

TRANSLATION

On Attaining the Settled Mind

Anjin ketsujō shō

PART I

TRANSLATED BY DENNIS HIROTA

[The Primal Vow]

To actualize [with your own existence] the living core of the Pure Land way,¹ you must first of all know the dynamic that informs the Primal Vow.²

* *Anjin ketsujō shō* 安心決定鈔—“On Attaining the Settled Mind” with which one entrusts oneself to the Primal Vow—is an influential tract of the Japanese Pure Land tradition, treasured since the fourteenth century for its incisive exposition of the interrelationships between the person of the nembutsu and Amida Buddha. It is frequently compared with *Tannishō* as an early vernacular work that likewise retains its power for contemporary readers, and is also contrasted to it, for its emphasis on the settledness of our attainment of birth (“deep mind with regard to Dharma”) rather than on reflection on the nature of our samsaric existence (“deep mind with regard to the practitioner”).

The author is unknown. The work employs a number of concepts and expressions characteristic of the Seizan branch of the Jōdo school, and the dominant opinion of contemporary scholars is that it is a writing of the Seizan tradition. Historically, however, it has been the Shin tradition that has studied, annotated, and transmitted the work—Kakunyo (1270–1351), the third head of the Honganji lineage, and his son Zonkaku were familiar with it, and Rennyo called it a “gold mine” for its presentation of the nature of true entrusting—and it was even a Shin scholar-priest, Ekū (1644–1721), who first argued for Seizan provenance. *Anjin ketsujō shō*, then, is an impor-

ANJIN KETSUJŌ SHŌ

Forty-eight universal Vows have been established [by Amida], but their fundamental intent is expressed in the Eighteenth. The other forty-seven exist in order to bring beings to entrust themselves to this Vow. Shan-tao paraphrases the Eighteenth Vow in his *Hymns of Birth*:

If, on my becoming Buddha, sentient beings throughout the universe say my Name, be it only ten times, and yet fail to be born [in my land], then may I not attain perfect enlightenment.³

In other words: if the sentient beings of the universe attain birth—the necessary awakening of aspiration and performance of practice (*gan-gyō*) having been accomplished—I also will become Buddha; if they do not attain birth, I shall not attain perfect enlightenment.⁴

The Buddha's realization of perfect enlightenment, then, must de-

tant document in the development of Shin doctrine, and a major resource for the comparative study of Shin and Seizan thought.

The translation will be published in two parts, corresponding to the two fascicles of the work, and will be followed by a study of its teachings and its place in the history of Japanese Pure Land thought. The Japanese text may be found in T83, 921–929.

¹ *Jōdo shinshū* 浄土真宗. This expression literally means "the true teaching (or essence) of the Pure Land" path; it also came to be used as the name for the tradition stemming from Shinran. Scholars who consider *Anjin ketsujō shō* to be from the hand of a Seizan author point out that this expression also occurs, with the first sense, in the writings of the Seizan teacher Ken'i 圓應 (1238–1304); see Okumura Gen'yū, *Anjin ketsujō shō—jōdo e no michi* (Tokyo: 1964), p. 53.

² Vow or Aspiration: *gan* 願. *Gan* refers to the bodhisattva's aspiration, arising from the wisdom-compassion that regards all beings as inseparable from oneself, to attain enlightenment together with all beings. Further, it refers to the specific formulation of this aspiration in concrete vows.

³ *Ōjōraisan* 往生礼讃, (T47, 447c). Shan-tao's paraphrase of the Eighteenth Vow was widely used in the Japanese Pure Land tradition because of its explicit interpretation of *jūnen* (十念 "ten thoughts," "ten utterances") as saying the Name ten times.

