

“I Have Accorded with the Buddha’s Teaching”: The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and *Upadeśa*

TAKESHI KAKU

Introduction

How can we confused ordinary beings—who cannot help but discriminate between self and other—be confident that we are correctly listening to, that is, interpreting, the Buddha’s words? Additionally, what kind of scriptures and traditions take this question as their main topic?¹ In this paper, I will consider the significance of the second line of Vasubandhu’s *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (Skt. *Sukhāvātīvyūhōpadeśa*; Ch. *Wuliangshoujing youbotishe yuansheng jie* 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈; Jp. *Muryō jukyō ubadaisha ganshōge*; lit. *Verses of Aspiration for Rebirth in the Pure Land as an Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*) in the intellectual history of Pure Land Buddhism. I will consider the role that Tanluan’s (476?–542?) original interpretation of this second line in his *Pure Land Treatise Commentary* (Ch. *Wuliangshoujing youpotishe yuanshengjie zhu* 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈註; Jp. *Muryō jukyō ubadaisha ganshōge chū*) played in the history of the reception of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (*Foshuo wuliangshoujing* 仏説無量壽經 [Jp. *Bussetsu muryōju kyō*] translated in the Wei 魏 period) in the Pure Land tradition after him. In particular, I will focus on the influence it had on Shinran (1173–1262), who clarified the absolutely Other Power nature of the power of the original vow that is expounded in that sutra.

¹ Odani Nobuchiyo states, “Sarvāstivāda, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Consciousness-Only took properly listening to the Buddha’s teachings as a fundamental issue” (Odani 2000). I basically agree with this view, but I also think that Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* can be seen as another such tradition. The Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition that is based on the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures and *yoga* scriptures of the Madhyamaka, Yogācāra and other schools takes cutting off affliction based on religious training as a premise. In contrast, Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* are a Mahāyāna tradition of thought that tries to get ordinary individuals—just as they are—to properly listen to the Buddha’s words.

1. Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*

The only extant version of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is the translation by Bodhiruci (Putiliuzhi Sanzang 菩提流支三藏) who came to the Wei state in 508.² Bodhiruci translated many of Vasubandhu's works and claimed to be part of his direct lineage.³ This treatise is comprised of twenty-four lines of verse, with prose interpreting these verses. In the verses, Vasubandhu expresses, based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, his aspiration to be born in Amida Buddha's Pure Land, and in prose he makes clear the meaning of this aspiration. While it is not a long work, the *Treatise* has an important position in the history of Pure Land teachings as the only Pure Land treatise based upon the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* written by an Indian master. The Kamakura-period Buddhist Hōnen 法然 (Genkū 源空; 1133–1212) saw it as the only treatise that determined that the Buddha's doctrines in the three Pure Land sutras should be understood as teachings for us to be born in the Pure Land. Regarding its historical significance, Hōnen states, "First, the three [Pure Land] sutras and this single treatise are the teachings that properly made clear Birth in the Pure Land."⁴ As he points out here, if this treatise had not determined that the main topic of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is leading sentient beings to aspire to be born in the Pure Land, then the sutra would have probably just continued to be a scripture about the origins of a buddha named Amida.

This *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* has a unique form among Vasubandhu's works that were translated by Bodhiruci. Throughout the verses (in the introduction, main section and dissemination section), Vasubandhu uses the word "I" (Ch. *wo* 我; Jp. *ware*) five times, something that is not seen in his other works.

² The woodblock versions of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and the quotations found in Tanluan's *Pure Land Treatise Commentary* sometimes differ. Incidentally, Ōtake Susumu 大竹晋 has doubts regarding the main text of the *Treatise of the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* that Tanluan quotes (Ōtake 2011: 314). In this paper, I have chosen to trust Tanluan's quotations of the main text because he directly met its translator Bodhiruci, and he adopted the sincere approach of interpreting the translation based on a critical analysis.

³ Bodhiruci was not only from Northern India like Vasubandhu, he also said that he was part of Vasubandhu's lineage (*Jingang xian lun* 金剛仙論; Ōtake 2011). If so, it is hard to think that Tanluan, who was directly taught by Bodhiruci, completely misunderstood the main thrust of Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. We should respect Tanluan's understanding of it; it was directly inherited from the text's translator.

