

Daochuo's Creative Quotation Practices

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Daochuo 道綽 (562-645) begins his *Anleji* 安樂集 by stating: “Within this work, *Anleji* (*A Collection [of Passages on the Land of] Peace and Bliss*), there are twelve chapters, all together. In each, sutras and treatises are quoted, given to prove and clarify, encourage faith and cause one to seek birth in the Pure Land.”¹ As this passage indicates, the work itself primarily consists of quotations from scriptural authorities, the majority of which were thought to be of Indian origin. That is to say, Daochuo quotes broadly from a variety of scriptures that relay the words of Śākyamuni Buddha and the Indian thinkers who were revered as bodhisattvas.

Daochuo's quotations, however, seem to indicate an attitude toward the words of the Buddha that might strike us as disrespectful or disingenuous, because he very rarely quotes from these scriptural sources verbatim. Instead, in almost every quotation that he makes from sutras (and there are many), he makes some sort of change to the language, such that it is nearly impossible to find an exact quotation of the Chinese-language sutras that were held to relay the Buddha's words. What is more, Daochuo often adds phrases or words that accentuate the point that he is trying to make in the discussion at hand. In that sense, one might say that he is not simply taking the meaning of scripture and rephrasing it in his own words, but he is instead reshaping scripture to fit his purposes—putting words into Śākyamuni's mouth.

Daochuo's liberal attitude toward the letter of scripture seems to have been shared broadly, both among his contemporaries, such as Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛 (538-597), Jizang 吉藏 (549-623), and Jingyingsi Huiyuan 淨影寺慧遠 (523-592), and across much of Chinese Buddhist history. This fact seems to challenge some of our assumptions² about the status of the Buddha's

¹ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書 (hereafter SSZ), 1: 377; T 1958.47: 4a8-9.

² In a discussion of the role of quotation in religious speech, Webb Keane quotes Vološinov's statement, “The stronger the feeling of hierarchical eminence in another's utterance, the

words in the Buddhist exegetical tradition and forces us to question the nature of scriptural authority in medieval China. While we might believe that the Buddha's words were an absolute, unquestionable authority, these quotation practices indicate that the words of the Buddha were neither sacrosanct nor immutable for a very broad range of Chinese Buddhists from the earliest commentators at least through to the end of the Tang dynasty. Why did Chinese exegetes feel free to take such liberties with the words of the Buddha? What higher authorities did they appeal to in their revisions? What standards did they apply in reshaping scriptural language?

Paul Swanson, in his analysis of Zhiyi's quotation practices, suggests that the admonition by Śākyamuni on his deathbed to his disciples to "rely on the meaning, not on the word"³ perhaps was viewed as granting permission for such creative rewriting in the course of a quotation.⁴ However, there is no direct reference to this passage as a justification for quoting the Buddha's words freely with little concern for the letter. In fact, as far as I can tell, there seems to be little sense that such practices required any form of justification or defense at all. Most Chinese and Japanese commentators on these early Chinese Buddhist works seem to view creative quotation practices as a matter of course. Generally speaking, they simply provide the source of the quotation. In Edo-period Japanese commentaries we find analyses of the differences between the quoted passages and the originals, but no apparent sense that such treatment of the Buddha's words is problematic or irreverent. Even in the modern period, Swanson appears to be the only scholar who has even addressed the issue as somehow requiring explanation.

That said, these quotation practices are worthy of note and consideration when discussing the issue of how the Buddha's words have been accepted and interpreted within the Buddhist tradition. Therefore, I will explore some of these issues by focusing specifically on one extensive quotation in Daochuo's *Anleji* that is particularly noteworthy because of the extent and nature of the revisions. After examining the quotation and its source in detail, I will consider the authorities and standards that Daochuo makes recourse to in his revisions and suggest that these quotation practices and those of his contemporaries should be seen as an outgrowth of the creation of doctrinal

more sharply defined will its boundaries be, and the less accessible will it be to penetration by reporting and commenting tendencies from outside" (Keane 1997: 62). The words of the Buddha and Indian masters were clearly hierarchically eminent over Chinese commentators, so their free revision indicates that there is a flaw in Vološinov's position, at least in the case of Chinese Buddhism.

