guan*) the buddhas, not see (*jian*, 見) them.

75. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, p. 691b.10.

76. On the *Ugraparipṛcchā* see Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path according to The Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)*, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003); on the “Triskandha(ka),” the earliest known repentance ritual, see Nattier, *A Few Good Men*, pp. 117–121, 259–260, and note 336; and Nancy Barnes, “Rituals, Religious Communities, and Buddhist Sūtras in India and China,” in *Buddhism Across Boundaries: Chinese Buddhism and the Western Regions (Collection of Essays 1993)*, ed. Erik Zürcher and others (Taipei: Foguang Cultural Enterprise Co., Ltd., 1999), pp. 485–515.

77. Yamabe Nobuyoshi, “*Bonmōkyō ni okeru kōsōgyō no kenkyū: Toku ni zenkan kyōten to no kanrensei ni chakumoku shite,*” in *Hokuchō Zui Tō chūgoku bukkyō shisō shi*, ed. Aramaki Noritoshi (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2000), pp. 205–269. A revised English version of this paper has been published as Yamabe Nobuyoshi, “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination in the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*,” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya: Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Stanley Weinstein*, ed. William M. Bodiford, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 18 (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), pp. 17–39.

78. Yamabe, “*Bonmōkyō ni okeru kōsōgyō no kenkyū,*” pp. 207–209.

79. *Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, p. 496c.25–26. This is reminiscent of Daojing’s situation after he received the bodhisattva precepts; see Yamabe, “*Bonmōkyō ni okeru kōsōgyō no kenkyū,*” p. 208; and Yamabe, “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination,” p. 20.

80. A *yojana* is most commonly defined as the distance an ox can go in one harnessing (usually within one day). Estimates of actual distance range from 2.5 to 9 miles.

81. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, pp. 693c.28–695b.7.

82. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, pp. 693c.29–694a.18.

83. Reading *yin* (隱), “secret, hidden,” as *wen* (穩), “stable; stability.” This name does not correspond exactly to the name of this buddha land known from other sources, Āśoka “Without Sorrow.”

84. When a bodhisattva attains the first stage of bodhisattva practice he or she obtains the ability to create up to one hundred multiple, or replicate, bodies (*fenshen*, 分身) in order to visit various pure lands and receive teachings. As the bodhisattva progresses along the bodhisattva path, the number of replicate bodies he or she can produce increases. A buddha can create an innumerable number of these bodies.

85. The transformation body (*huashen*, 化身) is a buddha’s *nirmāṇakāya*, the body a buddha manifests in the human realm when he attains buddhahood. By extension it represents the body through which he enters the realms of samsara in order to save beings.

86. *Shizi zuo*, 師子座, commonly stands for 獅子座, i.e., Simhāsana, the Lion Throne, the seat from which the Buddha teaches.

87. I.e., in the so-called “lotus position” (*padmāsana*).

88. The value of a *nayuta/niyuta* varies and may be more or less than a *koṭi*, usually translated as *Krore* and representing ten million (although this may vary); see Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 98b, q.v. *niyuta*. Basing himself on the Tibetan, Edgerton remarks that a *niyuta* may be vary from one million to one hundred billion.

