

TRANSLATION

The Ching-t'u Shib-i-lun

TRANSLATED BY LEO PRUDEN

Introduction

I. *The Text of the Shib-i-lun.* The *Shib-i-lun* (T. 47, No. 1961) has been held traditionally to be a minor work from the pen of one of China's greatest Buddhist thinkers, the Sui dynasty founder of the T'ien-t'ai tradition, the monk Chih-i 智顛 (538–597). Of a total of some forty-six works attributed to Chih-i, four stand as traditionally important in understanding Chih-i's thought with regard to Pure Land 淨土 doctrines: the *Kuan Wu-liang sbou fo ching sbu*¹ 觀無量壽佛經疏, the *O-mi-t'o ching i-chi*² 阿彌陀經義記, the *Wu fang-pien nien-fo men*³ 五方便念佛門, and the present text, the *Ching-t'u Shib-i-lun* 淨土十疑論 ("Ten Doubts Concerning the Pure Land").

First mentioned and quoted in 774 in a work by the monk Fei-hsi,⁴ the *Shib-i-lun* has long been accepted in both China and Japan as the authentic work of Chih-i. Although there has been only one Chinese commentary on this work,⁵ in China the *Shib-i-lun* was quoted by many of the leading Buddhist writers and thinkers of their day—Liu Tsung-yuan⁶ (9th century), Yung-

¹ T. 37 no 1750. A work which if not authentic was composed after 645; See Satō Tetsuei, *Tendai-daisbi no kenkyū* (hereafter referred to as Satō), p 601.

² T. 37 no 1755; an early forgery, according to Satō, p 617, dating however from before the eighth century.

³ T. 47 no 1962; the work exists in two editions—a basic and an expanded text—the latter placed between 713 and 839; see Sato p 658.

⁴ T. 47 p 141 a 20.

⁵ Ch'eng-yü's 澄瓊 *Cbu Shib-i-lun* 注十疑論 written by 983; cf. *Zaku-zōkyō* 2. 12. 4 (vol 107) p 357–365, and the *Jōdo-sbū zensho* vol 6; see *Bursho kaisetsu daijiten* (BKD) VIII. 48.

⁶ T. 47 p 182c–183a.

ming⁷ (10th century), Chih-li⁸ (11th century), Yuan-chao⁹ (12th century), Wang Jih-hsiu¹⁰ (12th century), Chih-p'an¹¹ (13th century), Ta-yu¹² (14th century), Chou-K'e-fu¹³ (17th century) and Chih-hsü¹⁴ (17th century); in Japan the work is referred to by Saichō,¹⁵ Gennichi¹⁶ (9th century), Ryōgen¹⁷ (10th century), Genshin¹⁸ (10th and 11th centuries), and Hōnen¹⁹ (12th to 13th centuries), the seventeenth century in Japan seeing a total of five commentaries²⁰ on this text!

It was in Japan however that the traditional authorship of the *Sbib-i-lun* (Jap: *Jūgiron*) first came to be denied—an opinion later monks and scholars have elaborated upon, and which has now come to form the accepted opinion concerning the authorship of this work. In his 1207 work, the *Hokke-gengi sbiki*²¹ 法華玄義私記, the Tendai monk Shōshin 證真 first doubted the traditional authorship of the work on the grounds of style (it is written in very pedestrian Chinese) and on the basis of the fact that the *Sbib-i-lun* quotes two sources that were translated after the death of Chih-i, thus making it impossible that Chih-i could have been the author of this work as it exists in its present form; the traditional authorship was defended soon thereafter by Ryōchū

⁷ T. 48 p 966c.

⁸ In his *Miao-tsung ch'ao* 妙宗鈔 T. 37 p 228c.

⁹ T. 37 p 281a, 291b, and 305c.

¹⁰ T. 47 p 283b-c, where the First Doubt is quoted and more elegantly rephrased!

¹¹ T. 49 p 258.

¹² *Zoku-zōkyō* 2.13.1 (vol 108) p 85 verso a-b; the Eighth Doubt is quoted.

¹³ *Zoku-zōkyō* 2.14.2 (vol 109) p 149 verso b.

¹⁴ *Zoku-zōkyō* 2.13. 4-5 (vol 108) p 359-364.

¹⁵ In his *Tai-shū raku*, T. 55 p 1056c.

¹⁶ T. 55, p 1136c.

¹⁷ In his *Kubon-ōjō-gi*, in *Jōdo-shū zensho*, vol 15 no 1.

¹⁸ In his *Ōjō-yōshū*, T. 84.

¹⁹ In his *Kango-tōroku*, chap 10; T. 83.

²⁰ They are: a) the *Jōdō-jūgiron yoku-chū* 異註 by Fubi 不貳 (1679), in the *Zoku Jōdo-shū zensho* vol 7 (cf. *BKD* VI. 89-90); b) the *Jūgisūyaku* 福諭 by Genshin 玄心 (-1685-) (cf. *BKD* V. 155); c) the *Jūgiron-sbibōshō* 至實鈔 by Shimpō 真峰 (-1695) (cf. *BKD* V. 155); d.) the *Jūgiron-Kosui* 欵吹 by Jōa 貞阿 printed in 1696 (c.f. *BKD* V. 155); and e) the *Chū-Jūgiron kankō* 註十疑論冠考 by Taizen 持全, a work printed in 1695 (cf. *BKD* VIII. 49).

²¹ In the *Dai-nippon Bukkyō zensho*, vol 21, p 207b.

良忠 in his 1287 work, the *Ōjōyōsbū-giki*²² 往生要集義記. The debate did not resume until the 18th century when it was revived again by Hōtan 鳳潭, the Kegon scholar-monk who, in his 1738 work, the *Nembutsu ōjō myōdō satsu*²³ 念佛往生明導割, repeated Shōshin's arguments and added his own conclusion that the work was written by Huai-kan 懷感, an 8th century Chinese monk whose ideas and phraseology (as seen in his *Ch'ün-i-lun* 群疑論) indeed appear to have contributed much to the final form of the work.

Seventeenth century Japanese commentarial work added little to the critical study of the *Sbib-i-lun*'s authorship, and it is only in the closing years of the 19th and the early years of the 20th centuries that the work came to be critically studied, reviving in effect the views of Shōshin and Hōtan. Although the first critical study of the *Sbib-i-lun* was published in 1898²⁴ and was followed thereafter in 1902²⁵ and 1910²⁶ by articles by Shimaji Daitō and Tsumaki Jikiryō, the major article at this time was published in 1901 by Mochizuki Shinkō,²⁷ who argued that the *Sbib-i-lun* was not the work of Chih-i. More recently the *Sbib-i-lun* has received treatment in the fifties²⁸ and sixties²⁹; the major work on the *Sbib-i-lun* has, in my opinion, been done by Satō Tetsuei, who devotes pages 619 to 643 of his opus, *Tendai-daisbi no kenkyū* (1961), to a study of the *Sbib-i-lun*.

To summarize Satō's conclusions, a) the *Sbib-i-lun*, in its totality, is a later work, a work not by Chih-i (such an opinion has become the established

²² Preserved in the *Jōdo-sbū zensho*, vol 15.

²³ In the *Dai-nippon Bukkyō zensho* vol 98, p 438-439. Hōtan's major critic (for this argument) was Sōboku 僧樸 (1719-1762), who, in his *Jōdo-jūgiron sbōryōroku* 弁量錄, maintained Chih-i's authorship of the text (cf. *Sbinsbū zensho* vol 62; *BKD* V. 155).

²⁴ Ueda Shōhen's 上田照遠 *Jōdo-jūgiron sbingi-ketsu* 真偽決 (cf. *BKD* VI. 89).

²⁵ See Shimaji Daitō's 島地大等 article "Tendai no Jūgiron" in *Rokujō-gakubō* no 8 (February 1902).

²⁶ See Tsumaki Jikiryō's 妻木直良 article "Tendai no Jūgiron ni tsuite" in *Rokujō-gakubō* no 100 (February 1910).

²⁷ See Mochizuki Shinkō's 望月信亨 article "Tendai Jūgiron wa gisaku tarubeshi" in *Sbūtsui-zasshi* 宗粋雜誌 (1901); reprinted in his *Jōdokyō no kenkyū* (1914) chapter 26.

²⁸ See Yamamoto Bukkotsu's 山本仏骨 article, "Anrakushū to Tendai Jūgiron no kōshōmen" in *Sbinsbū kenkyū* no 2 (September 1956).