³ *Dabanniepanjing* 大般涅槃經 (T 374.12: 401b-c; T 375.12: 642a-b).

⁴ See Swanson 1993: 897-93. See also Swanson 1997.

classification systems and the determination of Śākyamuni's "true intent" (*benhuai* 本懷) in preaching the sutras.

Clarifying the Central Purport of the *Contemplation Sutra*

In the fourth section of Chapter 1 of the *Anleji*, Daochuo makes a delicate argument about the central purport (*zong* 宗) of the *Guanwuliangshoujing* 觀無量壽經 (T 365.12, hereafter *Contemplation Sutra*), where he highlights the special role of the *nianfo* 念佛 in Pure Land practice as a whole and in the *Contemplation Sutra* in particular. The first portion of this section is based largely on Jingyingsi Huiyuan's discussion of the central purport of the *Contemplation Sutra* in his *Guanwuliangshoujinyishu* 觀無量壽經義疏 (T 1749.37), such that at first glance Daochuo appears to take exactly the same position as Huiyuan does regarding this matter. That is, both Huiyuan and Daochuo state that the central message of the sutra is the presentation of the *samādhi* of contemplating the Buddha (*guanfo sanmei* 觀仏三昧). The second portion, however, is made up of several creatively reworked passages from the *Guanfosanmeihajing* 觀仏三昧海經 (T 643.15) and the *Huayanjing* 華嚴經 (T 278.09), which indicate that Daochuo's understanding of the content of that *samādhi* differed considerably from Huiyuan's. In the following, I will examine how Daochuo reshaped disparate passages from these two sutras to show that the central purport of the *Contemplation Sutra* lies in the clarification of a *samādhi* that can be practiced by ordinary human beings beset with grave karmic hindrances and that transforms such beings into effective, compassionate bodhisattvas.

First, let us take a look at Huiyuan's understanding of the content of *guanfo sanmei*. At the start of his *Guanwuliangshoujinyishu*, after designating the central purport of the sutra, he provides an explication of the title, where he writes:

Extending one's thoughts, considering and observing based on the exposition is "to contemplate." "Immeasurable Life" is the buddha that is contemplated. There are two types of contemplating the Buddha: first, contemplating the true body; second, contemplating the response body. Contemplating the body of the dharma gate of the equality of all buddhas is to contemplate the true body. Contemplating the bodies of buddhas and Tathāgatas together in a world is to contemplate the response body. Contemplating the true body is the contemplation of the body of actual form in the chapter on seeing Akṣobhya in the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa*. Contemplating the Buddha is just like this: "I see that the Tathāgata neither comes from before me, passes behind me, nor now

stays,” etc. . . . Contemplating the response body is as described in that *Guanfosanmeijing*. Taking the form and characteristics of a buddha, focusing one’s thoughts, considering and observing is referred to as “contemplating the response body.” This contemplation of the response body cannot be limited to one type, for form is brought forth based on the teaching, and there are various different characteristics [of the various buddhas]. Among these contemplations of the response body, there are initial and ultimate forms. The initial form is to hear the storehouse of bodhisattva teachings and knowing that there are innumerable buddhas in the ten directions, focus one’s thoughts, consider and observe, making one’s mind perfectly distinct and clear. This sort of contemplation, where one sees roughly purely based on faith, is referred to as the “initial.” Using great superhuman powers, intimately visiting, worshipping and serving, or being born in front of a buddha, seeing personally, and making offering is referred to as “truly seeing,” which is the ultimate form. . . . The [contemplation] under discussion in this sutra is, among response bodies, the roughly pure contemplation based on faith. . . . The [contemplation] under discussion in this sutra is a specific contemplation. One specifically contemplates the Buddha of Immeasurable Life in the Western Quarter.⁵

