

Pacific World Journal, Third Series Number 2 Fall
2000 pp.91-103.

<http://www.shin-ibs.edu/documents/pwj3-2/08SM2.pdf>

The Sung Dynasty saw the appearance of a number of monks who were known for their cultivation of the Pure Land teachings, such monks as T'ien-i I-huai, Hui-lin Tsung-pen, Ku-su Shou-na, Ch'ang-lu Tsung-i, Huang-lang Ssu-hsin, and Chen-ko Ch'ing-liao. This period also saw, for the first time, the appearance of laymen who became renowned for their joint cultivation of Pure Land and Ch'an practices, laymen such as Yang Chieh, Wang Ku, Chiang-kung Wang, Wang Chen, and Wang Jih-hsiu. The fame of these laymen strengthened this tendency towards joint Ch'an-Pure Land cultivation.

The T'ien-t'ai tradition also produced a number of believers in Pure Land teachings, as well as a number of scholarly monks who worked in exegesis, among whom were the Sung Dynasty monks Hsing-ching, Ch'eng-yu, I-t'ung, Yuan-ch'ing, Wen-pi, Tsun-shih, Chih-li, Chih-yuan, Jen-yüeh, Ts'ung-i, Ts'e-ying, and Tsung-hsiao. All of these masters either composed commentaries on the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching* or the *O-mi-t'o ching*, or wrote works explaining various aspects of the Pure Land teachings. Chih-li's *Kuan-ching Shu Miao-tsung ch'ao* is the most famous of these works. Its salient doctrinal feature was the teaching of visualizing the Buddha Amitābha with respect to one's own mind. This teaching came to be emphasized within T'ien-t'ai circles, contributing much to the development of a doctrinal basis for the joint cultivation of Ch'an and Pure Land practices, and to the fusion of Ch'an and Pure Land theories within Chinese Buddhism as a whole.

Later, during the Sung, the monk Yuan-chao of Yu-k'ang, noted for his studies and writings on the Vinaya tradition (*Lü-tsung*), devoted the latter years of his life to propagating the Pure Land teachings. He composed a commentary on the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and in his own way set up a variant lineage and school within the broader Pure Land tradition. His disciples, Yung-ch'in and Chieh-tu, also wrote commentaries, and contributed to popularizing the philosophical views of their master. During the Southern Sung Dynasty, the Japanese monk Shunjō introduced the writings of Yuan-chao to Japan where, however, their circulation was initially limited. Thus it was that Pure Land thought developed during the Sung Dynasty.

At this same time, Chinese Buddhism also saw the rise of Pure Land lay societies (*chieh-she*), or lay organizations established to promote Pure Land belief and practice among their members. Such groups became especially strong in South China, and we know the names of the major leaders of such groups. Indeed, a large number of the most renowned scholar-monks of their day organized such groups, masters such as Hsing-ch'ang, Tsun-shih, Chih-li, Pen-ju, Ling-chao, Tsung-i, and Tao-shen. All of these masters organized laymen and clerics into societies for the purpose of cultivating *nien-fo* practices. In almost all of

these cases, the organizers considered themselves to be reviving the tradition of Hui-yuan's White Lotus Society on Mt. Lu, while also looking to the lives of Shan-tao and Fa-chao, themselves reputed to have formed such organizations, as precedents.

At the beginning of the Southern Sung Dynasty, the master Tz'u-chao Tzu-yuan founded an organization now actually termed the White Lotus Tradition (*Pai-lien tsung*). In its teachings and organization, the traditions to which this group hearkened back were written down by the monk P'u-tu of the same Mt. Lu in a major compendium of this sect's teachings, the *Lien-tsung pao-chien*. In this work, we find a large amount of popular superstition and degenerate customs mixed with Buddhist doctrines. The work was banned on several occasions but, after each banning, the resentment of the masses became enflamed, leading to popular rebellions and local uprisings. The sect was often termed the *Pai-lien chiao-fei*, the White Lotus Teaching Rebels, in official documents.

With the founding of the Yuan Dynasty, the tendency toward the joint cultivation of Ch'an and Pure Land became even more pronounced. Several renowned Ch'an masters became noted for their devotion to the Pure Land faith: such masters as Chung-feng Ming-pen, T'ien-ju Weitse, Ch'u-shih Fan-ch'i, and Tuan-yün Chih-ch'e. Within the T'ien-t'ai tradition, a number of well-known monks wrote works in praise of the Pure Land teachings, such as Chan-t'ang Hsing-ch'eng, Yü-k'ang Meng-jun, Yin-chiang Miao-hsieh, and Yün-wo Shan-chu.

The Ming Dynasty (1368–1627) was a period characterized by large numbers of monks who taught the practice of the joint cultivation of Ch'an and the Pure Land teachings. Among such masters were Ch'u-shan Shao-ch'i, K'ung-ku Ching-lung, Ku-yin Ching-chin, I-yuan Tsung-pen, Yün-chi Chu-hung, Tz'u-po Chen-k'o, Han-shan Teh-ch'ing, Po-shan Yuan-lai, Chan-jan Yuan-ch'eng, Ku-shan Yuan-hsien, and Wei-hsiang Tao-p'ei. The most eminent of these was the master Chu-hung. During the Lung-ch'ing period (1567–1572), he went into retreat at an auspicious site in the Yun-chi Mountains in the area of Hang-chou, and there he cultivated the *nien-fo san-mei* (S.: *buddhānusmṛtisamādhi*). He composed a commentary on the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and several works extolling the joint cultivation of Ch'an and Pure Land teachings. His influence spread widely and gradually influenced all of Chinese Buddhism.

At this time, the T'ien-t'ai tradition also produced some eminent scholar-monks who wrote books elucidating Pure Land teachings from the standpoint of T'ien-t'ai thought. Among such masters were Wu-ai P'u-chih, Yen-ching Tao-yen, Chü-an Ta-yu, Yuan-hsi Ch'uan-teng, Ling-yueh Chih-hsü, and Ku-hsi Ch'eng-shih. The most eminent of these was the master Chih-hsü, who advocated the theory that "the

Three Learnings have One [Common] Origin.” Chih-hsü also stressed the necessity of upholding all three traditions—Ch’an, Pure Land, and Vinaya—as an exclusive reliance on any one of them would lead to the decay of Buddhism as a whole. Nevertheless, Chih-hsü believed that the most essential of these Three Learnings was the Pure Land tradition. Contemporary with these masters were the laymen Yuan Hung-tao and Chuang Kuang-huan, who also composed works extolling the Pure Land teachings.

During the Ch’ing Dynasty (1616–1911), the Pure Land teachings came to be advocated by an ever larger number of laymen. Active during the K’ang-hsi period were the laymen Chou K’o-fu, Yü Hsing-min, and Chou Meng-yen, who all wrote works encouraging the practice of Pure Land devotions. During the Ch’ien-lung period (1736–1795), the laymen P’eng Chao-sheng and P’eng Hsi-su compiled biographies of persons who had attained rebirth in Sukhāvātī. P’eng Chao-sheng composed an especially large number of works praising Pure Land teachings, and worked for the wider dissemination of these doctrines.

Toward the end of the K’ang-hsi period (1662–1722), the monk Shih-hsien Ssu-ch’i, emulating the work of Chu-hung, organized a Pure Land society (*lien-she*) in Hang-chou. The influence of this society spread widely, and Ssu-ch’i came to be called “Yen-shou come again” (*Yung-ming tsai-lai*), and became the object of much popular affection and veneration. This period also saw the activities of the monks Hsing-ts’e, Hsü-fa, Ming-heng, Ming-teh, Ch’i-neng, Fo-an, Shih-ch’eng, and Chi-hsing. These monks were active in the K’ang-hsi and Ch’ien-lung periods in their cultivation of the Pure Land teachings. At a slightly later period the monks Shui-chang and Hu-t’ing continued to compile biographies of persons who had attained rebirth in the Pure Land. Slightly later, the monks Ta-mo and Wu-k’ai, and the laymen Chang Shih-ch’eng and Chen I-Yuan, wrote works extolling Pure Land practices.

From the time of the Sung Dynasty onward, Pure Land teachings especially flourished in southern China. However, with the founding of the Ch’ing Dynasty, the capital of China was moved to the north to the city of Yen-ching (re-named Pei-ching, meaning “the northern capital,” i.e., present-day Peking). At this court, the Tantric Buddhism of Tibet and Mongolia was especially honored, and so it happened that during this dynasty Pure Land doctrines and practices were largely limited to southern China. From the Ming Dynasty onward, Chinese Buddhism appears to have lost some of its vitality and much of its originality and creative genius, and this was evident too in the case of Pure Land literature. Much of the published Pure Land literature consisted of nothing more than excerpts from the writings and thoughts of the great masters of the past.

With the establishment of the Republic, Chinese Buddhism underwent a slight revival. However, with the advent of the Second World War and the subsequent socialist revolution on the Chinese mainland, much Buddhist work came to a halt. This work has been only slightly revived in the last two decades on the island of Taiwan, in Hong Kong, and in certain Southeast Asian centers.

Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History

Chapter Two: The Earliest Period,

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

Chapter Four: The Translation of Texts; Spurious Scriptures

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CHAPTER II: THE EARLIEST PERIOD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. The Earliest Period of the Pure Land Faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER III: HUI-YUAN OF MT. LU

1. The Life of Hui-yuan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV: THE TRANSLATION OF TEXTS;
SPURIOUS SCRIPTURES

1. The *O-mi-t'o ching*: Kumārajīva

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Spurious Scriptures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pacific World. Third Series Number 4 , Fall 2002.
pp259-280.

<http://www.shin-ibs.edu/documents/pwj3-4/13MC4.pdf>

Pure Land Buddhism in China:

A Doctrinal History

Chapter Five: The Early Pure Land Faith: Southern China, and

Chapter Six: The Early Pure Land Faith: Northern China

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CHAPTER V: THE EARLY PURE LAND FAITH SOUTHERN CHINA

1. Hui-Yuan's Disciples

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Hui-yuan established the *Pai-lien she* (the White Lotus Society) on Mt. Lu and, together with his followers, he cultivated the *nien-fo san-mei*, the meditation on the Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land. Due to his reputation for diligent religious practice, his fame spread throughout the country.

After the death of Hui-yuan, his disciple Tao-ping became the abbot of the Tung-lin Monastery (*Tung-ling ching-she*). Others of his disciples, such as T'an-heng and T'an-hsien, also remained on Mt. Lu, and there spread Hui-yuan's teachings, so it is not hard to imagine that Mt. Lu continued for a long time to be an important center of Pure Land activities.

At the same time, many of the monks and laity who had joined the White Lotus Association, among them many who were Hui-yuan's disciples, traveled to various parts of China, converting others to the Pure Land faith. Due to their activities, the Pure Land faith spread throughout all parts of China and soon embraced a large portion of the population. The monks T'an-shun, T'an-yü, and Seng-ch'e initially remained on Mt. Lu after the death of Hui-yuan, but after a while they moved to Chiang-ling (present-day Chiang-ling *hsien*, Hupei), and there began to preach. The layman Tsung Ping is also reported to have constructed a lodging in the San-hu (Three Lakes) region of Chiang-ling and lived there in seclusion.

Subsequent to this, the monk T'an-chien also moved to the same region, and began to preach there.

According to the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, T'an-chien was a disciple of Hui-yuan's disciple, Tao-tsu; he was diligent in keeping all the rules of the *Vinaya*, and studied many of the scriptures. Subsequently, he went to Ch'ang-an where he studied with Kumārajīva, and then moved to Chiang-ling where he lived in the Hsin-ssu Monastery. Here he cultivated devotions to Amitābha, desiring to be reborn in the Pure Land. Based on these references then, we know that the Pure Land faith was at an early period spread throughout the Chiang-ling region of China.

The city of Ch'eng-tu (the present-day city of Ch'eng-tu, Szechwan) was the location where Hui-yuan's younger brother, the monk Hui-chih, preached. According to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, Hui-chih was a constant devotee of the Pure Land faith. He left his brother's company in 399, and traveled west to the land of Shu (Szechwan). Here he lived in the Lung-yuan Monastery, and widely propagated the Buddhadharma. Many clerics and laity became his disciples, two early disciples being the monks Hui-yen and Seng-kung. Hui-chih died at the age of seventy-five in 412, and it is recorded that his chief disciples were the monks Tao-kung and T'an-lan.

The monk Tao-wang, one of the disciples of Hui-yuan, also taught in Szechwan. According to the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, and the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, Tao-wang became a disciple of Hui-yuan at an early age. He is described as having been widely versed in both the scriptures and the *Vinaya*, but specialized in the study of the *Nieh-p'an ching* (the Mahāyāna *Parinirvāna Sūtra*), and for several decades confined his diet to uncooked, vegetarian foods. Later in his life he moved to Ch'eng-tu, where he lived and taught in the Chih-yüan Monastery ("the Jetavana Monastery"), dying in the year 465. It is reported that, sometime during the Later Ch'i Dynasty (479–502), the monk Fa-lin also moved to Szechwan and there cultivated Pure Land devotions.