²⁹ See Hibi Senshō's 日比宣正 work, *Tōdai Tendai-gaku josetsu* 唐代天台學序説 (1966).

scholarly opinion in Japan); b) seven of the Ten Doubts are closely related to the *An-lo-chi* 安樂集, either in thought or in phraseology; c) the influence of T'an-luan's 曇鸞 *Wang-sbeng-lun-chu* 往生論註 on the *Sbib-i-lun* has been through T'an-luan's first having been quoted in the *An-lo-chi*, and then incorporated into the *Sbib-i-lun*; d) any influence from Chia-ts'ai's 迺才 *Cbing-t'u-lun* 淨土論 has also been through the intermediacy of the *An-lo-chi*, the *Sbib-i-lun* representing, however, a doctrinal advance (in the direction of the exclusiveness and autonomy of the Pure Land tradition) over the *Cbing-t'u-lun*; e) any influence from Shan-tao 善導 is slight, there being major doctrinal differences between them relating to the area of practice (Shan-tao holds that calling on the name of O-mi-t'o (Jap: Amida) 稱名 is the correct practice 正定業, whereas the *Sbib-i-lun* holds that the *nien-fo samādhi* 念佛三昧 and the keeping of the precepts is the practice of taking delight in the vow 欣願行); f) chronologically the last work the influence of which can be found in the *Sbib-i-lun* is the *Cb'ien-i-lun* of Huai-kan; since the last date recorded for Huai-kan is 695, the *Sbib-i-lun* must be placed after 695; g) the first mention of the *Sbib-i-lun* is in Fei-hsi's *Nien-fo san-mai pao-wang lun*, completed in 774, so the *Sbib-i-lun* was produced sometime in the period 695 to 774, and according to Satō, probably in the first half of the 8th century; h) although later writers have attributed the *Sbib-i-lun* to Chih-i (as Saichō), the work itself nowhere quotes either the words of Chih-i, his works, or even his thought—indeed, the work has no trace of T'ien-t'ai influence whatsoever; i) since the *Sbib-i-lun* is heavily indebted to the *An-lo-chi*, as well as standing in the doctrinal tradition of T'an-luan, Shan-tao and Huai-kan and relying almost exclusively for its scriptural confirmation on the *Wu-liang shou ching*, the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching*, the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and the *Wang-sbeng-lun* (scriptures and commentaries that form the major points of reference for the exclusivist Pure Land tradition), if the author of the *Sbib-i-lun* had wished to attribute his work to some famous master of the past, the 'logical' choice would have been Tao-ch'o (the author of the *An-lo-chi*) or at the least, a master known for his advocacy of exclusivist Pure Land doctrines; and j) regardless of the fact that the *Sbib-i-lun* displays no T'ien-t'ai influence, by the last decades of the 8th century—in the generation of the disciples of Chan-jan (711–782) the sixth patriarch of the T'ien-t'ai—the work had come to be accepted as canonical within the T'ien-t'ai, and came to be circulated about as the work of Chih-i, being ranked with Chih-i's other

reputed Pure Land works (as above), from which standpoint the *Sbib-i-lun* came to play its role both in the development of Sung dynasty T'ien-t'ai-Pure Land thought and in the growing doctrinal sophistication of Japanese Pure Land thought of the Heian period.

II. *The Contents of the Sbib-i-lun.* In structure the *Sbib-i-lun* is in the form of a catechism, a question and answer style common to Chinese and Japanese Buddhist doctrinal works. The protagonist raises ten points where the exclusivist Pure Land teachings conflict with general Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The First Doubt questions the reasons for singling out the Western Pure Land of O-mi-t'o for special emphasis and devotion, when any of the Pure Lands in any other directions, e.g. the Eastern Pure Land, the Northern Pure Land with their respective Bodhisattvas, would have done as well. The Second Doubt questions the Pure Land teachings on doctrinal grounds: since all dharmas have emptiness (*śūnyatā*) as their basic nature, choosing one aspect of reality over another aspect of the same reality, this is, choosing the Western Pure Land over this samsaric world would overlook the essential unity of the two, a concept elaborated upon in the Third and Fourth Doubts.

The Fifth and the Sixth Doubts deal with man's ability or inability to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land; the Fifth Doubt asks how a common person, evidently not a monk but a layman (here termed *prthagjana*—凡夫—normally a word meaning a non-Buddhist) can be born in O-mi-t'o's Pure Land, and (the Sixth Doubt) if once born there, how he can attain the stage of non-regression—that is, how he can stay there.

The Seventh Doubt compares the Pure Land of O-mi-t'o—Sukhāvati or the Pure Land of the West 西方淨土—with the Pure Land of Maitreya, Tuṣita 兜率淨土, and shows how O-mi-t'o's Pure Land is better for persons living in this world.

The Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Doubts harken back to problems raised in Doubts Five and Six: the Eighth Doubt wonders how only ten meditations, done at the moment of death, can have the effect of cancelling out all man's transgressions, transgressions accumulated from the very beginning of time. The Ninth Doubt wonders how a weak person can get to the Pure Land, which is after all so very far away, and wonders too how women, the mentally and physically defective, and those of Hīnayāna capacities can be born therein,

all this latter in the light of the *Wang-sbeng-lun* denying the possibility of such persons being reborn in the Pure Land.

The Tenth Doubt again raises the question of common persons being reborn in the Pure Land without their having cut off their passions. This doubt also raises a more positive question, namely what religious practice 行業 one should carry out, what seeds (of good actions) one should plant and cultivate to attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land of the Buddha O-mi-t'o; this section also strongly emphasizes the concept of "the mind of Bodhi" (菩提心: *bodhi-citta*).

From the above it can be seen that the *Sbib-i-lun* is still midway between mainstream, normative Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism, and the gradually developing sophistication of the exclusivist Pure Land tradition. Assuming that the problems to which the *Sbib-i-lun* is directed were the problems facing the self-conscious Pure Land thinkers, we can see reflected in this work problems raised against the Pure Land practice as it was developing at this time, i.e., mainly the problem of its nascent exclusivism (as in Doubts One, Two, Three, Four, and Seven) and scriptural contradictions to certain of its teachings (as in Doubts Five, Six, and Eight, where Buddhism is not seen as for "the saints", and in Doubt Nine where doctrines clearly opposed to one authoritative text, the *Wang-sbeng-lun*, are defended).

Certain tendencies which became more pronounced in later Pure Land writings are seen in an early form in the *Sbib-i-lun*: of the various scriptures quoted to support Pure Land positions, there is a growing emphasis on three Pure Land scriptures, the *Kuan Wu-liang sbou fo cbing*, the *Ta Wu-liang sbou fo cbing*, and the *O-mi-t'o cbing*, and the commentaries, the *Wang-sbeng-lun* and the *Wang-sbeng-lun cbu*. In the Sixth Doubt Nagarjuna's theory of the difficult and the easy path 難易二道 and T'an-luan's theory of self-power and other-power 自力他力 are called upon to prove a point—references used with great frequency in later Pure Land writing. The Eighth Doubt directs its attention to combating the major doctrinal opposition to the exclusivist Pure Land teachings, the *pieb-sbib-i* 別時意 theory, a theory elaborated upon and made orthodox in the Wei-shih 唯識 tradition (the Chinese Yogācāra). The *Sbib-i-lun* also assumes the physical reality, the 'literalness' of the existence of the Western Pure Land (as in the Ninth Doubt) and its role as only an after-death, rebirth state, a literalness and a role later discarded in the increasingly

sophisticated developments of Pure Land thought in both China and Japan. In the Eighth Doubt the phrase *sbib nien* 十念 still appears to imply ten acts of meditation or mental concentration, rather than the maximum number of times one "calls upon the name of the Buddha O-mi-t'o," a meaning now held to be the standard meaning of this phrase in both China and Japan.

In this way, the *Sbib-i-lun*, a text of unknown authorship dating perhaps from the first half of the eighth century, offers us an interesting view of the intellectual ferment of medieval Chinese Buddhism, a ferment whence evolved on the one hand the exclusivist Pure Land tradition and on the other hand, the absorption of Pure Land elements into the mainstream of hitherto non-Pure Land traditions and schools of the Chinese Mahāyāna.

The Ching-t'u Shib-i-lun

(text)

The First Doubt.

Question: All the Buddhas and bodhisattvas have taken great compassion to be their activity, and thus they should only desire birth within the three worlds, in the five impurities and in the three paths (of painful rebirth), in order that they might save all the creatures therein from pain.

For what reason therefore do they seek rebirth in the Pure Land? This is forsaking all creatures and putting one's own self at ease; this is not great compassion; this is only for one's own benefit, and this hinders the way of Bodhi.

Answer: There are two types of bodhisattvas. Those who traverse for a long time the way of the bodhisattvas and who have attained the insight of non-arising 無生忍 are those who undertake such a responsibility (as the above question implies).