Huiyuan distinguishes two types of contemplating the Buddha, holding that contemplating the true body of the Buddha is superior to contemplating the response body. He further distinguishes the response body into initial and ultimate, arguing that the contemplation of the Buddha that is the primary focus of the *Contemplation Sutra* is an initial, introductory level of such meditative practice. In that sense, from Huiyuan’s perspective, the meditative practice laid out in the *Contemplation Sutra* is not necessarily a pivotal practice leading to the attainment of enlightenment. At best, it is one initial form of meditative practice that is on par with the practice of meditating on the thirty-two gross and eighty fine features of Śākyamuni as laid out in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*. Although this meditation is effective to some extent, it is far from a central practice in Huiyuan’s view of the Buddhist path. Indeed, in his discussion of the benefits that accrue to one who contemplates Amituo Buddha, he merely mentions that this practice allows one to see the buddhas of the ten directions and attain insight into the fact that they are all of identical substance.⁶

⁵ T 1749.37: 173b19-c14.

⁶ T 1749.37: 180c19-22.

Daochuo, on the other hand, takes the position that the teaching of the *Contemplation Sutra* itself directly clarifies the path out of birth and death for all suffering sentient beings.⁷ For him, then, *guanfo sanmei* as the central message of the sutra is of utmost significance as a soteriological key. Further, Daochuo displays considerable ambivalence regarding the effectiveness of meditative practice in general, designating it as an “auxiliary practice” that takes second place to the “right practice” of calling the name of Amituo.⁸ Therefore, his presentation of the content and benefits of that *samādhi* is far more layered and nuanced than Huiyuan's. While Huiyuan saw *guanfo sanmei* as one somewhat effective *samādhi* among many others and treated it with concomitant interest in his commentary on the *Contemplation Sutra*, Daochuo saw it as one of the chief elements of how human beings attain liberation. His quotation from the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* and the extent to which he revised the original reflect that central position, while also highlighting that he did not necessarily understand *guanfo sanmei* to be simply a meditative state in which one envisioned the various wondrous physical aspects common to all buddhas' response bodies.

In terms of quotation practices, one general feature of this quotation that we should keep in mind is that the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* is a sutra about the wondrous forms of Śākyamuni's body and the sources for those forms and is not at all related to Amituo Buddha. Daochuo's choice to quote this sutra in the context of the discussion of the *Contemplation Sutra* is thus a major reworking in itself, as naturally the contemplation referred to in the quotation takes on the meaning of contemplating Amituo Buddha by juxtaposition.

The quotation is quite long, but it is primarily a discussion of the three types of benefits that sentient beings are able to achieve through the appearance of a buddha in the world. These are enumerated as: 1. the benefits attained by the buddha's preaching; 2. the benefits obtained by contemplating the various physical features of the buddha's body and light; 3. the benefits attained through the mind of the *nianfo* and the realization of the *nianfo sanmei* 念仏三昧. We should note that in this enumeration Daochuo is making a distinction between simply meditating on the physical characteristics of the buddha and the *nianfo sanmei*, as well as showing that the *guanfo sanmei* that he holds up as the central message of the *Contemplation Sutra* subsumes both aspects. As such, it is a far wider definition than Huiyuan's. We should also note that the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* makes no reference to these three benefits as a set. In his quotation, Daochuo is bringing together

⁷ SSZ 1: 379; T 1958.47: 4b24-28.

⁸ SSZ 1: 378-379; T 1958.47: 4b22.

three disparate parts of the sutra under a single heading that is not present in the sutra at all.

First, let us consider the first two benefits. The passage as quoted in the *Anleji* reads:

The Buddha told the father king, “There are three types of benefits in the appearance of the myriad buddhas in the world. First, with their mouths, they preach the twelve types of sutras. Benefiting [sentient beings] by dispensing the dharma, they remove the dark obstructions of the ignorance of sentient beings and open [their] eyes of wisdom, causing [them] to be born before myriad buddhas and to quickly attain the unsurpassed *bodhi*. Second, the myriad buddhas, Tathāgatas, have innumerable fine features in their bodily form and their light. If there are sentient beings who consider, call, and contemplate [these forms], whether the general forms [of all buddhas] or the specific forms [of particular buddhas], with no question of whether the buddha’s body is of the past or present, all have [the residual effects of] the four grave offenses and the five abhorrent acts removed and obliterated, turn their backs on the three [evil] modes of existence, and, in accord with the wish of their minds, are continually born in Pure Lands until they attain buddhahood.”⁹