⁴ There are two fundamental elements in the Buddhist path: aspiration for enlightenment formulated to give direction to practice, and the religious cultivation and good works (*gyō* 行) performed through many lifetimes in order to bring that aspiration to fruition. This view underlies Shan-tao's analysis of "Namu-amida-butsu" quoted on p. 111. In *Anjin ketsujō shō*, however, the scheme of aspiration-practice functions as a forceful device for teaching the unity of Amida's compassion and human aspirations, for concretely it refers to Amida's Vow and the aeons of practice performed as Dharmākara, the results of which are transferred to living beings.

pend on whether or not we are born in the Pure Land. This being so, it is difficult to understand [Amida's] having achieved enlightenment before the sentient beings of the universe have in fact been born. Nevertheless, the Buddha has already arranged the birth of beings by wholly fulfilling, in our place, the essential aspiration and practice. When the awakening of aspiration and performance of practice of all the sentient beings throughout the universe were thoroughly realized and their birth thereby accomplished, Amida attained the perfect enlightenment embodied in *Namu-amida-butsu*, in which practitioner and Dharma are one.⁵ The birth of foolish beings, then, is inseparable from the Buddha's realization of perfect enlightenment. When the birth of all sentient beings throughout the universe was consummated, the Buddha also attained enlightenment; thus, the Buddha's realization of enlightenment and the fulfillment of our birth were simultaneous (*dōji*).

Although our birth has been effected on the part of the Buddha, we sentient beings differ in coming to grasp this truth; hence, there are those who have already been born, those who are now being born, and those who will be born in the future. The times of past, present, or future may vary according to the individual practitioners; nevertheless, beyond the moment (*ichinen*) of perfect enlightenment in which Amida achieved the attainment of birth in [our] place, there is [nothing else necessary,] nothing at all that we contribute.

To give an analogy, when the sun emerges, the darkness in all directions vanishes instantly, and when the moon appears, the waters throughout the Dharma-realm simultaneously reflect its image. The moon ascends and casts its reflection on all streams; the sun rises and

⁵ *Kihō ittai* 機法一体. Literally, "oneness of *ki* (practitioner) and dharma (Buddha)." This phrase, expressing one of the central themes of *Anjin ketsujō shō*, occurs twenty times throughout the work. It first appears in the writings of Shōkū (1176–1246), founder of the Seizan branch of the Jōdo school, and its usage in *Anjin ketsujō shō* exerted strong influence on the thought of Shin leaders—most notably Kakunyo, Zonkaku, and Rennyo—during the formative period of the Honganji tradition.

Scholars have distinguished various implications on the phrase depending on context in *Anjin ketsujō shō*, and have also sought to differentiate its range of meaning from that in Shōkū and in the Shin teachers. Here we note simply that the present work develops two general dimensions of the nonduality: that based on the nature of the Vow as inherently including the birth of beings (oneness of perfect enlightenment and attainment of birth), and that based on the working of the Vow in beings (oneness in *Namu-amida-butsu*).

unfailingly sweeps away the dark. You need only know, then, whether the sun has risen, and should not worry about whether or not the darkness has been dispelled. You should perceive whether the Buddha has attained perfect enlightenment, and not be anxious about whether or not foolish beings will attain birth.

The bhikṣu Dharmākara, who vowed not to attain Buddhahood unless all sentient beings are born into his land, has already been Buddha for ten kalpas. [Nevertheless,] to this day we have been foolishly ignorant of the birth that has already been fulfilled on the part of Buddha (*buttai*) and have been aimlessly transmigrating in samsara. Thus, Shan-tao states in *Hymns of the Samādhi of All Buddhas' Presence*:

Let us all deeply repent! Śākyamuni Tathāgata is truly father and mother to us, full of compassion.⁶

The two characters in the term “repent” (*zan-gi*) are interpreted [in various sutras and treatises] to mean to be ashamed before heaven and before human beings, or to be ashamed within oneself and before others.

We should be deeply ashamed because Amida, for a span of billions of years and infinite kalpas, labored in sustained aspiration and practice in the place of foolish beings who lack any good, and Śākyamuni, since five hundred “chiliocosms of atoms of kalpas” in the past,⁷ has

⁶ The opening words of *Hanjusan* 般舟讚, from which three passages are quoted and commented on:

“Respectfully I say to all friends who aspire for birth: Let us deeply repent! Śākyamuni Tathāgata is truly father and mother to us, full of compassion. Through various skillful means, he leads us to the awakening of the mind of supreme trust. Various means are enjoined; more than one gateway of the teaching is provided, for the sake of us, who are foolish beings of inverted views. If we perform practice according to the teaching, then any of the gates will lead to seeing the Buddha and attaining birth in the Pure Land.” (T47, 448a)

Anjin ketsujō shō has (textual) “passages” 文 for “gateways” 門.