⁴ *Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選訳本願念仏集 (Collection of Passages on the *Nenbutsu* of the Chosen Primal Vow), in SSZ 1: 931.

Line 1: O World-honored Ones, with the mind that is single, I take refuge in the Tathāgata of unhindered light, Filling the ten quarters, And aspire to be born in the land of happiness.

Line 2: Relying on the sutras, In which the manifestation of true and real virtues is taught, I compose a gāthā of aspiration, a condensation, and accord with the Buddha's teachings.

Line 15: For this reason I aspire to be born, In the Buddha land of Amida.

Line 23: May I be born there, And deliver the Buddha-Dharma like the Buddha.

Line 24: On writing this treatise, I have composed these verses, In aspiration for seeing Amida Buddha, And, together with all other sentient beings, For being born in the land of peace and happiness.

After the verses end, Vasubandhu summarizes their meaning as follows: "Concerning the words and passages of the sutras on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life, I have expounded a summary of them in verse."⁵

Bodhiruci's other translations do not adopt this form. While we cannot know if "I" appeared in the original text, at the very least we can see that Bodhiruci thought that Vasubandhu was making an expression of his own personal faith. Tanluan, accurately understanding the special nature of this work, said that this treatise consisted of Vasubandhu's most central, foundational teachings (Ch. *zong* 宗; Jp. *shū*).⁶ The first line is the treatise's dedication (Ch. *guijing xu* 歸敬序; Jp. *kikyōjo*), and the second line is the reason it was written (Ch. *faqi xu* 發起序; Jp. *hokkijo*). In the latter, Vasubandhu states that his aim in writing the treatise is to "accord with the Buddha's teachings."

⁵ SSZ 1: 277-278. Translations, with modifications, are from CWS.

⁶ Yasuda Rijin (1900-1982) has discussed the meaning of "I" being found at major points in the verses. Based on the fact that this treatise includes Vasubandhu's dedication, Jinrei 深励 (1749-1817) described it as a "treatise on Śākyamuni's definitive doctrines" (*shakushūron* 釈宗論; in *Jōdoronchū kōen* 淨土論註講苑, vols. 2 and 7 [Kōgatsuin Jinrei 1973: 105, 375]), and Yamaguchi Susumu (1895-1976) refers to it as a "fundamental treatise" (*konponron* 根本論; Yamaguchi 1966: 47). However, considering that "I" appears throughout the verses, surely it is best to see it as an expression of Vasubandhu's belief. Incidentally, while Ōtake (2011) criticizes Yamaguchi's view based on the fact that dedications are found in Vasubandhu's other works, it appears that he does not touch upon the significance of Bodhiruci's using "I" in his translation.

2. Tanluan's View of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*

The oldest commentary on the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is Tanluan's *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*. According to Daoxuan's 道宣 (596-667) *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* (Ch. *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳; Jp. *Zoku kōsō den*), Tanluan became confused regarding the Buddha Way and then ultimately took refuge in Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, after being encouraged to do so by Bodhiruci. While there is debate as to what text Bodhiruci gave Tanluan, judging from Tanluan's interest in pursuing the Buddha Way, there is no doubt that with its declaration, "I have accorded with the Buddha's teachings," Vasubandhu's treatise was decisively significant in effecting Tanluan's turn toward Pure Land devotion.⁷

Tanluan saw the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as the scripture that gives birth to an "I" that can proclaim to "have accorded with the Buddha's teachings," and he took refuge in its tradition. Regarding his reason for doing so, Tanluan wrote about the religious way of living realized by the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* in his concluding verses—based on that sutra's passage on the fulfillment of the primal vow—to *Verses in Praise of Amida Buddha* (Ch. *Zan Amituo fo jie* 讚阿彌陀仏偈; Jp. *San Amida butsu ge*):

I have been wandering in the three realms since the beginningless past,
Turning on the wheel of falsity.
The karma I commit every moment, every instant,
Is a step bound to the six courses, so that I stay in the three paths.
May the compassionate light protect me
And keep me from losing the mind aspiring for enlightenment.
...
My taking refuge in Amida Buddha's Pure Land
Is taking refuge in all the buddhas' lands;
Single-heartedly I extol one Buddha; May it extend to the unhindered