This first part of the quotation is based on the opening passage of the second chapter of the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*, entitled “Preface of Viewing the Basis.” That passage reads:

What is referred to as contemplating the state of the myriad buddhas? When myriad buddhas, Tathāgatas, appear in the world, there are two dharmas by which they adorn themselves. What are these two? First, they first preach the twelve types of sutras and bring benefits to sentient beings by causing them to intone them. These various actions are referred to as dispensing the dharma. With their wondrous physical form, they appear in Jambudvīpa or the worlds of the ten directions and by making myriad sentient beings see the buddha’s physical form fully adorned with the thirty-two gross features and the eighty fine features without anything lacking or deficient, they cause great joy to arise in the minds [of sentient beings]. Based on what causes are the forms seen in this way attained? All of these characteristics arise based on

⁹ SSZ 1: 381; T 47.01: 5a29-b6. The quotation up to this point is based on the passage at T 643.15: 647b17-22.

the hundreds of thousands of ascetic practices, cultivating the myriad *pāramitās* and auxiliary dharmas of the path in previous lives.¹⁰

As the closing sentences indicate, this passage appears at the start of what is essentially an introduction to the main body of this sutra, which is an exposition of how Śākyamuni attained the various features of a great man both in his current life and in his various practices in his previous life. These features and their causes are seen as being common to all buddhas. Daochuo, however, takes this passage out of its context, appends information from other parts of the sutra, and rewords the passage to serve as a discussion of the content of *guanfo sanmei*.

Close examination reveals that there are great differences between the two passages. Perhaps most strikingly, this passage refers to only two ways in which buddhas adorn themselves, as opposed to Daochuo's full quotation, which contains three "benefits" that result from the buddhas' appearance in the world. Secondly, Daochuo describes these benefits in great detail that is not present in Chapter 2 of the sutra. There is reference in Chapter 8 of the sutra to the effectiveness of the meditative practices outlined in the body of the scripture in removing the residual effects of the four grave offences and the five abhorrent acts,¹¹ as well as some discussion of how this practice leads to birth in a variety of Pure Lands,¹² so it is likely that Daochuo is bringing that content, separated by a full forty pages in the Taishō canon, together into this single quotation. Further, Daochuo considerably changes the portion about the buddha's bodily form to include reference to a variety of practices laid out in the *Contemplation Sutra*. While the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* simply states that sentient beings "are made to see" the buddha's body, Daochuo says that sentient beings attain benefits when they "consider, call, and contemplate [these forms]." Given Daochuo's emphasis on invocation of Amituo Buddha's name, the inclusion of "call" here is noteworthy. The addition is clearly based on the *Contemplation Sutra*, which explicitly recommends chanting the Buddha's name. There is only one passing reference to chanting the name of the Buddha in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*,¹³ a few lines from the discussion of the benefits that are attained by those who have committed grave sins, so the inclusion of "to call" in the quotation is not entirely baseless, but it is clear that Daochuo's

¹⁰ T 643.15: 647b16-23.

¹¹ T 643.15: 687b12-16.

¹² T 643.15: 687c29-689c4.

¹³ T 643.15: 687b23.

focus on it is heavily informed by the position that practice has in the *Contemplation Sutra*. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Daochuo rewrites the passage to state that these benefits ultimately lead to the attainment of buddhahood. For the first benefit, it “quickly leads” to its attainment, while, for the second, enlightenment is said to be attained after multiple births in various Pure Lands.

Daochuo’s quotation, then, shows that when he speaks of *guanfo sanmei*, he interprets it broadly to include the benefits gained from coming into contact with the Buddha’s words in scripture, contemplating the physical form of the Buddha, as well as intoning and thinking on the Buddha’s name. Further, Daochuo contextualizes these practices as essential and highly effective elements on the Buddhist path (even for those heavily burdened by karmic evil) by closing his discussion of each with a reference to the ultimate goal of buddhahood.