But those who have not attained to such an insight and those common persons 凡夫 who have newly produced the mind of Bodhi should never be separated from the Buddha until the power of such an insight is perfected, and then they will be able to withstand existence in the three worlds and there they can strive to alleviate the sufferings of the creatures within these evil realms.

As the *Ta Cbib-tu lun*³⁰ says, ". . . if such enmeshed common persons have

³⁰ Hōtan, in his *Nembutsu-ōjō-myōdōsatsu* (p 439b) claims that there is no such passage in the *Ta-Cbib-tu-lun*, but gives two references in the *Ta-Cbib-tu-lun*, the sense of which passages could be interpreted as fitting this "quote" of the *Shib-i-lun*: T. 25 p 415c1-3 speaks of saving oneself before attempting to save others; T. 25, p 271a29-b4 speaks of obtaining rebirth as a king through merits yet failing to encounter a Buddha.

Sōboku, in attempting to refute Hōtan, maintains in his *Shōryō-roku*, p 62a, that this quotation is not a direct quote but a restatement of the *Ta-Cbib-tu-lun* passage on p 271a.

a heart of great compassion, and even should they vow to be born in this evil world to save suffering creatures, such will not take place. Why is this? It is because the defilements of the evil world are strong, and if one does not possess the strength of the insight of non-arising one will follow this (evil) realm, and turning towards sounds and forms one will be enmeshed by them, and one shall fall into the three evil realms. How can one then truly save all creatures?

“For even if one should obtain birth in the human realm, the path of the Holy Ones is hard to obtain. Some, by means of their practice of such merits as generosity and morality, may become kings and great ministers with unlimited wealth.

“But even if one should meet a spiritual guide 善知識, one may not trust him, and so one becomes greedy and indolent and commits many sins. Due to this evil karma, when once one falls into the three evil realms, innumerable kalpas elapse. Should one emerge from hell, one may receive the form of one poverty-stricken.

“And if one does not encounter a spiritual guide, one shall fall again into hell.

“In this manner, samsara has continued up to the present time. Persons who are like this are termed (those who follow) the path of difficult practice.”

Thus the *Wei-mo cbing* 維摩經 says, “Being unable to cure one’s own illness, how can you cure others?”³¹

The *Ta Cbib-tu lun* says, “. . . this is like unto two persons, each of whom had a close relative drowning. One man, being excitable, jumped into the water to save him, but lacking the power or the means, they both drowned. The other man, having an expedient (method), took an oar and, by riding upon it, both attained their salvation.

“A bodhisattva whose determination to attain Bodhi has newly arisen is also like this. Not yet having the power of the insight of non-arising, he is unable to save all creatures. Because of this, he should draw near to the Buddhas, and after he has attained the insight of non-arising, he then is able to save all creatures, like one who has gotten a boat.”³²

³¹ See T. 14, p 542a14.

³² Hōtan claims that there is no such passage and again a passage similar in purport is given: T. 25, p 275c2-11. Sōboku now gives several references to the *Ta-cbib-tu-lun*, restatements of which could make up this “quote”: T. 25, p 602a14 on obtaining the*

Further, the *Ta Chih-tu lun* says, "... a small child cannot leave his mother; if he leaves his mother, he will perhaps either fall into a well or he may die of thirst.³³ If a bird's wings have not yet fully developed, he stays close to the tree and goes from limb to limb, and he is unable to go far. If his wings are fully developed then he is able to fly into the sky, freely and unhindered."³⁴

"Common persons have no power and can only obtain a single-minded meditation on the Buddha O-mi-t'o and bring about the successful completion of this *samādhi*. With the completion of this practice, when the devotee approaches his death, he concentrates his mind and obtains birth (in the Pure Land) definitely and without doubt.

"After he has seen the Buddha O-mi-t'o, and attained the insight of non-arising, he returns to the three worlds. Riding on the boat of the insight of non-arising he rescues suffering humanity, and he carries out on a broad scale the Buddha's work, freely in any way he so desires."

Thus the *Ta Chih-tu lun* says, "... he who has roamed in the pathways of hell, after he is born in the Pure Land and attains the insight of non-arising, returns and enters birth-and-death, and converts those creatures who are suffering in hell."

For these reasons one seeks for birth in the Pure Land. We wish that you would remember this teaching. The *Sbib-chu p'o-sha lun* 十住婆沙論 calls this the way of 'easy practice.'³⁵

The Second Doubt.

Question: All the dharmas are by nature empty 空, and essentially there is no arising 無生 and in this the various dharmas are equally quiescent 平等寂滅.

*"boat" of *apavārtika* to save others; p 275c2-11 on not leaving the presence of the Buddhas until one had attained *apavārtika*; and p 607a5-6 where a sinking man is not able to save another sinking man.

³³ See the *An-lo-chi*, T. 47, p 9a12ff. Hōtan again states that there is no such passage in the *Ta-Chih-tu-lun* (op. cit. p 440b); Sōboku quotes however T. 25, p 530b26 and p 275c23 on children not leaving their mothers.

³⁴ Sōboku quotes T. 25, p 489c9. See also the *An-lo-chi*, p 9a17 ff.

³⁵ See T. 26, p 41a13 ff, and T'an-luan's *Wang-sheng-lun*, T. 40, p 826b7.

Now then, you would discard this world and seek birth in that Pure Land of O-mi-t'o in the West.

How does this not go against the above reasoning?

A scripture³⁶ says, "... to seek for the Pure Land, first purify your mind. If your mind is pure, then the Buddha-land is pure."

How do you reconcile this?

Answer: There are two principles involved in this explanation. First the general answer and second, the specific answer.

The general answer: if you say 'to strive after birth in O-mi-t'o's Western Pure Land is to abandon this world and strive after that world, and that this does not correspond to the principles (of Mahāyāna Buddhism),' then you are clinging to rebirth in this world; and if you do not strive after (rebirth in) the Western Land, this is abandoning that world and clinging to this world. This is, further, a cause of (spiritual) illness, and does not correspond to the principles (of Mahāyāna Buddhism).

Further, one who in delusion says that he does not strive after birth in this world nor in that world, is one who (falls into the extreme) of the view of annihilation.

As it says in the *Chin-kang po-jo ching* 金剛般若經, "O Subhūti, you might hold this thought, namely that those who generate Supreme, perfect Bodhi teach that all the dharmas are extinguished 斷滅: do not hold this thought. And why? Those who generate the mind of Bodhi do not teach that there is the external characteristic of extinction with reference to the dharmas."³⁷

The specific answer: when we speak of 'non-arising and non-extinction' 不生不滅 we mean that within arising through external conditions all the dharmas are in harmony, and that they do not maintain their individual self-natures 不守自性.

If we search after the substance 體 of this type of arising, we cannot understand it by conventional means. When such arising occurs, there is no place from whence it comes; hence it is named 'non-arising.'

When all the dharmas disperse, they do not maintain the substances (of the

³⁶ Hōtan criticizes this *Second Doubt* and its *Answer* from the point of view of the orthodox object of meditation of the T'ien-t'ai (op. cit. p 440b-441a); see also Sōboku (op. cit. p 65b ff).

³⁷ See T. 8, p 732222; the *Sbib-i-lun* slightly abbreviates this passage.

object so constituted) and so we say that the self 我 of the object is extinguished. When they disperse, in going there is no place whither they go, hence they are termed 'non-extinguished.'

This is not to say that outside of arising through primary causes and external conditions there is any separate 'non-arisen non-extinguished' object.

Also, 'non-arising' 無生 is not so called for not seeking birth 生 in the Pure Land.

The *Chung lun* says, "The dharmas arisen through conditions, I teach that these are none other than empty, also they are termed temporary names; this is termed the principle of the Middle Way."³⁸

Also, "All the dharmas are not self arisen, nor are they generated by external forces; they do not arise together with, nor do they arise without their primary causes: thus may 'non-arising' be known."³⁹

The *Wei-mo ching* says, "Although we know that all the Buddha-lands as well as all creatures are empty, still we always practice the way of the Pure Land to convert all living creatures."⁴⁰

It also says, ". . . in constructing a palace, if we build on empty land 空地 we may build as we wish, without hinderance. If we build in the air, we shall ultimately never complete it."⁴¹

The preachings of all the Buddhas rely always on the (above) two truths.

Without breaking down the concept of temporary names, yet do they preach of the true (substantial) characteristics of all the dharmas.

The wise enthusiastically seek birth in the Pure Land, and realize that the unattainability (through conventional means) of the nature of such birth (in the Pure Land) is none other than the true 'non-arising.'

This is the meaning of 'if your mind is pure, then the Buddha-land is pure.'