⁷ Incidentally, Shinran says in the *Shōshin nenbutsu ge* 正信念仏偈 (Hymn of True Faith and the Nenbutsu) and *Kōsō wasan* 高僧和讚 (Hymns of the Pure Land Masters) that Bodhiruci gave Tanluan not a specific text but the "Pure [Land] teachings." This is different from the account in *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks*, which says that Tanluan received the *Contemplation Sutra*. At the very least, that Tanluan's understanding of the Pure Land teachings has the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as its basis is also clear from the fact that Tanluan's works *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*, *Verses in Praise of Amida Buddha* and *Abbreviated Treatise on the Meaning of the Pure Land of Bliss* (Ch. *Lüelun anle jingtu yi*; Jp. *Ryakuron anraku jōdogi* 略論安樂淨土義) take the sutra's vows and vow fulfillment passages as their basis.

ones throughout the ten quarters.

To each of the innumerable buddhas of the ten quarters,
With all my heart, I bow in homage.⁸

Here, Tanluan's aim in taking refuge in Pure Land teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is very clear. At the end of these verses, he declares that only by taking refuge in Amida Buddha's Pure Land was he able to take refuge in the myriad buddhas' lands and "single-heartedly" praise them. In other words, by taking refuge in Amida Buddha's Pure Land, one can correctly listen to, believe and realize the words of Śākyamuni Buddha as one of the myriad buddhas.⁹ Tanluan positioned these teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as the Buddha Way leading to non-retrogression that is based on properly understanding the power of the Buddha, that is, the Buddhism of the path of Other Power and easy practice.¹⁰

3. Tanluan's Understanding of *Upadeśa*

Based on the teachings found in the *Commentary on the Ten Grounds* (Skt. *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*; Ch. *Shizhu piposha lun* 十住毘婆沙論; Jp. *Jūjū bibasharon*)—written by Nāgārjuna, whom Tanluan called a "great master"¹¹ (Ch. *benshi* 本師; Jp. *honji*)—Tanluan wrote a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* entitled *Pure Land Treatise Commentary* that saw the *Treatise* as being Other Power teachings for the path of easy practice that seeks non-retrogression as a bodhisattva.¹²

⁸ SSZ 1: 363. Translation from CWS. Shinran quotes this verse of Tanluan in the True Buddha and Land Chapter of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* and turns it into a hymn in the *Japanese Hymns Praising Amida Buddha in Verse* (*San amida butsu ge wasan* 讚阿弥陀仏偈和讚: no. 45, 46).

⁹ Tanluan interprets the term *shizun* 世尊 (Jp. *seson*) that appears at the beginning of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as meaning not "world-honored one" but "world-honored ones," in other words, both Śākyamuni Tathāgata who preaches the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and the multitudes of buddhas (SSZ 1: 281-282).

¹⁰ Tanluan defines the Buddha Way of Other Power as follows: "In the path of easy practice, one aspires to be both in the Pure Land with solely one's entrusting oneself to the Buddha as the cause, and allowing oneself to be carried by the power of the Buddha's vow, quickly attains Birth in the land of purity. Supported by the Buddha's power, one immediately enters the group of the truly settled of the Mahāyāna. The stage of the truly settled is none other than the stage of non-retrogression. Thus the path of easy practice may be compared in its comfort to being carried over waterways in a ship" (SSZ 1: 279; Practice Chapter of Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*, translation from CWS).

¹¹ *San amida butsu ge* 讚阿弥陀仏偈 (Verses in Praise of Amida Buddha), SSZ 1: 365; True Buddha and Land Chapter of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*; translation from CWS.

¹² Ōtake and Odani criticize Tanluan as writing his commentary based on the different tradition of Nāgārjuna without having understood Vasubandhu's Yogācāra teachings (for example,

Tanluan highlights the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, saying the following regarding Vasubandhu's intention in writing it:

In the second line, the writer says that he will create a treatise based on the Buddha's sutras and in accord with the Buddha's teachings. This is his expression that what he has taken from the sutra is of essential significance. He says this to establish the reason for naming it an *upadeśa*. It follows the above three gates [of five gates of mindfulness discussed in the first line] and gives rise to the below two gates [from the third line onwards].¹³

In this way, Tanluan finds two meanings in the second line.