⁷ *Gohyaku jinden gō* 五百箇点劫. Based on the *Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 16, “Lifespan of the Tathāgata” (T9, 42b). An incalculable length of time illustrated by a spacial analogy: suppose that five hundred thousand myriad infinite chiliocosms are ground into atoms, and a person traveling in a straight line deposits one atom every five hundred thousand myriad infinite lands that he passes through. If all the worlds that he passes through are then ground into atoms, the number of atoms will still be exceeded by the number of kalpas (referred to as “five hundred particle kalpas”) since Śākyamuni’s attainment of Buddhahood.

appeared in the world eight thousand times in order to make us aware of the inconceivable Vow;⁸ yet in spite of this, up to now we have not listened. Of this we should be ashamed.

If it were [a matter of] Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna cultivation to be accomplished by the practitioner, then although the Dharma would be sublime, since beings are incapable of such practices, it might be called powerless. With the aspiration and practice [fulfilled through] Other Power, the practice is endeavored in on the part of Buddha and the effect is transferred to us, who are incapable of any good; it is virtue that never fails to lead to attainment, even for practitioners who slander the Dharma or lack the seed of Buddhahood, or those of the one-hundred year period after the extinction of the Dharma.⁹ We should be profoundly ashamed that we remain ignorant of this truth, failing to accept the earnest communication of it to us. In the three thousand great chiliocosms there is no place, even so small as a mustard seed, where Śākyamuni has not given up his life. All this was undertaken to awaken trust in us, who do not entrust ourselves to Other Power, by forming bonds with us and accumulating merit for us through the performance of rigorous practices and austerities in our place. [Shan-tao's] meaning is that we should deeply repent having remained ignorant of this vast and encompassing aspiration. To express it, he goes on to explain, "Through various skillful means, [Śākyamuni Buddha] leads us to the awakening of the mind of supreme trust." The mind of supreme trust is the threefold trust [fulfilled through] Other Power.¹⁰

Next, he states, "Various means are enjoined; the passages of the teaching are not single," referring to [Śākyamuni's] leading beings to benefit by accommodating the sutras to his listeners. It is difficult for foolish beings to attain the mind that entrusts to Other Power and be free of all vacillation. But when they hear that performing [practices through] self-power is arduous, trust in the effortless practice of

⁸ The *Brahma-Net Sutra* (*Bonmōkyō* 梵網經) states that Śākyamuni has appeared in the world eight thousand times.

⁹ It is taught in the *Larger Sutra* that, even after the last dharma-age, when all the other teachings have vanished from the world, this sutra will survive for one-hundred years to benefit beings (T12, 279a).

¹⁰ *Tariki no sanshin* 他力の三信. Refers ultimately to the attitudes described in the Eighteenth Vow: sincerity, entrusting of oneself to the Vow, and aspiration for birth into the Pure Land.

Other Power arises in them; hearing of the formidable practices of the Path of Sages, they come to accept the ease of practicing the Pure Land [way].

As we have seen, birth has been accomplished on the part of the Buddha, without any pain or effort whatsoever [on our part]; nevertheless, tormented by blind passions, we have long been transmigrating in samsara and do not accept in trust the Buddha's wisdom, wondrous beyond conceivability. Because [our birth has already been effected by the Buddha], the thought-moment in which a sentient being of the past, present, or future takes refuge [in the Vow] returns to the one thought-moment of perfect enlightenment, and the mind [settled on] saying the Name that arises in the living beings of the universe also returns to the one thought-moment of perfect enlightenment. Not a single utterance or thought [of aspiration or trust] remains with the practitioner [as his or her own good act].