The ignorant are bound by (the concept of) arising 生. When they hear (the word) 'arising' then they create an understanding of 'arising.' When they hear (the word) 'non-arising' 無生 then they create an understanding of 'non-arising.'

³⁸ See T. 30, p 33b11.

³⁹ See T. 30, p 2b6.

⁴⁰ See T. 14, p 550a1.

⁴¹ Is this a reference to Seng-chao, T. 38 p 393b, or p 392b?

They do not know that 'arising' is none other than 'non-arising,' and that 'non-arising' is the same as 'arising.'

They do not understand this principle, and wilfully they pronounce one true and one false 橫相是非, and they are angry at others' seeking birth in the Pure Land.

How deluded they are!

They are transgressors who slander the Dharma, non-Buddhists of perverted views!

The Third Doubt.

Question: The natures and the qualities of all the Pure Lands in all the ten directions are the same, and the devotee could meditate on all these qualities to be born in all the Pure Lands.

Now then, to desire exclusively the Pure Land of one Buddha is to turn one's back on the equality of their natures. Thus, how could one be reborn in the Pure Land?

Answer: All the Buddha-lands are in essence equal, but the dull and muddled masses are many (and various). If they do not bind themselves to one sphere (of meditation), their samadhis will be hard to accomplish. Their exclusive meditation on the Buddha O-mi-t'o is the 'samādhi on one characteristic' 一相三昧, and by the mind's single-minded attainment (of this samadhi), birth is achieved in the Pure Land.

As the *Sui-yuan wang-sbeng ching* 隨願往生經 says, "The bodhisattva P'u-kuang 普広菩薩 asked, 'All of the ten directions have Pure Lands; why therefore do you exclusively praise the Pure Land of the Western direction?' The Buddha answered P'u-kuang saying, 'The minds of the inhabitants of Jambudvīpa are defiled and disturbed. It is for this reason that I make them exclusively praise a single pure land of a Buddha in the west, and have their minds concentrated solely upon one object, so that they may easily obtain rebirth (in that Pure Land).'"⁴² If they were to meditate on all the Buddhas,⁴³

⁴² See T. 21, p 529c5-14.

⁴³ This paragraph appears to paraphrase the *Sui-yuan wang-sbeng ching* (p 530a27) where it speaks of someone being reborn in all of the Pure Lands of the ten regions: 往生諸仏十方淨土.

their minds would become scattered, for such are spheres broad, and their samādhi being hard to achieve, they would not obtain birth (in any Pure Land).

Further, to seek after the qualities of one Buddha is the same as seeking the qualities of all the Buddhas, as they all possess the same nature of Buddhahood.

Because of this, to meditate on the Buddha O-mi-t'o is to meditate on all the Buddhas; to be born in one Pure Land is to be born in all the Pure Lands.

Therefore, the *Hua-yen ching* 華嚴經 states, "The bodies of all the Buddhas are the body of any one Buddha; be it with any one mind or with any one wisdom, they are all the same in their powers, and in their states of fearlessness."⁴⁴

And further, "... just as a pure full moon is everywhere conditioned by all the waters (in which it is reflected), and its images and reflections are numberless, yet the original moon is still one; in this way, an unobstructed wisdom attains to Perfect Enlightenment, and manifests itself in response to every place. The body of the Buddha is one."⁴⁵

The wise shall obtain understanding by means of this parable,⁴⁶ that all the shadows of the moon are none other than the shadow of the one moon, the shadow of any one moon is none other than the shadows of all the moons, as the body of the moon is one; one Buddha is the same as all Buddhas, and all Buddhas are one Buddha, as the body of the Dharma is one—truly understanding this, when one earnestly meditates on one Buddha, one is meditating on none other than all the Buddhas.

The Fourth Doubt.

Question: Concerning the Pure Lands of the ten directions, if one meditates on any one land and thereby obtains rebirth in it, why therefore should one meditate exclusively on the Buddha O-mi-t'o (and on his Pure Land)?

Answer: Ignorant people dare not develop a single-mindedness on their own,

⁴⁴ See T. 9, p 429b20. This section of the *Sbib-i-lun* is also quoted by Genshin, in his *Ōjō-yōshū*, T. 84, p 56b15.

⁴⁵ See T. 9, p 486c13-16.

⁴⁶ Is this a paraphrase from the *Ta-chih-tu-lun* p 584c16? See *Sōboku*, p 68b5.

but should rely exclusively on the Buddha's own words. Śākyamuni's lifetime of preaching the Dharma in various places was only to persuade all persons to meditate exclusively on the Buddha O-mi-t'o,⁴⁷ and to strive for birth in the world of the Western Paradise.

Because several tens of scriptures, such as the *Wu-liang shou ching*, the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching*, and the *Wang-sheng lun* have so earnestly pointed out this (practice) to us, we practice only this meditation (on the Buddha O-mi-t'o).

Further, the Buddha O-mi-t'o has specifically forty-eight compassionate vows which are for the rescue of all beings.⁴⁸

Further, in the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching*, the Buddha O-mi-t'o has eighty-four thousand major characteristics, and each major characteristic has eighty-four thousand minor marks, and each minor sign emits eighty-four thousand lights which shine on all the multitudes throughout the universe who meditate on this Buddha,⁴⁹ taking all (into his Pure Land), he abandons none. When a man meditates (on the Buddha) his nature and the Buddha's response are in accord with one another, and man's birth (in the Pure Land) is assured.

Further, as stated in the *O-mi-t'o ching*,⁵⁰ the *Ta Wu-liang shou ching*,⁵¹ the *Ku-yin-wang t'o-la-mi ching*⁵² and others, when the Buddha Śākyamuni preached this scripture, all the Buddhas of the ten directions—as many as the sands of the Ganges—unfolded their tongues, and covering the three thousand great universes, gave witness to the fact that if all creatures meditate on the Buddha O-mi-t'o, because of their taking advantage of the power of the compassionate ultimate vows of this Buddha, they shall be assured of their birth in the World of Great Bliss.⁵³

⁴⁷ Compare Chan-jan: 諸教所讚 多在弥陀 故以西方而為一準 T. 46, p 182c. Here too Genshin paraphrases the *Sbib-i-lun* in his *Ōjō-yōshū*, T. 84, p 46b5-8.

⁴⁸ See Genshin, T. 84, p 46c17.

⁴⁹ See T. 12, p 343a18 ff.

⁵⁰ See T. 12, p 348a3.

⁵¹ See T. 12, p 273a22.

⁵² This text, the *O-mi-t'o ku-yin-sheng wang t'o-lo-ni ching* 阿彌陀藏音聲王陀羅尼經 nowhere specifically says that the Buddhas extended their tongues; the Buddhas "equal in number to all the sands of the Ganges of the ten directions" laud the Pure Land T. 12, p 352b15.

⁵³ See Genshin, T. 84, p 46c19-21.

Thus one should know that the Buddha O-mi-t'o alone has a strong inter-relationship with this world. How may we know this?

It says in the *W'u-liang sbou ching* that, "At the time of the disappearance of the Dharma, this scripture shall be especially retained for a period of one hundred years, saving all creatures and causing them to be born in that (Pure) Land."⁵⁴

Thus should one know that the Buddha O-mi-t'o alone has a unique inter-relationship with the evil creatures of this world.

Although there are one or two scriptures which in a general way exhort (people to strive for rebirth) in other Pure Lands, they cannot be compared to to the Land of the Buddha O-mi-t'o, rebirth in which is diligently exhorted in many places in the scriptures and in their commentaries.

The Fifth Doubt.

Question: The evil karma of those common persons who are thus totally enmeshed (in samsara) is very great; not even a small portion of their defilements has ever been cut off. The Western Pure Land is beyond the three worlds. How can one thus so totally enmeshed obtain birth (in such a Pure Land)?

Answer: There are two modes 二種緣 (for such a rebirth). First is 'self-power' 自力 and second, 'other-power' 他力.⁵⁵

'Self-power' means practicing the way in this world and yet really not obtaining a birth in the Pure Land.

The *Ting-lo ching*⁵⁶ 瓔珞經 says, "The common man in bondage does not know of the Three Jewels; he does not know of good and evil causes and their relationship to effects. Should one initially give rise to the mind of Bodhi, faith

⁵⁴ See T. 12, p 279a12; see also the *An-lo-chi* T. 47, p 18b17, the *Cb'ün-i-lun* T. 47, p 48a24 (by Huai-kan), and the *Hsi-fang yao-chueb* T. 47, p 109ab (also by Huai-kan). Hōtan (op. cit. p 441a) holds that the author of the *Cb'ün-i-lun* and the *Hsi-fang yao-chueb* (i.e., Huai-kan) is the same as the author of the *Sbib-i-lun*, since all three of these works quote the same "proof" of O-mi-t'o's special relationship with this world.