First, Tanluan argues that the basis for the inclusion of the word *upadeśa* in the treatise's title lies in its second line, and he defines *upadeśa* as follows:

Within the twelve divisions of the Buddhist canon, there are treatises called *upadeśa*. If the Buddha's disciples understand the meaning of the scripture's teaching and are in accord with the Buddha's meaning, the Buddha allows [what they write] to be called an *upadeśa*. This is because [these writings] match the characteristics of the Buddha Dharma.¹⁴

While this interpretation is held to be based on the *Great Liberating Wisdom Treatise (Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*; Ch. *Dazhidulun* 大智度論; Jp. *Daichidoron*),¹⁵ the word "accord" (Ch. *xiangying*; Jp. *sōō* 相應) cannot be

Ōtake 2011: 200). In contrast, I believe that we can see Tanluan's sincere approach to doctrinal studies in the fact that, while understanding the Yogācāra tradition that Bodhiruci represented, he states at the beginning of his commentary that he is interpreting the treatise through the lens of the "path of easy practice" that he acquired from Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Ten Grounds*. Through Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on the Ten Grounds*, Tanluan showed that there are two paths for a bodhisattva seeking the state of non-retrogression: the path of self power and difficult practice, and the path of Other Power and easy practice. In this way, Tanluan shifted the paradigm of Buddhism. Tanluan held that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* did not preach the self-power path of difficult practice but the path of easy practice in which we walk the Mahāyāna Buddhist path based on the Other Power of the Tathāgata's primal vow. He then interpreted the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* from this perspective.

¹³ SSZ 1: 281.

¹⁴ SSZ 1: 280.

¹⁵ "The treatises spoken of by the Buddha, the sutras made clear by the Mahāyāna, all the way up to and including the teachings that are like the Dharma of ordinary beings of the semblance Dharma [age]: they are also called *upadeśa*" (*Dazhidulun* 大智度論 33, *Kokuyaku issaikyō* 国訳一切経 [Japanese Translation of the Buddhist Canon], Shakyōronbu 釈経論部 [Treatises] 3: 41).

found in this text. Thus, it is actually based on the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*.

Tanluan also states the following:

The verse says, "Relying on the sutras I accord with the Buddha's teachings." "Sutras" are the Buddha's scriptures. Because [I, Vasubandhu, discuss the meaning of the Buddha's scriptures, accord with them, and match the characteristics of the Buddha's Dharma,] it can be named an *upadeśa*.¹⁶

In this way, Tanluan held that Vasubandhu called his work an *upadeśa* in order to show that it was his attempt as a disciple of the Buddha to accord with the meaning of the Buddha's teachings and conform to the characteristics of the Buddha Dharma. Next, Tanluan addresses why Vasubandhu aspired to be born in the Pure Land.

Vasubandhu Bodhisattva lived during the age of Śākyamuni Tathāgata's semblance Dharma and followed the scriptural teachings of Śākyamuni Tathāgata. Thus, he aspired for Birth [in Amida's Pure Land]. This aspiration for Birth is of central purport.¹⁷

In other words, Tanluan did not understand Vasubandhu's *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as simply an interpretation of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. Rather, he emphasized that Vasubandhu's endeavor to accord with the Buddha's teachings based on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* was itself his aspiration to be born in the Pure Land in an age of the semblance Dharma in which one cannot encounter Śākyamuni. Tanluan states that this aspiration is Vasubandhu's most central concern (Ch. *zong* 宗; Jp. *shū*). Even if one cannot meet Śākyamuni in the flesh, one can be in accord with the Buddha's teachings by aspiring to be born in the Pure Land. Thus, Tanluan adopts the radical interpretation that the *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is an endeavor to reach non-retrogression, a fundamental part of the Mahāyāna Buddhist Way:

This treatise, the *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, indeed holds the consummation of the Mahāyāna; it is a sail with which to catch the favorable wind toward non-retrogression.¹⁸

¹⁶ SSZ 1: 283.

¹⁷ SSZ 1: 282.

¹⁸ SSZ 1: 279. Translation from CWS. I am of the opinion that since the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* positions the Tathāgata's primal vow as the background to the buddhas' preaching of the Dharma (such as that of the founder Śākyamuni), the sutra is a Mahāyāna *jātaka*

Recent philologically focused scholarship argues, based on Vasubandhu's other works (*Principles of Exegesis* [*Vyākhyāyukti*], *Treatise on the Scripture of Adorning the Great Vehicle* [*Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra*], etc.), that the word *upadeśa* in the title of *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* refers to Vasubandhu's "explaining the meaning of the scriptures in an easy-to-understand way"¹⁹ for other sentient beings. However, I think that Tanluan's interpretive method of seeking a definition for Vasubandhu's use of *upadeśa* within the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* itself is more appropriate.