The Name is in itself the entire embodiment of [Amida's] perfect enlightenment, for it is the practice of the universal Vow in which Name and Buddhahood are nondual (*myō-tai funi*). Because it is the embodiment of perfect enlightenment, it is the embodiment of the birth of the sentient beings throughout the universe. Because it is the embodiment of birth, it is fully and unfailingly possessed of the aspiration and practice necessary for our attainment. Thus, Shan-tao states in "On the Essential Meaning of the *Contemplation Sutra*":

Concerning the "ten utterances of the Buddha's Name" taught in the *Contemplation Sutra*, these utterances hold the fulfillment of ten instances of awakening aspiration and ten instances of accomplishing practice. Why do they possess [this fulfillment]? "Namu" signifies taking refuge; further, it has the meaning of awakening aspiration for the Pure Land and directing merit toward attaining birth there. "Amida-butsu" signifies the practice [that fulfills this aspiration]. Because [utterance of the Name] holds this significance, one unfailingly attains birth.¹¹

¹¹ T37, 250a-b. The "ten utterances" refers to the sutra passage on the lowest of nine grades of practitioner, represented by a person who encounters the dharma only on the deathbed after a life of evil and, finding it impossible to concentrate on Amida, merely utters the Name.

Know that while utterance of the nembutsu by a person in the lowest grade of the lowest level—one incapable of turning his thoughts to the Buddha in his final moments—is nevertheless possessed of aspiration and practice, there is nothing in it at all of the person's own aspiration and practice. For it is the aspiration and practice [accomplished] by Bodhisattva Dharmākara over a span of five kalpas [of reflection on his Vows] and billions of years [of practice] that fulfills the aspiration and practice of foolish beings. Apprehending the truth that Amida Buddha perfected the aspiration and practice for foolish beings is called realizing the "three minds," or the "threefold trust," or the "mind of trust." The verbal act that expresses the fact that Amida fulfilled foolish beings' aspiration and practice in the Name is "Namu-amida-butsu." Hence, apprehension does not remain with the practitioner; when one apprehends, [that apprehension] returns to the actuality of the Buddha's Vow. Neither does the Name remain with the practitioner; when one says it, it immediately goes back to the universal Vow. Thus, the Dharma-gate of the Pure Land [way] consists of nothing but authentically grasping the Eighteenth Vow.

[Shan-tao] writes:

As stated in the forty-eight Vows in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, it is clear that by singly practicing the saying of the Name alone, one attains birth.

Further:

The passages of this [*Contemplation*] Sutra presenting meditative and non-meditative good acts show that by singly practicing the saying of the Name alone, one attains birth.¹²

The three [Pure Land] sutras all teach solely this Primal Vow.

To know the Eighteenth Vow is to know the Name. To know the Name is to realize that at the very moment Amida Buddha accomplished beforehand the birth of foolish beings—fulfilling the necessary aspiration and practice in their place—he made the birth of sentient beings throughout the universe the substance of his enlightenment. Hence, whenever we who practice the nembutsu hear the Name, we

¹² These passages are from *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, "On Meditative Practice," (T37, 268a).

should reflect, "Already my birth has been accomplished! For it is the fulfilled Name embodying the perfect enlightenment of Dharmākara Bodhisattva, who vowed not to attain it unless the birth of the sentient beings of the universe were achieved."

Whenever we pay homage before the image of Amida Buddha, we should reflect, "Already my birth has been accomplished! For this is the form embodying the perfect enlightenment realized by Dharmākara Bodhisattva, who vowed not to attain it unless the birth of the sentient beings throughout the universe were fulfilled."

And whenever we hear the name "Land of Ultimate Bliss," we should reflect, "The Buddha has prepared the place where I will be born—the Land of Ultimate Bliss fulfilled by Dharmākara Bodhisattva, who vowed not to attain perfect enlightenment unless sentient beings are born there!" On the part of the Buddha, virtues countless as the sands of the Ganges have been fulfilled for such practicers as ourselves, who know only committing evil and who lack both the roots of good taught in the Buddha-dharma and those valued in mundane life; hence, that land is called "Ultimate Bliss," being the fullness of happiness for the sake of such foolish and evil-viewed sentient beings as ourselves.

It would be a sad thing for people to assume that they will attain birth if they accumulate utterances of the Name, believing—though they say the Name trusting the Primal Vow—that it embodies Buddha's virtue existing apart [from their own birth]. When faith has arisen in us that our birth having been wholly accomplished is manifested by "Namu-amida-butsu," then we see that the substance of Buddhahood is itself none other than the practice bringing about our birth. Thus, where there is a single voicing, birth is firmly settled.