⁵⁵ See the *Wang-sbeng-lun chü*, T. 40, p 844a20 ff.

⁵⁶ See T. 24, p 1017a9ff.

will be its basis. If one should reside within the family of the Buddha (as a cleric), the precepts will serve as their basis. Should one receive the bodhisattva precepts, the practice of these precepts shall continue without interruption, body after body, for one, two, or even three kalpas until one comes to the arising of the first of the mind's stages. In such a manner does one practice innumerable practices and vows, such as the ten (stages) of faith,⁵⁷ and the ten *pāramitās* continually without interruption for a full ten thousand kalpas until one reaches the sixth, the abode of right mindfulness.⁵⁸ Should one continue still further, one will reach the seventh, the abode of non-regression, which is the stage of the seed (of ultimate Buddhahood) 種性位.

This is with reference to 'self-power,' and yet even in the end one does not yet attain birth in the Pure Land.

'Other-power' means that if one believes that the power of the compassionate vow of the Buddha O-mi-t'o takes to himself all of the multitudes that meditate upon him, then one is enabled to generate the mind of Bodhi, practice the *samādhi* of meditation on the Buddha 念佛三昧, detest the body which is within the three worlds, and practice generosity, morality, asceticism, and merit.

And if within each of these various practices, (the merit is) transferred (to others), and if one vows to be born in the Pure Land of O-mi-t'o by taking advantage of the power of the Buddha's vows, one's nature and the Buddha's response will be in mutual accord, and one will obtain rebirth (in the Pure Land).

⁵⁷ Ch'eng-yü gives the ten stages of faith 十信 as 'ten minds' 十心, namely the minds of faith 信心, energy 進心, remembrance 念心, *samādhi* 定心, wisdom 慧心, non-regression 不退心, precepts 戒心, protection 護心, vows 願心, and transfer of merit 迴向心; see *Zoku-zōkyō* 2,12,4 (vol 107) p 360 verso a; see also the *Ting-lo-ching*, T. 24, p 1017a14; Ch'eng-yü also gives the ten *pāramitās* as generosity, morality, patience, energy, *samādhi*, wisdom, (skill in) upāya, vows, power, and knowledge (p 360 verso b).

⁵⁸ As given in the *Ting-lo-ching* (T. 24, p 1012c7-10) and Ch'eng-yü (p 360 verso b), the ten abodes 十住 are the abode of the first generation of the *bodhi*-mind 初發心住, of holding to the *bhūmi* 持地住, of practice 修行住, of generating true wealth 生貴住, of possessing all upāyas 具足方便住, of right mindfulness 正心住, of non-regression 不退住, of the true son 真子住, of the Dharma-prince 法王子住, and the abode of the *abhiṣeka* 灌頂住.

Thus it says in the *Sbib-chu pi p'o-sba lun*,⁵⁹ "Within this world there is the path of difficult practice and the path of easy practice."⁶⁰

The 'difficult practice' refers to (practice within) the evil world of the five impurities.

Although one searches for *svaivartika* 阿鞞跋致 (i.e., the stage of non-regression) through numberless Buddha-eras, it is hard to obtain. Its difficulties are without number, and they cannot be described. Roughly however, there are five:

1. The good as conceived by non-Buddhists is only relative, which puts the bodhisattva's Dharma in confusion;
2. evil doers are destructive of others' good merits;
3. the perversion of good karma defiles an undefiled life;
4. what is practiced by śrāvakas is self-benefiting, which interferes with the exercise of great compassion;
5. if one thinks that there is only 'self-power' and that there is no support from any 'other-power,' this is like a lame man who, although he walks several *li* a day, yet is in very great pain. Such may be termed 'self-power.'

The 'easy path'⁶¹ means believing that the words of the Buddha do teach the *samādhi* of meditation on the Buddha: if we desire for birth in the Pure Land, taking advantage of salvation by the power of the vow of the Buddha O-mi-t'o, we are without doubt assured of our rebirth.

This is like one taking a boat which is carried by the current, and which can travel a thousand *li* in a moment.⁶² Such may be termed 'other-power.'

An inferior servant following a *cakravartin* ruler traverses four empires in a day and a night; this is not by his own power, but by the power of the *cakravartin* ruler.⁶³

⁵⁹ See T. 26, p 41213, and the *An-lo-chi*, T. 47, p 12b6, where this passage is given.

⁶⁰ On the paths of difficult practice and of easy practice, see the *Wang-sbeng-lun chu*, T. 40, p 826a26ff; and the *An-lo-chi*, p 12b2 ff, where the enumeration is the same as the *Sbib-i-lun*.

⁶¹ See similar passages in the *Wang-sbeng-lun chu*, p 826b7 ff, and the *An-lo-chi* (with slight differences), p 12b21 ff.

⁶² On the simile of a swift ship, see the *An-lo-chi*, p 10b26.

⁶³ On the simile of the *cakravartin* ruler and his servant, see the *An-lo-chi*, p 12c2, and p 10c2; the *Wang-sbeng-lun chu*, p 844a25ff. Sōboku also mentions (p 70b) the *Ta-Chib-tu-lun*, p 130b1 ff.

If one says that a common person with his impurities cannot obtain birth in the Pure Land, we would agree that a common person with his impurities cannot obtain a vision of the body of the Buddha. Yet this is what is produced both by the *samādhi* of meditation on the Buddha, and by his pure roots of good (deeds).

An impure common person may, according to his allotment, obtain a vision of the grosser aspects of the Buddha, while bodhisattvas may see the minute aspects.

So is it with the Pure Land. Although it arises by the pure roots of the good (deeds), if an impure common person produces the highest mind of Bodhi and seeks to be born in the Pure Land, by his always meditating on the Buddha, he may conquer his defilements and obtain a birth in that Pure Land; and according to his allotment, he will obtain a vision of the grosser aspects (of the Pure Land), whereas a bodhisattva shall see the minute aspects.

What is there to doubt in this?

As the *Hua-yen ching* says, "All the Buddha-lands are equal and are beautifully adorned. But the karmas and the practices of all creatures differ, their visions of it are not the same." This is the meaning (of our answer).

The Sixth Doubt.

Question: Even though a common person who is totally enmeshed (by his evil karma) might obtain birth in that Pure Land, perverse views and the three poisons constantly arise. How can one be born into the Pure Land and obtain the stage of non-regression and transcend the three worlds?

Answer: There are five reasons by which one shall not regress from his rebirth in the Pure Land:⁶⁴

1. he will obtain the stage of non-regression because the power of the Buddha O-mi-t'o's great compassionate vow embraces him;
2. the light of the Buddha shall always shine (upon him),⁶⁵ so his mind of Bodhi shall progress, and he shall not regress;

⁶⁴ See Chia-ts'ai's *Ching-t'u-lun* where Chia-ts'ai enumerates four conditions for non-regression (T. 47, p 86b), and five conditions that lead to regression (p 87a).

⁶⁵ For the *Shib-i-lun*'s stress on the saving power inherent in both the vow and in the eternal light of the Buddha's body, see below, Seventh Doubt.

3. (in the Pure Land), the (sounds of) water-fowl, the trees, and the wind all bespeak the truths of suffering and emptiness; those that hear this always have a mind that meditates upon the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, hence he shall not regress;

4. in the Pure Land, one's companions are exclusively the various bodhisattvas;⁶⁶ there are no spheres of evil influence. Externally there are no evil demons and spirits, internally there are not the three poisons, etc. The defilements are absolutely finished, hence he shall not regress;

5. if one is born therein, one's life is of very great length, being equal to that of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas; hence he shall not regress. In this evil world, time speeds on. Even if we traverse *asamkhyeya-kalpas*, the defilements do not arise. If for a long time we practice the way, how can we not obtain (the insight of) non-arising! These principles are clear, and need not be doubted.

The Seventh Doubt.

Question: The bodhisattva Maitreya occupies the place (vacated by the Buddha Śākyamuni in Tuṣita Heaven).⁶⁷ Persons who have practiced in a superior manner the ten good precepts⁶⁸ obtain birth in this heaven and view the bodhisattva Maitreya. In company with him they are born again in this world, and during his three sermons,⁶⁹ they naturally obtain the Holy Result (i.e., arhatship).

⁶⁶ Compare *Cb'ün-i-lun* T. 47, p 51b. In this passage Ch'eng-yü (p 361 verso b) maintains that the pure bodhisattvas in the Pure Land do not hear the *Lotus Sūtra*, for that preaching embraces the (Hīnayāna) śrāvakas!