4. *Upadeśa* and the Five Gates of Mindfulness

Furthermore, based on Vasubandhu's statement at the end of his prose commentary, "I have finished briefly explaining the significance of the verses of aspiration for Birth in the Pure Land as an *upadeśa* on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*" (SSZ 1: 277; CWS), Tanluan divides up the verses that follow "O World-honored Ones, with the mind that is single, I . . ." into the five gates of mindfulness that Vasubandhu sets forth in the treatise's prose explanatory section (the five gates are: worshipping Amida's image, invoking Amida's name, vowing to be born in the Pure Land, meditating on the glories of the Pure Land, and transferring one's accumulated merit to sentient beings²⁰). Furthermore, he sees this second line as completing the first three gates and giving rise to the last two gates. By doing this, Tanluan shows that the verses, which are the expression of the content of the single mind that calls out to the World-honored Ones, are themselves the practice of the five gates of mindfulness. That is to say, in his commentary, Tanluan holds that the second line of the verses points to the fact that the verse portion as a whole describes the five gates of mindfulness as the development or playing out of the inner reality of Vasubandhu's single mind. The second line is the pivot where the subject (the three activities of body, speech and mind) that appears in the first line is completed by according with the Buddha's teachings, and

discussing the Tathāgata's past life (Yasuda 2015) that provides the grounds for other Mahāyāna teachings to be the teaching of the Buddha (Ch. *foshuo* 仏説; Jp. *bussetsu*). In other words, it is an *upadeśa* that brings to completion the Mahāyāna scriptures. Tanluan saw the *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as not simply an *upadeśa* that interprets a specific sutra (the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*) but as an *upadeśa* that allows one to match the characteristics of the Buddha Dharma based on the Mahāyāna scriptures.

¹⁹ In addition to the works by Yamaguchi Susumu, Ōtake Susumu and Odani Nobuchiyo, see also Ishikawa Takudō's work in Ishikawa 2009: 77.

²⁰ Translations based on "五念門," *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, last updated 2007/06/02, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=五念門>.

the two gates arise based on the Tathāgata's wisdom (the activity of cognition and the activity of expedient cognition) that is called forth by according with the Buddha's teachings. The center point for this completion and arising is this according with the Buddha's teachings.

If we were to see the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as a *yoga* treatise, then, based on the cessation and observation meditations, the practice of vowing to be born in the Pure Land and meditating on the glories of the Pure Land (*yoga* in a narrow sense) would be seen as central. However, Tanluan describes the intention behind creating the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as follows: “[Vasubandhu Bodhisattva] preached the verses on aspiration for rebirth, a condensation, and has accorded with the Buddha's teaching” (SSZ 1: 285). In other words, if we see the aim of the verses on aspiring for Birth in the Pure Land as being to “accord with the Buddha's teachings,” then of the five gates of mindfulness, invoking Amida's name would become the fundamental one. This is because Vasubandhu interprets this second gate in the explanatory section in the following way:

How is praise accomplished? Praise is performed as a verbal act. Saying the name, in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light that is the embodiment of wisdom, for one wants to practice in accord with the name's significance, and with reality.²¹

According to Tanluan's interpretation, the first half (称彼如来名如彼如来光明智相, “Saying the name, in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light that is the embodiment of wisdom”) refers to the practice of praising Amida,²² and the second half (如彼名義欲如実修行相応故, “for one wants to practice in accord with the name's significance, and with reality”) shows the aim one seeks to realize through this praise. In other words, the invoking of Amida's name brings about within us the desire to practice in accord with the name's significance and reality.

²¹ SSZ 1: 314. Translation based on CWS, modified. Ōtake interprets this passage as follows: “How is praise accomplished? Praise is performed as a verbal act. By saying the name in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light, the embodiment of wisdom. This is because in correspondence with the name's significance, [based on their] desire beings accord with the practice that corresponds to reality.” / 云何が讃嘆する。／口業をもて讃歎するなり。彼の如来の名を、彼の如来の光明智相の如く称うるなり。彼の名義の如く、欲〔に依りて〕如実修行に相応するが故に (Ōtake 2011: 324).