89. This is the second stage of the “ten stages of the pervasive teaching” (*shidi tongjiao*, 十地通教); see, e.g., Leon Hurvitz, “Chih-i (538–597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk,” *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 12 (1960–1962): pp. 260–262, 361.
90. *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, pp. 694c.29–695b.7.
91. A similar situation can be inferred from Tanluan’s *Zan Amituo fo jie* (讚阿彌陀佛偈; *Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1978, pp. 420c–424b), or *Verses in Praise of Amitābha Buddha*. These verses are to be recited while bowing before the Buddha; ostensibly the visualization these verses describe is to be performed at the same time. For a translation of these verses, or canticles, as Roger Corless has termed them, see Roger Corless, trans., “T’an-luan’s Canticles to Amita Buddha,” *The Pure Land*, n.s., 6 (December 1989): pp. 262–278; and 7 (December 1990): pp. 124–137.
92. See Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, 4th ed. (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1979), pp. 129–130, 161, 165, and 171. These correspond to sections IV.29, IV.138, IV.152, and IV.181 in Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli’s translation.
93. Funayama Toru (“Masquerading as Translation: Examples of Chinese Lectures by Indian Scholar-Monks in the Six Dynasties Period,” *Asia Major*, 3rd ser., 19, nos. 1–2 [2006]: pp. 48–50) discusses this text as one in which translated sections are intermixed with commentary by Bodhiruci.
94. *Taishō*, vol. 25, no. 1512, p. 863b–c.
95. *Taishō*, vol. 40, no. 1819. This text has been translated, annotated, and discussed by both Roger Corless (“T’an-luan’s Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse: An Annotated Translation and Soteriological Analysis of the *Wang-sheng-lun-chu* [*Taishō* no. 1819]” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1973) and Hisao Inagaki (*Ōjōronchū: T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land* [Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998]). I am indebted to Professor Roger Corless for bringing Tanluan’s writings to my attention and showing me their importance for understanding late sixth-century meditative and ritual practice.
96. *Taishō*, vol. 40, no. 1819, p. 841b; see Corless, “T’an-luan’s Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse,” pp. 297–298; and Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū: T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse*, pp. 264–265.
97. *Taishō*, vol. 40, no. 1819, p. 832a; see Corless, “T’an-luan’s Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse,” pp. 171–176; and Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū: T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse*, pp. 172–177.
98. The passage from the *Guan Wuliangshou fo jing* occurs at *Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 365, p. 343a.19–22.
99. *Taishō*, vol. 40, no. 1819, p. 832a; see Corless, “T’an-luan’s Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse,” p. 172; and Inagaki, *Ōjōronchū: T’an-luan’s*

*Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse*, pp. 176–177. The underlined portions represent passages quoted from the *Guan Wuliangshou fo jing*.

100. On the development of the two / three truth theories in southern China from the fourth through the sixth centuries see, for example, Whalen Lai, "Chinese Buddhist Causation Theories: An Analysis of the Sinitic Mahāyāna Understanding of *Pratitya-samutpāda*," *Philosophy East and West* 27, no. 3 (July 1977): pp. 241–264; "Sinitic Understanding of the Two Truths Theory in the Liang Dynasty (502–557): Ontological Gnosticism in the Thoughts of Prince Chao-ming," *Philosophy East and West* 28, no. 3 (July 1978): pp. 339–351; "Further Developments of the Two Truths Theory in China: The *Ch'eng-shih-lun* Tradition and Chou Yung's *San-tsung-lun*," *Philosophy East and West* 30, no. 2 (April 1980): pp. 139–161; and "Sinitic Speculations on Buddha-nature: The Nirvāṇa School (420–589)," *Philosophy East and West* 32, no. 2 (April 1982): pp. 135–149; and Paul Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism*, Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1989).

101. For overviews of these formulations, see Ming-wood Liu, *Madhyamaka Thought in China*, *Sinica Leidensia*, vol. 30 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), pp. 226–232; and Paul Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy*, pp. 115–156.

102. This aspect of Zhiyi's thought is brought out most clearly by Yu-Kwan Ng, *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism and Early Mādhyamika* (Honolulu: Tendai Institute of Hawaii and the Buddhist Studies Program of the University of Hawai'i, distributed by the University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp. 44, 62–89.

103. See also note 20.

104. The primary source for Tanqian's biography is the XGSZ (*Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, pp. 571b.12–574b.6); see Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*; for a translation of Tanqian's essay "Wang shifei lun" (亡是非論) see Whalen Lai, "T'an-ch'ien and the Early Ch'an Tradition: Translation and Analysis of the Essay 'Wang-shih-fei-lun,'" in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, no. 5 (Berkeley, CA: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies and The Group in Buddhist Studies, University of California, and The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1983), pp. 65–87. Tanqian fled south to the Canton area after the Northern Zhou conquered the Northern Qi in 577 and extended its Buddhist persecution into the northeast. He appears to have been involved with the early history of the influential apocryphal text *Dacheng qixin lun* (大乘起信論), *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*; see Whalen Lai, "The *Chan-ch'a ching*: Religion and Magic in Medieval China," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 187–188. The Shelun (攝論) school, a

Yogācāra school that took its name from the *She dacheng lun* (攝大乘論, the *Mahāyāna samgraha* by Asanga), stems from Tanqian and his group who apparently obtained this text in the south and brought it back north.