⁶⁷ For comparisons between O-mi-t'o's Pure Land and Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven, see Chi-tsang's *Kuan-ching shu* (T. 37, p. 236a), the *An-lo-chi* (T. 47, p 9b22 ff), and *Cbing-t'u-lun* (T. 47, p 100a) and especially Huai-kan, who in his *Cb'ün-i-lun* analyses the differences between the two under twelve topics (T. 47, p 52c-54c): he concludes that they differ on eight points and are similar on fifteen points!

⁶⁸ See Ch'eng-yü (p 362 recto a) who says that there are three grades 三品 of persons who keep these ten good precepts: those who have kept them in a superior manner 上品 are born in heaven 生天, those who practice in an average way 中品 are born as humans, and those who keep them poorly 下品 are born as *asuras*!

⁶⁹ See the *Ta-Chih-tu-lun* (T. 25, p 311b23) where Śākyamuni was said to have had 1,250 śrāvakas in his Sangha, and where Maitreya will have 9,900,000,000 九十九億 such followers saved during his first preaching, 9,600,000,000 saved during his second preaching, and 9,300,000 saved during his third preaching; see Ch'eng-yü (p 362 recto a).

Therefore why should one seek birth in the Western Paradise?

Answer: Seeking birth in Tusita Heaven wherein one day one hears the Dharma and sees the Buddha seems very similar in appearance (to the Pure Land of O-mi-t'o). But if one compares the two in greater detail, there are great differences.

Here we shall discuss only two points.

First, even though one keeps the ten good precepts, perhaps one shall not obtain birth (in Tusita Heaven). How may we know this? The *Mi-lo sbang-sbeng ching* says, "When one practices all the *samādhis*, and enters deeply into true *samādhi* 正定,"⁷⁰ it is then for the first time that one obtains birth (in Tusita Heaven); there is no principles of either *upāya* or of drawing (all creatures into the Heaven). This cannot be compared to the power of the light and the power of the basic vow of the Buddha O-mi-t'o which takes (into his Pure Land) those who meditate upon the Buddha (O-mi-t'o) and which abandons none of them.⁷¹

Further Śākyamuni preached nine types of teachings to serve as an *upāya* and to draw (all creatures into the Pure Land); he diligently preached, causing all to be born into the Pure Land.

If only all creatures were to meditate on the Buddha O-mi-t'o, men's natures and the Buddha's responses would be in mutual accord and they would certainly obtain birth (in the Pure Land). This is likened in the world to one who, giving love, is one who also receives love; their mutual capacities and responses are in union, and their goals are accomplished.

Second, in the palaces of Tusita Heaven⁷² are many who are in the regressive stage of the world of desire. There are not the sounds of the water-fowl, the trees, and the winds, hearing which all meditate upon the Buddha, generate the mind of Bodhi, and eliminate the defilements.

Further, there are women (in Tusita Heaven) who increase the five desires⁷³

⁷⁰ See T. 14, p 420a12.

⁷¹ See the *Ch'iin-i-lun* T. 47, p 52c-54c. For the *Sbib-i-lun*'s stress on the powers of the vows and the light emitted by the body of the Buddhas, see above, Sixth Doubt.

⁷² See the *An-lo-chi*, T. 47, p 9c1-3.

⁷³ According to Ch'eng-yü, the five desires 五欲 are form, sound, odor, taste, and touch (p 362 verso a).

of the *devas* 天. Also, the *devas* indulge in the beauty of the *devīs*, and so cannot exert themselves. This is not like the Pure Land of O-mi-t'ō where there are (sounds of) water-fowl, trees, and winds, the multitudes hearing which meditate on the Buddha, generate the mind of Bodhi, and eliminate the defilements.

Also there are no women nor persons of the two *yānas* (in O-mi-t'ō's Pure Land); there are only the unsullied companions of the pure, unique Mahāyāna.

Because of this the defilements and evil karma are finished and do not arise, and so one finally reaches the stage of non-arising.

If compared in this manner, the merits and demerits (between the Pure Land of O-mi-t'ō and the Tuṣita Heaven of Maitreya) are obvious. How can there be any doubt of this?

In the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, those who saw the Buddha yet who did not attain arhatship were (as many) as the sand of the Ganges.⁷⁴ And when Maitreya comes into the world it will be the same: there will be many who will not attain arhatship. Such is not the case with O-mi-t'ō's Pure Land. After being born in the Pure Land, all obtain the insight of non-arising, and there has never been one who has fallen therefrom into the three worlds and who again became bound by the karma of birth-and-death.

There were three bodhisattvas in the *Hsi-kuo ch'üan* 西國傳⁷⁵; Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, and Simhabhadra. These three all had the same determination in being born in Tuṣita Heaven and in desiring to see Maitreya. They vowed that if one were to die first and obtain a look (at Maitreya), he would return and inform the others. Simhabhadra died, but once he had gone he did not return.

⁷⁴ Ch'eng-yü (p 362 verso a) here quotes from the eleventh chapter (*chüan*?) of the *Ta-Chib-tu-lun* a passage to the effect that there were 900,000,000 九億 households in Vaiśālī, of whom 300,000,000 saw the Buddha, 300,000,000 heard of him but did not see him, and 300,000,000 neither saw him nor heard of him. The passage in question is not, however, in the *Ta-Chib-tu-lun*.

⁷⁵ Namely Hsüan-tsang's (whose dates are 603–668) *Hsi-yü-chi*, T. 51, p 896ca–16. Since the *Sbib-i-lun* was supposed to have been written by Chih-i (538–597), this passage poses problems for this traditional attribution. The first to discover this contradiction was Shōshin, a medieval Tendai monk, who pointed out this discrepancy in his work, the *Hokke-gengi sbiki* (composed in 1207; see *Dai-nippon Bukkyō zensho*, vol 21, p 207b). For a rebuttal of Shōshin, see Ryōchū's (died 1287) *Ōjō-yōsbū giki* (*Jōdo-sbū zensho*, vol 15) and Sōboku's *Sbōryō-roku* (*Sbin-sbū zensho*, vol 62). Sōboku maintains that this passage is a later interpolation (p 60a).

Later, when Vasubandhu was nearing his death, Asaṅga said to him, "If you see Maitreya, come and tell me." Vasubandhu died, but returned only after a period of three years. Asaṅga asked him, "why did it take you such a long time to return?" Vasubandhu said that he had arrived there (in Tuṣita Heaven), had heard the bodhisattva Maitreya preach but one sermon, had circumambulated him (in reverence) and had come back immediately; but days are long there (in Tuṣita),⁷⁶ and here (on earth) three years had already elapsed; Asaṅga again asked, "Where is Simhabhadra now?" Vasubandhu replied that because Simhabhadra had received such heavenly pleasures, he was enjoying the five desires, and so resides in the outer ring of attendants, and so from that time to the present he has never seen Maitreya!

Even minor bodhisattvas who are born there (in Tuṣita Heaven) all the more cling to the five desires. How much more so common men.

Because of this, if one desires birth in the Western Land, one will definitely obtain the stage of non-regression and will not seek for birth in Tuṣita Heaven.

The Eighth Doubt.

Question: All creatures, from beginningless time to the present, have created innumerable (evil) karma. In this life, if they do not meet a spiritual guide 善知識, and thereby commit all kinds of evils, there will be no evil that they will not commit.

How can they, at the approach of their death, accomplish the ten meditations⁷⁷ 十念 and so obtain rebirth, getting out of the binding karma of the three worlds? How do you reconcile the contradiction between this fact and the fact of karma?

Answer: The types of evil and good karma created by all creatures and how

⁷⁶ See Ch'eng-yü, p. 362 *verso* b10-13.

⁷⁷ On the ten meditations 十念, see the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching*, T. 12, p 346a12-26, and the *An-lo-chi*, T. 47, p 10a12, b3 ff. This passage's debt to the *An-lo-chi* is pointed out by Hōtan (p 446a). See also the didactic passage by Ch'eng-yü (p 363 *recto* a). For a variant—indeed, a more polished—reading of this, the Eighth Doubt, see the *Ching-f'u chih-kuei-chi*, *Zoku-zōkyō* 2.13.1 (vol 108), p 85 *verso* a-b.

many or few, how strong or weak—all such things may not be known. But,⁷⁸ if with the aid of a spiritual guide one is able to accomplish the ten meditations at the approach of one's death, this is because one's past good karma was so strong; that one was enabled to meet a spiritual guide and to accomplish the ten meditations.

If one's evil karmas are many, a spiritual guide cannot be met with, not to mention accomplishing the ten meditations.⁷⁹

Now if you think that beginningless bad karma is heavy and the ten meditations at the approach of death is light,⁸⁰ then,⁸¹ there are three comparisons of this 'weight' of karma, since their heaviness or lightness is indefinite; it does not depend upon (a duration of) long or short.