²² In the first volume of *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*, Tanluan states, “Vasubandhu Bodhisattva says, ‘now the Tathāgata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters.’ In other words, he is invoking the Tathāgata's name in correspondence with the Tathāgata's light that is the embodiment of wisdom. Therefore know that this line is the invocation of Amida's name” (SSZ 1: 283).

5. Accordance

What does “accord” (Ch. *xiangying* 相應; Jp. *sōō*) mean in the sentence “accord with the Buddha’s teachings”? Multiple possibilities (including *anuloma*, *yoga*, etc.) have been suggested as the original Sanskrit word.²³ However, Tanluan says, “[To] accord is like a box and a top fitting together.”²⁴ This metaphor is from Nāgārjuna’s *Great Liberating Wisdom Treatise* (36).²⁵ Therein, he uses the metaphor of a box and its top perfectly fitting together to express that a bodhisattva, following the characteristics of *prajñā pāramitā*, observes with wisdom, acquires well, fulfills well, and falls into neither substantialism nor nihilism regarding phenomena. Immediately before this statement, he says, “For example, the likes of a disciple following a teacher’s teachings and not differing from the teacher’s intention is called ‘accordance.’”²⁶

In this way, Tanluan differentiates a relationship of “accordance” from one of object-oriented awareness based on subject and object. In other words, to “accord with the Buddha’s teachings” is to neither bring Buddhism into one’s own awareness nor place it on the outside of one’s awareness as an object to be cognized. It is also neither a mystical experience of unity with truth nor a dialectic in which two different things are sublated (*aufheben*). The metaphor of accordance between a box and a lid expresses a relationship in which the Dharma and one’s spiritual capacity—which are different in nature—remain un-separated while maintaining their difference. Tanluan adopted this metaphor as a concept that expresses the relationship between the Tathāgata and sentient beings within Other Power, that is, finding the self within the Tathāgata’s functioning.

²³ Based on *Principles of Exegesis* (*Vyākhyāyukti*), Yamaguchi Susumu argues that it comes from the word *anuloma* and means “direct the Buddha’s teachings in the proper direction.” Ōtake Susumu, on the other hand, sees it as a translation of *prayoga* based on the *Treatise on the Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva’s Question on Bodhi* (T 1531.26. Skt. *Gāyaśīrṣa sūtra ṭīkā*; Ch. *Wenshushiri pusa wen puti jing lun* 文殊師利菩薩問菩提經論; Jp. *Manjushiri bosatsu mon bodai kyōron*; Ōtake 2011: 324, note). Yasuda Rijin argues based on the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (Ch. *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論; Jp. *Yuga shiji ron*; Discourse on the Stages of Concentration Practice) that *xiangying* probably comes from *yoga* in a wider sense: while it has a narrow meaning of cessation and observation (Jp. *shikan* 止觀), it also has a wider meaning of “objects, practices and realization” (Jp. *kyōgyōka* 境行果). Following Tanluan’s box-lid metaphor, one might also be able to argue that it came from *samprayukta*.

²⁴ SSZ 1: 285. 相應者 譬如函蓋相稱也。

²⁵ *Dazhidulun* vol. 36, ch. 3, “Shixi xiangying pin” 釋習相應品. T 1509.25: 327a16. 如般若波羅蜜相 菩薩亦隨是相 以智慧觀能得能成就不增不減 是名相應 譬如函蓋大小相稱。

²⁶ T 1509.25: 327a13-14. 譬如弟子隨順師教不違師意是名相應。

6. Faith and True Practice in the Line Invoking Amida's Name

Tanluan states the following regarding the “accordance” realized by the practice of praise that is invoking Amida's name:

“To want to practice in accord with the name's significance, and with reality”: the name of the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light dispels all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations.h)²⁷

The name of Amida that is invoked in the practice of praise is not simply a name as signifier but expresses the Tathāgata's true practice that corresponds with reality. The Tathāgata's name makes ordinary beings realize their ignorance that loses sight of reality as it is and calls forth in them a desire to awaken to that reality. Why is it that, despite the fact that foolish beings are called to accord with the name, an expression of true practice, they are unable to do so? Tanluan asks the following question:

But if you ask why ignorance still remains and your aspirations are not fulfilled even though you say the name and are mindful of Amida, it is because you do not practice in accord with reality, because you are not in correspondence with the significance of the name. Why is your practice not in accord with reality and not in correspondence with the significance of the name?²⁸

In response to this question, he presents three types of non-belief, and he answers that it is because one has not realized the faith that is expressed in Vasubandhu's statement at the beginning of his treatise, “I, with the mind that is single.” Here, to be in “accordance” is ultimately an issue of faith, whether or not one believes in the calling (the name of) the Tathāgata.

The *Collection on Peace and Bliss* (Ch. *Anleji* 安樂集; Jp. *Anrakushū*)²⁹ by Daochuo 道綽 (562–645), as well as Shinran's works, highlight this issue as well. Shinran praises the work of Tanluan, stating, “Whether practice is fully in accord with reality is determined solely by faith” (*Kōsō wasan*),³⁰

²⁷ SSZ 1: 314; quoted in *Kyōgyōshinshō* Chapter on Faith. Translation from CWS, modified.

²⁸ SSZ 1: 314; quoted in *Kyōgyōshinshō* Chapter on Faith. Translation from CWS.

²⁹ At the end of the *Anleji*'s second section, Daochuo quotes Tanluan's three kinds of non-faith and states, “It is completely unthinkable that one would not be born if they have these three minds” (SSZ 1: 403). Shinran praises Daochuo's work, stating, “With kind concern he teaches the three characteristics of entrusting and nonentrusting” (“Shōshinge” 正信偈, Chapter on Practice, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, SSZ 2: 63).

³⁰ Translation from CWS. Shinran, “Donran san” 曇鸞讚 [Tanluan Hymn], *Kōsō wasan* (SSZ 2: 430). Incidentally, in the Bunmei version (*bunmei bon* 文明本) of the *Kōsō wasan* (TSSZ 2 wasan hen: 102), one finds the following reading above “accord with reality”: *oshie no*

and he quotes this passage in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* Chapter on Faith as one of the foundational scriptural sources of the Pure Land tradition.³¹

7. Shinran and the Second Line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*

Based on Tanluan's interpretation, Shinran held that the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* was one of Vasubandhu's important contributions to Pure Land thought. Shinran quotes this line in the Chapter on Practice in his magnum opus, *Kyōgyōshinshō*:

Relying on the sutras
In which the manifestation of true and real virtues is taught,
I compose a gātha of aspiration, a condensation,
and have accorded with the Buddha's teaching.³²

Here, Shinran indicates the Chinese characters for "accord" should be read as *sōō seri* 相応せり, meaning "have accorded." Furthermore, in *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls* (*Songō shinzō meimom* 尊号真像銘文) he states the following regarding this line:

Compose a gātha of aspiration, a condensation: Gātha here refers to words that express the essence of the primal vow. A condensation is wisdom, the wisdom of unhindered light. *have accorded with the Buddha's teaching* [*yo bukkūō sōō* 与仏教相応; Shinran does not provide the Japanese reading of these characters here]: the *Treatise on the Pure Land* says that this is to conform with the World Honored Ones' [*shakuson* 釈尊] teaching and Amida's vow.³³

He says that to "have accorded with the Buddha's teachings" is, according to the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, being in accordance with the encouragement (*hakken* 発遣) of the external teachings of the World Honored Ones and the internal truth of the calling of Amida's vow (*shōkan* 招喚).³⁴

gotoku shinzuru kokoro nari 教えの如く信ずる心なり ("the mind that believes corresponding to the teachings").

³¹ Shinran understands the True Pure Land Teaching (Jōdo Shinshū) elucidated by his teacher Hōnen to be the "ultimate within the Mahāyāna" (*Mattōshō* 末灯鈔 [Lamp for the Latter Dharma Age], SSZ 2: 779; original translation) that realizes as the "faith given by Amida" (*Tannishō*, SSZ 2: 1073) a subject that properly interprets the Buddha's words.

³² Chapter on Practice, SSZ 2: 25. 淨土論曰 我依修多羅真實功德相 說願偈總持 與佛教相應. Translation from CWS, modified.