Whenever we hear the Name "Amida Buddha," we should recognize it as itself our attainment of birth, and grasp that our birth is none other than the Buddha's perfect enlightenment. Although we may be doubtful about whether or not Amida Buddha has already attained perfect enlightenment, we should have no doubt concerning whether or not our birth has been fulfilled. If even a single sentient being were not to attain birth, the Buddha would never have attained perfect enlightenment. To understand this is to discern plainly the nature of the Eighteenth Vow.

[It may seem reasonable that] sentient beings themselves—if they re-

ally want to attain birth—should awaken aspiration and endeavor in practice; nevertheless, the Bodhisattva, on his part, has striven to complete aspiration and practice and the results are brought to fruition on our side. This transcends the reasoning of causality in the mundane or supramundane spheres. Master [Shan-tao] has praised this as “the universal Vow of distinctive nature.”¹³ If there were even a single person not reached by the Buddha’s accomplishment of aspiration and practice in his stead—beginning with those constantly sinking [in samsaric existence] and extending to good people—then the Vow of great compassion would not be fulfilled. When the aspiration and practice for each practitioner—each individual sentient being—was fulfilled, the Buddha attained perfect enlightenment and foolish beings attained birth.

The Buddha vowed not to enter into perfect enlightenment if there were any place that this Name surpassing conceptual understanding were not heard. Already we do in fact hear the Name “Amida Buddha.” Know, then, that our birth has already been fulfilled. To hear does not mean hearing the Name casually; it is to hear the inconceivable working of the Other Power established through the Primal Vow and to be without doubt. This hearing of the Name is accomplished on the part of the Primal Vow; it is entirely [activity that is] Other Power. Although the Buddha has effected the birth of foolish beings, if we do not hear the Name that embodies the fulfillment of the Vow, how can we know that the Vow has indeed been fulfilled? Thus, even though people hear the Name or pay homage to the [Buddha] image, they may fail to hear it as the Name in which the Buddha has fulfilled their own birth, or to reflect that it is the manifestation [revealing] that Dharmākara’s Vow not to attain Buddhahood if he does not bear us across [to nirvana] has not been in vain, and that he has attained perfect enlightenment; this is to hear without hearing, to see without seeing.

The *Sutra of the Enlightenment of Nondiscrimination* states:¹⁴

¹³ A phrase from *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, “On the Essential Meaning,” (T37, 246b). While *Anjin ketsujō shō* has *betsu i no gūgan* (別異の弘願), however, Shan-tao’s text has 別意弘願 (also read *betsu i no gūgan* in Japanese), “universal Vow of special intent.”

¹⁴ *Byōdōgaku kyō* 平等覺經, a Later Han dynasty translation of the *Larger Sutra*.

ANJIN KETSUJŌ SHŌ

On hearing [Śākyamuni Buddha] teach the Dharma-gate of the Pure Land, [beings] dance with joy and the hair of their bodies stands on end.

This is not vaguely to rejoice. We may endeavor in some practice to bring about our emancipation, but in doing so we find that we are wanting in genuine aspiration for enlightenment and without wisdom. Since we are beings lacking the eyes of wisdom and the legs of practice, we can only sink in the burning pit of the three evil courses; nevertheless, aspiration and practice have been fulfilled on the part of Buddha, and when we are struck with gladness that the [Buddha] has attained the perfect enlightenment in which practitioner and Dharma are one, our joy is so great that in its abundance we leap and dance. The *Larger Sutra* expresses this: "During that time [after the three treasures have disappeared], people who hear [the Name] and realize one thought-moment [of joy will all attain birth]." Further, "Those who, hearing the Name, rejoice in it and praise it [will all attain birth]."¹⁵ When we stop regarding the Name as applying to others, hearing it instead as itself our own birth already fulfilled and seeing [Amida's] form as [the embodiment of] our having attained birth, then we may speak of "hearing the Name" or "seeing the form." To apprehend that truth is called knowing and entrusting oneself to (*shinchi*) the Primal Vow.

[Nembutsu-Samādhi (Saying the Name in Trust)]

With the mind of trust [that resides] in nembutsu-samādhi settled in you, you should understand that your body is Namu-amida-butsu, your mind is Namu-amida-butsu.