The city of Chien-k'ang (present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu), the capital city of southern China at this time, was also the scene for the preaching of the Pure Land faith by Hui-yuan's disciples. Hui-yuan's disciple, the monk Tao-yen, and two lay members of the White Lotus Association, Chou Hsü-chih and Lei Tz'u-tung, moved to Chien-k'ang after the death of Hui-yuan. According to the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Tao-yen was a native of Ch'ao-na, in An-ting (present-day Ping-kuo *hsien*, Kansu). He moved to Mt. Lu and there became a student of Hui-yuan, later moving to Ch'ang-an where he studied with Kumārajīva. Sometime during the Yuan-chia period (424–453), he was living in the T'an-hsi ssu Monastery, in the city of Hsiang-yang (the present-day city of Hsiang-yang, Hupei). In the early years of the Hsiao chien period (454–456), he received an Imperial Order to become the abbot

of the Chung-hsing ssu Monastery, in the capital city of Chien-k'ang. It was evidently here that he died in the early years of the Ch'in-shih period (466–471) at the age of sixty-eight.

The city of Yang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu) was the site of Buddhahadra and Fa-yün's new translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*) in the year 421, and it was to this city that Hui-yuan's disciple Fa-chuang moved. According to the twelfth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Fa-chuang was a native of Huai-nan (present-day Shou *hsien*, Anhwei) who, at the age of nine, left the householder's life and became a disciple of Hui-yuan. Later in life he moved to north-central China (the Kuan-chung region) and studied with Seng-ying, a disciple of Kumārajīva. In the early years of the Yuan chia period (424–453), he moved to Yang-tu and there lived in the Tao-ch'ang ssu Monastery. It was here that he recited the *Nieh-p'an ching*, the *Fa-hua ching* (the *Lotus Sūtra*), and the *Wei-mo ching* (the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*), dying here in the early years of the Ta-ming period (457–464) at the age of seventy-five.

There also appears to have been considerable missionary activity in the Chekiang region. According to the fifth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, Hui-min, who at an early age had become a monk and lived on Mt. Lu, moved to the Chia-hsiang ssu Monastery in Shan-yin (present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang) in the early years of the Yi-hsi period (405–418). He later contracted a serious illness, and his thoughts turned to the Pure Land. He fervently prayed to Kuan-yin (the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara), and it is reported that, at the moment of his death, he was rewarded by the appearance of auspicious signs.

Hui-yuan's disciple, the monk Tao-ching, left Mt. Lu and took up his residence on Mt. Jo-hsien (located in Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), where he preached the Buddhadharmā. The monk T'an-i moved to Mt. Ch'in-wang (located in present-day Hang-chou, Chekiang), where he constructed a monastery (which has been mentioned above in Chapter III. 3 [*Pacific World*, Third Series, 3 (2001)], p. 259). It is also reported that the monk Tao-tsu moved to the state of Wu (present-day Wu *hsien*, Kiangsu) after the death of Hui-yuan.

According to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Tao-tsu first left the householder's life under the master Chih Fa-chi; later, with his companions, the monks Seng-ch'ien and Tao-liu, he moved to Mt. Lu and there received the full number of precepts. These three monks were favorites of Hui-yuan, but the monks Seng-ch'ien and Tao-liu both died at the early age of twenty-seven. Tao-tsu continued the literary work begun by his friend Tao-liu, and so put into final form a scriptural catalogue entitled the *Chu-ching mu-lu*. Tao-tsu later returned to the T'ai ssu Monastery in the state of Wu, dying there at the age of seventy-one in 419. According to the seventh volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, the catalogue

compiled by Tao-tsu was in four Chinese volumes. The first volume, a scriptural catalogue of those works translated during the Wei Dynasty, was entitled the *Wei-shih lu-mu*. The second volume, recording those scriptures that appeared during the Wu Dynasty, was entitled the *Wu-shih lu-mu*. The third volume, recording those scriptures that appeared during the Chin Dynasty, was entitled the *Chin-shih tsa-lu*. And the fourth volume, recording those works that appeared "west of the river," was entitled the *Ho-hsi lu-mu*. It was reported that this four-volume catalogue enjoyed a wide circulation at this time.

Indications have been preserved for us pointing to considerable Pure Land activity at this time among monks and laymen who were not disciples of Hui-yuan. According to the biography of the monk Seng-ch'uan, preserved in the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* and in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, he was a native of Hai-yang (located in present-day Hsing-ch'eng hsien, Feng-t'ien, in Manchuria), in the western part of the region of the Liao. He early began his studies in the regions of the states of Yen and Ch'i, and a while later moved to Mt. Hu-ch'iu (present-day Wu hsien, Kiangsu), where he constructed a golden image. Subsequently, he moved to Yü-hang (present-day Ch'ien-t'ang, Chekiang), taking up residence in the Fang-hsien ssu Monastery. He is reported to have constantly desired rebirth in Sukhāvati, and to have copied out by hand several thousand copies of the *O-mi-t'o ching*.

According to the biography of T'an-hung, preserved in the twelfth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, this monk was a native of Huang-lung (perhaps the present-day Chi-lin area of Manchuria). He devoted himself to a study of various *Vinaya* works and, in the Yung-ch'ü period (420-422), traveled to the city of Fan-yü in the far south of China (in present-day Kuang-tung province). In his later years, he moved to the region of Chiao-chih (in the present-day Tongking region of Annam), taking up residence in the Hsien-shan ssu Monastery. Here he recited the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, desiring rebirth in Sukhāvati. One day in 455, he gathered together a pile of firewood and immolated himself, being perhaps the first person to commit "religious suicide" in the history of the Pure Land faith (see below, Chapter XV). T'an-hung was also perhaps the first propagator of the Pure Land faith in the area of Chiao-chih. Sometime later, there was received from the land of Champa (south of Tongking) a stone image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, Amitāyus, which may be in some way related to the early Pure Land preaching of T'an-hung.

The eleventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as well as the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, mentions the monk Hui-t'ung (var. Chih-t'ung), who lived in the T'ai-hou ssu Monastery in Ch'ang-an, learning the practice of meditation from the master Hui-chao. He was always devoted to the Pure Land faith, and it is recorded that at his death he saw the light of the Buddha.

In volume seven of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, in the biography of the monk T'an-chien, it is reported that there were many others who, through their desire to be reborn in the Pure Land, experienced auspicious signs at the time of their deaths. Such events are recorded for Tao-hai (of Chiang-ling), Hui-k'an (of Pei-chou), Hui-kung (of Tung-chou), T'an-hung (of Huai-nan; present-day Shou *hsien*, Anhwei), Tao-kuang (of Tung-yuan shan), and Tao-kuang (of Hung-nung; present-day Ling-pao *hsien*, Honan). In addition to these names, the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao* also records that the monks Fa-i, Seng-hung, and Seng-ch'ang saw auspicious signs at their deaths. And the fifteenth volume of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, quoting the *Ming-hsiang chi*, records that in the Liu-Sung Dynasty, the *upāsaka* Ko Chi-chih, the *bhikṣunī* Hui-mu, and the laymen Wei Shih-tzu and Ho T'an-yuan desired rebirth in the Pure Land, and were rewarded at their deaths by the appearance of auspicious signs.

2. The Pure Land Faith in the Ch'i and Liang Dynasties

There also appeared to be a considerable number of persons during the Ch'i (479–502) and the Liang (502–557) Dynasties who sought rebirth in the Pure Land. It was during this period that lectures on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* came to be especially popular, and the Pure Land teachings gradually came to be more and more studied. In perusing the various biographies of monks of this period, we find that in these dynasties a number of monks are recorded to have desired rebirth in the Pure Land: the monks Hui-chin, Seng-hsing, Ch'ao-pien, Fa-ming, Fa-ling, Seng-jou, Fa-tu, and Pao-liang.

According to the twelfth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Hui-chin was a native of Wu-hsing (present-day Wu-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), who lived in the Kao-tso ssu Monastery in the capital city of Chien-k'ang. He would always lecture on the text of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and caused over one hundred copies of this scripture to be made, transferring the merit from this pious deed to the attainment of his desire to be reborn in the Pure Land. He died at the age of eighty-four in 485.

According to his biography in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, the monk Seng-hsing was a native of Shan-yin (located in present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), and was the disciple of the master Hui-chi. He later moved to the Ch'eng-shan ssu Monastery in Yü *hsien* (present-day Yu-ch'eng *hsien*, Honan), where he preached the Buddhadharma. He always visualized (*nien*) the Western Pure Land, and longed for rebirth there, dying at the age of fifty-eight in 493.

The biography of Ch'ao-pien is found in the twelfth volume of the *Liang-sao-seng ch'uan*, and in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*. Here it is recorded that he lived in the Ting-lin shang ssu Monastery (the Upper

Ting-lin Monastery) in the city of Chien-k'ang, where he was earnest in his worship of the *Lotus Sūtra* and of the Buddha Amitābha. The monk Fa-ming lived in the Ling-chi ssu Monastery, where he always recited the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Wu-liang-shou ching*.

According to the eleventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Fa-lin lived in the P'ei ssu Monastery in Shu chün (present-day Ch'eng-tu hsien, Szechwan), where he was renowned for his adherence to the *Vinaya* rules. He subsequently accompanied the monk Seng-yin to the province of Shensi, returning eventually to the Ling-chien ssu Monastery in Shu (Szechwan). He was always concerned with the Pure Land faith, and recited both the *Wu-liang shou ching* and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. He died at an unknown age in 495.

According to the eighth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Seng-jou was a native of Tan-yang (present-day Tan-yang chen, Ch'ang-t'u hsien, Anhwei). He early became proficient in the scriptures and began lecturing on them, subsequently moving to Shan-yin where he studied with the master Hui-chi. He then moved to the Ting-lin shang ssu Monastery (see above) in Chien-k'ang. Here his fame reached the attention of the emperor, and he was richly rewarded for his scholastic abilities by the Emperors Wen-hui and Wen-hsüan, gaining great fame during his lifetime. He constantly vowed to be reborn in Sukhāvātī and, at every sunset, he would stand in a formal position, facing west with his palms together in reverence. He died at the age of sixty-three in 494.

The monk Fa-tu was also a native of Huang-lung. Early in his life, he traveled to the north for study and, towards the latter years of the Liu-Sung Dynasty, he moved to the city of Chien-k'ang and took up residence in the Chi-hsia ssu Monastery on Mt. She (located in present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu). He was held in esteem by the Emperor Wen-hsüan, and always desired to be reborn in the Pure Land, often lecturing on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. He died at the age of sixty-three in 500.

The monastery in which Fa-tu lived, the Chi-hsia ssu, was founded sometime during the T'ai-shih period (465–471) of the Liu-Sung Dynasty. It seems that a retired scholar from Chi-chou by the name of Ming Seng-shao moved to Mt. She and there built himself a rude hut. Subsequently the monk Fa-tu, who was "a companion in the Way" of Ming Seng-shao, also moved to Mt. She, and there, in a small mountain temple, he began to lecture on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. Once, during the night, Ming Seng-shao saw a bright light coming from this temple. Moved by this miracle he converted his hut into a Buddhist monastery in 489. After his death, his son Ming Chung-chang constructed a more permanent dwelling against the face of a cliff at the western base of the mountain. Here, together with the monk Fa-tu, he carved a seated image of the Buddha Amitābha, over thirty feet in height, with a backdrop forty feet high, and seated figures of two bodhisattvas, over thirty feet in height. Chung-chang and the monk Fa-tu

were aided in their construction work by the various emperors of this dynasty, the Emperors Wen-hui, Wen-hsien, Wen-hsüan, and Shih-an. The wife of the Liu-Sung Prime Minister, the Lady Tsui, and, later, the Ch'i Dynasty military governor of Yung-chou, one T'ien Hsiung, contributed money for the completion of this work. With their contributions, the workmen were able to carve onto the face of these massive rocks "hundreds of millions" of forms of the *nirmāṇakāya* Buddha, Śākyamuni. These figures were later decorated through gifts made by a Liang Dynasty king, King Ching-hui of Lin-ch'uan. (This information is based on a memorial inscription, the *She shan chi-hsia ssu p'ei-ming*, which was composed by the Ch'en Dynasty official, Chiang Tsung-chih, and preserved in volume four of the *Chin-ling fan-she chih* [A Monograph of the Buddhist Monasteries in the Chin-lin area]). These carvings became famous, and were known as the She-shan Ch'ien-Fo yen, "The Grotto of the One Thousand Buddhas on Mt. She." However, another account differs considerably in its account of the origins of these carved images. This is the one preserved in a memorial inscription erected in honor of one Lord Ming-cheng, a stele written in the hand of the T'ang Dynasty Emperor Kao-tsung and erected within the precincts of the Chi-hsia ssu Monastery. This memorial inscription is also preserved in the fifty-ninth volume of the *Chin-shih ts'ui-pien*. This latter account records that the monk Fa-tu had over ten new carved images. It also records that in 516 (not in 511 as given above) the King of Lin-ch'uan had constructed one image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life (Amitāyus) which measured (from base to tip of halo) some fifty feet in height! It is not certain which of these accounts is the correct one.

According to the account preserved in the eighth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Pao-liang initially lived in the Chung-hsing ssu Monastery, in the city of Chien-k'ang. Later, he moved to the Ling-wei ssu Monastery, and here would often lecture on the *Nieh-p'an ching*, the *Sheng-man ching* (the *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra*), the *Wei-mo ching*, and the *Fa-hua ching*. In 509, upon an order from the Emperor Wu, he composed a seventy-one volume commentary on the *Nieh-p'an ching*, the *Nieh-p'an ching chi-chieh*, in which he gathered together all the theories propounded by the various masters who had previously commented upon this scripture. His biography also records that he lectured on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* close to ten times.