³³ SSZ 2: 620. Translation from CWS.

³⁴ Shinran understands true faith as arising from the functioning of Amida and Śākyamuni. He also holds that buddhas arise from hearing the praise of Amida Buddha's merit.

Incidentally, on the inscription found with the portrait of Shinran at age eighty-three that is thought to have been made when Shinran gave the *Kyōgyōshinshō* to one of his disciples (the portrait is called the *Anjō no goei* 安城の御影), one finds part of the *Shōshinge* and text from the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, which includes this second line. From this as well, one can see that Shinran attached importance to this line.³⁵

Conclusion

From the perspective of the tradition of Vasubandhu, Tanluan and Shinran, the strand of Pure Land teachings that might be characterized as performing *upadeśa* on the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is not a Buddhism that aims to be reborn after death in the world of Amida Buddha. The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is a Mahāyāna scripture that describes the fundamental vows by which buddhas such as Śākyamuni appear in this world (the Tathāgata's primal vow or fundamental desire) and the fulfillment of these vows (in the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* they are discussed within the framework of the "purity of the world and its inhabitants" [Ch. *erzhong shijian qingjing* 二種世間清淨; Jp. *nishu seken shōjō*] and the "the fulfillment of twenty-nine kinds of adorned merit" [Ch. *ershijiu zhong zhuangyan gongde chengjiu* 二十九種莊嚴功德成就; Jp. *nijūku shu shōgon kudoku jōju*]). The Pure Land of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (in more exact terms, the buddha-body and buddha-land) is a primal world that gives birth to buddhas and discourses about them. Our wishing to be born in the world of Amida Buddha's primal vow via the teachings of Śākyamuni is in order to discover ourselves in a land where the myriad buddhas are present, so that we will then be able to properly hear the teachings of the buddhas, including those of Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism.

How is it possible for ordinary beings living in an era without Śākyamuni to correctly listen to the buddhas' words and live based upon their wisdom? The second line of Vasubandhu's treatise points to the historical significance of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as a discourse that answers this question. In this sense, the second line also shows not only Vasubandhu's intention in creating his treatise but also the historical significance of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* in Buddhist intellectual history, having been created in a tradition

³⁵ Incidentally, in the inscription of the Name that is the primary object of worship on which the ten characters "taking refuge in the Tathāgata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters" (*kimyō jinjippō mugekō nyorai* 歸命盡十方無碍光如来) is written, one finds both part of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and a text that includes this second line. Furthermore, while not a direct quotation of this line, Shinran also draws from it in the *Shōshinge*, *Nyūshutsu nimonge* 入出二門偈 (Gāthā on the Two Gates of Entering and Leaving), and elsewhere.

where it is possible to firmly believe that “I have accorded with the Buddha’s teachings.”³⁶

Abbreviations

- CWS *The Collected Works of Shinran. Vol. 1. The Writings*, translated by Dennis Hirota, et al. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997.
- SSZ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書, ed. Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensansho 真宗聖教全書編纂所. 5 vols. Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, eds. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932.
- TSSZ *Teihon Shinran shōnin zenshū* 定本親鸞聖人全集, ed. Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 親鸞聖人全集刊行会. [Waidoban ワイド版] 9 vols. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2008.

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³⁶ If Vasubandhu’s *Upadeśa on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* had not been written, it would not have become clear that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is a set of teachings that leads to the realization that, based on the aspiration for Birth, one has “accorded with the Buddha’s teaching.” If Tanluan’s commentary on the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* had not been written, the understanding that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is about the power of the Buddha’s primal vow (the easy practice path of Other Power) would not have appeared. Furthermore, it would have not become clear that within the Buddha Way of Other Power the invocation of the Name that is the Tathāgata’s calling is the practice that realizes for us faith, which is nothing other than the essence of “accordance.” If Shinran had not highlighted the second line of the *Treatise on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and Tanluan’s commentary on it in *Pure Land Treatise Commentary*, people would probably not have been able to see the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as the true teaching for ordinary beings to properly hear and believe the buddhas’ words and walk the Mahāyāna Buddha Way.

the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and Others], *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* 新国訳大蔵経 (New Japanese Translation of the Tripiṭaka) 14, Shakkyōronbu 釈経論部 (Treatises) 18. Tokyo: Daizō.

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