The human body arises through a mergence of the four elements—earth, water, fire, and air—and in the Hīnayāna tradition, it is said to be composed of minute particles. But though it be ground into dust, not a single particle will fail to be suffused with the virtue of the fulfilled Buddha. Thus, the physical body that actualizes the oneness of practitioner and Dharma is itself Namu-amida-butsu.

The quotation is drawn from a passage of Shan-tao's *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, "On Meditative Practice," paraphrasing the sutra (T37, 264a).

¹⁵ Not directly from the *Larger Sutra*, but rather from verses based on the sutra in Shan-tao's *Hymns of Birth* (T47, 441c).

The mind is wholly formed of blind passions and attendant blind passions; from moment to moment it arises and perishes. But though it be divided a thousand times, not a single instant will fail to be pervaded by Amida's aspiration and practice. Hence, manifesting the oneness of practitioner and Dharma, the mind also is itself *Namu-amida-butsu*.

Sentient beings, who are forever foundering [in samsaric existence], fill Amida's heart of great compassion; therefore, practitioner and Dharma are one and are themselves *Namu-amida-butsu*. The virtues of the Buddha, who is the body of the Dharma-realm, fill our ignorant and inverted minds to their depths; again, therefore, practitioner and Dharma are one and are *Namu-amida-butsu*.

The two kinds of fruition constituting the Pure Land—Buddha-body and the land itself—are also thus. There is nothing in the fulfillment of the land—down to even a single leaf of a jewel-tree—that is not for the sake of us, who are utterly evil; hence, practitioner and Dharma are one and are *Namu-amida-butsu*. The fulfillment of the Buddha-body—from the white hair between the eyebrows to the thousand-spoked wheels on the soles of the feet—consists of forms manifesting the complete realization of the aspiration and practice of sentient beings, who are constantly sinking [in samsaric existence]; hence, again, practitioner and Dharma are one and are *Namu-amida-butsu*.

Our bodies and our hearts and minds¹⁶—our activity in its three modes and our deportment in its four states—are all thoroughly pervaded by the virtues of the fulfilled Buddha. Hence, the practitioner—*Namu*—and Amida Buddha are never separated for even an instant; every point in time is *Namu-amida-butsu*. Since there is not a moment when exhaled breath and inhaled breath are separated from the Buddha's virtues, all is the embodiment of *Namu-amida-butsu*. A man named Vajrabodhi practiced constant contemplation of water, so that, drawn by the mind, his body turned into a pond.¹⁷ When one has been

¹⁶ I have followed the text of the *Shinshū hōyō bon*, which reads *shiki-shin nihō* 色心二法 "two dharmas of body and mind." The expression *shiki-shin* also occurs at the end of the paragraph. Other texts read *dōshin nihō* 道心二法, "the mind of aspiration and the two dharmas [of self-benefit and benefit of others]."

¹⁷ Vajrabodhi (Kongōchi 金剛智, 671–741). Indian master active as teacher and translator of esoteric Buddhism in China. The water contemplation (*suikan* 水觀) consists of meditation on the body as fundamentally water (focusing on tears, saliva, urine) and perceiving it as therefore identical with the ocean that surrounds the world.

suffused with the Dharma, body and mind are transformed into the right Dharma itself. When we have gained the apprehension that is [harbored in] nembutsu-samadhi, then both body and mind turn into Namu-amida-butsu, and when that apprehension is expressed in words, Namu-amida-butsu is uttered; this is what is meant when we speak of the consummate nembutsu of the universal Vow.

The term "nembutsu" is not necessarily restricted in meaning to verbally saying "Namu-amida-butsu." It refers to the arising of trust, [the realization] that the virtues of Amida Buddha have been established and have pervaded us, practitioners of Namu, since the moment of perfect enlightenment ten kalpas ago. If this realization is expressed rationally, it is done so with Namu-amida-butsu. Since the mind of Amida Buddha is fundamentally great compassion, it takes as its foremost [goal] the bringing of dull and foolish sentient beings to enlightenment; thus, [the Buddha] has announced the perfect enlightenment in which Name and Buddhahood are nondual (*myō-tai funi no shōgaku*). Buddhahood enters into the Name, and the Name is possessed of the virtues of Buddhahood. Therefore, even people of unexceptional faith attain birth if they say the Name, though they may lack a precise grasp of any [of this]. We, however, being foolish beings of inferior capacities, are restless and incapable of simply entrusting ourselves [to the Vow]; nevertheless, when we hear this truth and it unfolds for us, true entrusting arises.