Based on these accounts, then, we can see that lectures on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* were gradually becoming more popular at that time in southern China, but it would seem, too, that there were no written works as yet composed by these lecturers.

The monk Fa-yün was a disciple of the master Pao-liang. He lived in the Kuang-che ssu Monastery in Chin-ling (one of the names of the city of Chin-k'ang). There he lectured often on the *Ch'eng-shih lun* (the *Tattva-siddhi*) and the *Fa-hua ching*. Together with the scholar-monks Seng-min and

Chih-tsang, Fa-yün was counted as one of the "Three Great Dharma Masters of the Liang Dynasty" (*Liang san ta-fa-shih*). It is not recorded that he sought rebirth in the Pure Land. However, in the fifth volume of his work on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Fa-hua ching i-chi*, in the section where he elucidates the fourth chapter, "On Faith and Understanding," the wealthy man in the scripture is likened to the Buddha Amitābha. Similarly, in the eighth volume of this same commentary, Fa-yün discusses the passage from the sixteenth chapter, "On Length of His Life," where the text says, "he manifests his own body, or the body of another." Fa-yün explains that "his own body" refers to the form of the Buddha Śākyamuni, while "the body of another" refers to the body of Amitābha. Based on these fragmentary passages, it would appear that Fa-yün held that the Buddha Amitābha (here identical to the Buddha Amitāyus) is the basic underlying form (*pen shen*) of the Buddha Śākyamuni, which, if true, is profoundly significant for later thought.

In his *Ching Kuan-yin ching shu*, Chih-i (founder of the T'ien-t'ai tradition) discusses the ideas of the Master An-lin of the Ch'i-an ssu Monastery, whom Chih-i considered to be one of the "Seven Masters of the North." According to Chih-i, An-lin held that Śākyamuni was the "response body, the trace body," whereas Amitābha was "the true body, the underlying body." "The response body" (*nirmāṇakāya*) was unable to conquer the effects of poison, but the "true body" (*dharmakāya* or *sambhogakāya*) was able to remove all types of poisons. This theory of An-lin is clearly the teaching that there are two aspects to the Buddha's manifestation, a basic ground whence the manifestation arises, and the manifestation, "the trace body" itself, and that these bodies were the Buddha Amitābha and Śākyamuni respectively. This theory was perhaps borrowed by An-lin from the teachings of the master Fa-yün. We know that in 509, a nineteen-foot high golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life was cast and enshrined in this same Kuang-che ssu Monastery. Based upon these accounts, then, we can see that this Kuang-che ssu was the primary center for the Pure Land faith in this region.

According to the fourth volume of the *Pi-ch'iu-ni ch'uan* (*Biographies of Nuns*), the nun Tao-kuei of the Ting shan ssu Monastery recited the *Sheng-man ching* and the *Wu-liang-shou ching* continually both day and night, dying at the age of eighty-five in 516.

According to the sixteenth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Tao-ch'in lived on Mt. Lu in the early years of the Liang Dynasty, constantly cultivating Pure Land devotions. One night in a dream he saw a ship about to set sail in the direction of the Buddha land of Amitābha. Although he asked to board the ship, he was not permitted to do so. This was because he did not recite the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and he had not paid for the construction of a bathhouse on the grounds of the monastery! From this time onward, we are told, Tao-ch'in recited the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and he was

eventually reborn into the Pure Land, his death being accompanied by auspicious signs.

The account of Tao-ch'in is preserved also in the *O-mi-t'o ching pu-ssu-i shen-li ch'uan* (*Accounts of the Miraculous Power of the O-mi-t'o ching*), and in a *Postface* (*hou chi*) to the *O-mi-t'o ching*, dated 728 (K'ai-yuan 16), which was discovered at Tun-huang. In these accounts, the monk in question is referred to simply as "the Meditation Master Ch'in" (Ch'in *ch'an-shih*), and his dream occurred sometime during the T'ien chia period (560–565) of the Ch'en Dynasty. Ennin's catalogue of scriptures, the *Nittō-guhō mokuroku* (dated 838), lists among other works a one-volume *nien-fo san-mei chih kuei* (*Instruction in the Nien-fo Samādhi*), composed by the Sui Dynasty monk Hui-ch'in, of the I-ai ssu Monastery, on Mt. Lu. Now if this Hui-ch'in is the above-mentioned Meditation Master Ch'in, he could not have lived in the early years of the Liang Dynasty, but sometime during the years of the Ch'en Dynasty and the Sui Dynasty instead.

3. Early Images of Amitābha

From the end of the Chin Dynasty onwards, the construction of images of the Buddha Amitābha continued apace with the gradual growth of the Pure Land faith. Most of the images in north China were carved out of rock, while those in the south were metal.

According to an account given in the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as well as in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, the monk Seng-hung lived in the Wa-kuan ssu Monastery, in the city of Chien-k'ang (present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu). At this time, at the end of the Chin Dynasty, the prohibition on the use of copper was very strictly enforced, but notwithstanding, Seng-hung solicited donations from believers and was able to have cast a sixteen foot-high image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. He was arrested and thrown into prison for this deed, but he began to recite the *Kuan-shih-yin ching* (the scripture of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*), while fervently worshiping an image of the Buddha. Suddenly, he perceived a miraculous vision, and was able to escape from the prison.

According to an account preserved in the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as well as in the *Ming-seng ch'uan chao*, the monk Seng-liang lived in Chiang-ling. He wished to cast a sixteen-foot golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. However, since the copper necessary for the casting was insufficient in that region, he hired one hundred craftsmen and rented some ten large vessels, and sailed with the craftsmen to the border of Hsiang-chou (present-day Ch'ang-sha *hsien*, Hunan). He arrived at the shrine of Wu-tzu Hsü, located in Tung-hsi, "Copper Canyon." Here they mined some copper and cast the image. However, there was not enough copper for the casting of the halo surrounding the image,

so the Liu-Sung Emperor Wen constructed a gold-plated halo and presented it to the image. The finished image was enshrined in the P'eng-ch'eng ssu Monastery. Subsequently, during the T'ai-shih period (465–471), the image was moved to the Hsiang-kung ssu Monastery by the Emperor Ming.

There is preserved in the *Fa-yuan tsa-yuan yuan-shih chi mu-lu* (quoted in the twelfth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*) an account of the construction of a golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life that was sixteen feet tall by the monk Seng-liang. This account is entitled the *Ching-chou sha-men Shih Seng-liang tsao Wu-liang-shou chang-liu chin-hsiang chi*.

Volume two of the Liang Dynasty monk Pao-ch'ang's composition, the *Pi-ch'iu-ni ch'uan*, records that the nun Tao-ch'iuung (of the Chien-fu ssu Monastery, Chin-ling) had constructed a golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life in 438.

The *Ming-seng ch'uan chao* records two additional instances. The Liu-Sung Dynasty monk Tao-ching, of the An-lo ssu Monastery (the Sukhāvati Monastery), had a five-foot gilded image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life cast. Also, the monk Hui-ching (of the Chih-yuan ssu Monastery, see above) constructed a sixteen foot-high image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life.

The twenty-eighth volume of the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* records that the Liu-Sung Dynasty nun Tao-yüan had constructed some seven large images, which she placed in various monasteries, and further records that she had a copper and gold alloy image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life cast.

The above-mentioned *Fa-yuan tsa-yuan yuan-shih chi mu-lu* also contains two further inscriptions. One is a record of the Liu-Sung Emperor Hsiao-wu constructing a golden image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life (the *Sung Hsiao-wu Huang-ti tsao Wu-liang shou shin-hsiang chi*). The other is an inscription on the cast metal image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life sent as tribute from the country of Champa (the *Lin-i kuo hsien Wu-liang-shou t'ou shih hsiang chi*).

The Japanese Buddhist scholar Seigai Ōmura, in his *Shina Bijutsu-shi: Chōsō-hen (History of Chinese Art: Sculpture)* records a slightly defaced stone inscription, dated 448, from a border region of China. The inscription reads: "For the benefit of my father and mother, as well as for my mate of the Hsiung clan, and our children, I have made the vow to be born in the land of the Buddha □-liang-shou□" (為父母并熊身兒子、起願□亮壽□国生[square boxes represent illegible or missing characters in the original]). The character *liang* 亮 is an error for *liang* 量, and so the image was clearly an image of the Buddha Amitābha. We can see from these above accounts that the construction of images of the Buddha Amitābha continued apace throughout the Liu-Sung Dynasty.

There are a considerable number of references to the construction of such images during the Ch'i and Liang Dynasties as well. The sixteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi* preserves for us an inscription on an

embroidered hanging of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, which was crafted by a certain Madame Ch'en in company with the *bhikṣuṇī* Pao-yuan of the Yueh-lin ssu Monastery, and dated 486. The thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* records that the monk Fa-yüeh of the Ch'eng-ch'ueh ssu Monastery in Chien-k'ang, together with the monk Chih-ching of the Pai-ma ssu Monastery, made a solicitation for donations in order to construct an eighteen foot-high image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. In the early years of the Liang Dynasty, they received imperial permission for the construction of this image, and in 909 work was begun on it within the Hsiao Chuang-yen ssu Monastery. The amount of copper available for the construction was insufficient, so additional copper was presented by the Imperial Court, and eventually a nineteen foot-high image of the Buddha was completed, which was enshrined in the Kuang-che ssu Monastery. The account concludes by saying that this image was the largest golden image existing anywhere east of the Kunlun Mountains (i.e., in all China!). The account of the casting of this image is given in the *Kuang-che ssu chang-chiu Wu-liang-shou chin-hsiang chi*, preserved in the *Fa-yuan tsa-yuan yuan-shih chi mu-lu* (which in turn is preserved in the twelfth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*).

The sixteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming-chi* contains an inscription to an image of the Buddha Amitābha, composed by the Liang Dynasty literati Shen Yueh.

The thirty-ninth volume of the *Nan-shih (Standard History of the Southern Dynasties)* preserves the inscription from a stele erected within the Chin-hsiang ssu Monastery (the Monastery of the Golden Image) in Yung-chou (the *Yung-chou Chin-hsiang ssu Wu-liang-shou Fo-hsiang p'ei*) composed by the Liang Dynasty layman Liu Ch'ien.

The ninetieth volume of the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, in the *Monograph on Spirits and Prodigies (Shen-i tien)*, records an inscription to an image of the Buddha Amitābha composed by the Liang Dynasty Emperor Chien-wen.

In his *O-mi-t'o ching shu*, the Sung Dynasty scholar-monk Yuan-chao (see below Chapter XXVIII) records that the layman Ch'en Jen-leng raised a stele within the precincts of the Lung-hsing ssu Monastery, Hsiang-chou (present-day Hsiang-yang, Hupei), with the text of the *O-mi-t'o ching* on it. The text had some twenty-one additional characters in it: following the words "one-pointedness of mind, undisturbed," the text continued with the words: "exclusively hold to the Name . . . with many good roots and various meritorious and virtuous causes and conditions."

Yuan-chao himself had this inscription copied and carved on another stele, and erected it on the grounds of his own monastery, the Ch'ung-fu ssu Monastery in the Hsi-hu (the Western Lakes) region of Hang-chou, in present-day Chekiang province. Eventually, this latter inscription was again copied and brought to Japan, and raised on a stele presently in the precincts of the Shuzo-jinja, in the province of Echizen. This stele has been declared a National Treasure.

CHAPTER VI: THE EARLY PURE LAND FAITH NORTHERN CHINA

1. The Northern Wei Dynasty

Under the influence of Hui-yuan of Mt. Lu, coupled with the translation by Pao-yün and Kālayaśas of Pure Land texts, the Pure Land faith spread to all parts of south China. In the north, however, there were no major spokesmen for the Pure Land teachings. Civil wars and insurrections continually ravaged the area, and in 446 the Northern Wei Emperor Wu began a systematic destruction of Buddhism. Texts were burned, and monasteries and *stūpa*-s were laid waste. Thus, for a while Buddhism was effectively destroyed in the regions under the effective control of the Northern Wei Dynasty.

When the Emperor Wen-ch'eng took the throne, Buddhism underwent a revival. In 454, the monk T'an-yüeh was given an Imperial Command to construct five shrines out of caves and grottos carved into the north face of the mountains facing the Sai-shan ku Valley, in Wu-chou, to the northwest of the Wei capital, Heng-an (present-day Ta-t'ung, Shansi). Later, T'an-yüeh constructed over ten stone chapels and temples in the vicinity of these caves, and images of the Buddhas were enshrined in all of them. This was the beginning of the famous Ta-t'ung Caves.

In 494, the Emperor Hsiao-wen moved the capital of the Wei Dynasty to the city of Loyang, and soon thereafter work was begun on the Lung-men caves (located in present-day Lo-yang *hsien*, Honan). Over the years, a large number of both caves and temples came to be constructed in this area, and images of the Buddhas were enshrined in them. The largest number of images were those of the Buddha Maitreya, followed in number by images of Śākyamuni and Avalokiteśvara. There were comparatively few images of the Buddha Amitābha, and those that exist are of a somewhat later date.