First,⁸² that (karma) within the mind 在心; second, that within external conditions 在緣; and third, that within the certainty (of salvation) 在決定.

Concerning that (karma) within the mind; when one commits a transgression, such grows out of one's own empty, illusory delusions. The meditation on the Buddha grows out of hearing a spiritual guide preach the true merit-filled name of the Buddha O-mi-t'o.

One is false, and the other is true. How can they be compared one with another! It is like a room dark for ten thousand years; the sunlight comes in for an instant, and the darkness suddenly disappears. However longstanding the darkness may be, how can it fail to disappear!

Concerning that (karma) within external conditions: when one commits a transgression, such grows out of one's own mind, which is vain and false, conditioned by the delusions of the sphere of empty illusions. A mind that meditates on the Buddha arises from the mind seeking for highest Bodhi conditioned by hearing the Buddha's pure, true, merit-filled name.

⁷⁸ See Genshin, *Ōjō-yōshū*, T. 84, p 81c13 ff where this is quoted with a slight variation; see also Chih-li's *Miao-tsung chao*, T. 37, p 228c23 where this paragraph is quoted.

⁷⁹ See the *An-lo-chi*, p 10b5.

⁸⁰ See the *An-lo-chi*, p 10c21 ff, and the *Wang-sheng-lun chu*, T. 40, p 834b21 ff.

⁸¹ See Genshin's *Ōjō-yōshū*, T. 84, p. 83b22-c15.

⁸² The following explanation, the *san-tsai* 三在 explanation owes much to the *Wang-sheng-lun chu*, T. 40, p 834 b-c, but it is believed that this passage in the *Shih-i-lun* is quoted from the *An-lo-chi*, p 10c21 ff. where the original source, i.e., T'an-luan, is also omitted.

One is true, and the other is false. How can they be compared one with another! This is likened to being hit by a poisoned arrow; the arrow goes deep and the poison penetrates; the skin is damaged and the bones are broken. But upon hearing the drum (beat signifying) an antidote, the arrow is taken out and the poison removed. How may the poison that came in with this deep arrow not be expelled?

Concerning that (karma) within the certainty (of salvation): when one commits a transgression, there are intervening mental states 有間心 and there is the final mental state 有後心. When one meditates on the Buddha there are no intervening mental states, nor any final mental state, and so when one is finally about to die, his mind of goodness is firm and clear, and by this he is immediately reborn (in O-mi-t'o's Pure Land).

This is likened to ten strands of rope,⁸³ which even a thousand men cannot manage, but which even a child brandishing a sword can cut into two in a moment. Or it is like sticks accumulated for one thousand years,⁸⁴ which when set on fire with but one small flame, are completely consumed within a short time. Or it may be likened to a man who has practiced the ten virtuous precepts throughout his lifetime, and who should thus be born in Heaven. As he approaches death, if there should arise one thought of a decidedly perverse view, then he would fall into *avīci* hell.

Bad karma is empty and illusory, but by means of its strength, it is able to upset a lifetime of good karma and cause one to fall into an evil rebirth.

Therefore, how can a strong-willed meditation upon the Buddha at the approach of death—true unceasing good karma—be unable to upset evil karma (accumulated since) beginningless time, and so achieve rebirth in the Pure Land!

It is also said,⁸⁵ "One thought of meditation on the Buddha destroys the transgressions (committed during) birth and death in eighty million kalpas."

It is because of the strength of mind at the time of meditating on the Buddha that it can conquer evil karma and determine one's rebirth (in the Pure Land). This should not be doubted.

⁸³ See the *An-lo-chi*, p 10c26; Hōtan, p 446b.

⁸⁴ See the *An-lo-chi*, p 10b23; Hōtan, p 447a.

⁸⁵ See the *An-lo-chi*, p 4b18.

In the past, the accomplishment of the ten meditations was evaluated, and the idea of spiritual rewards at a later date 別時 was formulated. But this cannot be. How do we know this?

The *Sbe Ta-cb'eng lun* says, "... it is only from producing the vow; there is absolutely no other religious practice. . . ."86

The *Tsa-cbi lun* says, "... if one desires a birth in Paradise, one has none other than attained it. If one hears the undefiled name of the Buddha, one has obtained Bodhi."87

These are both primary causes 因 for a later period, and there is absolutely no other religious practice (necessary).

If one holds that the strong, unceasing good actions of the ten meditations at the approach of death signifies these spiritual rewards given at a later period, how mistaken he is!

The devotee is to ponder deeply this principle and is to make his mind secure; do not believe differing views, nor allow yourself to fall (from faith)!88

The Ninth Doubt.

Question: The Paradise of the Western Land is ten billion Buddha-lands from here. Common persons are weak and frail; how are they able to go there?

Also it says in the *Wang-sbeng lun*,⁸⁹ "Women, those with defective sense organs, and persons of the two *yānas* are not born therein." Such has already

⁸⁶ See the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*, T. 31, p 121b14, and its commentary, T. 31, p 194b8.

⁸⁷ The *Tsa-cbi-lun* was translated by Hsüan-tsang in 646; the passage in question is T. 31, p 752 a-b. This is another major passage that throws the authorship of this work into doubt. See Shōshin's *Hokke-gengi sbiki* (p 207b). Sōboku totally ignores the Eighth Doubt!

⁸⁸ For an elaboration of the philosophy of this section, see Ch'eng-yü's commentary, p 363 verso b.

⁸⁹ See the *Wang-sbeng-lun*, T. 40, p 830c4 ff. Any reference to women and persons with defective sense organs not being born in the Pure Land is lacking in the *An-lo-cbi*; see however the *Cbing-t'u-lun* (T. 47, p 91b) where this problem is discussed, but not satisfactorily solved. Shan-tao also seems not to have been too successful in solving this problem (see his *Kuan cbing sbu*, T. 37, p 351a10 ff). For the Pure Land teaching being for common persons, "and not for the saints" 不為聖人, see Shan-tao, p 249b10.

been taught. Thus we know that women and those with defective sense organs can definitely not be born into the Pure Land.

Answer: It is said to be ten billion Buddha-lands away with reference to common persons' physical eyes and their mental concepts of birth and death.

This is only to make all creatures complete the karma whereby they are born in the Pure Land.

The meditation that impels a mind to be firm at the approach of death—a mind that receives birth in the Pure Land—is itself the occasion of birth in the Pure Land.⁹⁰

Because of this the *Kuan Wu-liang shou ching* says, "The land of the Buddha O-mi-t'o is not far from here."⁹¹

The power of karma cannot be conceived. One meditation can obtain birth therein. One need not worry over the distance. This is like unto a person dreaming; his body is on a bed, yet his mental consciousness goes to all worlds in any direction, as if he were doing so in his daily life. Birth in the Pure Land is like this: if one's meditation is thus impelled, one is thereby born (in the Pure Land). This need not be doubted.

As for "women, those with defective sense organs, and persons of the two *yānas* not being born therein"—this merely argues that among those who have been born in that land there are not any women nor any who are deaf and dumb; it does not mean that in this world women and those with defective sense organs will not obtain rebirth in the Pure Land. Anyone who speaks in this way is totally ignorant, and understands nothing of the meaning of the scripture. When the Lady Vaidehī asked to be born in the Pure Land, she and five hundred of her serving maids were all predicted to be born therein.⁹²

However, women, as well as the blind, the deaf and the dumb of this world, if they but meditate on the Buddha O-mi-t'o, will all be born in that (i.e., the Pure) Land, and from that time on they shall never again receive the body of a woman, nor shall they receive the body of one with defective sense organs.

If persons of the two *yānas* (i.e., *śrāvaka-yāna* and *pratyeka-buddha-yāna*) but

⁹⁰ See Shan-tao, p 259a8.

⁹¹ A paraphrase of T.12, p 341c5.

⁹² See T. 12, p 346a-b.

turn their hearts and vow to be born in the Pure Land, when once they arrive there, they shall not have again the grasping mind of the two *yānas*. Hence it is said, "Women and those with defective sense organs, and persons of the two *yānas* are not born therein." This is not saying that women and those with defective sense organs in this world shall not be born (in the Pure Land).

(The thirty-fifth of) the forty-eight vows of the *Wu-liang sbou ching* says, "If, upon my attaining Buddhahood, all women in the world of the ten directions who call upon my name and who despise their female bodies yet after their lives shall again receive a female body, I shall not obtain Supreme Enlightenment."⁹³

How then could one being born in the Pure Land again receive a female body!

It is also thus for those with defective sense organs.

The Tenth Doubt.

Question: In definitely seeking birth in the Western Paradise, I do not yet know what practice to do, nor what constitutes the "seeds" 種子 for obtaining birth in that land.