If we are not born even though we say the nembutsu, it is because, as T'an-luan explains, we are "not in accord with the significance of the Name."¹⁸ To be "in accord with the significance of the Name" is to say it realizing that we will be born through the power of Amida Buddha's virtues. Because the Name expresses verbally the trust [arising as] apprehension [of the Vow] (*ryōge no shinjin*), to grasp thoroughly its six characters, Na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu, is itself called the "three minds." Thus, to say Namu-amida-butsu merely with the lips, aware that the Buddha's virtues have been established inseparably from one's own existence, is nembutsu that harbors the three minds.

What of the nembutsu of people who adhere to self-power? They cast the Buddha aside—far-off in the western direction—and being themselves foolish beings given to self-deception, they turn their

¹⁸ From the *Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land*, T40, 835b.

thoughts to the Buddha's Other Power or say the Name only from time to time. Thus, Buddha and sentient being remain remote from each other. When a slight aspiration for enlightenment arises in them, they feel that their birth is near. When their nembutsu turns spiritless and their aspiration cools, however, birth seems altogether precarious. Since the minds of foolish beings are such that aspiration for enlightenment rarely arises, their birth seems ever undecided. Although they wait, anxiously thinking "maybe it will come, maybe it will come," to the very point of death birth will remain uncertain in their minds; thus, though they may occasionally recite the Name from their lips, they cannot count on attaining birth. This is like going to pay one's respects to a noble personage or serving at court, [but doing so] only sporadically. Similarly, they ponder how to accord with the Buddha's mind, and seek to receive the favor of birth by flattering him. Because of such thoughts, the settled mind of the practitioners and the Buddha's great compassion are completely disjointed, and their existence always remains distant from the Buddha. In this situation, birth is indeed extremely uncertain.

Nembutsu-samādhi refers to entrusting oneself [to Amida] in the awareness that the aspiration (Vow) and practice embodying the great compassion of the fulfilled Buddha has, from the very beginning, entered the minds and thoughts of ignorant sentient beings, so that without our knowing, from the side of Buddha, the perfect enlightenment of Namu-amida-butsu in which practitioner and Dharma are one has been attained. Because aspiration and practice have both been accomplished on the part of Buddha, our hands in worship, our lips in utterance, and our minds in trust are all Other Power.

For this reason, in the eighth exercise [of the *Contemplation Sutra*] it is taught, concerning nembutsu-samādhi [that embodies] the oneness of practitioner and Dharma:

The Buddha-tathāgata [Amida] is the body of the Dharma-realm, entering the minds of all sentient beings.¹⁹

In commentary, [Shan-tao] states:

¹⁹ From the contemplation of the figure of Amida Buddha (T12, 343a).

ANJIN KETSUJŌ SHŌ

“Dharma-realm” refers to the field of enlightening activity, the world of sentient beings.²⁰

Note that it is all the sentient beings of the Dharma-realm—not “sentient beings who perform meditative good” or “sentient beings who awaken aspiration for enlightenment”—who are the objects of enlightening activity. This is what Shan-tao means when he says, “‘Dharma-realm’ refers to the field of enlightening activity, the world of sentient beings.” Further, he states that precisely because the Buddha’s mind transfuses [beings], the Buddha’s body also transfuses them. The virtues of Amida’s body and mind penetrate and fill the bodies of the sentient beings of the Dharma-realm and the depths of their minds; hence the words, “entering the minds of all sentient beings.” The person who accepts this in trust is called a sentient being of the nembutsu.

Further, Shan-tao explains, concerning the contemplation of the true Buddha-body:

The three modes of activity of sentient beings of the nembutsu and the three modes of activity of Amida Tathāgata are mutually inseparable.²¹

The Buddha’s perfect enlightenment consists of the birth of sentient be-

²⁰ From *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, “On Meditative Practice,” (T37, 267a).