105. His biography is found in the XGSZ (*Taishō*, vol. 50, no. 2060, p. 484a.11–b.2).

106. *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, p. 918b.6–8.

107. *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, p. 919a.19b–26.

108. *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, p. 918c.11–15.

109. This expression is found, for the first time I believe, in the apocryphal sutra *Datong fanguang chanhui miezui zhuangyan chengfo jing* (大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經; *Taishō*, vol. 85, no. 2871, p. 1355b.10; S. 1847, *DHBZ* 14.124a), more commonly known as the *Datong fanguang jing*. We might also note that the phrase “A B *chengfo*” occurs in situations where “A B” describes the essential, if not sufficient, means to attain buddhahood, e.g., the later Chan Buddhist dictums “*kanxin chengfo*” (看心成佛), “Attain buddhahood through viewing the mind” and “*jianxing chengfo*” (見性成佛), “Attain buddhahood through seeing one’s nature.”

110. *Taishō*, vol. 46, no. 1911, p. 13c22–26. See also Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, p. 260.

111. *Taishō*, vol. 46, no. 1941.

112. This ritual has been translated in its entirety by Stevenson, “The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samadhi,” pp. 468–537.

113. *Ibid.*, pp. 526–527.

114. *Ibid.*, pp. 534–535.

115. I.e., the *Guan Puxian pusa xingfa jing*.

116. *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, p. 916a10–c.29.

117. See Li-ying Kuo, *Confession et contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois du Ve au Xe siècle*, Publications de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient, Monographies, n° 170 (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1994), pp. 71–77.

118. See Li-ying Kuo, *Confession et contrition*, pp. 71–74.

119. *Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1982, p. 464b.10.

120. Yabuki Keiki, *Sangaikyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1927), pp. 306–316, 523; Nishimoto, *Sangaikyō no kenkyū*, pp. 481–483; Hirokawa, “Tonkō shutsudo nanakai butsumyōkyō ni tsuite,” p. 79.

121. Daoshi’s version, the longer of the two, is found in his encyclopedia, the *Fayuan zhulin*, chapter 20, “Perfect[ing] Reverence” (“Zhijing,” 致敬); *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, pp. 435a.8–436a.7. Daoxuan’s version is found in



the second fascicle of his two fascicle work *Shimen gui jingyi* (釋門歸敬儀; *Taishō*, vol. 45, no. 1896, p. 815a.2–c.10). Ishii Kōsei (*Kegon shisō no kenkyū* [Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1996], pp. 493–501) mentions these three versions but only compares those by Daoshi and Daoxuan in very general ways. He further suggests (pp. 493–499) that the some of the terminology in the longer version presented by Daoshi shows the influence of *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.

122. Zhiyan's version is found in his *Huayan jing neizhang mendeng za kongmu zhang* (華嚴經內章門等雜孔目章; usually known simply as *Kongmu zhang*; *Taishō*, vol. 45, no. 1870, p. 540b.4–c.16).

123. *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, p. 435a.23–28.

124. *Taishō*, vol. 45, no. 1870, p. 540b.16–17.

125. On *gongde* as the qualities to be visualized, see pp. 51–52 of this essay. This passage makes this explicit by adding the word “[major] characteristics” (*xiang*).

126. This suggests a model not unlike Zhiyi proposed with his distinction between *shichan* and *lichan*.

127. *Taishō*, vol. 45, no. 1896, p. 865b.28; *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, p. 435c.25–26.

128. *Taishō*, vol. 53, no. 2122, p. 435c.27–28.

129. Jinhua Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*, pp. 170–179; and “An Alternative View of the Meditation Tradition in China: Meditation in the Life and Works of Daoxuan (596–667),” *T'oung pao* 88, nos. 4–5 (2002): pp. 360–367.