Also, common persons all have wives and children, and have not cut off their lustful desires; do they obtain birth there or not?

Answer: If one wants definitely to be born in the Western Paradise, there are two types of practice which definitely obtain for the devotee birth therein. First is the practice of disgust 厭離行, and second is the practice of the vow 欣願行.

The practice of disgust means that the ordinary person, from beginningless time to the present, has been bound by the five desires, and transmigrates in the five realms of rebirth.⁹⁴ He has received all the various sufferings, and yet if he does not generate a mind that is disgusted with the five desires, he shall not have any possibility of release. For this reason, he should always view this body's pus, blood, dung and urine and all foul effusions as impure and vile-smelling.

⁹³ See T. 12, p 268c21-24.

⁹⁴ There are normally six realms of painful rebirth, but the author of the *Sbib-i-lun*, according to Ch'eng-yü (p 364 verso b) has combined *asuras* into the *preta* class.

The *Nieb-p'an ching* says, "The castle which is this body has living within it an ignorant *rākṣasa*. Who with wisdom would take pleasure in this body!"⁹⁵

And the scripture also says, "This body is the accumulation of all pains and all impurities. Embracing ulcers, et cetera, it is basically without value." And even the bodies of the *devas* are all the same.

The devotee, whether walking or sitting, asleep or awake, should always regard this body only as suffering, without pleasure, and should produce a deep (-seated sense of) disgust.

For example, if he is unable to sever relations with his wife immediately, he should gradually develop a feeling of disgust (for her), and generate seven types of meditation on impurity :

first, see that this body, full of lustful desires, is generated out of lustful craving and the defilements: this is the impurity of its seeds;⁹⁶

second, when the father and mother copulated, the red and the white fused together: this is the impurity of receiving birth 受生;

third, being in the womb is to be beneath the organ of birth and to be above the organ of maturation: this is the impurity of residence;

fourth, when one is in the womb, one eats only the mother's blood: this is the impurity of eating;

fifth, when the days and the months are fulfilled, the head emerges from the womb, and pus and blood gush forth together with it, and there are foul smells in profusion: this is the impurity of birth 初生;

sixth, a thin skin covers (the body of the child), and within it pus and blood cover everything: this is the impurity of the whole body;

seventh, after the body dies, it swells up and rots to pieces; its bones and flesh are in disarray, and it is devoured by wolves: this is the ultimate impurity.

One's own body is thus, and it is also the case with the bodies of others.

A deep-seated disgust is produced in regards to male and female forms, the spheres of our clingings, et cetera, and impurity is now always the object of our meditations.

⁹⁵ Is this a paraphrase of T. 12, p 434a or p 373a-b?

⁹⁶ According to Ch'eng-yü, these are the seeds of later defiled karma (p 364 verso b).

If one is able to meditate thus, the defilements of lustful desires gradually diminish. This is also the case with the meditations on the ten meditations 十想⁹⁷ et cetera, as widely taught in the scriptures.

So too in producing a vow—"I vow that I may always be freed from male or female form in the three worlds, form which is befuddled by the five desires, foul-smelling with pus, blood and impurities, and eating various foods; I vow to obtain a body generated of the nature of the Pure Land."

This constitutes the practice of disgust.

The practice of the vow also has two aspects.

First, clearly understanding what it means to search for rebirth (in the Pure Land), and second, meditating on items such as the adornments of the Pure Land.

The mind desiring (rebirth) desires to understand the significance of rebirth. The reason one seeks birth in the Pure Land is because one wants to rescue all creatures from pain. Thus one thinks, "At the present time I have no strength. If I stay on in the defiled world the sphere of the defilements will be strong and I myself bound by karma and sunk in the three evil realms 三塗. If I act, I shall traverse many more kalpas. In this manner I have transmigrated from beginningless time up to the present, without ever having rested. When could I ever save suffering creatures! For this reason, I desire birth in the Pure Land and I desire to draw close to all the Buddhas. If I attain the insight of non-birth, then I should be able to save suffering creatures in this evil world."⁹⁸

Hence it says in the *Wang-sbeng lun*, "To generate the mind of Bodhi means to truly desire to attain Buddhahood; to desire to attain Buddhahood is none other than having the heart to save all creatures. The heart to save all creatures is none other than the heart to embrace all creatures and have them be born in the Buddha-land."⁹⁹

Also, there are two practices¹⁰⁰ to be accomplished in vowing to be born in the Pure Land.

⁹⁷ For these ten meditations, see the *Ta-Chih-tu-lun*, T. 25, p 22925.

⁹⁸ See Genshin's *Ōjō-yōsbū*, T. 84, p 52b10.

⁹⁹ This passage is not in the *Wang-sbeng-lun*, but in the *Wang-sbeng-lun chu* (T. 40, p 842a17 ff); the *Sbib-i-lun* follows the *An-lo-chi* (T. 47, p 7c7) in this attribution.

¹⁰⁰ See the *An-lo-chi*, p 8a1-216; this passage, to note 9 below, is a direct quotation from the *An-lo-chi*.

First, one should leave far behind the three things that hinder the way of Bodhi, and second, one should obtain the three things that advance the way of Bodhi.

How is one to leave far behind the three things that hinder Bodhi?

First, by relying upon the path of wisdom, one does not seek for one's own pleasure, and thereby one's mind leaves far behind greedy attachment to one's own person.

Second, by relying upon the way of compassion, one saves all creatures from pain and thereby one leaves far behind the heart that would be disinclined to ease (the sufferings) of all creatures.

Third, by relying upon the way of *upāya*, one sympathizes with all creatures and desires to give them pleasure, and thereby one leaves far behind the mind that reveres and honors one's self.

If one can leave far behind these three things that hinder Bodhi, then one obtains the three things that advance Bodhi.

First is the unstained, pure mind. Because it is not for one's self that one seeks all pleasures,¹⁰¹ Bodhi is unstained, and pure. If one seeks pleasure for one's self then one's mind is stained and the way of Bodhi is hindered. The unstained, pure mind is a way that advances Bodhi.

Second is a pure mind at ease. Because one saves creatures from suffering, Bodhi is the purity that puts all creatures at ease. If one does not produce the mind to rescue all creatures and cause them to be separated from the pains of birth and death, then this opposes the way of Bodhi. Hence a pure mind at ease is a way that advances Bodhi.

Third is a joyfully pure mind. Such a mind desires that all creatures attain great Bodhi and Nirvāna.¹⁰² Bodhi and Nirvāna are the ultimately, eternally blissful realm. If one does not produce a mind which would cause all creatures to attain ultimate and eternal bliss, then it hinders the way of Bodhi.

What is the primary cause by which we may attain this Bodhi?

This necessarily depends upon birth in the Pure Land, and never being separated from the Buddha; after attaining the insight of the unborn, we may

¹⁰¹ Ch'eng-yü (p 365 recto b) would here appear to want to attribute much of this passage's commentarial material to Chih-i!

¹⁰² See above note 7; the *Shih-i-lun* has here 大善提運樂故, which the *An-lo-chi* abbreviates to 大善提故.

then save suffering humanity in the realms of birth and death.

Compassion and wisdom are internally harmonized (with this Bodhi); it is a certainty and is always active 常用, freely and without hindrance.

This is the same as the mind of Bodhi; this is the meaning of vowing to be born (in the Pure Land).

Second, in explaining the mind that vows to seek (the Pure Land): the mind which so desires raises up a thought, a thought having as its object the Buddha O-mi-t'o's Dharmakāya or his Sambhogakāya, et cetera, his gold-colored rays of light, his eighty-four thousand major characteristics, each major characteristic having eighty-four thousand minor signs, and each minor sign emitting eighty-four thousand lights which always illumine the universe and which embrace those multitudes that meditate upon the Buddha.¹⁰³

Also one meditates upon the seven-jewelled marvellous decorations (of the Pure Land) et cetera, such as the sixteen meditations given in detail (in the *Wu-liang sbou ching*¹⁰⁴ and) in the *Kuan Wu-liang sbou ching*.¹⁰⁵

To transfer all one's good acts—such as the constant practice of the *samādhi* 'meditating on the Buddha',¹⁰⁶ generosity, morality, et cetera—to all creatures, thus causing all creatures to be born in that land, definitely obtains (for one) birth (in the Pure Land).

This is the way of the vow.

¹⁰³ See T. 12, p 343a18 ff.

¹⁰⁴ See T. 12, p 270c6 to p 271b24; see also p 268c10-14 for the vow to so decorate this Pure Land.

¹⁰⁵ See T. 12, p 341b23-26, p 342a10 ff.

¹⁰⁶ See Ch'eng-yü on verbal and non-verbal *śīla*-fo, p 365 verso a-b.