He further broadens this definition of *guanfo sanmei* by appending the third benefit to this quotation, again pulling together distinct elements from several different parts of the sutra. Through this inclusion, Daochuo indicates that the *guanfo sanmei* discussed in the *Contemplation Sutra* refers to the realization of the *nianfo sanmei*, or the attainment of what he calls “the mind of the *nianfo*,” while also pointing out that this practice is appropriate for foolish ordinary beings.

We should note here that in spite of the fact that Daochuo states that the central purport of the *Contemplation Sutra* is the *guanfo sanmei*, he uses the term only twice in the entire *Anleji*, while using the term *nianfo sanmei* thirty-seven times in the work. This clearly indicates that Daochuo preferred the term *nianfo sanmei* over *guanfo sanmei* and hints that his discussion of *guanfo sanmei* in the section under consideration is largely in response and deference to Huiyuan, who was a major authority in Chinese Buddhism during Daochuo’s life. In contrast to Daochuo’s emphasis on *nianfo sanmei*, Huiyuan only uses the term once in his commentary on the *Contemplation Sutra*,¹⁴ and that instance is simply because the term appears in the sutra itself. Much of the reworking of the sutra passages in the section under consideration here appears to be Daochuo’s attempt to deferentially disagree with Huiyuan and imbue new significance in Huiyuan’s interpretation. A major part of that process is Daochuo’s presentation of the *nianfo sanmei* as a synonym for *guanfo sanmei* in this third benefit described in the quotation under consideration. Through this quotation, he is refilling the content of Huiyuan’s *guanfo sanmei* with something that is entirely absent in Huiyuan’s

¹⁴ T 1749.37: 180c21.

understanding, shifting it from a low-level meditative experience to a key factor in the attainment of buddhahood.

The latter half of Daochuo's quotation from the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* can be broken into two parts. First is a dialogue between Śākyamuni and his father, Śuddhodana, and second is Śākyamuni's presentation of a metaphor to describe the merits of the *nianfo*. Let us consider each in turn. First, the dialogue reads:

Third, [the Buddha] encouraged the father king to practice *nianfo sanmei*. The father king said to the Buddha, "The completed virtues of the stage of buddhahood are true suchness, actual form, and the primary truth of emptiness. What is the reason that you do not have your disciple practice this?" The Buddha told the father king, "The completed virtues of the myriad buddhas have innumerable and deeply wondrous states, supernatural powers, and liberation. Because this is not a state to be practiced by [foolish] ordinary human beings, [I] encourage [you], the father king, to practice *nianfo sanmei*."¹⁵

Although Śuddhodana is one of the main interlocutors of the Buddha in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*, no such dialogue exists there. Śuddhodana appears in Chapter 1, where he pays a visit to his son and asks him to explain how he came to have the thirty-two fabulous features of a great man. There is reference to how the dharma body of the Buddha is not a state to be practiced by foolish, ordinary human beings, but it does not appear in an exchange between the Buddha and his father. Instead, it appears in a monologue at the beginning of Chapter 8 where the Buddha is addressing Ānanda about the ease and effectiveness of the *nianfo*. The Buddha states that if one simply focuses one's mind on a single follicle of the Buddha's hair, one will be able to see myriad buddhas standing before one and preaching the true Dharma. Such a meditation on just one part of the Buddha leads a person to attain the seed of the Tathāgatas, so, Śākyamuni continues,

How much more so one who is able to think on the complete physical form of the Buddha? The Tathāgata also possesses an immeasurable dharma-body, the ten powers, fearlessness, *samādhi*, freedom, various superhuman powers. These wondrous capacities are not a state to be studied by [foolish] ordinary beings like you. One should simply, with a profound mind, give rise to sympathetic joy. After giving rise to this

¹⁵ SSZ 1: 381; T 1958.47: 5b6-10. This portion of this quotation is based on the passage at T 643.15: 687b29-c4.

thought [of joy], one should then focus one's thought and consider the virtues of the Buddha.¹⁶