According to Seigai Ōmura's *Shina Bitjutsu-shi: Chōsō-hen*, the first image of the Buddha Amitābha to be constructed at Lung-men was one raised by a pious laywoman, one Madame Chiang, in the year 518. This image was followed at Lung-men by images raised in 519, 522, 523, 526, 527, 533, and 545.

Nevertheless, at this early date, concepts of the Pure Land were still in the elementary stage, and in most cases the faith in the Pure Land of Amitābha was identified or confused with a faith in the appearance of the future Buddha Maitreya and his Pure Land, Tuṣita. This is shown with great clarity by one inscription, dated 499, preserved in the Ku-yang Cave in Lung-men. This inscription was composed by the *bhikṣu*

Seng-hsin on a stone image of the Buddha Maitreya constructed by him. The inscription says:

I have raised this one stone image of Maitreya for the benefit of the rebirth of my father and mother, and for all of the masters and members of the *Saṅgha* related to me. I desire that they all be born in the Western Land of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, that they may hear the Three Teachings of the Dharma under the Nāga Flower Tree. May they all be reborn in their human state as the sons and grandsons of lords and kings, and may they be born together with the Great Bodhisattvas in the dwelling of Tuṣita Heaven.

An inscription on an image of Maitreya raised by the *bhikṣuṇī* Fa-ching in 501 states that she desired to be born in the Western Land of Sublime Bliss (Sukhāvātī), and that she be born as a duke, a king, or a millionaire. We find a similar sentiment in an inscription on an image of the Buddha Śakyamuni raised in this same year by the *bhikṣuṇī* Hui-chih. She also desires to be born in this same Western Land of Sublime Bliss as a duke, a king, or a millionaire, and she desires to hear the Three Teachings of Maitreya given under the Nāga Flower Tree.

These inscriptions show that the belief in a future Pure Land involved both belief in the future appearance of Maitreya, and belief in the Pure Land of Amitābha, Sukhāvātī. These devotees wished to be reborn in Sukhāvātī by virtue of the merits accruing from the construction of an image of Maitreya. Then, when the Buddha Maitreya appears in the world, they wish to be born as human beings, the sons of feudal lords or kings, and to hear the Three Teachings given by the Buddha Maitreya under the Nāga Flower Tree.

Many devotees desired to be born in Heaven, among the *deva*-s, through the merits acquired by raising an image of the Buddha Amitābha. In one inscription, dated 526, on an image of the Buddha Amitābha raised by the *upāsikā* (laywoman) Huang Fa-seng, she desires that her deceased relatives be born in Heaven, where “they will cast off suffering, and obtain pleasure.” In an inscription on an image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life, raised in 545 by (the monk?) Hui-chien, the donor says: “For the benefit of my deceased father and mother, I have constructed an image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life [here: Wu-shou Fo], desiring that they may be born in the Heavenly Land.” Another inscription dated 549 on a stone image says that the donor has constructed four Buddha and four Bodhisattva images, by the merits of which the deceased may ascend to Heaven, and there be born in the Western Land of the Buddha of Unlimited Life. An inscription on a stone image of Amitābha carved in 597 records that the donor desires to cast off his present defiled form, and meet Maitreya face to face, and that he may be born in the Western Land (of Amitābha).

What specifically do these donors mean by Heaven, *t'ien*? We can, of course, regard this Heaven in the Confucian sense of the word. However, these are not Confucian inscriptions, but inscriptions at the base of Buddha images, so the Heaven referred to must be one of the Pure Lands of Buddhism. From this very early period, however, the belief in the Pure Land of Maitreya, Tuṣita Heaven, was bound up with the belief in the Pure Land of Amitābha, Sukhāvati. So these inscriptions doubtlessly refer to the one Pure Land which is commonly called a "heaven" (*t'ien*), in Buddhist writings, the Tuṣita Heaven of Maitreya. If this is the case, these inscriptions must be read and understood as evidence of this confusion of beliefs, on the one hand a belief in "birth in Tuṣita" (*tou-shuai shang-sheng*), and on the other, "rebirth in the West" (*hsi-fang wang-sheng*). The later result of this confusion of beliefs led to Sukhāvati coming to be called the *t'ien-shou kuo*, the "Heavenly Land of Long Life."

In a *Postface* (*hou-chi*) to the forty-sixth volume of a copy of the *Hua-yen ching*, found in Tun-huang and dated 583, we find what is perhaps the first occurrence of the phrase *t'ien-shou kuo*. This is in the phrase: "I desire that my deceased father and mother are born in the Western Heavenly Land of Long Life." Also, an inscription on an image of Amitābha in the Mo-ai Cliffs in the Ling-yen ssu Monastery, located in the Ch'ien-fo Mountains of present-day Li-shan *hsien*, Shantung province, and dated sometime in the Sui Dynasty, states: "I have respectfully constructed this one image of the Buddha Amitābha, with the desire that I, together with all sentient beings, may ascend to □□□□□, there to maintain our heavenly long lives" (敬造阿弥陀佛像一軀、願供一切衆生同登岐□□□□□保天壽).

In Japan, in 622, the Empress Suiko had constructed an embroidered hanging, entitled the "Tenjūkoku Embroidered Hanging," as an offering upon the death of Prince Shōtoku. Such a hanging clearly reflected the north Chinese belief of the two previous centuries. Prince Shōtoku was, it was thought, reborn in Amitābha's Pure Land, and this embroidered hanging is thought to represent this Pure Land, Sukhāvati.

In any case we can see that, although confused with Tuṣita Heaven in the minds of some monks, nuns, and laity, belief in the Pure Land of Amitābha came to be more and more widespread in north China.

2. Bodhiruci and the "Six Great Worthies of the Pure Land Teachings."

The monk Bodhiruci was a native of north India who came to China, arriving at the capital city of Loyang in 508, during the reign of the Emperor Hsuan-wu of the Northern Wei Dynasty. Bodhiruci was the famous translator of such important texts as the *Shih-ti ching lun* (the *Daśa-bhūmi vyākhyāna*) and the *Ju-Leng-chia ching* (the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*). Impor-

tant for the Pure Land teachings, however, was his translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching Yü-p'o-ti-she Yuan-sheng chieh* (An Upadeśa [Instruction] on the Amitāyus Sūtra: A Gāthā on Desiring Rebirth), traditionally ascribed to Vasubandhu. This work is also known by a variety of shorter titles, either the *Wu-liang shou ching lun* (A Commentary on the Amitāyus Sūtra), the *Wang-sheng lun* (A Commentary on Rebirth), or simply the *Ching-t'u lun* (A Commentary on the Pure Land). It was an important work to later Pure Land thinkers for its teaching of attaining rebirth by the five-fold practice of the *nien-fo* (*wu nien-fo wang-sheng*).

According to the ninth volume of the *Li-tai San-pao chi*, this work was translated in 530 during the Northern Wei Dynasty; the sixth volume of the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu* gives the date of this translation as 529. However, there is nothing in the biography of Bodhiruci (preserved in the first volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*) that would attribute a belief in the Pure Land to him. Rather, the first reference to him in a Pure Land context is a master-disciple lineage recorded in the second volume of the *An-lo chi* (A Collection of Works on Sukhāvati), composed in the T'ang Dynasty by the monk Tao-ch'ō (see below, Chapter XII). In this work, Tao-ch'ō gives a lineage of six masters who, in their profound investigations of the Mahāyāna, came to believe that the most essential teachings of the Mahāyāna were the Pure Land teachings. These six masters are Bodhiruci, Hui-ch'ung, Tao-ch'ang, T'an-luan, Ta-hai, and Fa-shang. Thus, according to Tao-ch'ō, Bodhiruci is the first Patriarchal Master of the Pure Land teachings in China.

In the biography of T'an-luan, preserved in the sixth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, the story is told that when T'an-luan was traveling in south China, he passed through Loyang and there met the master Bodhiruci. T'an-luan asked Bodhiruci whether there was in the Buddhadharma any art or technique that equaled the Taoist techniques for attaining perpetual life. Bodhiruci responded to this by spitting on the ground and berating him. Handing T'an-luan a copy of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, Bodhiruci said that this was the technique of the Great Sage, Śākyamuni, and that if he were to cultivate its teachings, he would obtain liberation from the round of birth and death, and hence attain the deathless state.

If this account is true, then Bodhiruci must be regarded as a believer in the Pure Land teachings. However, it is not recorded in either the *An-lo chi*, nor in Chia-ts'ai's *Ching-t'u lun*. Perhaps this account is no more than a pious legend appended to account for Bodhiruci's translation of a major Pure Land text, the *Wu-liang-shou ching lun*. In any case, it is hard to credit this account with any basis in historical fact.

The name Hui-ch'ung 慧龍 is perhaps a misprint for the name Tao-ch'ung 道龍. According to the seventh volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, the master Tao-ch'ung studied the *Shih-ti ching lun* with Bodhiruci. In his day he was as famous a master as his contemporary, Hui-kuang (see

below), for Tao-ch'ung came to be counted as one of the patriarchal masters of the northern Ti-lun tradition. The northern Ti-lun tradition was a major academic tradition in Chinese Buddhism which centered on the study of Bodhiruci's translation of the *Daśa-bhūmi-vyākhyāna*. The study of this text prepared the way for the eventual development of the Hua-yen tradition of Buddhism. In any case, there is no evidence in the biography of the master Tao-ch'ung that he was especially interested in the Pure Land faith.

According to the twenty-fourth volume of the *Ta-chih-tu lun shu* (composed by the Northern Chou Dynasty scholar-monk Hui-ying), the master Tao-ch'ang 道場 (also written Tao-chang 道長) was a disciple of Hui-kuang. Subsequently he attended Bodhiruci's lectures, but became the object of the jealousy of Bodhiruci's other students, and moved to Ch'ung-kao shan (located in present-day Teng-feng *hsien*, Honan), where he lived for ten years, studying the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. He eventually left the mountain and returned to the city, where he began to lecture on this work, and the subsequent popularity of the *Ta-chih tu lun* is said to be based on Tao-ch'ang's lectures on the text.

In the biography of one Chih-nien, preserved in the eleventh volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, there is mention of the Dharma Master Tao-ch'ang 道場 (道長) who lived in Yeh-tu (located in present-day Lin-chang *hsien*, Honan). He was well-versed in the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, and was a major scholar of this tradition. In the biography of the monk Ming-chan, in the twenty-fourth volume of this same *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, mention is also made of the Dharma Master Tao-ch'ang, who lived in the Ta-chi ssu Monastery, in Yeh. It states that his exclusive topic of study was the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. Thus, we can see from these accounts that he lived in the Ta-chi ssu Monastery in the capital city of Yeh, and that his lectures on the *Ta-chih-tu lun* were popular and well-attended.

According to accounts preserved in the second volume of Tao-hsüan's *Chi Shen-chou San-pao kan-t'ung lu*, and in the fifteenth volume of the *Fayuan chu-lin*, sometime during the reign of the Sui Dynasty Emperor Wen, the *śramaṇa* Ming-hsien visited the monastery of the master Tao-ch'ang. While there he saw a picture of the Buddha Amitābha surrounded by some fifty attendant bodhisattvas. This picture was supposedly based on an Indian model preserved in the Kukkuṭārāma Vihāra in Magadha, showing the Five Bodhisattvas of Supernormal Powers (*rddhi*). Tao-ch'ang copied this picture and caused it to be circulated. Since this Tao-ch'ang is, without doubt, the same Tao-ch'ang mentioned above, and if this account is historically true, then he was a believer in the Buddha Amitābha, and the work that he obtained was the so-called "*Maṇḍala* of the Five Supernormal Powers."

According to the third volume of Fa-lin's *Pien-ch'eng lun*, the Northern Wei Emperor Hsiao-wen constructed the An-yang ssu Monastery (the

Sukhāvati Monastery) in the capital city of Yeh in memory of his deceased mother. It is clear then, that the Pure Land faith enjoyed a great prosperity in the capital city of Yeh.

The fifth of the “Six Pure Land Worthies” listed by Tao-ch’o is the monk Ta-hai, which is perhaps a variant name for the monk Hui-hai. According to the twelfth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch’uan*, the monk Hui-hai first studied with the Dharma Master Chiung who lived in the Kuang-kuo ssu Monastery, in the capital city of Yeh, and here studied the *Nieh-p’an ching* and the *Leng-chia ching*. Later Hui-hai constructed the An-lo ssu Monastery (the Sukhāvati Monastery) in Chiang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu), and lived there until his death at the age of sixty-eight in 609. Throughout his life he desired rebirth in the Pure Land. On one occasion he received from the monk Seng-ch’üan (of Ch’i-chou, located in present-day Li-ch’eng *hsien*, Shantung) an image of the Buddha of Unlimited Life copied from the above-mentioned picture of the Bodhisattvas of the Five Supernormal Powers. He in turn caused this picture to be copied, recording on it that viewing it only deepened his desire for rebirth in the Pure Land. From this account, it is clear that the master Hui-hai was also a believer and a worshiper of the “Maṇḍala of the Five Supernormal Powers.”