²¹ The contemplation of the true body of Amida (*shinshinkan* 真身觀), the ninth exercise of the *Contemplation Sutra*, focuses on the Buddha’s transcendent features and the light they emit: “Each ray of [Amida’s] light shines everywhere upon the worlds of the cosmos, grasping and never abandoning sentient beings of the nembutsu” (T12, 343b). In his commentary on the light grasping and never abandoning people of the nembutsu, Shan-tao describes three relationships that exist between the practitioner and Amida Buddha. The first is the “intimate” or “close” relationship: if a person always utters the Name, worships Amida, and thinks on him, the Buddha hears, sees, and recognizes the person; thus their three modes of activity are inseparable. “Three modes of activity” (*sangō* 三業) refers to all actions categorized as bodily, verbal, and mental; in the case the practitioner, concretely it refers to worship, saying the nembutsu, and thinking on the Buddha.

The quotation in *Anjin ketsujō shō* is a paraphrase based on *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, “On Meditative Practice,” (T37, 268a).

ings, and the birth of sentient beings consists of the Buddha's perfect enlightenment; hence, the three modes of activity of sentient beings and those of Amida are wholly one. [Those who] hear with genuine understanding that there is no birth of sentient beings apart from the Buddha's enlightenment, and that both aspiration and practice have been fulfilled on the part of Buddha, are the sentient beings of the nembutsu. Their entrusting of themselves [to the Vow], when given verbal expression, is *Namu-amida-butsu*.

Thus, once you have become a practitioner of the nembutsu, however much you might try to isolate yourself from the Buddha, there can be not the slightest particle of separation. Since the perfect enlightenment embodied in *Namu-amida-butsu*, in which practitioner and Dharma are one, has been realized on the side of the Buddha, even such unstable utterance leads to birth as that performed by people of the lowest grade and rank, who are bereft of all mindfulness of the Buddha. This is because they are not first born at the moment they say the Name; rather, their utterance gives expression to the birth that the Buddha has from the very beginning fulfilled for the sake of the practitioner of extreme evil.

Further, practitioners so [unrelated to Dharma] that they have scarcely heard of even the names of the three treasures—like sentient beings of that period, taught in the *Larger Sutra*, when the three treasures will have completely disappeared from the world—still attain birth by a single utterance of the Name. Neither is this a matter of birth being first established at the moment of utterance. The transfusing influence of the aspiration and practice accomplished by Buddha emerges when the nembutsu is uttered once and brings to realization the one great matter of birth.

When we have grasped this, [we understand that] though we are [able to be] born today, at this hour, it is not [because of] the effectiveness of our own saying the nembutsu and entrusting ourselves to Other Power with astute minds. The virtues of the Buddha, who strove with courage and energy, were fulfilled in us in the instant of perfect enlightenment ten kalpas ago, but they emerge only gradually. Although the virtues of awakening were fulfilled simultaneously in all the sentient beings throughout the universe, there are those in whom they became manifest yesterday and those in whom they will become manifest today. Attainment of birth may vary thus in terms of past,

present, and future, but since its actual cause, the universal Vow, becomes present little by little, beyond the Buddha's aspiration and practice, there is nothing of trust or of practice added by the practitioner. Nembutsu means to be mindful (*nen*) of this truth; practice means to pay homage to and revere this happiness. Hence, the Buddha's perfect enlightenment and the being's practice are one and inseparable. Even to describe this as "intimate" is ambiguous; "near" still implies distance.²² Know that, although we have discussed the one who is mindful and the object of mindfulness, we [make this distinction] only within the "oneness" [of practitioner and Dharma].²³

²² Allusion to Shan-tao's analysis of three relationships between practitioner and Buddha (see fn. 21). The second is described as "near": if a person desires to see Amida, the Buddha appears before the person.

²³ Traditional commentaries have varied in designating these elements of agent and object of mindfulness (*nōnen shonen* 能念所念): the former is Amida and the latter is the being; the former is the mind of trust and the latter is Buddha. However, the allusion to Shan-tao probably continues here: in explaining the foundation of the "intimate" relationship, he states that "if the being is mindful of Amida, Amida is mindful of the being." The relationship is reciprocal.