He then lists a variety of virtues that are unique to buddhas, such as the eighteen uncommonly held dharmas, the thirty-two gross and eighty fine features, the ten powers, and fearlessness. In this context, the reference to foolish ordinary beings is to highlight the contrast with the wonderful virtues that buddhas possess, and those virtues are simply being praised to prove the vast effectiveness of contemplating the Buddha. That is to say, the original sutra does not make any contrast between the *nianfo sanmei* and contemplation of the ultimate truth of Buddhism, as Daochuo's quotation does. He reshapes the passage so that it appears Śākyamuni is discouraging his father from trying to gain meditative insight into that ultimate truth of emptiness, because it is beyond his capacities as an ordinary human being. This contrast and Śākyamuni's encouragement to engage in the *nianfo* in Daochuo's quotation calls to mind the distinction that Huiyuan made between contemplating the Buddha's dharma body and the Buddha's response body. Daochuo likely had that distinction, and Huiyuan's prioritization of the former, in mind when he has Śākyamuni say, "Because this is not a state to be practiced by [foolish] ordinary human beings, [I] encourage [you], the father king, to practice *nianfo sanmei*."

We should also note this particular concern with the word "ordinary human being" in Daochuo's presentation. The term only appears nine times in the whole of the *Guanfosanmeihajing*. While the sutra does state that it is being preached for the sake of "ordinary human beings" after Śākyamuni's passing, practitioners at that stage are not necessarily of paramount concern. In the passage quoted above, it is nothing more than a passing reference, but Daochuo seized on the term as central to the message of the sutra and, perhaps influenced by another passage that speaks of the "*nianfo sanmei* for ordinary human beings,"¹⁷ brings it up as an important point about the nature of that *sanmei* that is driven home by Śākyamuni. Daochuo's sensitivity to this term likely relies on the passages in the *Contemplation Sutra* where Śākyamuni declares that the teachings there are intended for all future ordinary beings¹⁸ and states that the primary interlocutor in that sutra is an ordinary human being and should therefore listen well to the teachings preached there.¹⁹ That is, because Daochuo saw the *Contemplation Sutra* as a sutra

¹⁶ T 643.15: 687c1-5.

¹⁷ T 643.15: 692c21-22.

¹⁸ T 365.12: 341c7-8.

¹⁹ T 365.12: 341c23.

that preached a path to Buddhahood for foolish ordinary beings, he picked up on the use of the term in the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* and emphasized it in his quotation. Here again, Daochuo is reshaping the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* in the image of the *Contemplation Sutra*.

The metaphor that Daochuo quotes is also removed from its original context so the elements take on a different meaning in the *Anleji* than they hold in the original. Daochuo's quotation reads:

The father king said to the Buddha, "What are the conditions of the virtues of *nianfo*?" The Buddha told the father king, "It is as though, in a forest of *eraṇḍa*²⁰ that is forty *yojana* square, there is one *gośīrṣa-candana*,²¹ which, although it has roots and sprouts, has not yet broken forth from the ground. The forest of *eraṇḍa* is only foul smelling, not at all aromatic. If one eats those fruits or flowers, one will go mad and die. At a later time, the roots and sprouts of the *candana* gradually grow and have barely become like a tree. The fine aroma flourishes and ultimately transforms this forest, completely giving everything a beautiful scent. Those sentient beings who see this all give rise to a rare mind." The Buddha told the father king, "For all sentient beings within birth and death, the mind of the *nianfo* is also like this. If one just connects one's thoughts [to that Buddha], without cease, one will definitely be born before a buddha. If one attains birth once, then all the various evils are transformed and become great compassion, in the same way that this fragrant tree changes the forest of *eraṇḍa*."