The reputed history of this maṇḍala is given in the second volume of Tao-hsüan’s *Chi Shen-chou San-pao kan-t’ung lu*. In the Kukkuṭārāma Monastery, in Magadha, there were five Bodhisattvas who possessed supernormal powers (*rddhi*). They went to Sukhāvati heaven and there they met Amitābha, requesting him to descend to this *sahā* world in order to benefit the living beings here. At that time, the Buddha was seated with fifty of his attendant bodhisattvas, each one on his lotus throne. The Buddha then appeared in this world, together with these fifty attendant bodhisattvas, and they manifested themselves on the top of a tree. The five bodhisattvas took the leaves of this tree and drew pictures of this scene on them, and distributed these leaves far and wide.

During the reign of the Han Emperor Ming, a *śramaṇa*, the nephew of Kāśyapa-*mātāṅga*, brought a copy of this *maṇḍala* to China. Tao-hsüan continues that time of the Wei and Chin Dynasties is distant from the time of the Buddha, and the world has entered into the period of the Extinction of the Dharma. For these reasons both scriptures and religious pictures are on the verge of extinction, and this *maṇḍala* too was almost lost.

During the reign of the Sui Emperor Wen, there was a *śramaṇa* by the name of Ming-hsien. He obtained a copy of this *maṇḍala* from the Dharma Master Tao-ch’ang, and Tao-ch’ang in turn told him the circumstances of its composition in India, and of its transmission to China. From the time of Tao-ch’ang onward, copies of this picture spread widely throughout China. The Northern Ch’i Dynasty painter, Ts’ao Chung-ta, was especially good at mixing colors, and he drew facsimilies of this *maṇḍala* on the walls of monasteries all over the country.

As we have seen from the above, this *maṇḍala* is reputed to trace its origins to the Later Han Dynasty, but this tale is obviously not based on historical fact. Previously we have referred to the second volume of the *Wang-sheng ch'uan*, which was composed by one Chieh-chu, and is now preserved in the library of the Shimpukuji Monastery, Tokyo. This text records that the Indian monk Jinadharmā was a firm believer in the Pure Land teachings, and that in India he drew a picture of Amitābha surrounded by twenty-five attendant bodhisattvas. He brought this picture with him to China, and composed a *gāthā* expressing his devotion to the *maṇḍala*. The *gāthā* says, "If you desire the Pure Land, you should make images and pictures. At the moment of your death, they will appear before you, and shall point out the Path to you"

These twenty-five attendant bodhisattvas perhaps have some relationship with the twenty-five bodhisattvas mentioned in the *Shih wang-sheng O-mi-t'o Fo-kuo ching*, and since this *maṇḍala* is a picture of Amitābha and his attendants, the figure twenty-five is perhaps also a scribal error for the figure fifty-two. If this is the case, then perhaps it was the Indian master Jinadharmā who first brought this *maṇḍala* to China, sometime during the Northern Ch'i Dynasty (479–502).

According to volume X:4 of the *Yuishiki-ron Dōgaku-shō*, the master Chih-chou of P'u-yang (present-day P'u-yang *hsien*, Hopei), constructed images of Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and the fifty-two bodhisattvas within the Hsi-fang Ching-t'u yuan (the Western Pure Land Chapel). His mind was solely concerned with the Pure Land, and suddenly some miraculous signs appeared to him. According to this account, the representation of these fifty-two bodhisattvas continued to be produced well into the T'ang Dynasty.

The representation of Amitābha and his fifty-two attendant bodhisattvas was introduced into Japan as well. The volume *Amida* of the *Kakuzen-shō* (*Kakuzen-shō: Amida-no-kan*) gives pictures of these bodhisattvas.

3. Hui-kuang

The scholar-monk Hui-kuang was as famous in his day as was the monk Tao-ch'ung, the disciple of Bodhiruci. He was counted as the founder of the southern branch of the Ti-lun tradition that centered on the study of the *Daśa-bhūmi* scripture. According to the twenty-first volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, Hui-kuang was initially the Monastic Supervisor (*kuo-seng-t'u*) in the capital city of Loyang. Later he was sent by Imperial Order to Yeh, where he became the Monastic Supervisor for the whole kingdom (*kuo-t'ung*). During his whole life, he desired rebirth in the Pure Land. However, it is not certain which

Pure Land it was that he was so devoted to (the Sukhāvati of Amitābha, or the Tuṣita of Maitreya). His biography does state that when he was about to die, he desired to be reborn in Sukhāvati.

Fa-shang, the last of the Tao-ch'ō's "Six Pure Land Worthies," was a disciple of Hui-kuang. According to the eighth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, he was as famous in his day as Tao-ch'ang. Throughout his life he worshiped Maitreya, and thus desired to be reborn in Tuṣita Heaven, dying at the age of eighty-five in 580. According to this, he was not a devotee of the Sukhāvati Pure Land faith. The reason Tao-ch'ō included him among the "Six Pure Land [here: Sukhāvati] Worthies" was perhaps that the meaning of the term "Pure Land" as employed by Tao-ch'ō was the broad meaning of this term. In this usage it would have also included the idea of Tuṣita Heaven as a Pure Land, on an equal footing with Sukhāvati.

Furthermore, Hui-kuang's disciple, the monk Tao-p'ing, was noted for being a devotee of Sukhāvati and, according to the eighth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, at the time of his death saw the light of the Buddha. According to the ninth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, Tao-p'ing's disciple was the monk Ling-yü, who composed three commentaries. One was on the *O-mi-t'ō ching* (the *O-mi-t'ō ching shu*), one on the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching* (the *Kuan Wu-Liang-shou ching shu*), and one on the *Upadeśa* of Vasubandhu (the *Wang-sheng lun shu*) in which he elucidated and clarified the Pure Land teachings. Based on this, then, we can clearly see that Pure Land faith and devotion was highly regarded in both the Northern and the Southern branches of the Ti-lun tradition.

It was approximately at this period, too, that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* (*The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*) first came to be noticed in Chinese Buddhist circles. It was traditionally taught that this work was composed in India by Aśvaghōṣa, and was translated into Chinese by the monk Paramārtha. This work teaches origination from out of the Tathāgata-garbha, and that the absolute (*tathatā, chen-ju*) constitutes the basis and the support of all the dharmas, a position which tallied with the contemporary teachings of the Southern branch of the Ti-lun tradition.

In volume five of the *Chung-ching mu-lu* (compiled in the Sui Dynasty by the monk Fa-ching), the *Ta-ch'eng ch'ih-sin lun* is listed within the section "Doubtful Works" (*I-huo lu*). The notation indicates that the work does not appear in any list of Paramārtha's translations, and so the compiler relegated it to the "doubtful" category. Volume ten of the *Ssu-lun hsüan-i* by the T'ang Dynasty monk Hui-chun is preserved in the second volume of Chinkai's *Sanron-gensho Mongiyō*. Here it states that the masters of the Northern branch of the Ti-lun tradition held that this work was not composed by Aśvaghōṣa, but that it was forged (i.e., written in China and ascribed to an Indian master) by some master of the Ti-lun tradition.

The *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* itself says in one passage at the end of the section "Cultivation and Faith":

If one desires to cultivate stilling and insight (*śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*), and to search out correct faith, because one lives in this *Sahā* world, it is not possible to ever personally encounter the Buddhas, and to make *pūja* offerings to them. It is very difficult to generate faith. So, if someone fears regressing, he should with one-pointedness of mind concentrate on the Buddha of the West, Amitābha, and be reborn in his Pure Land, and abide in the number of those truly assured.

This passage borrows heavily from the teaching of the two paths, the difficult and the easy path, attributed to Nāgārjuna. Furthermore, it is also closely related to T'an-luan's teachings that divide these paths into two: the difficult path is the path of practice in this world, whereas the easy path is the path of rebirth. We can see, then, that many of the masters of the Ti-lun tradition were believers in the Pure Land faith, and, as Hui-chün points out, this work was probably composed by a master of the Southern branch of this Ti-lun tradition.

Another work whose first appearance dates from this period is the two-volume *Chan-ts'a shan-o Yeh-pao ching*. The text itself, which is included in the present-day canon of Buddhist scriptures, bears the name of the Indian *Tripitaka* Master Bodhidīpa as its translator. Bodhidīpa, however, is totally unknown. According to the twelfth volume of the *Li-tai San-pao chi*, the scholar-monk Fa-ching (the compiler of the *Chung-ching mu-lu*) was asked to examine this work in 593 in order to determine its authenticity. Fa-ching declared that it was a forgery, and as a result, it was officially prohibited from circulating. Fa-ching, in both the second volume of his *Chung-ching mu-lu* and the fourth volume of Yen-tsung's *Chung-ching mu-lu*, relegates this scripture to the section "Doubtful Works," so we can confidently say that this work is not the translation of an Indian original.

The last volume of the *Yeh-pao ching* states that it teaches the "true significance" of the Mahāyāna but, in fact, its teaching in this section is almost identical to the teachings of the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*. Furthermore, the *Yeh-pao ching* praises the Pure Land teachings in terms that are very close to those used in the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*. The *Yeh-pao ching* says, towards the end of its last volume, that even if one were to practice *adhimokṣa* (one's resolutions, lit: one's faith and understanding), because his roots of good are still shallow, he will be unable to progress in his spiritual cultivations. However, anyone who fears regressing should meditate on the name of the Buddha and visualize the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha. Should he thus cultivate the practice of faith, he will be born, in

accordance with his vows, in that Pure Land which is even now in that other direction. There his good roots will grow and increase, and he will be able to speedily attain the state of non-regression.

The monk Jin'go of Silla wrote the *Tamhyön-gi Jesam-sagi* (*Private Notes on the Third Volume of the T'an-hsüan chi*), which is in turn quoted in the eighth volume of Kembō's *Hōsatsu-shō*. There, Jin'go states that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* was composed based on another forged text, the *Chien-ch'a ching*. Thus, it would naturally follow that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* would be a forgery. The words *chien-ch'a* 漸刹 appear to be a transliteration of the words *chan-ts'a* 占察, so it would appear that Jin'go is saying that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* was written based on the *Chan-ts'a shan-o Pao-yeh ching*.

Whatever the case may be, it is clear that from the very earliest days, both the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* and the *Pao-yeh ching* were regarded as similar texts. Now, if we were to assume that the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* was the composition of one of the masters in the Southern branch of the Ti-lun tradition, then we would be obliged to acknowledge that the *Chan-ts'a shan-o pao-yeh ching* is from the hand of a master from this same school. These problems have already been discussed in detail in my work, the *Daijō-kishin-ron no kenkyū* (*A Study of the Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*). If this above conclusion is accepted, then it is clear that the Pure Land faith came to be viewed with increasing importance among the masters of the Ti-lun tradition.

Pacific World. Third Series Number 2 , Fall 2000.
pp149-166.

<http://www.shin-ibs.edu/documents/pwj3-2/08SM2.pdf>

Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History Chapter Seven: T'an-luan

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IN THIS ISSUE WE continue with the publication of selections from Leo Pruden's translation of Shinkō Mochizuki's *Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History*. Given the theme of this issue, we have chosen to publish chapter seven, on T'an-luan, out of order. As mentioned in the previous issue, editing of Pruden's typescript has been limited to improvements in the readability and updating some of the terminology employed.

We again wish to express our appreciation to everyone who contributed to initiating this project, especially the Pruden estate for their permission to publish the work.

CHAPTER VII: T'AN-LUAN

1. T'an-luan's Life and Writings

T'an-luan was counted by Tao-ch'ō as one of the "Six Pure Land Worthies. His influence over later generations of Pure Land thinkers was considerable, due to his commentary on the *Wang-sheng lun* of Vasubandhu, his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, and his teaching in this work with respect to the "other-power" of the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha.

Hōnen, in his *Senchaku-shū* (the *Senchaku-hongan-nembutsu shū*), divides the Chinese Pure Land movement into three major traditions. First is the tradition founded by Hui-yuan of Mt. Lu, second is the tradition represented by the Tripiṭaka Master Tz'u-min, and third is the tradition represented by the two masters, Tao-ch'ō and Shan-tao. The first patriarchal master of this third tradition was the master T'an-luan.

As we have mentioned earlier, Hui-yuan's tradition centered on the cultivation of the visualization, in meditation, of the form of Amitābha, a meditation based upon the teachings of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*. In opposition to this practice, T'an-luan stressed rebirth in the Pure Land after one's death, that one attained this rebirth by means of the powers inherent in the Fundamental Vows of the Tathāgata, and that once there, one could speedily attain to the state of non-regression.

In later years, these three traditions came to merge with one another in China, but in Japan, largely through the influence of Hōnen, the third tradition (that of Tao-ch'ō and Shan-tao) came to be the mainstream tradition of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. It is due to this that the master T'an-luan has come to be esteemed in Japan as the first of the five Chinese Pure Land patriarchs, whereas in China itself the master Hui-yuan is regarded as the first Pure Land patriarchal master.

According to his biography in the sixth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, T'an-luan was a native of Ying-men (present-day Tai-chou, Shansi). Another source states that he was a native of Wen-sui, in Ping-chou. His family home was located close by the sacred mountain of Wu-t'ai shan (located in present-day Wu-t'ai hsien, Shansi), and when he was a little over ten years of age he climbed this mountain and there visited its monasteries and holy sites. This left a lasting impression on him, and soon thereafter he left the householder's life and joined the Sangha. He read widely in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist writings, specializing in the *Ssu-lun* (the Madhyamaka Tradition) and the *Fo-hsing lun* (The Treatise on Buddha-nature by Vasubandhu). Subsequently, he planned to write a commentary on the *Ta-chi ching* (the *Mahā-sarṇipata* corpus), but became gravely ill in the middle of his work. He recovered, but had now become intensely aware of the transience of human life. He then began to search out and study various Taoist formulas for long life. In this search he traveled to the south, to the capital city of Chien-k'ang, where he is reported to have had an audience with the Liang Dynasty Emperor Wu. He departed the capital city and traveled to Mt. Chü-yung, where he met the adept T'ao Hung-ching, from whom he received instruction in ten volumes of Taoist texts. He then left the company of T'ao Hung-ching and visited a number of other famous mountains, visiting the masters there and cultivating the different Taoist arts of prolonging life.

While traveling home, he passed through the city of Loyang, where he met the Indian master Bodhiruci. He is reported to have told Bodhiruci of his Taoist studies, to which Bodhiruci responded that the deathless state could not be attained in China, and then presented T'an-luan with a copy of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, as being a scripture of the Greatest Sage, the Buddha. Reading this scripture, T'an-luan became suddenly awakened, and burned his Taoist texts. He subsequently returned home, where he began to cultivate the Pure Land teachings, converting many clergy and

laity. His fame spread, and he came to the attention of the Emperor of the Wei Dynasty, who bestowed the title of “shen-Luan” (the divine Luan) upon him. The Emperor gave over the Ta-yen ssu Monastery, in Ping-chou, to T’an-luan. Later, T’an-luan moved to the Hsüan-chung ssu Monastery, at the foot of the Pei-shan cliffs, in Fen-chou (present-day Chiao-ch’eng hsien, Shansi). Here he gathered around him a group of disciples, and together they cultivated the Nien-fo practice. T’an-luan is reported to have died in the year 542, at the age of sixty-six, in a “mountain monastery” in Ping-yao.

As we have mentioned above, the account of T’an-luan meeting Bodhiruci and receiving a copy of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* from him, is highly doubtful. Furthermore, in his composition, the *Wang-sheng lun chu*, T’an-luan criticizes the choice of words used by the translator of the *Wang-sheng lun* (i.e., Bodhiruci). Especially, in a note to the passage “one searching out” in the *Wang-sheng lun*, T’an-luan says, “The translator uses the word ‘to search out.’ How obscure this meaning is!” Now if Bodhiruci were T’an-luan’s master, who introduced him to the Pure Land teachings, then these words would have been extremely rude. In a word, we do not know who the teacher was, who introduced T’an-luan to the Pure Land teachings and their practice.

However, it is recorded in his biography that T’an-luan was a student of the Ssu-lun Tradition (the Madhyamaka Tradition), which was based on four treatises: the *Chung-lun*, the *Pai-lun* and the *Shih-erh lun*, plus the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. Also, among the “Six Pure Land Worthies” listed in the *An-lo chi*, the order Tao-ch’ang and T’an-luan is given, so perhaps T’an-luan studied under the master Tao-ch’ang, who was the leading authority on the *Ta-chih-tu lun* of his day. We have also mentioned above that Tao-ch’ang had received a copy of the Maṇḍala of the Five Bodhisattvas of Supernormal Powers, so perhaps T’an-luan may have received his introduction into the Pure Land faith from this master.

The *Hsü Kao-seng ch’uan* places T’an-luan’s date of death in the year 542 (the fourth year of Hsing-ho, of the Eastern Wei Dynasty). However the name of a bhikṣu Seng T’an-luan appears among some twenty-seven names listed on an inscription carved in the second month of 554 (the fifth year of T’ien-pao, of the Northern Ch’i Dynasty). Assuming that this Seng T’an-luan is this same T’an-luan, then his death must be placed some time after the year 554.

Furthermore, the last volume of Chia-ts’ai’s *Ching-t’u lun* gives the biography of T’an-luan, and mentions that he was still alive “at the end of the Wei, and at the beginning of the Kao-Ch’i Dynasties.” The biography of Tao-ch’o in the twentieth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch’uan*, as well as the *Wang-sheng Hsi-fang Ching-t’u shui-ying shan-ch’uan*, lists him as “the Dharma Master T’an-luan of the Ch’i era.” It is clear from the above that T’an-luan did not die any time during the Eastern Wei Dynasty, but was alive well into the Ch’i Dynasty.

Only three works have come down to us from the hand of T'an-luan: the two-volume *Wang-sheng lun chu*, the one volume *Ts'an O-mi-t'o Fo chieh*, and the one-volume *Lüeh-lun An-lo Ching-t'u i*.

The first work, the *Wang-sheng lun chu*, is a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Wang-sheng lun*. The first volume of his work comments on the twenty-four lines of *gāthā* in this work, and the second volume comments on the prose section. In various places throughout this work T'an-luan presents his Pure Land philosophy.

The *Ts'an O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* (*Gāthās in Praise of the Buddha Amitābha*) is a short work, consisting of 195 seven character lines. This work is a collection of praises of the various qualities of Amitābha and his Pure Land, based largely on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. This work is also variously entitled the *Wu-liang-shou ching feng-ts'an* (Praises Offered to the *Wu-Liang-shou ching*) or simply the *Ta-ching feng-ts'an* (Praises Offered to the Greater Sūtra).

The *Lüeh-lun An-lo Ching-t'u i* raises, and answers, several questions with respect to the Pure Land:

- whether it is within the three dhātus or not,
- how many adornments it has,
- what are the various types of capacities of devotees who can be reborn therein,
- the nature of womb birth in the peripheral areas of the Pure Land,
- the doubts and delusions of the Five Wisdoms, and
- the problem of ten continuous recitations.

This work's authenticity has been called into question by a number of writers. In his *Yanggwŏn Muryang-gyŏng jong'yo*, the scholar-monk Wŏnhyŏ—from the Silla dynasty in Korea—claims that the simile of crossing the river employed in the *Lüeh-lun* can be traced back to Kumārajīva. The Japanese Tendai scholar-monk Shōshin, in the sixth volume of his *Hokke-gengi shiki*, claims that Kumārajīva composed this work. However, the *Lüeh-lun* quotes a number of works, specifically the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and the *Wang-sheng lun*, which were translated into Chinese only after the death of Kumārajīva, so the work cannot possibly be his work.

In the Edo period the scholar-monk Reikū Kōken composed a work entitled *The Lüeh-lun An-lo Ching-t'u i is not a Work by T'an-luan* (*Ryaku-ron Anraku Jōdo-gi Donran-sen ni arazu*). In this he claimed that the *Lüeh-lun* was composed in Japan by someone very uneducated, and that it was not really from the hand of T'an-luan. However, in the last volume of his *Ching-t'u lun*, Chia-ts'ai mentions, in addition to the *Wang-sheng lun chu* and the *Wu-liang-shou ching feng-ts'an*, one volume of *Questions and Answers*, and here refers to the *Lüeh-lun*, which is written in a catechical

form. The *Lüeh-lun* is also quoted many times in Tao-ch'ó's *An-lo chi*. In addition to this, an old manuscript copy of the *Lüeh-lun* has been discovered among the finds in Tun-huang, so it is clear that the *Lüeh-lun* is not a Japanese composition.

Besides the above three works ascribed to T'an-luan, his biography in the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan* also mentions a work entitled the *Tiao-ch'í lun* (An Essay on Regulating the Breath). Additionally, *The Monograph on Bibliography* (the *Ching-chi chih*) in the *Sui Shu* mentions two other works by T'an-luan, the *Liao pai-ping tsa-wan fang* (Prescriptions for Mixing Pills for the Cure of All Illnesses), and the *Lun liao-fang* (A Discussion of the Role of Breath in the Curing of Illnesses). Finally, the *Monograph on the Arts and Literature* (the *I-wen chih*) of the *Sung Shu* mentions a work entitled the *Fu ch'í yao-ch'ueh* (Essentials for Regulating the Breath). We can see from this that T'an-luan was considered to have been very learned in the homeopathic sciences. These works are probably the result of his own studies in recuperative techniques, carried out in the period early in his life when he was gravely ill.

2. The Two Paths

T'an-luan's major teachings are to be found in his *Wang-sheng lun chu*. At the very beginning of this work, he quotes the "Chapter on Easy Practice" from the *Shih-chu pi-p'o-sha* (the *Daśa-bhūmi vibhāṣā*), traditionally ascribed to Nāgārjuna. There are two paths by which the Bodhisattva can search out the stage of non-regression (Skt: *avaivartika*), the path of different practice (*nan-hsing-tao*) and the path of easy practice (*i-hsing-tao*). To search out the stage of non-regression in this world, which is full of the five defilements, and in this present age, which is without the living presence of a Buddha, is regarded as the path of difficult practice. But to be born in the Pure Land due to one's faith in the Buddha (lit.: by means of the causes and conditions of believing in the Buddha), to be empowered by the Buddha and so enter into the Mahāyāna assembly of those definitively assured [of such a rebirth] is termed the path of easy practice.

In a world full of the five defilements and without a Buddha, the non-Buddhists propagate doctrines of tangible, existent characteristics. These teachings disturb the characteristic-less cultivation of the Bodhisattvas, and the self-centered discipline and the self-benefitting teachings of the Hīnayāna śrāvakas cause the Bodhisattva to turn away from his own practice of great compassion and benevolence. Also, evil and unreflective beings destroy the distinguished qualities of the Bodhisattva, and, seeing the perverted, defiled results of these beings disturbs the mind of the Bodhisattvas, and so brings about a disruption of their religious cultivation.

Furthermore, in a world without a Buddha, one cannot rely on the power of the Buddha, and one must cultivate religious practices through his own powers. For these reasons, then, it is extremely difficult to attain the state of non-regression. Therefore, the author likens this path to walking on land, and so terms it “the path of difficult practice.”

In opposition to this, however, the path of easy practice takes advantage of (lit.: rides on) the power inherent in the Buddha’s Fundamental Vows, and leads to rebirth in the Pure Land. Furthermore, by being empowered by the Buddha, the devotee enters into the Mahāyāna assembly of those whose rebirth is assured, and thus abides in the stage of non-regression. That is to say, he attains the stage of *avaivartika* by means of “another power,” a power that is not his own, and this is likened to riding a ship over the water (and not walking on land). This is termed “the path of easy practice.”

The theory of the two paths, the difficult and the easy path, is originally borrowed from Nāgārjuna. Nāgārjuna holds that to strenuously cultivate religious practices in this world for a long time, and to thus attain the stage of non-regression, constitutes the path of difficult practice. However, calling upon the Names of the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will allow the devotee to speedily attain the stage of non-regression. These would include the Names of the Buddhas of the ten directions, such as the Buddha Sugaṇa (Fine Qualities) in the East, etc., and the Names of other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, such as Amitābha and Lokeśvararāja. Thus, this path is called the path of easy practice. In other words, according to Nāgārjuna, both paths allow the devotee to attain the stage of non-regression, the only difference being in the time that it takes to reach the goal. However, T’an-luan modified this teaching slightly, and taught that the attainment stage of non-regression in this world is the path of difficult practice, whereas attaining the stage of non-regression through rebirth in the Pure Land constitutes the path of easy practice. In other words, he discusses the differences in these two paths by virtue of the difference between this world and the Pure Land. To Nāgārjuna, the problem of the attainment of the stage of non-regression did not especially give rise to the necessity for rebirth in the Pure Land. For T’an-luan, however, the attainment of the stage of non-regression within the path of easy practice was considered to be one of the benefits (*teh-i*) attained after one had been reborn in the Pure Land. According to his teaching, then, in order to attain the stage of non-regression, one must first be reborn in the Pure Land, and rebirth in the Pure Land became a necessary condition for the attainment of the stage of non-regression.

Also, Nāgārjuna held that calling on the Names of the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas constituted, in its totality, the easy practice, whereas T’an-luan, in opposition to this, held that faith in one Buddha, the Buddha Amitābha, constituted the path of easy practice. Furthermore, T’an-luan

strongly stressed the power inherent in the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha, and that such attainments as rebirth in the Pure Land, and the attainment of the stage of non-regression once one is reborn in the Pure Land, were all due to the empowerment (*chu-chih*) derived from these vows. It is in these points, then, the teachings of T'an-luan differed greatly from those of Nāgārjuna. T'an-luan drew these teachings from both the *Wu-liang shou ching* and the *Wang-sheng lun*, and it was he who first introduced this theory of the two paths into the Pure Land faith. From that time onward, this theory came to be used very frequently in subsequent Pure Land writings.

T'an-luan deeply revered Nāgārjuna, for we find in his *Tsan O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* the phrases:

The Great Master Nāgārjuna, the Mahāsattva,
 was born at the beginning of the period of the Counterfeit Dharma,
 and served as a model of Truth.
 He closed and locked the doors of error, and opened the pathway
 of Truth. For this reason, all eyes in Jambudvīpa
 look to him in reverence, he who is enlightened in the Stage of Joy.
 I go to Amitābha for Refuge, that I may be reborn in Sukhāvātī.

And in another passage:

In the manner that when the dragons move, clouds must follow
 in Jambudvīpa, he gave off hundreds of rays of light.
 Homage to the Venerable One, the most compassionate Nāgārjuna,
 we bow down to him in reverence.