Here, Daochuo introduces the metaphor with a line that is clearly based on the next line from the passage from Chapter 8 of the sutra quoted above, which encourages people to consider the virtues of the Buddha. That line says, "considering the Buddha's virtues refers to" (念仏功德者), while Daochuo's quotation reads, "What are the conditions of the virtues of *nianfo*?" (念仏之功其状云何). The imagery of the large forest of foul-smelling *eraṇḍa* being transformed by a single sandalwood tree is, however, taken from Chapter 1 of the *Guanfosanmeihaijing*, which lists six metaphors that describe how the mind of sentient beings that contemplates the Buddha is identical to the mind of the Buddha itself. The passage in the sutra reads:

"Next, O father king, it is as though *eraṇḍa* were to grow together with a *candana* on a mountain. A *gośīrṣa-candana* grew within a thicket of *eraṇḍa*, but, when it had not yet grown large and was still within the

²⁰ Also *erāvaṇa*, a foul-smelling tree of the same family as the castor oil plant.

²¹ Ox-head sandalwood, a tree known for its fine scent and often used for making incense.

ground, it was like a bamboo shoot of Jambudvīpa, and the various people did not recognize it and would say that on this mountain there are only *eraṇḍa* and no *candana*. The *eraṇḍa* were foul-smelling, and the stench was like a decomposing corpse, which spread over forty *yojana*. Its flowers are red in color and very attractive. If one eats them, one will go mad and die. Although the *gośīrṣa-candana* started growing within this forest, since it had not finished growing, it was unable to emit a scent. After the full moon of mid-autumn, it came forth from the ground and became a *gośīrṣa-candana* tree. The various people could all smell the superb, wondrous fragrance of the *gośīrṣa-candana* and the scent of the foul-smelling *eraṇḍa* was extinguished forever.” The Buddha said to the father king, “The mind of the *nianfo* is also this way. Because of this mind, one is able to attain the roots of the three types of *bodhi*.”²²

Although the use of this imagery to describe the “mind of the *nianfo*” is clearly the same, Daochuo’s presentation is far more detailed, especially the last portion, where Daochuo has Śākyamuni explain the transformative function of this mind. The sutra itself does not explicitly explain the elements of the metaphor at all, but we can surmise that the *eraṇḍa* refers to the state of sentient beings’ minds prior to contemplating the Buddha, while the *candana* refers to the transformative power of that mind that contemplates the Buddha. There is no reference to birth in the Pure Land nor to the content of the transformation in the original sutra, but Daochuo causes Śākyamuni to say: “If one just connects one’s thoughts [to that Buddha] without cease, one will definitely be born before a buddha. If one attains birth once, then all the various evils are transformed and become great compassion, in the same way that this fragrant tree changes the forest of *eraṇḍa*.” This revision, which takes birth before a buddha to be a prerequisite for the transformation of evil into great compassion, is, like the other major revisions here, informed by the Pure Land scriptural tradition, especially the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, which discusses the way in which bodhisattvas who are born in Amituo’s Pure Land then function compassionately to liberate sentient beings.

Daochuo not only phrases the quotation so that Śākyamuni explains the elements of the metaphor, he explains them again himself, as follows.

In the metaphor, the forest of *eraṇḍa* stands for the three poisons, the three obstructions, and the limitless grave sins within the bodies of sentient beings. *Candana* represents the mind of the *nianfo* of sentient

²² T 643.15: 646a21-b1.

beings. "Have barely become a tree" means if all sentient beings simply can pile thought upon thought [of the Buddha] without break, the karmic path is completed and clear.

Here, Daochuo emphasizes the *nianfo*'s power to transform sentient beings' evil karma and open up a path to buddhahood that would otherwise be closed off to them. This passage also echoes the passage at the end of the *Contemplation Sutra* that speaks of the power of the *nianfo* to destroy karmic hindrances and bring about birth in the Pure Land for even the most limited, sinful person. Again, these are issues of concern in Pure Land scriptures related to Amituo Buddha and his land, but not necessarily the focus of the sutra that Daochuo is quoting.

On the whole, then, Daochuo can be said to be making a Pure Land sutra out of the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* in an attempt to show that the Pure Land tradition offers a path for limited, ordinary beings to first become bodhisattvas and then attain buddhahood through the *nianfo*. This quotation and many of the changes to the original text are clearly motivated by Daochuo's attempt to correct or reinterpret Huiyuan's understanding of the *Contemplation Sutra*, in a sense borrowing the authority of Śākyamuni to undermine the authority of Huiyuan or at least to breathe new vitality and immediacy into Huiyuan's rather tepid interpretation of that sutra.