In the above passages, the phrase "He who is enlightened in the Stage of Joy" (Skt. *pramuditā-bhūmi*) refers to a passage in the ninth chapter, the chapter "On Stanzas" in the *Ju Leng-chia ching*, translated in 513 by Bodhiruci. In this chapter, the Buddha predicts the eventual rebirth of Nāgārjuna into Sukhāvātī. T'an-luan had studied the Ssu-lun Tradition (the Madhyamaka Tradition), and it was probably at this time that he first became a devotee of Nāgārjuna. His faith was deepened by this reference in the *Ju Leng-chia ching*, and it was probably based on this that his faith in the Pure Land teachings became as firm as it did. In addition, the Chapter on "Easy Practice" mentions the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha, and Amitābha and his Pure Land are praised in a *gāthā* of some thirty-two lines in this same work. T'an-luan clearly got his inspiration from these works of Nāgārjuna, and so developed his theory of easy practice with respect to this one Buddha only, as well as the teaching that the stage of non-regression is attained only after the attainment of rebirth in the Pure Land.

3. The Other Power of the Fundamental Vows

Needless to say, T'an-luan's stress on the power of the Fundamental Vows of Amitābha is based on the teachings of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, but we also get some hints for this theory from the writings of Nāgārjuna.

The *Wu-liang-shou ching* circulated early in South China and we know from the monastic biographies that the monk Fa-tu of the Chi-hsia ssu Monastery and the monk Pao-liang of the Ling-wei ssu Monastery lectured frequently on this scripture. However, we do not have any idea what their views on these Fundamental Vows were, since no works from their hands, or from their disciples exist. Nevertheless, it was T'an-luan who was the first person to employ this scripture in the north, and to stress the power of these vows in his teaching. It is for this reason that he exercised a great influence on all later Pure Land writers and thinkers.

T'an-luan teaches the greatness of the power of these Fundamental Vows of Amitābha in the last volume of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*. In this passage, he states that cultivating the practice of the five types of *nien-fo*, benefiting oneself and others, and speedily attaining *samyaksambodhi* (supreme, perfect enlightenment), is due basically to the Tathāgata Amitābha. In this way, Amitābha is considered the "predominating condition" (*ts'eng-shang yuan*, Skt.: *adhipati-pratyaya*) for all these attainments. The power of the Fundamental Vows of the Tathāgata Amitābha also conditions birth in the Pure Land, and the performance of all types of good deeds by bodhisattvas, humans, and devas. If these powers of the Buddha did not exist, then his forty-eight vows would have been set up in vain. Hence, what T'an-luan teaches is that birth in the Pure Land, etc., is made possible by means of the power of the actual attainment (*ch'eng-chiu*, Skt.: *siddhi*) of these forty-eight vows by Amitābha.

Of these forty-eight, T'an-luan lays particular stress on the eleventh, eighteenth, and twenty-second vows. It is by means of these vows that one can be reborn in the Pure Land, attain the stage of non-regression, and can speedily attain Buddhahood.

The eleventh vow is the fundamental vow that the devotee will abide in the assembly of those definitively determined [to be reborn in the Pure Land]. T'an-luan holds that it is by means of the power of this vow that those reborn in the Pure Land all abide in the assembly of those definitively determined, and are able to attain this stage of non-regression.

The eighteenth vow is the fundamental vow of rebirth in the Pure Land, and T'an-luan holds that it is by means of the power of this vow that all beings in the ten directions are able to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

The twenty-second vow is the vow that the devotee will certainly go to the abode just before the stage of total enlightenment. It is by means of this vow that, when the devotee is reborn into the Pure Land, he will do so by

jumping over all of the various religious practices of the different bhūmis, and will presently cultivate the qualities of the Universally Auspicious One (Samantabhadra). T'an-luan teaches that it is by means of the power of this vow that the devotee who is to be born into the Pure Land does not need to gradually traverse all the different bhūmis in sequence. Rather than going from the first bhūmi to the second, from the second bhūmi to the third, and so on, the devotee is enabled to jump over all of the various practices of these different bhūmis, and speedily attain the stage of "only one more rebirth" (*i-sheng pu-ch'u*).

In a word then, T'an-luan borrowed heavily from the thought of Nāgārjuna, taking for his point of departure the problem of non-regression. Since it was his aim to attain Buddhahood as quickly as possible, he laid special emphasis on the eleventh and the twenty-second vows. But all of these benefits are benefits attained only after the devotee's rebirth in the Pure Land, so as a preparation for the attainment of these benefits, T'an-luan also stressed the eighteenth vow, the vow that enables the devotee to attain rebirth by calling on the name of Amitābha. T'an-luan then constructed his theory of the "other-power" of these Fundamental Vows, centering on these three vows. The path of difficult practice is a path centered on one's own power, and the cultivation of this path is not supported by any other power. The path of easy practice takes advantage of the power of the Buddha's Vows, and one is able to be reborn in the Pure Land and, sustained by the power of the Buddha, to speedily attain Buddhahood. In this manner, T'an-luan taught what he considered to be the true message of the Pure Land faith. In later years, the theory of the Fundamental Vows propounded by Shan-tao will be seen to derive directly from the theories first taught by T'an-luan.

4. The Five Teachings of Nien-fo

In his teachings, T'an-luan stressed the power of the vows of the Buddha, and centered his theories on the concepts of birth, non-regression, and the speedy attainment of Buddhahood. Of these three, non-regression and the attainment of Buddhahood were automatically realized by virtue of the power of the vows of the Buddha. However, in order to attain rebirth, a specific type of religious practice was demanded of the devotee: these were the Five Nien-fo Teachings (*wu nien-fo men*), which were ultimately based on the *Wang-sheng lun* of Vasubandhu.

These five are: "Prostrations" (*li-pai men*), "Singing Praises" (*tsan-t'an men*), "Making Vows" (*tso-yuan men*), "Insight Meditation" (*kuan-ts'a men*), and the "Transfer of Merits" (*hui-hsiang men*). The treatise attributed to Vasubandhu explains these practices, but T'an-luan explains them in greater detail, and gives many of his own opinions in these explanations.

“Prostrations” means that one should always turn his thoughts to the desire for rebirth and make prostrations to the Tathāgata Amitābha. T’an-luan’s understanding of this item does not differ from that of Vasubandhu.

“Singing Praises” means to recite the names of “the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light in all the Ten Directions” (*chin-shih-fang wu-ai-kuang ju-lai*: Amitābha). In explanation of this practice, the *Wang-sheng lun* states: “One’s verbal actions sing the praises of, and recite the Name of the Tathāgata. / The wisdom and glory of the Tathāgata / are the meaning of his Name; one should want to truly cultivate its aspects.” T’an-luan understands this passage as saying that light (the glory, Skt.: *ābha*) is the mark of the Buddha’s wisdom, so he is called “the mark of wisdom and glory.” This light illumines all the worlds in the ten directions. It removes the darkness of ignorance from all beings, and fulfills all the vows and aspirations of all creatures. Thus, if one truly cultivates this practice, and if one is in union (*hsiang-yin*, yogic union) with the meaning of the Name of the Tathāgata, the darkness of ignorance will be destroyed, and all aspirations will be satisfied. However, if beings should call on the Name, and their ignorance is not destroyed and their aspirations remain unsatisfied, this is only because they are not in union with the significance of the Name in their practice. They do not know that the Tathāgata is the “true aspect body” (*shih-hsing shen*), and that he is a form for the benefit of living beings (*wei-wu shen*). Furthermore, it is because their faith is not honest, sometimes being there and sometimes not: their faith is not one-pointed and definitive, and is not continuous, being interrupted by other thoughts. For these reasons, then, their practice is not correct, and they are unable to attain a yogic union with the significance of the Name of the Buddha. If, however, the devotee’s faith is sincere, if it is definitive and continuous, he will be able to attain a yogic union with the significance of the Buddha’s name, and will be able to fulfill his every aspiration.

This theory owes much to the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. In the thirty-fourth volume of the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, it is taught that the Buddha has two bodies or modes of appearance. First, there is the body arisen from Dharmatā (*fa-hsing sheng-shen fo*). Second, there the transformation body manifested, in either a superior or an inferior manner, in accord with the world in which it arises (*sui-shih chien-yü lieh hsien-hua fo*). The first type of Buddha, the body arisen from Dharmatā, is without limits, and is able to fulfill all aspirations. It is taught that if one but hears the Name of this Buddha, one will be able to attain enlightenment. Since the Buddha Amitābha is the Buddha whose body has arisen from Dharmatā, when one truly (correctly) cultivates these practices, all of one’s aspirations should be fulfilled.

The *Wang-sheng lun* also has the passage: “With oneness of mind I go for refuge to the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light, which fills all the ten directions.” If one’s faith is definitive and continuous, one will be in a yogic

union with the significance (the light) of the Name of Amitābha, and will be able to destroy the darkness of ignorance.

Of these various theories, the teaching that one's faith must be "definitive and continuous" (*hsin-hsin ch'üeh-ting hsiang-hsu*) was later elaborated by Shan-tao, and came to be regarded by him as the primary cause (*ch'eng-yin*) for one's rebirth into the Pure Land. Nevertheless, this portion of the explanation is T'an-luan's own understanding of the problem, and we would do well not to consider this theory as part of the original intention of the *Wang-sheng lun*. In any case, the phrase in the section on "Singing Praises"—"one should want to truly cultivate its aspects"—is parallel to similar phrases in other sections. For example, in the section "Making Vows", we have "one should want to truly cultivate śamatha," and in the section "Insight Meditation," we have "one should want to truly cultivate vipaśyana." From these remarks we can clearly see that, according to T'an-luan, the purport of these passages is that one should want to correctly cultivate the religious practice of yogic union. If this is the case, then the Chinese phrase *hsiang-ying* must be considered a translation of the Sanskrit word *yoga*. The sense of this section, then, is that singing the praises of Amitābha is for the purpose of correctly cultivating the religious practice of a type of yoga.

There are four types of yoga (union): yoga with respect to the external sphere of sense perception (*viśaya*), yoga with respect to the religious practice (*cārya*), yoga with respect to the resultant state (*phala*), and yoga with respect to the Teaching (*deśanā*). Singing the praises of Amitābha's qualities corresponds to the yoga of the resultant state. The practice of śamatha and vipaśyana is the yoga with respect to religious practice. The passage describing the ornaments of the Pure Land corresponds to the yoga with the *viśaya*. The whole of the five nien-fo teachings is largely arranged as the yoga with respect to the teaching. We have already discussed this in detail in the thirteenth chapter of my *Jōdo-kyō gairon* (An Outline of the Pure Land Teachings), and so will not go into it here. We must conclude in any case, that T'an-luan devised the teaching of the yogic correspondence of the significance of the Name (light) because he was dissatisfied with the explanation given by Vasubandhu.

The third teaching, that of "Making Vows," means that the devotee, with one-pointedness of mind and a full and exclusive concentration of thought, makes the vow to attain rebirth in the Pure Land; he correctly cultivates stilling of the mind, or śamatha. T'an-luan explains this word "stilling" as "the stilling of evil," the ending of evil deeds. He divides this into three aspects. First, if one thinks only of the Buddha Amitābha with one-pointedness of mind, and so desires to be reborn in the Pure Land, the Name of this Buddha and the Name of his land are able to put an end to all manner of evil. Second, since the Pure Land of Sukhāvātī transcends the Three Dhātus, if one is reborn into this land, all the evils generated by his

body, speech, or mind, will automatically be stilled. Third, the power of the Tathāgata Amitābha, which is maintained through his enlightenment, will naturally still the striving after the Two Vehicles (that is, striving for the stage of Arhat or Pratyekabuddha) on the part of those beings who are reborn in the Pure Land. These three types of stilling all arise from the true and actual (*ju-shih*) meritorious qualities of the Tathāgata, and so the text speaks of the correct or true cultivation of the practice of śamatha.

The fourth teaching is that of "Insight Meditation." This means that with "right thought" (*ch'eng-nien*, part of the Eightfold Path), one is to visualize or meditate upon the twenty-nine different types of adornments of the Pure Land. That is, one should correctly cultivate the practice of vipaśyana, or insight. T'an-luan divides this vipaśyana into two different types. First, in this world the devotee should direct his thought to, and visualize the qualities of the ornaments of the Pure Land. Since these qualities are real and true (*ju-shih*), the person who cultivates this visualization will also attain (through yogic union) these true qualities, and thus will certainly attain birth in the Pure Land. Second, when one is reborn in the Pure Land, he will then be able to see Amitābha, and a Bodhisattva who has not yet been awakened to his own pure mind will be able, exactly as the Bodhisattvas of pure mind, to realize his own Dharmakāya. This is why the author speaks of the correct (*ju-shih*) cultivation of the practice of Vipāśyana. In his explanation of the word śamatha as "putting an end to evil," and not as mental stilling, he was clearly in opposition to the accepted understanding of this word. This is also the case with his understanding of the word Vipāśyana as meaning to see the Buddha after one had attained rebirth in the Pure Land. Both of these explanations are at variance with the understanding of the original author of the *Wang-sheng lun*, Vasubandhu. Rather, we must understand that T'an-luan is concerned primarily with the Buddha himself, and with the power inherent in the Buddha and his Name, and that he explains the whole of this text in this light. Although there are passages which are inconsistent with the meaning of the original text, T'an-luan is himself consistent throughout the whole of his commentary.