The Buddha's Words as the Standard to Judge the Buddha's Words

This brings us back to the questions I posed at the beginning regarding the authorities and standards that Daochuo employs in his rewriting of Śākyamuni's words. From the above considerations, it is quite clear that he is taking his authority from the words of Śākyamuni within the Pure Land sutras. The *Contemplation Sutra* serves as a standard by which Daochuo judges the other sutras. He twists their words so that they conform to that sutra's message.

Daochuo is famous for his declaration that the Pure Land Way is the only effective path to buddhahood for ordinary beings (and even for highly accomplished bodhisattvas). That declaration is based on his understanding that Śākyamuni's central message lay in the clarification of the working of Amituo Buddha's vows within the world to liberate sentient beings, an understanding that prioritizes the Pure Land sutras over all the other sutras that preach different practices and paths to enlightenment. Those Pure Land sutras became a lens through which Daochuo viewed the rest of Śākyamuni's teachings, a litmus test for the true and effective, and a mold that he used to shape the message and the words of other sutras. In that sense, Daochuo's creative quotation practices can be seen as an outgrowth of his work of doctrinal

classification. By clarifying Śākyamuni's central message, Daochuo established for himself a scriptural standard through which he was able to evaluate the teachings in the rest of the canon. He employed that standard in his quotation of scripture. In doing so, perhaps he not only relied on Śākyamuni's dying admonition to "rely on the meaning, not the words," but also on the one to "rely on the sutras in which the Buddha's intent is fully revealed (*leyijing* 了義經), not on those where it is not."²³ For Daochuo, Śākyamuni's intention in leading sentient beings to buddhahood is most clearly and fully expressed in these Pure Land scriptures, and therefore he is able to take liberties with the letter of the Buddha's word in order to express its true intent.

When thinking about Daochuo's attitude toward scripture, there is one passage in the *Anleji* that offers some insight into the care with which he read Mahāyāna sutras and also what he saw to be their central message. In closing, I would like to briefly introduce that passage:

The profound storehouse of the Mahāyāna [contains] words and meanings [as innumerable as] particles of dust and sand. For this reason, the *Nirvana Sutra* states, "In one word, there are immeasurable meanings. Regarding a single meaning, there are immeasurable words."²⁴ One should necessarily fully investigate the multitudinous scriptures, and then perfectly clarify the essence of [each] work. It is not like Hīnayāna or secular works, where one fully grasps the meaning by reading the passages. Why should this be the case? It is just that the Pure Land is ineffably indistinct and the sutras and treatises teach about it in both obvious and subtle ways in order to affect the feelings of ordinary beings and lead them across using a variety of means.²⁵

Daochuo discusses the need for close, careful reading in order to determine the meaning of any specific passage. The passage should be read in light of the "essence" or essential significance of and its relation to the whole of the Mahāyāna canon. It is through that sort of broad vision about the intent of a scripture that the specific meaning of the letter of any passage should be determined. It is the last sentence, though, that is most telling about Daochuo's attitude toward the storehouse of the Mahāyāna. Here he says that the treatises and sutras teach about the Pure Land in both obvious and subtle ways, which implies that for Daochuo all the Mahāyāna sutras and treatises clarify in one way or another the teachings of the Pure Land. This passage

²³ T 374.12: 401b27-402c10; T 375.12: 642a21-643b9.

²⁴ This quotation is based on the passage at T 374.12: 563c15-16 and T 375.12: 810a27-28.

²⁵ SSZ 1: 391.

certainly succinctly summarizes the attitude that Daochuo took in his creative quotation from the *Guanfosanmeihaijing* that we examined above. It is likely that Daochuo's contemporaries had a similar view of the Mahāyāna canon as an expression, in one way or another, of Śākyamuni's essential teaching. For them, it was not the Pure Land, but some other essential message like the *ekayāna* that served as the lens for viewing scripture and the mold for reshaping its message.

Abbreviations

- 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, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932.

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