The fifth teaching is that of the "Transfer of Merits." This means that the devotee transfers the merits that he has accumulated through the practice of "the roots of good," his good deeds, not for the attainment of his own personal enjoyment, but for the relief of the sufferings of all sentient beings. He should desire to take all beings to himself so they may be reborn into the Pure Land with him.

T'an-luan also divides the transfer of merits into two different aspects: "The aspect of going" (*wang-hsiang*), and "the aspect of returning" (*huang-hsiang*). The "aspect of going" means that one gives his own stock of merits to all sentient beings, with the vow that he may, together with them, be reborn in the Pure Land. The "aspect of returning" means that, after he has been born in the Pure Land, he attains śamatha and vipaśyana. Then, if he

attains success (*siddhi*) in the power of expedient means, he will return to this Saha world to work for the conversion of all sentient beings, so that together they may follow the path of the Buddha.

The intention to transfer these merits (the *hui-hsiang hsin*) is none other than the “unsurpassed Bodhicitta” (*wu-shang p’u-t’i-hsin*) spoken of in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in the passage describing the three types of persons who are reborn into the Pure Land. This unsurpassed Bodhicitta is identical with the aspiration to attain Buddhahood (the *yuan tso-fo hsin*). This aspiration to attain Buddhahood is identical with the thought to save all beings (the *tu chung-sheng hsin*), and the thought to save all beings is identical to taking all beings to oneself and causing them to be reborn in a land that has a Buddha. Consequently, if one desires to be reborn in the Pure Land of Sukhāvati, one must generate this Bodhicitta. If one does not generate this Bodhicitta, but seeks rebirth in this Pure Land only in order to enjoy the pleasures of this land, then, it is argued, he will not be able to do so. In other words, if one does not generate Bodhicitta, one will not be able to be reborn in the Pure Land. The teaching of the necessity of the Bodhicitta for rebirth is termed “the theory of the Bodhicitta being the primary cause” (*p’u-t’i-hsin ch’eng-yin shou*; Japanese: the *bodai-shin shōin setsu*).

In this way, then, T’an-luan taught that all of these five Nien-fo teachings constitutes the means by which the devotee could attain rebirth in the Pure Land. Borrowing from the ideas of Vasubandhu’s *Wang-sheng lun*, it appears that he taught that the most essential of these five teachings was the fourth teaching, that of insight meditation (*kuan-ts’a*). However, as we have mentioned above, he firmly believed in and taught the importance of the “easy practice of calling on the Name” (*ch’eng-ming i-hsing*), a teaching based ultimately on the *Shih-chu p’i-p’o-sha lun*. T’an-luan thus stressed the recitation of the Name of the Tathāgata in the second teaching, that of “singing the praises” of the Buddha. He laid great stress on the calling on, or the recitation of, the Name of the Buddha, for he believed that the very Name itself contained a profound number of merits, and exhorted Pure Land devotees to hear it frequently, and to believe in it.

In the beginning of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, T’an-luan says that the Name of the Buddha Amitābha constitutes the “nature” (*t’i*) of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. He explains that the Name of the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light possesses the “function” (*yung*) of destroying the darkness of ignorance. Also, the Name of the Tathāgata and the name of his land (Sukhāvati) are able to put an end to all forms of evil. Additionally, even if the devotee has transgressions and impurities from countless numbers of births and deaths, when he hears the “highest, unarisen, pure and pear-like gem of the Name of the Tathāgata Amitābha, and when this Name is cast into his defiled mind, his transgressions will be extinguished from thought

to thought, his mind will become pure, and he will attain rebirth." His *Wu-liang-shou ching feng-tsan* also states that

If all who hear the meritorious Name of Amitābha
but have faith in, and take joy in what they have heard,
and if for one instant of thought they have utmost sincerity,
and if they transfer these merits and desire rebirth, then they shall
attain rebirth.

T'an-luan taught that ten continuous recitations (*shih-nien hsiang-hsü*) constitute the cause by which one attains rebirth. He based this on two passages. First, there are the words of the eighteenth vow in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, "If one is not reborn into the Pure Land with but ten recitations, then I shall not attain to Supreme Enlightenment." Second, there is the passage describing the lowest rank of the lowest grade of rebirth in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. This latter states that if one recites "Na-wu O-mi-t'o Fo" ten times, all his transgressions will be extinguished and he will attain birth. T'an-luan interpreted this phrase as signifying that the work necessary for birth had been accomplished.

As he states in the first volume of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, the word *nien* (here "recitation") signifies calling to remembrance (*i-nien*) the Buddha Amitābha. This is further divided into its "general aspect" (*tsung-hsiang*) and its "specific aspect" (*pieh-hsiang*). Whichever of these two one chooses to visualize, he is not supposed to have any other thoughts in his mind. It is these ten continuous thoughts which T'an-luan terms "the ten recitations," and this is also the case for ten continuous recitations.

In illustration of this one-pointedness of mind, T'an-luan employs, in his *Lüeh-lun An-lo ching-t'u i*, the example of "taking off one's clothes in crossing the river." Suppose that there is a man walking through a deserted land, and bandits rush upon him, intent upon killing him. He begins to flee, but suddenly in front of him appears a river that he must cross. If he crosses the river, he will escape the danger of the bandits: so this person is concerned only with a way to cross the river, and no other thoughts preoccupy him. He thinks, "When I get to the bank of the river, should I throw myself into the river with my clothes on, or should I take them off? If I go into the river with my clothes on, I shall perhaps drown, but if I try to take my clothes off, I probably will not have the time to do so." At the time, this person has only the thought of how to cross the river, and he has no other thoughts. It is in this manner, then, that the devotee should with singleness of mind think on the Buddha Amitābha, and his mind should be interrupted with no other thoughts: when ten such thoughts succeed one another, this is what is termed "the ten continuous thoughts." This also applies to the recitation of the Name of the Buddha, or the visualization of the major and minor marks of the Buddha. In both of these cases the

devotee should exclusively and totally concentrate his mind, and should have no other thoughts in his mind, and if ten such thoughts succeed one another, this is termed “the ten thoughts or recitations.” If in this manner he concentrates his mind and visualizes the marks of the Buddha, etc., the devotee will be unable to know just how many thoughts have elapsed, since he will not be concerned with any other thoughts, such as counting the thoughts from one to ten. But if initially he remembers the Buddha, and then thinks of something else, and then thinks on the Buddha again, and then thinks of another thing, he will in this manner be able to know the number of his thoughts, but his thoughts will be interrupted, and so these thoughts cannot be termed continuous.

In opposition to this, however, T’an-luan holds that these full ten thoughts (*chü-tsu shih-nien*) signify the completion of the work or practice necessary for rebirth, so it is not absolutely necessary for the devotee himself to know the number of his thoughts. The cicada is born in the summer and dies in this same summer, so he does not know spring or autumn (the passage of time, a quotation from *Chuang-tzu*). However, if someone who does know the passage of longer periods of time views the cicada, it becomes clear to the viewer that his lifespan is very short. In this same way, then, we unenlightened beings are unable to know the successful completion of these ten thoughts, but when we are viewed by someone who has attained the supernormal psychic powers (*ṛddhi*), it is clear to him whether we have done so or not. The devotee need only recollect the Buddha with one-pointedness of mind, with a mind undisturbed by any other thing, and he need only continuously accumulate such thoughts. If, however, he feels the need to know the number of thoughts that he has accumulated, T’an-luan teaches that there is a special method for knowing their number, but this method is only transmitted orally, and cannot be written down. Based on this, then, T’an-luan lays great stress on the continuation of concentrated thoughts, for this constitutes the essential truth of the completion of the work necessary for rebirth.

5. Amitābha and the Pure Land

In the period in which T’an-luan lived, there had not yet developed any teachings or theories with respect to the classification of the Pure Lands. Drawing on the teachings of the *Wang-sheng lun* and the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, T’an-luan states that the Pure Land of Amitābha transcends the Three Dhātus. The *Lüeh-lun* states that the land of Sukhāvati is not included within any of these Three Dhātus, for this is the teaching of the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. And why is this the case? It is not within *kāmadhātu* (the realm of desire) since there is no desire in Sukhāvati. On the other hand, it is a real abode, a *bhūmi*, so it is not included within the *rūpadhātu* (the realm of

form). Finally, because there are shapes and colors in the Pure Land, it is not included within the *ārūpyadhātu* (the formless realm).

The *Wang-sheng lun* contains a passage stating that “it far transcends the realms of rebirth of the Three Dhātus.” T’an-luan comments on this passage in the first volume of his *Wang-sheng lun chu*. He states that while viewing these Three Dhātus, the Buddha saw them all to be illusory and unsubstantial, constantly revolving and endless in and of themselves, like a caterpillar in its wanderings, and like a cocoon enmeshing itself in its own bonds. For this reason, the Buddha initially gave rise to these pure qualities. Taking compassion on the living beings who were bound in these Three Dhātus and subject to perverted views and much impurity, so the Buddha wished to establish a place that was not illusory and insubstantial, nor in a constant state of Samsaric flux and endlessly cyclical. In short, he desired a place that was pleasurable (*sukhā*) and pure, and it is for this reason that he gave rise to these qualities of pure adornment.

Furthermore, T’an-luan does not list any names for the various bodies of the Buddha—Sambhogakāya, Nirmanakāya, etc. In his *Wang-sheng lun chu*, T’an-luan says that the Bodhisattva Dharmākara attained the stage of non-regression (*anutpādadharmakṣānti*) in the presence of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja. His stage of spiritual development at this time was that of the Ārya-gotra, “the clan of the Āryans” (he was now bound for eventual full enlightenment). In this Ārya-gotra, he set up forty-eight vows, which in turn gave rise to the Pure Land. This land was attained while he was still in the causal state (the state of a Bodhisattva, and not a Buddha).

In his *Lüeh-lun An-lo ching-t’u i*, T’an-luan further writes that the Bodhisattva Dharmākara made these great vows in the presence of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja, taking for his purview all the different Buddha Lands. These vows were completed during the course of numberless *asamkhyeya* kalpas, during which time, too, he cultivated all the Pāramitās, eventually perfecting good and attaining unsurpassed Bodhi. This Pure Land was thus something attained by means of a specific karmic action, and for this reason, this Pure Land is not included within any of the Three Dhātus. Based on this, then, T’an-luan without doubt holds that the Buddha Amitābha was a Sambhogakāya, and that his Pure Land was a Sambhoga Land.

Chi-tsang, in his *Kuan-ching i-shu*, says that a master (or masters?) of the north holds that Amitābha’s Pure Land is not included within any of the Three Dhātus. Instead, the claim is that the Bodhisattva Dharmākara made his vows while in the stage of Dharmakāya, a stage above the eighth bhūmi. It was by means of these vows that he created his Pure Land, termed a Sambhoga Land. This North Chinese master may, of course, be T’an-luan.

T’an-luan was also the first to attempt to reconcile two contradictory teachings within the Pure Land corpus. The *Wu-liang-shou ching* says that countless numbers of (Hinayāna) śrāvakas dwell in Amitābha’s Pure Land.

In apparent contradiction, the *Wang-sheng lun* teaches that beings in (lit.: the seeds of) the Two Vehicles (*śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*) are not born into the Pure Land. T'an-luan attempts a reconciliation on two points: first, in this world of the five impurities, the one (the One Vehicle teaching) is divided into three (the Three Vehicles). In the Pure Land, these five impurities do not exist, so there is no distinction between these Three Vehicles, and beings in the two lower vehicles therefore do not dwell in the Pure Land. When the *Wu-liang-shou ching* says that *śrāvakas* dwell in the Pure Land, this is referring only to the Arhats (those who have reached the goal of the *śrāvaka* path), and does not refer to *real śrāvakas*. The Arhat has cut off the defilements (*fan-nao; kleśas*), and is no longer reborn in any of the Three Dhātus, but has not yet—which is outside of the Three Dhātus—and it is here that he must now continue to seek out unsurpassed Bodhi. When the Arhat is born into the Pure Land, he merely keeps his original name of “*śrāvaka*” without actually being one.

The second point that T'an-luan makes is that the seeds (*chung-tzu; bijas*) of the Two Vehicles do not arise in the Pure Land. Thus the *Wang-sheng lun* can say that the “seeds of the Two Vehicles do not arise” (*erh-ch'eng chung pu-sheng*) in the Pure Land. However, this does not prevent beings in the Two Vehicles here on earth from being reborn in the Pure Land. For example, the orange tree does not produce any fruit in North China, but its fruit can be seen in the market places of South China. In this way, the seeds (beings) of the Two Vehicles do not arise in the Pure Land, but this does not mean that beings who are *śrāvakas* in this world cannot go to the Pure Land. In this hypothesis, then, real *śrāvakas* are allowed to dwell in the Pure Land. This problem was also examined in later years by Shan-tao, as well as by various other masters. It is clearly Vasubandhu's teaching in the *Wang-sheng lun* that the Pure Land is the abode of Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas only, and that there are no *śrāvakas* or *pratyekabuddhas* there under any guise. Despite this, a large number of these masters adopted this latter explanation, holding that actual *śrāvakas* dwelt in the Pure Land.